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INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY

Our Future, Our Rights, We Decide!

On May Day, Day of International Working Class Unity and Struggle, the U.S. Marxist-Leninist Organization (USMLO) sends its revolutionary greetings to the workers of all countries and the peoples fighting worldwide

against U.S. imperialism and for a world fit for human existence. We salute all the oppressed peoples fighting for their rights, all the peoples resisting U.S. aggression and interference, as their struggles

We Decide • 3

PREPARING GROUND FOR FEDERAL TAKEOVER

Justice Department to Investigate Baltimore Police

Newly appointed Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch launched yet another Department of Justice (DoJ) investigation, this time into the Baltimore Police. Contending with the courageous resistance in Baltimore, with youth contending with National Guard, a

selectively imposed and racist curfew and a militarized police force, the federal government is acting to control the situation. Yet many are aware that similar investigations by the DoJ in Oakland and Cleveland and Ferguson and Los Angeles

Federal Takeover • 10

40TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION AND REUNIFICATION

Salute Heroic Victory of Vietnamese People

April 30, 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of the heroic victory of the Vietnamese people against U.S. imperialism. April 30, 1975 is the day the Vietnamese drove the U.S. out of their country and won their liberation. The united forces of the North Vietnamese Army and the

National Liberation Front in the south soundly defeated the U.S. and their puppet regime, winning their historic battle for independence. A year later the reunification of the country was proclaimed with the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

Heroic Vietnamese • 16

May edition of ***Voice of Revolution***

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I • We Decide

for sovereignty, for charting their own course, contributes to the rights and security of all.

The stand against U.S. wars, drones, torture and spying, were part of many May Day demonstrations across the country. Expressing the internationalist spirit of actions, signs called for bringing *All U.S. Troops Home Now!* so as to end U.S. wars and interference.

Workers across the country are joining in actions, to demand a \$15 minimum wage, the minimum needed for a standard of living above the poverty line. The large majority of minimum wage workers are women raising families and they are at the center of this organizing.

Immigrant workers, many undocumented, are also at the forefront of organizing efforts. They refuse to accept the unjust deportations, separation of families, and government failure to meet their rights as immigrants and workers.

Demands for *Legalization for All Now!* and *Stop the Raids and Deportations* are widespread, as is the targeting of Deportee-in-Chief, President Obama. People are rejecting any notion of second-class citizenship, for immigrants, for African Americans, for anyone. *No! Equal Rights for All Now!*

Longshore workers are closing the ports in Oakland and San Francisco on May 1, joining people across the country demanding an end to racist police killings and impunity. Longshore



workers in Charleston also joined this fight, making their union hall a center for organizing and condemning the refusal of government at all levels to stand against the wide scale and on-going racist government attacks. These include the brutality and killings that go unpunished and the racist mass incarceration and criminalization of youth.

The refusal of the government to put an end to these attacks and the undaunted persistence of those demanding justice — from Oakland to Ferguson, to Staten Island, from Cleveland to Charleston, to Baltimore — has brought many more youth and workers into the struggle. Their stand is firm: *Justice Now! Punish the Guilty and Hold All Responsible to Account!*

There is growing refusal to accept that yet one more Justice Department (DoJ) investigation, this time for Baltimore, is going to solve any problem — just as those for Cleveland and Ferguson did not. Racism and inequality are deep in the bones of the U.S. state. They can only be eliminated by burying this old and tired state, showing itself on every front to be unable to solve problems and unfit to rule.

It is time for the people, led by the working class, to instead build a democracy of our own making, where we, the people, decide. Increasingly, whether on the front of the right to education or that against police killings, the conclusion is being drawn that the only solution is to rely on ourselves and our own alternatives.

Our rights belong to us as human beings and we demand a future where those rights are guaranteed! The struggle for decision making unifies our battles while also putting our stamp on the solution — *Who Decides? We Decide!* Let all join in building the united fight for rights and further bring to life our right to govern and decide. That is what paves the way for a bright future.

***Our Future,
Our Rights,
We Decide!***



Workers of All Countries Unite in Defense of their Rights and for Social Progress on May Day

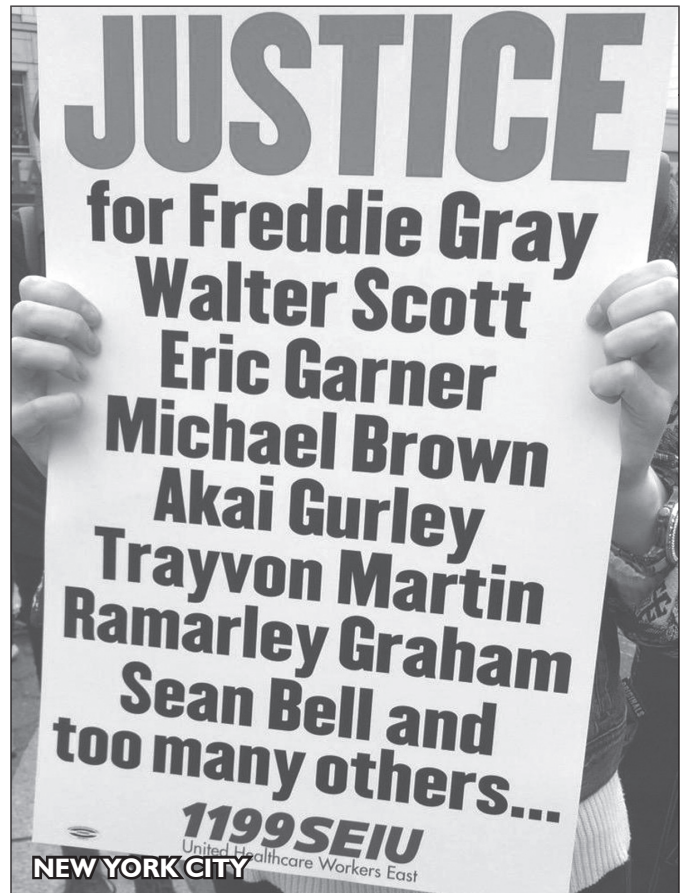
May 1, May Day, was celebrated this year with militant mass actions around the world. These actions are more important than ever, showing the worldwide unity of the working class to block imperialist military aggression and warmongering, led by the U.S., that threatens the peoples of the world. Worldwide people rejected the demands for more cuts and attacks on rights and the overall nation wrecking being imposed. In war torn countries, the oppressed peoples are affirming their right to be.

Internationally, the workers are fighting for justice and for the recognition of the rightful place of labor. In countries such as Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia where the mechanisms of people's empowerment exist or are being brought into being, May Day activities were joyful celebrations of that political empowerment and nation-building and the aspirations of the people to stand with the other countries of the world based on mutual respect, solidarity and peace. Everywhere, May Day 2015 showed the determination of the working class to change the situation in humanity's favor.

U.S.

Across the United States, workers and their organizations showed class unity, particularly opposing the attacks on immigrants and undocumented workers and racist police killings of African Americans, many of them young workers. Immigrants and refugees have faced brutal attacks as deportations under the Obama administration have been the worst in all U.S. history, and families are put in detention camps and branded as non-persons with no rights.

Police killings of unarmed African American men, especially youth, have been met by sustained resistance, most recently in Charleston, South Carolina and Baltimore Maryland. Many of the demonstrations demanded an end to state violence and to impunity for crimes committed by the police. Broad opposition to



INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY



DALLAS



TULSA, OKLAHOMA



LOS ANGELES



the militarization of police and an atmosphere where police treats cities like war zones, was also evident.

More than 1,000 people rallied in New York City's Union Square for workers' and immigrants' rights, \$15 minimum wage and a "March to Disarm the NYPD," to protest police violence. The banner "From Baltimore to Ayotzinapa" in Mexico expressed unity with the peoples of the world who are fighting similar battles against state violence, impunity and corruption.

In Baltimore, mass protests against the police killing of unarmed African American youth Freddie Gray on April 19 have been ongoing and coincided with May Day. Hundreds rallied on May 1 after the medical examiner's office ruled Gray's death a homicide and Maryland State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby announced charges against six police officers. People are persisting in demanding justice — recognizing that resistance is a main reason charges have been brought but also aware that it is rare that convictions take place.

Dockworkers on both coasts were in action [see p.9] with those in San Francisco and Oakland shutting down the ports for a period to mark May Day and to protest police violence.

In downtown Los Angeles actions were held to oppose the deportation of undocumented immigrants and demand *Legalization for All Now!* Also present in large numbers were port worker drivers, who marked one week of being on strike to demand better working conditions and an end to wage theft. Similar actions in defense of undocumented workers took place across southern California.

In Charleston, South Carolina, protests focused on denouncing the police killing of Walter Scott, an unarmed African American stopped for a broken taillight on April 4 and shot in the back. Police as usual tried to lie about what happened, but Scott's totally unjustified killing was exposed when a video recorded by a bystander came to light.

Many other demonstrations occurred from coast to coast, including in Boston, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Minneapolis, Tulsa, Dallas, Seattle and Oakland.

