

RAY O' LIGHT NEWSLETTER

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From the Senate's CIA Torture Report to Grand Jury Injustice to Police Killings

“FERGUSON SHOWS THE WAY FORWARD”

Questions & Answers with Ray Light

From late November through late December 2014, a large number of significant political developments have occurred in the USA. As we get ready for 2015, Ray Light, the General Secretary of the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA (ROL,USA), explains the interconnection of these events and provides some clear and principled direction for the working class and oppressed peoples within the belly of the beast and internationally.

Question #1: Will the release of the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee's Report on the program of "enhanced interrogation techniques" (torture) used by the CIA during the Bush-Cheney Regime post 9/11 help to make it less likely that such

horrific methods will be used against workers and oppressed peoples fighting for social justice now and in the future?

Answer #1: Quite the contrary. The release of the Senate Committee Report makes it *public knowledge* that the U.S. government, in the course of its unending War of Terror under the Republican Bush-Cheney Regime, committed acts of torture in violation of the UN Convention Against Torture, the Geneva Conventions and the International Bill of Rights. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and other global bourgeois politicians have emphasized that the report *should lead to prosecutions* because the prohibition against torture is absolute. Ben Emmerson, the United Nations Special

(contd. on p. 2)

Hasta la Victoria, Siempre! (A Salute to the Cuban 5)

by CINDY SHEEHAN

When I was barely two years old, an earth-shattering event occurred that would certainly alter the course of history, but also become intimately linked with my own story.

To make a very long story short, a band of revolutionaries in Cuba overthrew the brutal dictatorship of US puppet Fulgencio Batista and installed a Communist system led by Fidel Castro and other revolutionary heroes. Cuba became linked to the Soviet Union and I am pretty sure that I am not telling you (the reader) many things that you don't already know (probably better than I).

However, how does the Cuban Revolution of 1959 connect to my history, my life, and my story?

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Do you know who said it??

[To the family of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri]

"Further complicating this tragedy is the fact that the killer of your son is alive, known and currently free ... Your circle will necessarily close tighter because, the trust you once, if ever, had in 'the system' and its agents is forever changed. ... But with those changes come new challenges and opportunities. You will experience a swell of support from all corners of the world. ... The galvanizing of our communities must continue beyond the tragedies. While we fight injustice, we will hold ourselves to an appropriate level of intelligent advocacy. If they refuse to hear us, we will make them feel us. ... We will no longer be ignored. We will bond, continue our fight for justice and make them remember our children in an appropriate light."

Hint: This is not Al Sharpton or some other veteran political activist.

—Still stumped? See page 7 for the mystery answer.

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Rapporteur on Human Rights and Counterterrorism, has strongly demanded that U.S. President Obama take relevant steps to punish those who have committed torture against so-called “enemies of the state.” Democratic President Obama, however, “has Bush-Cheney’s back.” Obama’s Justice Department refuses to undertake a criminal investigation.*

Today, the fact that the Democrats and Republicans continue to function as one team, the “Republicrats,” representing the general interests of the U.S. finance capitalist ruling class, serves to make prosecution of the Bush gang of torturers impossible in the USA. Ironically, almost the only political establishment voice welcoming the report is Bush-Cheney’s fellow Republican, Senator McCain, former Vietnam POW and Obama’s rival for the Presidency in his first term! No wonder former VP Dick Cheney is unrepentant, dismisses the report as crap and claims he would launch the torture program again “in a minute” if he had the authority. In his memoirs George W. Bush too is proud to take credit for the program.

As Jose Maria Sison, the Chairperson of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle (ILPS) has pointed out, “It is clear that the U.S. imperialists allow and encourage the commission of crimes so long as these are meant to preserve and expand their power and wealth. ... Impunity is the privilege of U.S. imperialism for the worst of crimes, including abductions, torture, murder and wars of aggression.” (ILPS Statement, 12-13-14)

Sadly, after sixty years of U.S. hegemony in the world capitalist camp, this criminal indifference to the use of torture is shared by many of the Empire’s citizens, still desperately clinging to hope for the Empire’s future.

*The Torture Report makes clear that former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, the California Democrat, knew about the torture program from early on. In 2008, when the courageous Cindy Sheehan, an anti-imperialist war heroine, offered her congressional candidacy in opposition to the war criminal Pelosi, most of the U.S. so-called “left,” found excuses to avoid taking on Pelosi and the Democrats, objectively supporting the CIA torture program against the international working class and the oppressed peoples.