Canada

Actions across Canada defended the rights of all and vigorously opposed Prime Minister Harper's dictatorship, which is broadening anti-social, anti-national assaults. People are taking up the task of ridding Canada of the extremist Harper Conser-

vative government in upcoming 2015 federal elections. The workers are also sorting out the problem of their political empowerment so that whichever government comes to power in this year's federal election, it will be impeded in continuing the anti-social attacks on the people in the service of private interests.

The Harper government was held to account for its defense of

monopoly right over public right, the callous disregard for the destruction of manufacturing, the removal of protections for the natural environment, and the continued attacks on the rights of workers, women and youth and social programs which provide for their well-being. The resistance of the workers defies the attempts to criminalize their opposition to the anti-social offensive carried out by governments across the country.

As a contingent of the international working class, Canadian workers affirm their unity with the workers and oppressed peoples everywhere who are fighting to defend their sovereignty and right to chart their own destiny free from imperialist interference. The working class and its allies repudiate Harper's war government, which with the U.S. and other imperialist powers threatens to plunge the peoples into a devastating world war. On May Day they raised the call to withdraw all troops from Iraq, Syria and Ukraine.

Cuba

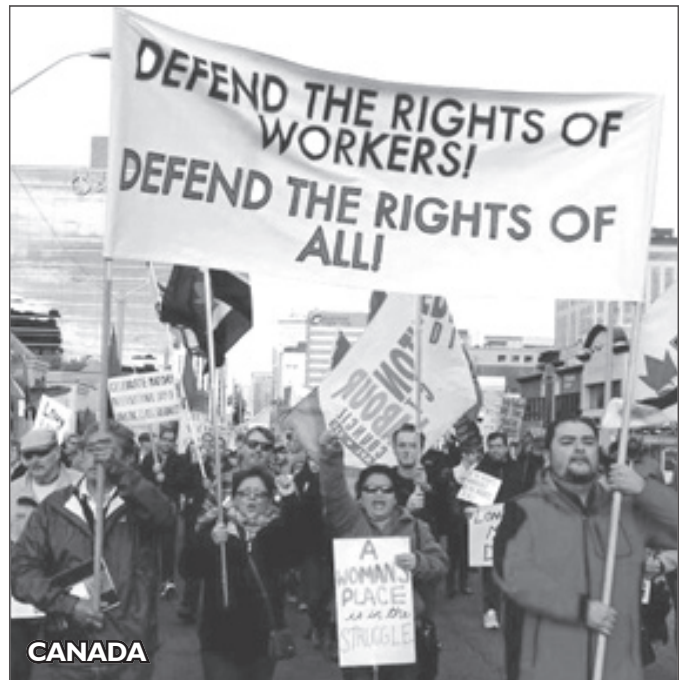
More than a million Cuban workers participated in the May Day parade in Havana, while many more participated in other marches and events across the country under the theme *Unidos en la Construcción del Socialismo* – *United in the Construction of Socialism*. Havana workers gathered before dawn in front of the monument to José Martí next to the Plaza de la Revolución.

From the tribune, Cuban President Raúl Castro Ruz, flanked by President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Nicolás Maduro, greeted the people who responded with roars of appreciation. They were joined by Cuban Communist Party and government officials as well representatives of the mass organizations of the Cuban people, such as the Cuban Women's Federation, the University Student Federation, the Communist Youth Union, the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution and the National Association of Small Farmers. Also present were outstanding patriots of the Cuban revolution such as veterans of the attack on Moncada and participants in the Granma expedition.

Ulises Guilarte Secretary General of the Workers' Central Union of Cuba (CTC) delivered the speech opening the May Day at 7 am. He voiced the Cuban people's vigorous support for the people of Venezuela and called on the U.S. to end its interference in Venezuela and to respect its sovereignty and democratic and constitutional order.

Guilarte firmly put forward the demands of the Cuban people for an end to the illegal U.S. occupation of Guantánamo Bay and its return to Cuba; and for an end to the criminal U.S. blockade. He pointed to the Cuban people's defense of socialist construction and work to improve the economy to raise the level of prosperity among other things.

The march in Havana was led by the Five Cuban Heroes — who were finally liberated from their unjust imprisonment in the U.S. and returned to their homeland as of December 17, 2014 — with their families and Heroes of the Revolution. Also in the lead was a contingent of 50,000 doctors and other medical workers, including 100 members of the Henry Reeves brigade recently returned from fighting the Ebola outbreak in



CANADA



MEXICO



CUBA

INTERNATIONAL MAY DAY



VENEZUELA



CHILE



BRITAIN



PORTUGAL

West Africa.

Workers from various unions and individual workplaces, representing all sectors of the Cuban economy followed and the air was filled with slogans in defense of the Cuban Revolution and the building of socialism, affirmations of the Venezuelan people's right to be, and demands for an end to the blockade. The march continued for one and a half hours until its last contingents passed the Plaza de la Revolución. As rain poured in the middle of the march, the Cuban working class was defiant and jubilant, underscoring a main theme of the festivities: that the people will never surrender and will continue to turn their success into victory.

Among the foreign delegations invited by the CTC and the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) to participate in the joyous events were 1,175 people from 140 organizations of 28 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean; 571 people from 40 organizations and 19 European countries; more than 60 people from Asia and Oceania; and 50 people from 14 countries in Africa and the Middle East. The largest delegation numbered 285 people from the U.S. calling for an end to the blockade against Cuba, followed by 209 from France, 127 from Uruguay, 121 from Chile and 102 from Argentina. In total, there were more than 2,000 people and more than 205 union and solidarity organizations from abroad.

Venezuela

Workers marched in Caracas to commemorate the achievements of a decade and a half of progress under the Bolivarian revolution. During the celebrations, President Nicolás Maduro stated that the Bolivarian Revolution has increased the number of workers unions, councils of workers and federations. He stated that "now is time for workers to lead the economic policy of the country" and called on them to participate in shaping economic policies through the institutions that represent them.

"I believe this is a great achievement of the Revolution, to have reinforced the demands of the working class channeled through the unions," he said.

Maduro also announced a 30 per cent increase in the minimum wage. This marks the 29th wage increase in the 16 years of the Bolivarian Revolution, as compared to only nine increases during the neo-liberal governments from 1974-1998, TeleSUR reports.

Bolivia

Bolivian President Evo Morales announced various salary increases to mark International Workers' Day.

The national minimum wage will increase by 15 per cent from U.S.\$208 to U.S.\$239 per month and the general salary by 8.5 per cent. The announcement came after lengthy negotiations between government officials and representatives from the Bolivian Workers Central (COB). Between 2005-2013, Bolivia's real minimum wage increased by 104 per cent, more than any other Latin American country, according to the International Labor Organization.

On May Day workers also marked the ninth anniversary of

the nationalization of hydrocarbons (oil and natural gas) under the Morales government.

Europe

May Day in Europe focused on the vicious austerity programs and the restructuring of the state, along with the increasing attacks on civil rights that accompany the subordination of the state to private monopoly interests.

In Greece, more than 13,000 people participated in anti-austerity marches in Athens, and another 13,000 took their place in the northern city of Thessaloniki, according to news reports. Greek workers face very high levels of unemployment and cutbacks to social programs and pensions and are firmly resisting.

Italian workers targeted the recently adopted *Jobs Act* that withdraws the long-standing protections that afforded workers some level of job protection and benefits. Another theme of the May Day demonstrations was the demand for humane and compassionate treatment of the tens of thousands of migrants who have been dislocated by imperialist plunder, aggression and war in Asia and Africa, led by the U.S., and are seeking refuge in Europe.

Several thousand people gathered in the German capital Berlin, while British workers assembled in London demanding an end to cuts to social programs. According to news reports, more than 1000 workers demonstrated in Kiev, Ukraine carrying banned communist flags in defiance of a the fascist law passed by the neo-Nazi government of the Ukraine.

Asia

Workers in many countries across Asia took part in militant demonstrations on May Day to raise the banner of their rights, demand better wages, working and living conditions, and for a bright future.

In Turkey, workers faced throngs of police, with more than 10,000 deployed around Taksim Square in Istanbul. Among other things, the workers were protesting a law that was passed in April that allows police to search and detain demonstrators at will. Workers, youth and students also defied the government ban on demonstrations in the square. Police used tear gas, water cannons and flash grenades to attack May Day demonstrators as they approached the square but participants persisted.

Close to 100,000 workers in south Korea marched against austerity and vowed to wage “an all-out general strike” if Park Guen-hye continues to impose anti-worker laws that introduce “flexible working conditions” that serve the south Korean and foreign monopolies. More than 10,000 workers were attacked by riot police as they attempted to march to the Presidential palace.

In Japan, thousands of workers protested the rising militarism of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and called for better wages and working conditions.

In the Philippines, more than 10,000 workers marched in Manila and burned an effigy of Philippine President Benigno Aquino to protest low wages and a law allowing employers to fire workers after six months in order to avoid giving them benefits.



SOUTH AFRICA



PALESTINE



PAKISTAN



TURKEY

In Indonesia, thousands of workers took part in May Day actions for higher wages and better labor laws to protect them.

In Myanmar, Cambodia, and Bangladesh, garment workers were in the forefront of the May Day actions to call for a living wage. Many garment workers in Myanmar earn about \$5 a day and are demanding better wages so that they and their families can enjoy a minimum standard of living. In Cambodia, garment workers called for an increase of their wages from an average of \$124 per month to \$177 per month. They called on their gov-

ernments to introduce labor laws that would provide them some protection from the garment factory owners who hold contracts with international clothing monopolies.

In Malaysia, tens of thousands of workers protested the new Goods and Services Tax that would put additional pressure on already low wages earned by the majority of workers.

As one workers worldwide stood up for rights and demanded that governments act to protect and defend the workers, not the monopolies.

JOINING PROTESTS AGAINST POLICE KILLINGS

Dock Workers Shut Down Ports on May Day

On Friday, May 1 — May Day, International Day of Working Class Struggle and Unity — dock workers in San Francisco and Oakland shut down the ports. The April meetings of both the Executive Board and membership of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 10 unanimously endorsed a call for “Union Action to Stop Police Killings of Black and Brown People.” A unanimously

approved amendment called for the monthly union membership meeting to be held on the May 1 day shift and conclude with a march and a rally at Oakland City Hall. The workers are taking their stand that racist police brutality and killings are unjust and an issue workers are fighting on.

The killing of yet another young African American in Baltimore, alongside that of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Eric Garner on Staten Island and Walter Scott in South Carolina, have been protested across the country. Youth and workers are together demanding justice for all those killed by police and for an end to government impunity. As nationwide actions April 14 and the on-going protests in Baltimore show, the people are united against the racist police killings — modern day lynching — and the genocide of mass incarceration.

That Local 10 dockworkers are taking their action on May Day is a reflection of their internationalist spirit, one that has brought actions against apartheid South African and in support of resistance in Palestine. It is a reflection of their consciousness of the importance of the working class playing its role in leading the fight for the rights of all.

Local 10's resolution for the May Day action brings out: “The ILWU has a proud history of standing up against racial injustice, like the 1984 anti-apartheid action and the 2010 shut-down for justice for Oscar Grant.” Oscar Grant was killed by a transit police at the Bay Area Rapid Transit's Fruitvale station on



January 1, 2009. In 1984, South African cargo sat in the harbor for 10 days as ILWU workers refused to unload it and community activists joined in picketing so a court order to unload the cargo could not be carried out.

Charleston Dock Workers Organizing

Walter Scott, unarmed African American stopped for a broken taillight, was gunned down by a white

officer in South Carolina. Police originally told their usual lie that Scott had attacked the officer involved who “feared for his life.” It was only when video of the event, showing Scott trying to run away and the officer shooting him in the back, then handcuffing the dying man, that action was taken against the police.

Protests were organized with the International Longshore Association Local (ILA) 1422 in Charleston playing a leading role, including having the local's union hall serve as a center for organizing.

Local 1422 president, said in a condolence statement issued by the ILA that Scott's brother is a longshoreman and other Local 1422 members are relatives. “Local 1422 recognizes that we have a social responsibility to our community and we take that responsibility very seriously.” Explaining that the local took the lead in organizing for the City Hall protest, the statement adds, “Local 1422 will continue to stand up and speak out against injustice in any form, whether it is racial profiling, racial discrimination or, as in this case, racial homicide.”

The South Carolina AFL-CIO thanked ILWU Local 10 for initiating a May Day action against police killings: “You supply courage to the members of the South Carolina AFL-CIO as we continue to address the unwarranted killing of Walter Scott. We will share your message of solidarity and reach out to workers around the country to join with us on May 1 in actions to protest the continuing unjustified killings.”

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have done nothing to block racist police brutality and killings, and the widespread government impunity that goes with them. And, despite what is well known and has been repeatedly documented and opposed by people in Baltimore, the DoJ is going to investigate *if* there is a “pattern or practice” of excessive force.

Lynch testified during her first hearing on Capitol Hill as attorney general on May 7, saying she was considering the investigation. She then announced it May 8. Already indicating that the investigation is not meant to solve the problem of government impunity, where frequent and regular excessive use of force goes unpunished, Lynch said, “Ultimately, this process is meant to ensure that officers are being provided with the tools they need — including training, policy guidance and equipment — to be more effective, to partner with civilians, and to strengthen public safety.”

It is the DoJ and Pentagon that are responsible for the fact that local police now have military-grade tanks and weaponry and large stores of chemical weapons like tear gas (which is banned for use in war). Just one example is the wide scale provision of Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, MRAPs. Their only real purpose is urban warfare against people in the U.S. rebelling against government racism, violence and government refusal to provide equal rights for all. Local police have received 624 MRAPs from the Pentagon since 2011. National Guard units, in contrast, have just 60.

It is also the DoJ and Pentagon that are responsible for the culture of militarism that pervades police departments. People, especially African Americans and youth, are seen as “threats” and the role of police is to shoot to kill and treat people, as the military does, as though they are not human beings — as though their lives do not count. They are also responsible for the numerous Joint Terrorism Task Forces and similar joint actions, under federal command, where police are trained to control, attack and repress dissent. This was evident in the live-exercises by police agencies conducted in Ferguson and at numerous demonstrations, such as those against NATO.

Lynch called for the investigation shortly after Baltimore State’s Attorney Marilyn J. Mosby filed criminal charges against six Baltimore officers who were involved in the arrest and killing of Freddie Gray. Mosby, in announcing the charges May 1, admitted the arrest itself was illegal and his treatment in custody, where he was left to be banged up and injured, shackled and handcuffed in the back of the police van, brought about his death. Gray’s repeated calls for medical help, much like Eric Garner’s calls that he could not breathe, were ignored.

Mosby announced charges in part in response to the persistent demonstrations in Baltimore demanding justice, including a large action April 25. Following Gray’s funeral April 27, there was

another large demonstration that was forcibly repressed by police, including with tear gas. It remains unclear if police were among those that instigated the breaking of windows — an action they regularly carry out and documented at numerous demonstrations.

The response of protesters has been to continue their fight, joined by actions across the country on May 1 demanding an end to police violence and equal rights for all. Rejecting the efforts by the government and monopoly media to divert attention from their violence to the protesters, people responded, “You are worried about a few broken windows that can be fixed. We are worried about people’s lives and police killings.” Many bring out that the government’s refusal to deal with the violence of poverty, government racism, the violence of police impunity, the occupation of African American communities by militarized police and National Guard are all evidence that the federal government has no solutions but more repression.

This was further indicated in remarks by Lynch. While the appearance is the federal government is opposing police killings, in reality it is preparing the grounds for potential federal takeover of local police. Lynch said, “The situation in Baltimore involves a core responsibility of the Department of Justice — not only to combat illegal conduct when it occurs but to help prevent the circumstances that give rise to it in the first place.” She added, “When there are allegations of wrongdoing made against individual officers and police departments, the Department of Justice has a responsibility to examine the evidence and, if necessary, implement changes.”

These changes include taking over a police department if it fails to make “progress” as determined by the DoJ. The joint task forces are already putting into practice such federal control and command. These DoJ investigations, which have systematically failed to end police violence, are a further mechanism for outright federal takeover.

People in Baltimore and across the country know that it is only as a result of continued and determined actions that charges were filed. They also know well that bringing charges does not mean convictions, as was evident in the Trayvon Martin case. And that even if there are convictions, it does not solve the problem of the thousands of police killings, beatings and unjust arrests that occur across the country and go unpunished.

Police impunity at all levels is a crime. Justice demands that it be treated as such and that the DoJ be held responsible first and foremost. Solutions lie in continuing to step up organized resistance, including demands to disarm police. And in rejecting federal intervention and instead organizing self-defense mechanisms of our own making, where the people themselves decide what more is needed to block racist government attacks and defend the rights of all.

Visit our website: **usmlo.org**

ADDRESSES MILITARIZATION OF POLICE DEPARTMENTS

Missouri Senator McCaskill Proposes Bill that Will Allow for Further Federal Intervention

Missouri Senator Claire McCaskill introduced a bill May 7 addressing the Pentagon and Department of Justice programs providing military-grade equipment to local police. U.S. Representative Lacy Clay, also of Missouri, is offering an identical bill in the House of Representatives. The bills would specifically remove Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, known as MRAPs, from the list of military equipment available to local police. It does nothing to remove the more than 620 MRAPs already in the hands of local police, such as those in Ferguson, Baltimore and most major cities and towns across the country.

McCaskill's concern is not that MRAP's, designed for urban warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan, have no place in local police departments. She said the problem is that MRAPs "Are not flexible or nimble enough to provide the kind of protection that police officers need in some circumstances."

As an indication of the high level of militarization already in place, the bill also would bar small police departments, with fewer than 10 sworn officers, from purchasing more than one military tactical vehicle.