Silence has been the overwhelming response to the release of the Report within the U.S. multinational state. After six years of the Obama Regime, led by a man of color who had been elected president largely on the basis of his opposition as an Illinois state legislator to the U.S. war in Iraq, the masses of U.S. society have become far more cynical and desensitized on the question of torture than they were during the Bush Regime when the U.S. military torturers at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq were exposed. And this disturbing silence reflects the deeply held chauvinistic view of many of the U.S. Empire’s citizens: “the lives of non-U.S. people don’t matter.”*

Professor Lisa Hajjar, in an editorial in the current issue of *The Nation* (January 5, 2015), after pointing out that no

“Kardeşimsin (You Are My Brother), Michael Brown”



Proletarian Internationalist Solidarity with the People of Ferguson, Missouri from Comrades in Istanbul, Turkey

one in authority in the U.S. government has been held accountable for torture, asserts further (echoing the sentiments of comrade Sison) that, “impunity has been virtually guaranteed” by “golden shield’ legal memos written by government lawyers for the CIA; ex post facto immunity for war crimes that Congress inserted in the 2006 Military Commissions Act; classification and secrecy that still shrouds the torture program, as is apparent in the Senate report’s redactions; and the ‘look forward, not backward’ position that President Obama has maintained through every wave of public revelations

since 2009.” Professor Hajjar concludes: “*An American majority, it seems, has come to accept the legacy of torture.*” (ROL emphasis)

It was this disturbing lack of response among the U.S. population that apparently moved the petty bourgeois left-liberal humorist, Calvin Trillin, to pen these words in the same issue of *The Nation*:

“Enhanced Interrogation Techniques”

*The backing of regimes where torture’s used
Was once an issue causing quite a fuss.
But now, to paraphrase what Pogo said,
We’ve met the torturers, and they are us.*

*Alleging that the Obama Regime that has been in charge of the CIA for the last six years no longer tortures people, the British imperialist mouthpiece, *The Economist* (12/13/14) caustically concludes: “Instead of capturing suspected terrorists, Mr. Obama prefers to have them blown to pieces by drone-fired missiles.”

(Ferguson Way Forward continued)

With the release of the Senate Report on CIA Torture, and the U.S. public's knowledge of the lack of any punishment for the war criminals responsible, the mass failure to press for such punishment means that the continued use of torture in defense of the U.S. Empire is a foregone conclusion.

Question #2: How does the major controversy surrounding the release of the Hollywood film, "The Interview," relate to this issue?

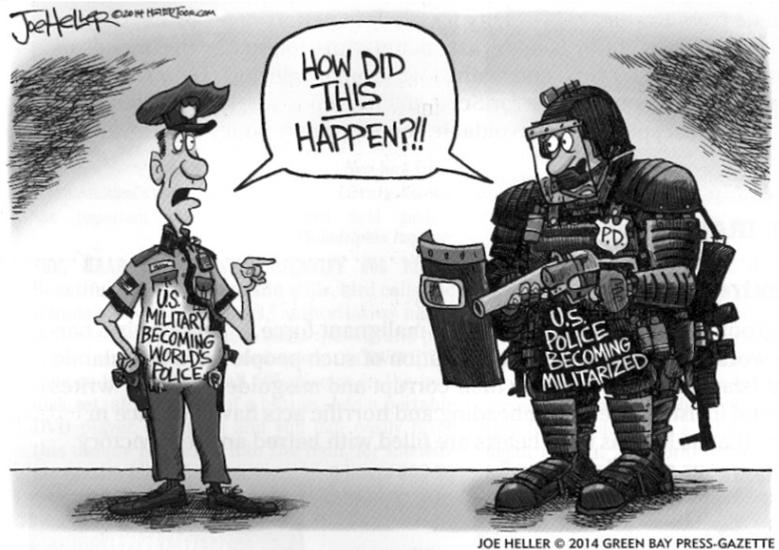
Answer #2: "The Interview," starring James Franco and Seth Rogen, two big-time young movie stars, is supposed to be a Hollywood *comedy*. The film's plot revolves around the use of an interview by two U.S. "entertainment journalists" of Kim Jong-un, the current head of the North Korean government, as an opportunity to assassinate him! The past two U.S. administrations, Bush-Cheney and Obama-Biden, have featured Bush and Obama respectively giving the order to the leaders of two sovereign countries that Saddam Hussein leave Iraq or be executed and Moamar Quadafi leave Libya or be executed. Both Saddam and Quadafi were overthrown and killed on the heels of major U.S. military war and intervention. And both the peoples of Iraq and Libya have suffered tremendously as these countries have been rendered miserable and ungovernable by U.S.-led imperialism. (Obama is currently attempting to do something similar in relation to Bashar Assad and Syria.)