The bill is also designed to use federal funds to force police departments to form regional policing agencies. For example, departments with fewer than 35 officers would not be able to obtain federal funding for SWAT equipment unless they teamed up with other agencies to form *regional* SWAT teams. These SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) teams



are already among the most militarized and aggressive policing forces. Developing regional teams will only further strengthen federal and Pentagon control — forces outside the communities and cities police are supposedly serving.

As well, far from blocking use of military equipment against protesters, or strikers, or immigrants defending rights, police departments would simply have to publish their requests for such equipment. These include flash bang grenades, sound blasters (Long Range Acoustic Devices or LRADs) and high caliber assault rifles. For the public, which is demanding an end to the militarization and disarming of police, there would be hotlines to receive reports about the misuse of funds and equipment.

McCaskill chaired a Senate hearing to examine the militarized police response to Ferguson protests. At the time, she said she was deeply disturbed by the sight of helmeted officers in body armor aiming sniper rifles at civilians and patrolling the streets of Ferguson atop huge armored vehicles. None of this is outlawed in the bill. Indeed, the federal program, funded with public dollars, will continue instead of being banned. The program has provided billions of dollars worth of surplus Humvees, helicopters, ballistic vests and other military supplies to police departments since the 1990s. It is run by three federal agencies notorious for their violence and racism — the Pentagon, the Department of Justice and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA. The demand of the people is to shut it down entirely. Fund rights, not repression.

Bringing the Crisis to a Head in Baltimore

Glen Ford, Black Agenda Report



"The only thing that can work to fundamentally change the system for Black people – whether in the 21st century or the Sixties – is mass organization for popular empowerment."

It has been nine months since the Black youth of Ferguson, Missouri, set history in motion with their demand for justice for Michael Brown, yet the movement has maintained its momentum while the forces of collaboration are on the defensive. In Baltimore, the young Black State's Attorney gave the people what they had so loudly demanded, but did not expect to get: serious charges against the six cops directly involved in Freddie Gray's death, with one officer facing up to 30 years in prison for 2nd degree "depraved heart" murder – a potential template for future "depraved indifference" charges against killer cops. [...]

It was not Allen Bullock's time. The 18 year-old succumbed to pressures from his family to turn himself in to police, and was promptly locked up in lieu of \$500,000 bail on charges of rioting and destruction of property [a police car] – substantially higher than the \$350,000 bail set for the four officers charged with manslaughter and murder of Freddie Gray, and twice as high as the two cops facing misdemeanor counts in Gray's death.

Maryland's top public defender appealed to private lawyers to represent the hundreds arrested during last week's rebellion, and pleaded for affordable bail. "This is a poor community. Putting high bonds on those who cannot afford even nominal bonds sends the wrong message—that if you have money you get released—and may fan the flames of frustration," said Paul DeWolfe. But judges continued to set high bail, including \$100,000 for a man accused of stealing 130 bottles of vodka.

Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, who had earlier lamented that her city was being "destroyed by thugs," and then later apologized for her remarks, reiterated Wednesday morning that more arrests would be forthcoming as police poured over video evidence.

More than one hundred people who had been arrested during protests were released with no charges, prompting deputy public defender Natalie Finegar to tell the *Los Angeles Times*, "It looks like a lot of folks were just flat-out illegally detained." Which only goes to show that the U.S. criminal justice system responds to protests against over-policing and disregard of Black rights – with more of the same.

On Sunday, Mayor Rawlings-Blake lifted the five-day curfew – a collective punishment that was selectively imposed on Black and poor sections of the city – and Maryland's governor announced the start of withdrawal of thousands of National Guard troops.

Baltimore State's Attorney Mosby, who won office vowing to reign in police misconduct and to set an example for swift prosecution of offenders in blue, will have to fight to assemble a jury willing to convict police officers of – anything. The cops' lawyers will surely demand a change in venue from 63 percent Black Baltimore and the heavily Black surrounding county, to a much whiter locale. Although Maryland is the fourth Blackest state in the nation, at about 29 percent, there are still "Simi Valley"-type venues out there that can be counted on to exonerate killer cops. If a change of venue is granted, then the odds of convicting a cop for killing a citizen of any race in the U.S. will remain unchanged at 1,000 to 1, as tabulated by a landmark Washington Post-Bowling Green State University study.

Mosby's use of Maryland's "depraved heart" statute – the equivalent of "depraved indifference" in other states or "reckless disregard" for constitutional rights in federal case law – to charge one of the cops with 2nd degree murder, is a challenge to the prosecutorial chorus, including former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, that maintains it is near impossible to prove a case of murder against cops because of how "the law" is written. Mosby is apparently aware of the Michigan Branch of the ACLU's efforts to show that U.S. court rulings provide ample room for prosecution of killer cops. For example, a 1997 U.S. appellate court ruling held that: "It is enough...if it can be proved – by circumstantial evidence or otherwise – that a defendant exhibited reckless disregard for a constitutional or federal right." (See, "It's Not the Law, But Prosecutors, That Give Immunity to Killer Cops," BAR, Dec 12, 2014.)

Under Eric Holder, according to the *New York Times*, the U.S. Justice Department "has supported police officers every time an excessive-force case has made its way to arguments." Which means, like every attorney general before him, Holder has used the weight of his department to relentlessly shape the case law



of the nation's highest court in favor of impunity for killer cops. He is part of the problem, yet is allowed to tour Black communities and churches pretending to be a friend on the inside of the system. (Loretta Lynch will doubtless be no different.)

Mayor Rawlings-Blake went to that poisoned well this Wednesday morning, asking the Justice Department to conduct a "pattern and practice" investigation into systemic racial bias and excessive force in the Baltimore Police Department.

The only thing that can work to fundamentally change the system for Black people – whether in the 21st century or the Sixties – is mass organization for popular empowerment. In a society where police practice systemic violence, the resistance will inevitably include violence, as well. Baltimore saw both ingredients at work, over the past couple of weeks – and it scared the powers-that-be to their bones. Whatever this movement will

ultimately be called, it announced its active presence in a major American city at the beginning of the hot season.

There was clearly more than simple "looting" going on in the pattern of confrontation with police – which means important things are happening in the street. When high school kids rush out of school to join the battle against the cops, we know that important things are happening in their peer groups. And the summer has not yet begun.

The "peaceful" protesters and the bad "thugs" – who might be the same person at different times of day – created a small taste of the crisis that must come to all of the Baltimores of the United States, if Black people are to control or replace the local police and sever every fatal connection to the Mass Black Incarceration State that has been imposed over the past 45 years. [...]

IVAW Calls on the Maryland National Guard to Stand Down in Baltimore

Iraq Veterans Against the War, April 29, 2015

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), a national group of Post 9/11 veterans, calls on the Maryland National Guard to stand down from their mobilization to Baltimore. As 1,000 soldiers currently deploy to put down an uprising of exploited people who have been terrorized by a consistently racist police department, we stand in solidarity with the people of Baltimore and encourage service members and veterans to listen to their fellow community members and to stand on the right side of history.

We know that the death of yet another black person at the hands of police is not unique or new in our country. We also know that the rage we are seeing in the streets is the direct result of a legacy of police departments and a prison system that dehumanizes and targets black people and people of color and the result of a morally bankrupt economy that continues to profit off of the backs of poor people across the country. We stand with those people who have lifted up the banner of #BlackLivesMatter to ensure that fundamental change takes place in our country.

The irony of the National Guard deployment to quell protests due to the death of Freddie Gray at the hands of police is not lost on us as we approach the 45th anniversaries of both the Jackson State and Kent State shootings, where the National Guard and police were deployed to silence protestors with deadly consequences.

As veterans who have deployed to and served in support of occupations abroad, we see some of the same tactics and military equipment being used by police against the people of Baltimore, just as it was used against the people of Ferguson and Oakland. The increased militarization of our foreign policy and our domestic policing, coupled with racist violence perpetuated by our government, has to stop. The people of Baltimore demanding systemic change should be responded to with dialogue not an escalation of force. We encourage National Guard members across the country, many of whom we have served with, to begin a conversation on how they will respond when it becomes their turn to be mobilized against their own communities.

TEXAS DETENTION CASE

Government Says Refugee Mothers and Children Are Not “Persons” and Have No Rights

According to the Department of Justice, Central American mothers and children who are refugees seeking asylum in the United States are not “persons” and therefore have no Constitutional rights. The families are currently being held in U.S. detention camps. Family detention is itself contrary to human rights law and the inhumane prison like conditions are as well.

The case involves the Karnes detention center in Texas. Women there organized

a hunger strike demanding humane conditions for themselves and their children, that their prolonged detention was unjust and that they be released. Commonly, those seeking asylum, once they have shown a “reasonable fear” for their safety if they are returned home, are released to family members in the U.S., various churches or other safe places while their cases are pending. Instead, President Obama has been housing families in what amount to prison camps, many for months. Many, including unaccompanied minors, have to contend with the complicated refugee process without the benefit of lawyers or even interpreters.

In late March, 78 women detained at the Texas facility signed a petition that said their continued detention was unjust, that their children were suffering and that they should be released. At least 40 women also participated in a hunger strike, while some also vowed not to work in the facility or to send their children to its school.

Several of the women who organized the hunger strike were placed in isolation and faced other retaliation for their stand, such as threats that they would be separated from their children. They brought a class action suit for all those in detention, saying their first amendment rights were being violated. They are calling for the court to stop the retaliation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The women also state that they “continue to suffer irreparable injury because they are unconstitutionally deterred from engaging in their protest,” and that they are bringing the action “to vindicate their rights under the First Amendment.” Among those named in their action are



two ICE administrators, ICE Director Sarah Saldana, Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson and the GEO Group Inc., the private monopoly that runs Karnes.

The Constitution specifically states “all persons” in the U.S. or under U.S. control have equal protection under the law. In arguing against the women, the government said the women cannot bring claims for first amendment rights, because they are not “persons.”

And they are supposed-

edly not “persons” because they are not citizens and have not yet been admitted into the country —although they are being forcibly detained by the government in government-run prison camps.

The government made use of a Supreme Court case from 1904 involving an alleged British anarchist imprisoned on Ellis Island for speaking out for the rights of workers and unions. (He was defended by renowned civil rights and labor lawyer Clarence Darrow).

Echoing far earlier arguments used to deny slaves rights, including those who escaped to freedom, the DoJ is claiming it can decide who is and is not a person. And in using a case involving political and union organizing, it is putting in place “legal” arguments for more broadly denying people their right to speak and organize. They are also calling the hunger strike an “insurrection,” another means to claim those involved can be punished and put in isolation.

In the context of U.S. drone massacres abroad, with those killed also not counted as people, and on-going police killings, where unarmed African Americans are also not treated as human beings whose lives matter, this attempt to deny rights based on the claim that refugees are not people is a dangerous threat to the rights of all. It is a government effort to make “legal” its racist killings and detention of families and to “legalize” similar attacks and detention of political activists. This effort must be firmly opposed and the rights of the women and all those targeted by the anti-people and racist attacks of government defended.

DHS Policies Result in Torture of Immigrant Children in Border Patrol Custody

Bryan Johnson, Benders Immigration Bulletin, May 5, 2015

In a sworn affidavit dated February 27, 2015, Chief Border Patrol Agent for the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas, Kevin W. Oaks, admitted to several policies that result in torture of children in border patrol's holding cells.

The affidavit was filed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in defense of a motion to enforce the Flores Settlement, which is close to a resolution in favor of all of the children victims. [The case was brought by rights organizations as part of efforts to defend children detained as refugees.]

In a separate filing, DHS admitted that the average time unaccompanied children spent in Border Patrol custody from March 1, 2014 to July 31, 2014 was 112 hours, or 4.6 days: The Oaks affidavit fully corroborates the stories of hundreds of our unaccompanied minors, who suffered unspeakable horrors due to their detention in border patrols holding cells. One of our 8-year-old clients, was detained in extremely cold holding rooms for 15 days with nothing to sleep on but the concrete floor.

An analysis of the actual conditions in border patrol holding cells compared to Oaks declaration and its own internal policy reveals that DHS has intentionally created extreme conditions where virtually all children held in custody are deprived of fundamental constitutional rights such as food, clothing, water, and sleep.

In a policy memorandum dated June 2, 2008, the Chief of border patrol at the time, David V. Aguilar, issued a series of directives related to juvenile holding rooms. Section 6.24.6 states that all juveniles detained longer than 24 hours will be given access to basic hygiene services, a blanket, and mattress. The following section, 6.24.7, states that all hold rooms used for unaccompanied children must provide access to mattresses and a blanket, as well as adequate temperature control and ventilation; and meals which must be offered every six hours.

Oaks stated in his affidavit that "In certain circumstances, aliens who are in Border Patrol custody may require some form of bedding" and that in the summer of 2014, mylar blankets were provided in "certain circumstances." Oaks does not claim that children in border patrol custody are provided with mattresses. In fact, the vast majority of our children clients who have been in the holding cells have stated that there were no mattresses and that they had to try to sleep on the concrete floor.

As such, Oaks admits that border patrol has and continues to blatantly ignore the directive that all children be provided with mattresses.

Oaks also stated in paragraph 20 that "In general the temperature in a Border Patrol station is maintained at a comfortable temperature, although, in my experience, those who are not accustomed to air conditioning at times find it cooler than they are accustomed to."

In response to our freedom of information request, the Office of Inspector General ("OIG") of DHS, released the recorded temperatures at border patrol stations in the Rio Grand Valley from visits

in July of 2014. At one station, Fort Brown, the temperature in the holding rooms for juveniles was recorded at 50 and 56 degrees Fahrenheit on two separate occasions. 50 degrees in air conditioning cannot be comfortable.

Again, the vast majority of our clients report that the holding cells were so cold that they were constantly shivering. Some children report that the temperatures are so low that their lips turn blue. Oaks outright misrepresents the accounts of hundreds of our unaccompanied children clients and thousands more across the country: the temperatures in border patrol cells are far from comfortable: they are bone chilling.

Another common horror experienced by children in border patrol detention is that the cells are so packed with people that there is not even enough room to lay down and that there was only one toilet for 100 plus individuals.

Oaks claimed that "hold room capacity for any room requires sufficient space and the appropriate number of toilets for the occupants it is designed to accommodate."

Oaks evaded the obvious: border patrol holding cells are often so overcrowded that the depravity of the cells is exacerbated even more by preventing children from even being able to lay down on the concrete floor.

Lastly, the OIG checklist itself raises troubling questions as to whether the OIG is wholly beholden to the leadership at DHS and the White House.

Why does the checklist omit crucial requirements that border patrol must follow according to its own internal policy, such as mattresses and basic hygiene articles?

How does the OIG affirm that each border patrol is providing meals every six hours when the agent only visited at one specified hour in the day? Did the OIG agents spend 24 hours or longer at each inspection? Were border patrol stations given any advanced notice of the OIG's inspections?

Why did the OIG only begin to inspect border patrol stations after the surge of children was already declining? The highest volume months in 2014 for unaccompanied minors were April, May, and June, in which 7,709; 10,585; and 10,631 unaccompanied minors were apprehended. In July, the month of the OIG inspections, the number dropped precipitously to 5,515. When accountability was needed most, the OIG was a no show.

Whatever the final outcome of the Flores litigation is, all the parties involved need to implement significant reforms to the settlement to prevent DHS from its decades-long violations of children's fundamental Constitutional rights.

When the agency in charge of preventing DHS misconduct is beholden to the leaders that are responsible for the misconduct, punitive measures for violation of the settlement—including a right to an aggrieved juvenile to termination of removal proceedings with prejudice—must be part of any eventual agreement.

SALUTE HEROIC VICTORY OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

Voice of Revolution salutes the heroic Vietnamese and their undaunted spirit, which saw them through not only the U.S. war of aggression against them, but also that of the Japanese and French occupiers. Without flinching, despite the massive U.S. bombing, massacres and use of chemical weapons like napalm and Agent Orange, the Vietnamese refused to bow down, refused to accept U.S. enslavement. They sacrificed millions of lives to achieve their just cause of freedom from foreign occupation, freedom to pursue their own path of development. Today they stand proud as a united country that has greatly reduced poverty and is growing in a manner that favors the people. The Vietnamese people and government have succeeded in building a stable and prosperous economy, with ties to many countries of the world.

In the course of their battle against U.S. imperialism, the Vietnamese, like the Koreans, showed that a people, armed with their just cause and conviction in victory can defeat a military power like the U.S. Led by their Communist Party of Viet Nam, from the days of the Japanese occupation in the 1940s to today, it is peoples who organize and resist that emerge victorious.

The U.S., blinded by its arrogance and belief that military power wins wars, to this day refuses to accept its defeat. Indeed, the rulers continue to think, as seen in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine, that they can easily defeat the peoples. Reality is once again showing differently. It is in fighting for a just cause that the peoples remain unvanquished, a lesson the U.S. is incapable of learning. It does not have justice on its side, at home or abroad. It has only force and false justifications, like those used against the Vietnamese, and today against the Palestinians and Iraqis and all those fighting for their right to be.

In their struggle against U.S. imperialism the Vietnamese won the support and admiration of people in the U.S. and the world over. A strong anti-war movement was organized, with youth and students playing an important role. This movement grew despite numerous police attacks and efforts to divide and divert it. Universities, like Kent State and Jackson State and many others, were battlegrounds against U.S. aggression and in defense of the right of the Vietnamese and all peoples to liberation. The National Guard killed four students at Kent State and police killed two at Jackson State within days of each other, while injuring many more. Inspired by the Vietnamese and like them, with conviction in their cause, students on these campuses



Victory monument in Xuan Loc.

and across the country persisted in demanding an end to the war. Like today, as seen in Baltimore, Ferguson and elsewhere, the violence of the state is no match for people determined to pursue their just demands.

April 30 is a day celebrated in Viet Nam and worldwide, as it marks a decisive defeat for the U.S. and its claim to world dictator and a tremendous victory for all the peoples fighting for their national and social liberation. The Vietnamese showed the world that it is the peoples, organized and fighting for rights, with the conscious leadership they require, that are more powerful than any foreign army, no matter how brutal, no matter the superiority in weaponry, no matter the arrogance. It is the human factor that was then and is today decisive.