At a time when the people of the USA have not held the criminal Bush and Obama regimes responsible for their war crimes, clearly Sony Corporation saw an opportunity to get the U.S. population into theater seats, redbox rentals, etc. to laugh at the (fictional) murder of yet another actual living leader of a sovereign country! In this historical context, as Sony Corporation was about to release the Hollywood film, there were some cyber threats and other threats from the North Korean government, which understandably views the film's release as an act of war. Sony initially backed off the film release. Then the unashamed arch-imperialist Obama intervened and ratcheted up the belligerent rhetoric against North Korea, while insisting that Sony release the film. The degeneracy of U.S. society reflected in this entire film enterprise is extreme as befits the mother country of the U.S. Empire. Again, the message is: "the lives of non-U.S. people don't matter."

Question #3: Is there a connection between the U.S. imperialist message "the lives of non-U.S. people don't matter" and the U.S. police view across the USA that "Black lives don't matter?"

Answer #3: Clearly, there is such a connection. The U.S. monopoly capitalist and imperialist ruling class seeks maximum profit from the exploitation and oppression of the international working class and the oppressed

peoples *both at home and abroad*. From the beginning of the Bush-led Imperialist War of Terror on the peoples of the world in 2001, starting with the unprovoked attack and invasion of Afghanistan, ROL, USA has pointed out that the War Abroad ("the lives of non-U.S. people don't matter") would also be a War at Home. The decline of the U.S. Empire required that the U.S. ruling class try to shift the entire burden onto the masses. Thus an austerity program had to be implemented against the workers and oppressed within the U.S. multinational state. The rapid loss of democratic rights, the emergence of an all-pervasive surveillance state, the militarization of the U.S. police (accelerated in the Obama period by the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) that has supplied military grade arms as well as materiel to local police forces across the USA) and the designation of U.S.



military battalions to repress U.S. citizens and occupy our "homeland," have brought the war home. It has made sense for the U.S. imperialist ruling class to bring its austerity program first to the most marginalized sector of the U.S. population, the Afro-American people. ("Black lives don't matter.")

Of course, after well over a decade of an unending U.S. war of terror, many police recruits are former military personnel who have been in combat. Serving as the violent enforcers of U.S. rule in other countries requires that these soldiers view themselves as being above the laws of the land and superior to the people whose country they terrorize and occupy. In addition, in the USA, historically, the U.S. military has occupied the Black Belt South homeland of the Afro-American people and the largest military bases are still there. And, as two recent best-selling books "Slavery by Another Name" and "The New Jim Crow" have exposed: from the post Reconstruction period after the Civil War all the way until today, Black men in particular have been *criminalized* by local police and sheriff's departments, especially in the South, *so as to be able to be enslaved legally* and sold off to labor in prisons, on plantations, in coal mines, etc. Furthermore, lynching has been a major

(Ferguson Way Forward continued)

weapon of terror used to steal Black people's land and keep Black people in servitude. Police currently kill an unarmed Black person every 28 hours. The excessively brutal and callous treatment of the most well known recent victims, their bodies *and* their families – Trayvon Martin in Florida, Michael Brown in Missouri, 12 year old Tamir Rice in Cleveland, and Eric Garner in New York City (NYC) – all had lynching characteristics. “Not only did we kill you but we have no remorse. Black lives don't matter.” In all these cases, there was no police effort to find out why the killer cops (In Florida, George Zimmerman was a community watch cop.) had resorted to lethal action until there was a progressive mass mobilization demanding it. It took more than two million people signing a petition just to get the Sanford, Florida police to bring Zimmerman in for questioning. The recent grand jury decisions in Missouri and NYC were outrageously flawed and corrupt. In Ferguson, the St. Louis County Prosecutor, Robert McCulloch, has admitted he knowingly had witnesses appear before the grand jury bearing *false* witness, a blatant violation of his sworn duty. In NYC, Eric Garner's death by asphyxiation due to an illegal police chokehold was recorded on camera along with his repeated pleading that, “I can't breathe.”