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VIET NAM MARKS 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF LIBERATION AND NATIONAL REUNIFICATION

Grand Celebrations Mark Historic Victory Over U.S. Imperialism and Ongoing Nation-Building

On April 30 in Ho Chi Minh City, a spectacular ceremony with a parade involving nearly 6,000 soldiers, militia, and civilians marked the 40th anniversary of the liberation of southern Viet Nam and national reunification.

The celebration of the victory over the U.S. aggressors was attended by General Secretary of the Communist Party of Viet Nam Nguyen Phu Trong, President Truong Tan Sang, Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung, Chairman of the National Assembly Nguyen Sinh Hung, former national leaders, and leaders of Ho Chi Minh City and many of the provinces.

Also in attendance were veterans who fought to liberate the city 40 years ago, Vietnamese from abroad and delegates from Cambodia, Cuba and Laos.

Personnel from 38 military and civilian units, including the Army, Air Force, Navy, commandos, police, mobile police, and others marched from the zoo, past the dais on Le Duan Street, then split to enter Ton Duc Thang Street and Nguyen Thi Minh Khai Street following a flag-hoisting ceremony, and music and dance performances.

The parade, watched by local residents and national and international leaders and covered by hundreds of local and international journalists, was conducted by Lieutenant General Nguyen Quoc Khanh, Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Viet Nam People's Army.

In his opening speech, Prime Minister Nguyen said: "The great victory in spring 1975 is a glorious chapter in our great history of national construction and defense.

"With that victory, we accomplished a historic mission of liberating the south and reunifying the country, bringing Viet Nam into a new era — an era of independence and reunification and building socialist Viet Nam into a strong nation with wealthy people and a democratic, just and civilized society."

The Prime Minister, on behalf of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, the State, people and Army, paid tribute to President Ho Chi Minh, hero of the nation's liberation, as well as to heroic martyrs and other comrades and compatriots who sacrificed and dedicated their whole lives to the struggle for independence, freedom and reunification.

In 30 years of reforms Viet Nam had achieved things of historical significance, he said. From being an underdeveloped nation, the country has become a middle-income, developing



country with an annual average growth rate of seven per cent, and its economic structure has been positively transformed, he said. The economy has grown consistently and GDP per capita is currently \$2,200, he noted.

The Prime Minister added that economic and social infrastructure has undergone strong development with many modern projects, creating a new image for the country, while social development, justice, cultural development and the building of new rural communities have also seen progress.

Social security is essentially ensured, social welfare and people's living standards have greatly improved and poverty has fallen sharply to less than six per cent, the Prime Minister said, adding that Viet Nam has fulfilled most of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals ahead of schedule.

Addressing the ceremony on behalf of younger generations, Nguyen Dao Phuong Thuy, a fourth-year student at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Law and a member of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union, said she was proud of the previous generations who made sacrifices for the country's reunion and pledged to unite with others to safeguard the achievements.

Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Thai, who fought in two triumphant battles — the Dien Bien Phu Campaign in 1954 and the Ho Chi Minh Campaign in 1975 — said that in the last four decades Viet Nam has changed significantly and achieved major development in all fields — social, economic and cultural — both rural and urban.

With global integration, the spiritual and material living conditions of the people have improved significantly, he said, adding that today the country has a strong voice in the international arena, and ties between Viet Nam and other countries are growing rapidly.

SALUTE HEROIC VICTORY OF VIETNAMESE PEOPLE

In the evening, a music performance featured more than 4,400 artists. This was followed by a 15-minute fireworks display set off at the Bitexco Financial Tower in Ho Chi Minh City's District 1 and seven other locations around the city.

The grand celebrations in Viet Nam and words and experiences of the people and those visiting from overseas affirm that from being a war-torn, isolated and sanctioned country, Viet Nam is now fully connected to the world in all spheres of human endeavor. It has established diplomatic and trade relations with most of the world. Forty years after its reunification, Viet Nam has entered a new phase of its nation-building, with the focus on improving its institutions and expanding democracy.

Tim Page, an American war correspondent during the Viet Nam War, back for the 40th anniversary, said he was happy to come to the country and see the peace and prosperity there. He told *Viet Nam News*: "When I first came back to Viet Nam 35 years ago, everybody was hungry. There were only two restaurants in Hanoi. Today, they are even making BMWs in Hanoi. It's good to see the progress. It's good to see your people happy and peaceful."

Michael Ebert, a German photojournalist who was impressed by the ceremony, said it was a very special event for Viet Nam, colorful and powerful and with many great moments. "I am also teaching the history of photojournalism. I think the Viet Nam War was a very important part of the history of photojournalism."

Eighty-year-old veteran Nguyen Tran told Xinhua, "We feel so happy each time the country commemorates Liberation Day and National Reunification on April 30. It is not because we are victors, but because it marks a time when there is no more war in our country and peace has returned to our people."



Nguyen said he joined the resistance war against the French colonialists and he witnessed its ending with the triumphant Dien Bien Phu Victory in May 1954. He also participated in the anti-U.S. resistance war and knew very well the aftermath of this horrible war and the value of peace. "When the Viet Nam War ended in 1975, only five out of my 10 classmates survived and returned home. It was really a huge loss," said the veteran, adding that young Vietnamese were the main force to participate in the war, and each of their deaths was a great loss to the country.

Ngo Van Tien, a native of southern Tay Ninh province and young soldier — a private first class who took part in the parade and marches — said that he was very happy to attend the celebration: "Being a soldier I am so proud to witness this significant event with my own eyes, and I feel more responsible for any task assigned to me."

Twenty-three-year-old Le Thanh Thuy, who just graduated from a college in Ho Chi Minh City, told Xinhua that she felt lucky to be born in the post-war period, but she is well aware of the sacrifice that the older generations of her compatriots made for today's national reunification. "The annual celebration on April 30 reminds us, the young generation of the country, of the nation's historical milestones and the forefathers' sacrifice for our current life in peace. We should strive to continue their tradition in defending and building the country," Le said.

(VNS, Xinhua, TML Weekly)



Variety of Activities Across Viet Nam Celebrate Achievements

A wide variety of activities took place across Viet Nam in the days leading up to the grand 40th anniversary celebrations of the liberation of Saigon, which occurred April 30, 1975, driving U.S. imperialism out and reunifying the country.

Leading up to the anniversary of reunification, events across the country honored the historical significance of the April 30 victory, commemorated individuals who sacrificed their lives for Viet Nam's liberation and highlighted the achievements of the country over the past four decades.

A national workshop was held in Ho Chi Minh City on April 3 on the significance of the spring victory in 1975. *Nhân Dân*, the central organ of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, reported that speeches at the workshop "affirmed that the struggle for liberation was not only a decisive military victory, but was also a victory of the people, leaving an inspirational legacy of human dignity which resulted from the long and enduring struggle and great sacrifices of the Vietnamese people all over the country under the sound leadership of the Communist Party of Viet Nam."

On April 14, a workshop in Hanoi highlighted the role of the general headquarters at the Hanoi Old Citadel in the success of the 1975 Spring Offensive. The general headquarters produced strategies and directions for the struggle against U.S. forces between 1965 and 1975. Within the headquarters, the Vietnamese people's leadership, consisting of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Viet Nam, the Central Military Commission, and the General High Command worked for over 7,000 days and held more than 1,000 meetings there to ensure the success of their fight for liberation and national reunification.

Ho Chi Minh City hosted a conference on April 14 to honor those who made significant contributions to the 1975 Spring Offensive. Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam expressed the gratitude of the Party, state and people to the heroes who sacrificed their youth and in some cases their lives for the national revolutionary cause. Dam affirmed the importance of the resistance war for national independence, peace, happiness, sovereignty and justice of the Vietnamese people.

Other victories of the Spring Offensive were celebrated in March and April, including the liberation of Quang Nam province on March 24 and of Lam Dong province April 3.

President Truong Tan Sang paid a visit on April 16 to revolutionary veterans who had been imprisoned on Phu Quoc Island during the war against the U.S. imperialists. The French colonialists originally constructed Phu Quoc jail in 1949-50 to house Vietnamese who resisted their control of the country, and during Viet Nam's struggle for national reunification held more than 40,000 prisoners at a time. President Sang was himself jailed in Phu Quoc from 1971 to 1973.



Cultural and artistic events were also held to mark the important anniversary.

An exhibition highlighting international support for the Vietnamese people's struggle for independence and national reunification from 1954 to 1975 opened April 24 at the Viet Nam National Museum of History in Hanoi. The exhibit features almost 130 photos and artifacts from close to 50 European, Asian and African countries, alongside nearly 30 displays of the work of international workers', anti-war, student, legal, youth, women's and democratic organizations, as well as organizations across the world that supported and contributed to Viet Nam's success in defeating the U.S. imperialists.

The fourth International Choir Competition was held in Quang Nam province on April 30 and May 1 in celebration of National Reunification Day and International Workers' Day. More than 1,500 performers from 15 countries will compete in the event.

Thirty-two sculpted busts of Vietnamese women who contributed to the resistance wars against the French and U.S. were on display at the Women's Cultural House in Ho Chi Minh City in celebration of the anniversary. The sculptor, Thi Kim Thanh, traveled around the country for ten years meeting women who fought for Vietnamese independence and reunification, including generals, soldiers, messengers, guerilla fighters and those who lost children in the war.

A nationally broadcast video conference celebrating the anniversary took place April 11 in Ho Chi Minh City featuring cultural and artistic performances, short documentaries and interviews with people and soldiers who took part in the campaign to liberate the city. The same day, the exhibition "Stories of Generals Imprisoned in Colonial Jails" opened in Ho Chi Minh City, showcasing nearly 150 photos and documents reflecting the revolutionary lives of generals such as Vo Nguyen Giap, Van Tien Dung, Hoang Van Thai, Nguyen Chi Tanh and Chu Muy Man.

POVERTY DRASTICALLY CUT

Viet Nam's Economic Development Since Liberation

Viet Nam's 40-year reconstruction since its reunification in 1975 has been hailed as a success story, with major international organizations and media taking note of the country's rapid socio-economic development, the Vietnamese press notes.

The United Nations noted that after reunification, due to the severe damages caused by many years of war, policy weaknesses and a difficult international environment, Viet Nam's economy experienced a long period of crisis during the 1970s and 1980s. To overcome these difficulties the Doi Moi (renovation) process was initiated in 1986, and stemming from the reforms, the country has seen rapid economic growth.

Since 1990, Viet Nam's GDP nearly tripled, based on an average annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 per cent — up until the global economic crisis in 2008. Growth suffered in 2008 (6.2 per cent) and 2009 (5.3 per cent) and remained sluggish in 2010 (6.3 per cent). Nevertheless, the percentage of the population living below the poverty line, estimated at 58 per cent in 1993 decreased to under 12 per cent in 2009 and under 10 percent now. Domestic resources for development have increased and international trade and foreign direct investment have dramatically expanded over the past two decades.

The UN said the country's two Socio-Economic Development Strategies (SEDS) for 1991-2000 and 2001-2010 have helped Viet Nam advance from a largely poor, agricultural-based economy to a wealthier, market-based and rapidly developing one, increasingly integrated into the regional and global community. The new SEDS from 2011-2020 aims to establish the foundation for Viet Nam to become a modern, industrialized country by 2020. The country's SEDS 2011-2020 give attention to structural reforms, environmental sustainability, social equity, and emerging issues of macro-economic stability.

According to the UN, these strategies and collective efforts have taken Viet Nam from being one of the poorest countries in the world only a few decades ago to a rapidly growing middle-income country. In general, Viet Nam's growth over the past two decades has been largely driven by a combination of steady economic reforms, integration into the world economy and a stable macroeconomic environment. Per capita income was below \$100 and has risen to more than \$2,000. To date, Viet Nam has achieved most and in some cases surpassed a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly the goals for poverty reduction, education and gender equality.

The Vietnamese government has recently paid more attention to improving the business environment, with two Resolutions issued in March 2014 and March 2015, setting out concrete actions to remove obstacles to doing business in Viet Nam, with a goal of achieving a business environment comparable to the average of the ASEAN+6 group (i.e., the



Association of Southeast Asian Nations — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam — plus their six major trading partners: China, India, Japan, south Korea, Australia and New Zealand).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) highlighted that Viet Nam has been among the fastest growing economies in the world since 1990, but the pace slowed down during 1998-2003 due to slow structural reforms and the instability in the global economy.

Bloomberg recently ran an article that said Viet Nam is once again poised for greater economic growth. "Money pouring into the Southeast Asian economy from the likes of manufacturers Samsung Electronics Co. and Intel Corp. is giving Viet Nam a second run at becoming Asia's next tiger economy," it said.

The article quoted PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP as saying that the country has the potential to become one of the world's fastest-growing economies over the period to 2050, adding that the Southeast Asian nation is gaining ground as a cheaper manufacturing alternative to neighboring China, and is also a destination for Japanese firms boosting investment in the region amid recurring Sino-Japan spats.

The article cited reports that in 2014 the country overtook other ASEAN members to become the biggest exporter to the U.S., while disbursed foreign investment in the country reached \$12.35 billion in 2014, up 7.4 per cent from 2013 and compared with \$2.4 billion in 2000.

It reported the Vietnamese government is working on some of the economy's biggest milestones, and quoted Dang Quyet Tien, Deputy General Director of the Finance ministry's Corporate Finance Department as saying in an interview March 13 that Viet Nam will attempt to sell a record number of shares in state-owned companies this year.

(CPA/VNA)

40 YEARS AFTER END OF VIET NAM WAR

Let's Not Forget Who Helped Stop the War and the Vietnamese Who Still Suffer

Merle Ratner and Azadeh Shahshahani, Alternet



Forty years ago, on April 30, 1975, the U.S. war against Viet Nam finally ended with a victory for the national liberation forces. After decades of struggle against French and U.S. intervention, Viet Nam was finally independent and at peace.

Millions of Americans took part in anti-war activities during the 1960s and early '70s. Together with the civil rights movements, this activism changed the body politic in this country. It made it harder for U.S. administrations to wage full-on land wars until the Persian Gulf wars. Today as the U.S. wages simultaneous land and drone wars in several countries, the lessons of the Viet Nam War are under attack as never before.

The U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) has a website commemorating the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the Viet Nam War. Dedicated to whitewashing history, the website's goals are, "to highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Viet Nam War." One wonders whether these advances include the development and use of napalm, Agent Orange and other weapons that killed millions of Vietnamese people along with U.S. veterans. Veterans For Peace, and its many members who fought in Viet Nam, is fighting against this revisionist history through a campaign called Viet Nam Full Disclosure.

The U.S. government clearly has an interest in obliterating the lessons of the war as it slogs on with brutal interventions in the Middle East and attempts at intervention in Latin America.

American drones, white phosphorus, depleted uranium, and other weapons of destruction are built upon the "advances" in technology lauded by the DoD's 50th anniversary website.

U.S. Myths About the War

The DoD and others are working hard to obscure the history of the Viet Nam War because they seek to blunt criticism of unpopular U.S. interventions and to give the Pentagon a freer hand in conducting future wars. They seek to spend more of our tax dollars on military hardware and weaponry for use in their wars. What are some of the myths that the right is trying to spread about the Viet Nam War?

A major general in the U.S. Air Force who served in Viet Nam told an anti-war veteran recently that the U.S. could have won if it had committed enough resources to achieving victory. During the war, General Curtis LeMay suggested that the U.S. could bomb Viet Nam "back into the stone ages." While the U.S. did not use the atomic bomb due to international pressure, it did everything short of this, deploying more air and ground munitions than were used in all of World War II.

Despite overwhelming U.S. military superiority, the Viet Nameese liberation forces won because they had the support of the people. Use of more U.S. firepower and troops might have prolonged the war and the killing, but it would not have changed the outcome. A people who are organized and dedicated

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to winning their independence cannot be truly defeated — a lesson the U.S. government has yet to learn in conducting its international affairs.

Another shibboleth of the right is that the U.S. conducted an “honorable” war in Viet Nam with only sporadic human rights violations such as the massacre at My Lai. The Winter Soldier Investigation, conducted by Viet Nam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) in 1971, painfully documented the massive scale of the massacres, torture of civilians and other war crimes perpetrated against the Vietnamese people.



War Crimes Against Vietnamese

Testifying before Congress on April 22, 1971, a young John Kerry, then representing VVAW, spoke of, “war crimes committed in Southeast Asia, not isolated incidents but crimes committed on a day-to-day basis with the full awareness of officers at all levels of command.” He went on to describe the testimony of his fellow veterans, who, “personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and turned up the power, cut off limbs, blew up bodies, randomly shot at civilians, razed villages in a fashion reminiscent of Genghis Khan, shot cattle and dogs for fun, poisoned food stocks, and generally ravaged the countryside of South Viet Nam in addition to the normal ravage of war, and the normal and very particular ravaging which is done by the applied bombing power of this country.”

Nick Turse’s well-documented book describing U.S. atrocities in Viet Nam, *Kill Anything That Moves: The Real American War in Viet Nam* is a more recent recounting of the war crimes Kerry testified about. The book has unsurprisingly been attacked by conservative pundits.

Connected to the whitewashing of U.S. war crimes is a denial of how U.S. racism fueled the war in Viet Nam. General William Westmoreland, the four-star general who was in command of all U.S. military operations from 1964 to 1968, famously said, “The Oriental doesn’t put the same high price on life as does a Westerner. Life is plentiful. Life is cheap in the Orient.”

Vietnamese people were referred to by the racist expletive “g-ks” and outright murder of civilians was justified by the “mere g-k rule” which held that the death of any Vietnamese person, including women and children, was justified. Today, bigotry directed at Arabs and Muslims in countries the U.S. has

attacked and occupied and at home eerily echoes such racism as does the police murders of black men in cities across the U.S.