The whole several centuries-long history of slavery and Jim Crow against the Afro-American people in the United States and the more than one hundred year history of U.S. imperialist oppression of nations and peoples around the world with its super-exploitation of their workers — from Cuba and Puerto Rico to the Philippines and China — have continually and jointly fed White Supremacy and the notion that the lives of non-U.S. and especially non-white human beings don't matter. During the upsurge of the Afro-American liberation movement in the 1960's, the civil rights and Black Power movement increasingly developed solidarity with the oppressed peoples around the world fighting against U.S. imperialism. Certainly, today, too, the Afro-American people have a direct stake in breaking with their current allegiance to the U.S. Empire.

Question #4: Will the random murder of two NYPD cops on December 20th help the police to become more sensitive to the Black lives they have been snuffing out? Will dialogue between the police

and the communities they occupy bring about substantial relief from systemic police violence?

Answer #4: The answer to this question is crystal clear. *No way!* On Saturday, December 20th two NYC policemen were randomly shot and killed by a Baltimore man, at least in part to avenge the police murders of Michael Brown and Eric Garner. Tactically, such random and/or adventurist violence almost never strengthens the popular forces; rather it serves to strengthen the forces of reaction. Not surprisingly, since then, police forces around the country have organized and demonstrated just how much consideration they believe *they* are entitled to. This makes it clear that the police always understood the basic human consideration that their Black victims were seeking in vain from them. *Clearly, to the police, “Blue Lives Matter” and nothing else does.*

President Obama and NYC Mayor de Blasio had cleverly paid lip service to the concerns of the tens of thousands of anti-police brutality protesters around the country while

demanding that these protesters respect the rule of law that had shown no respect for them. Obama and de Blasio were, nevertheless, lumped in with the protesters as “anti-police” by the police and accused by former NYC mayor Rudy Giuliani, the head of the NYPD police sergeant's union and the head of the NY Patrolmen's Benevolent Association, of having the two cops' blood on their hands! Thousands of cops, attending slain cop Ramos' funeral

Sunday, December 28th, turned their back on Mayor de Blasio, their commander-in-chief. Evidently, the cops want to make it illegal for citizens to protest brutal police treatment.

Under massive police pressure, some of the anti-police brutality protests have been less well attended; some of the demands have been toned down. At the same time, massive mobilization of police throughout the country continues to take place. What the police are demanding for the two NYPD “casualties” is far beyond what the Afro-American people have been demanding from the police for their victims. And both Obama and de Blasio, *in basic agreement with the cops*, called for an end to the series of protests that have roiled the city and the country since grand juries had refused to indict police



(Ferguson Way Forward continued)

officers involved in the deaths of Eric Garner in NYC and Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri.

This, however, is a zero-sum game. If Black lives matter, than blue (police) lives matter less! If blue lives matter as much as the police are demanding that they do, then Black lives don't matter. The current push by the political representatives of the Wall Street ruling class to establish police/community "dialogues" in every city and town in the USA is just another attempt to disarm the Afro-American people in the face of the militarized police forces. This is why bourgeois pacifist and religious NGOers linked to the Democratic Party and the U.S. ruling class are promoting the same "dialogue." While the decision whether to participate in such "dialogues" is a tactical one, the danger of cooptation is great and such "why can't we all just get along" activities cannot provide strategic relief for the oppressed Afro-American people.

The U.S. police and military, both at home and around the world, serve the interests of the Wall Street ruling class, the one percent. These "special bodies of armed men" cannot afford to show compassion to the oppressed and exploited majority of us. And the oppressed Afro-American people as well as the exploited working class cannot afford to show compassion to the U.S. police and military, if we ever expect to stop their systematic violence and oppression of us. Comrade Lenin, on the eve of leading the world historic Russian Revolution in 1917, observed: "A standing army and police [special bodies of armed men] are the chief instruments of state power. ... and every revolution by destroying the state apparatus, clearly demonstrates to us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve *it*, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organization of this kind capable of serving not the exploiters but the exploited." (Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, 1917, pp. 10, 11)

Question #5: Why is Ferguson, Missouri at the epicenter of the developing mass democratic and anti-imperialist movement rising up today in the USA?

Answer #5: There are a number of factors. Recent history had produced two significant progressive mass upsurges. Certainly, the massive countrywide mobilization to obtain "Justice for Trayvon Martin" and his family over an extended period provided an invaluable experience on the Afro-American national question that gave the Ferguson protesters a basis for courage and hope. And the emergence of Occupy Wall Street and the Occupy movements around the country also provided class consciousness among millions of the 99%, including in Ferguson, that the rich, the top one percent, have no interest in helping the rest of us, only in enriching themselves at our expense.

Moreover, the main form of social control in the USA by the Wall Street ruling class in the decades since the

civil rights movement's triumph over legal segregation in the U.S. South, has been through identity politics.* In Ferguson, more than two-thirds of the population is Afro-American. More than ninety percent of the police are white. It was obvious to all that the Ferguson police have been an occupying army. It was made more obvious by the fact that the police there have worked hand in hand with the "criminal justice" system. In Ferguson, a town of 21 thousand citizens, the city court issued more than 32 thousand arrest warrants for non-violent offenses in 2012, raking in court fees and fines from those too poor to mount a legal defense. (See "Why Ferguson Burns," *The Nation*, 12-15/22-14) According to a *Washington Post* expose, some municipalities in St. Louis County make forty percent or more of their annual budget from the collection of fines for "offenses" such as playing loud music and wearing saggy pants. Finally, *The Nation* editorial points to the ultimate product of this over-policing: "a historically unprecedented system of mass incarceration in which nearly half of all black men by age 23 will have been arrested." All of the above speaks to the fierce national oppression suffered by the Black masses in Ferguson and St. Louis County.

But, as Kareem Abdul-Jabbar observed earlier, "class warfare," the struggle between labor and capital, between the haves and have-nots, is also a major ingredient in the conditions there. As we pointed out a few months ago, "The protests [in Ferguson] were fueled and sustained by the economic conditions there, exacerbated by the 2008 economic crisis that has not ended. Ferguson's unemployment rate rose from less than 5% in 2000 to over 13% in 2012-2013 and its poverty rate doubled in the same period." (See "Ferguson, Missouri: The U.S. Empire's Global War of Terror Comes Home," *Ray O'Light Newsletter #86*, September-October 2014) What all this means is the working class people of Ferguson and St. Louis County, in the words of Karl Marx, have "nothing to lose but their chains, they have a world to win." (*The Communist Manifesto*, 1848)

The national and the class questions that provided Ferguson and St. Louis County such sharp contradictions had already produced some experienced and knowledgeable community leaders. Given the objective situation in Ferguson described above, it is not surprising that among the first concerned community folks to arrive at the murder scene on August 9th was 27 year old King D. Seals. Along with about ten other community folks and the family, King Seals was there within the hour and would see the body of murdered teenager Michael Brown lying on the street baking another three hours in the hot August sun. The next day members of the community passed around a plastic bag for donations to Brown's family, affirming the worth of Michael Brown as a human

*Look at the many uses that the Wall Street imperialists have made of Barack Obama, the Commander in Chief on the African continent as well as in Afro-America and elsewhere.

(Ferguson Way Forward continued)

being. (“Black lives matter!”) By the end of the day, the bag was filled with money. According to Seals, “before it became a riot, before it became a protest, it was just the community coming together.” On the second night there *was* a protest; the cop who killed Michael Brown had still not been identified or arraigned, even as protesters called for his arrest. The cold disrespect shown by the government officials in leaving the dead body lying in the street for more than four hours compounded by the police not providing the family and community with information gave the tragedy the character of a *lynching*. (Recall Trayvon Martin’s outrageous treatment by the Sanford, Florida police!) No wonder the St. Louis County police met the demonstrators with armored vehicles, M-4 rifles and riot gear.

With all their military-grade weaponry, the militarized police of Ferguson and St. Louis County, and the Missouri National Guard that was called out soon afterward, were unable to compel the people to disperse. “Shock and awe” didn’t work on them. They didn’t get back in “their place.” Instead, ***the masses of Ferguson protesters FOUGHT THE POWERS THAT BE. And this has made all the difference.***

This constant and courageous fight against the powers that be took place because King Seals and the community folks that were coming together had resources of their own. Seals, for example, had prior experience in protesting a police murder. A year earlier, he had protested when Cary Ball, Jr. was fatally shot twenty-one times by police officers in St. Louis City. (He was still in touch with Ball’s mother.) According to Seals, the Ball protests showed that when you do things within the confines that the power structure tells you to, “you don’t get any results.” The internal police investigation had later declared the shooting of Ball justified.

When the overwhelming force of the militarized police and Missouri National Guard did not disperse the aroused populace of Ferguson, Obama sent in Attorney General Holder (whose own horrible record of supporting police shootings of poor Black youth we exposed previously). Holder’s pledge: “Long after the events of August 9 have receded from the headlines, the Justice Department will continue to stand with this community. As we move forward together, I ask for the public’s