Perhaps the most tired of all the myths the right is trying to perpetuate is that anti-war activists’ actions dishonor U.S. soldiers. This goes hand in hand with the myth that U.S. soldiers returning from Viet Nam were routinely spat upon by anti-war activists. Soldiers involved in illegal and immoral wars benefit greatly from anti-war movements (which they often lead upon their return). Ending U.S. wars of intervention

saves human lives abroad as well as the lives of our soldiers.

The soldiers who come back from U.S. wars are not dishonored by anti-war movements, but by the callous disregard for their welfare shown by the U.S. government that refuses to provide adequate treatment, rehabilitation and jobs. The impact of the violence of unjust wars echoes long after the wars are over and beyond the ranks of the soldiers and their families. Seymour Hersh, the reporter who documented the My Lai massacre, told Amy Goodman of Democracy Now that when he spoke to a mother whose son had been involved in the massacre, she told him, “I gave them a good boy, and they sent me back a murderer.”

Reparations Now

The final lesson that is being undermined by the revisionists is their contention that the war is long over and is ancient history. In fact, wars are not over until those harmed by them receive justice and compensation. The Viet Nam War killed four million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans. But the war continues in those still suffering from its legacy of unexploded ordnance and Agent Orange, a dioxin-laden chemical weapon.

Agent Orange causes cancers and other diseases as well as horrific birth defects in the children and grandchildren of those exposed. The U.S. government has done precious little to provide redress to the Vietnamese victims or to Vietnamese-Americans who were exposed. While U.S. veterans fought for and won some compensation from the Veterans Administration, the children of U.S. veterans who suffer with disabilities due to birth defects related to exposure to Agent Orange receive no aid at all. To address this, Representative Barbara Lee is introducing the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015 to provide medical, rehabilitative and human services to several generations of Vietnamese and Americans suffering with

diseases and disabilities. The Viet Nam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign is working to build public support for U.S. aid to the victims to heal the wounds of war.

Progressives also espouse myths about the war. One that some among us perpetuate is the portrayal of the anti-war movement as a mainly white student movement and ignorance of the leading role of black and other movements of color. While students did play an important role, the role of returning anti-war veterans, the Vietnamese-American anti-war movement, and movements of color was crucial.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech in 1967, *Beyond Viet Nam*, helped turned the tide of public opinion in the U.S. against the war. Even before Dr. King, the Southern Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) came out against the war in 1965 as did Malcolm X. Muhammad Ali lost his heavyweight title and was convicted for refusing to fight in Viet Nam. While there was media coverage of the National Guard shooting of unarmed white anti-war protesters at Kent State, scant attention was paid to the killings of black anti-war students at Jackson State. Vietnamese-Americans, particularly the Union of Vietnamese in the U.S., played a crucial role in analyzing the events in Viet Nam even as they were often sidelined in some rallies for fear they would be identified with the "enemy."

The national veteran's anti-war movement, led by Viet Nam Veterans Against the War, brought formidable credibility and a working-class base to the anti-war movement. Seeing and giving voice to those who truly made up the anti-war movement is crucial if we are to build a strong and successful diverse anti-war movement today.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once called the United States, "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world." He noted that "a nation that continues year after year to spend more money on military defense than on programs of social uplift is approaching spiritual death."

As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of peace and independence in Viet Nam, it is important that we bring the unadulterated and true lessons of the war forward as we build the movement to end wars of aggression and to invest our resources in projects of social uplift.

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Agent Orange: Terrible Legacy of the Viet Nam War

By Marjorie Cohn, Truthout

Mai Giang Vu was exposed to Agent Orange while serving in the Army of South Viet Nam from 1968 to 1974. He carried barrels of chemicals to spray in the jungle. His sons were born in 1974 and 1975. They were unable to walk or function normally. Their limbs gradually "curled up" and they could only crawl. By age 18, they were bedridden. One died at age 23; the other at age 25.

Nga Tran is a French Vietnamese woman who worked in Viet Nam as a war correspondent. She was there when the U.S. military began spraying chemical defoliants. A big cloud of the agent enveloped her. Shortly after her daughter was born, the child's skin began shedding. She could not bear to have physical contact with anyone. The child never grew. She remained 6.6 pounds — her birth weight — until her death at the age of 17 months. Tran's second daughter suffers from alpha thalassemia, a genetic blood disorder rarely seen in Asia. Tran saw a woman who gave birth to a "ball" with no human form. Many children are born without brains; others make inhuman sounds, Tran said. There are victims who have never stood up. They creep and barely lift their heads.

Rosemarie Hohn Mizo is the widow of George Mizo, who fought for the US Army in Viet Nam in 1967. After he refused to serve a third tour, Mizo was court-martialed, spent two and a half years in prison and received a dishonorable discharge. Before his death from Agent Orange-related illnesses, Mizo helped found the Friendship Village where Vietnamese victims

live in a supportive environment.

Dr. Jeanne Stellman, who wrote the seminal Agent Orange article in *Nature*, said, "This is the largest unstudied [unnatural] environmental disaster in the world."

Dr. Jean Grassman, from Brooklyn College at the City University of New York, stated that dioxin (the active ingredient in Agent Orange) is a potent cellular disregulator that alters several pathways and disrupts many bodily systems. She said children are very sensitive to dioxin, and the intrauterine or postnatal exposure to dioxin may result in altered immune, neurobehavioral and hormonal functioning. Women pass their exposure to their children both in utero and through the excretion of dioxin in breast milk.

These were five of the 27 witnesses who testified at the International Peoples' Tribunal of Conscience in Support of the Vietnamese Victims of Agent Orange, which was held in Paris in 2009. I served as one of seven judges from three continents. We heard two days of testimony from Vietnamese and U.S. victims of Agent Orange, witnesses and scientists, including the five witnesses cited above. We saw firsthand horribly disfigured individuals who had been exposed to Agent Orange during the Viet Nam War.

The panel of judges found the following:

- From 1961 to 1971, the US military sprayed chemical products that contained large quantities of dioxin in order to defoliate the trees for military objectives.

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- The chemical products caused:
- Direct damage to those exposed to dioxin, including cancers, skin disorders, liver damage, pulmonary and heart diseases, defects to reproductive capacity, and nervous disorders;
- Indirect damage to the children of those exposed to dioxin, including severe physical deformities, mental and physical disabilities, diseases, and shortened life spans;
- Damage to the land and forests, water supply, and communities of Viet Nam, some of which may be permanent. This includes the extinction of animals that once inhabited the forests and jungles of Viet Nam, disrupting communities that depended on them; and
- Erosion and decertification that will change the environment, contributing to the warming of the planet and dislocation of crop and animal life. The damage to the environment of Viet Nam is “ecocide.”

After examining the evidence, the panel determined that the U.S. government and the chemical manufacturers knew that dioxin, one of the most dangerous chemicals known to humans, was present in one of the components of Agent Orange. Yet they continued to use it and in fact suppressed the 1965 Bionetics study that showed dioxin caused many birth defects in experimental animals. It was not until the results of that study were leaked that the use of Agent Orange was stopped.

The panel also concluded that the U.S. war in Viet Nam was an illegal war of aggression (crime against peace) against a country seeking national liberation, in violation of the United Nations Charter. It further decided that the use of dioxin was a war crime because it qualified as a poisoned weapon in violation of the Hague Convention and customary international law. Finally, the panel found that the use of dioxin was a crime against humanity, as it constituted an inhuman act perpetrated against a civilian population in connection with a crime against peace and war crimes.



and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The United States has ratified all of them.

Moreover, in the 1973 Paris Peace Accords, the Nixon administration promised to contribute \$3 billion for compensation and postwar reconstruction of Viet Nam. That promise remains unfulfilled.

Although U.S. veterans of the Viet Nam War have received some compensation for Agent Orange-related illnesses, the Vietnamese people have never seen a dime. The U.S. government has funded the cleanup of dioxin at the Danang airport, only one of the 28 “hot spots” still contaminated by dioxin.

Rep. Barbara Lee (D-California) has introduced H.R. 2114, the Victims of Agent Orange Relief Act of 2015. If enacted, the bill would lead to the cleanup of dioxin and arsenic contamination still present in Viet Nam. It would also provide assistance to the public health system in Viet Nam directed at the 3 million Vietnamese affected by Agent Orange. It would extend assistance to the affected children of male U.S. veterans who suffer the same set of birth defects covered for the children of female veterans. It would lead to research on the extent of Agent Orange-related diseases in the Vietnamese-American community, and provide them with assistance. Finally, it would lead to laboratory and epidemiological research on the effects of Agent Orange.

Following the 2009 Paris tribunal, I participated in a delegation to Viet Nam to present our findings to President Nguyen Minh Triet of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. I told the president that it struck me that even as U.S. bombs were dropping on the Vietnamese people, they distinguished between the U.S. government and the U.S. people. The president responded, “We fought the forces of aggression but we always reserved our love for the people of America ... because we knew they always supported us.”



Several international treaties provide the right to an effective remedy for violations of human rights law. They include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination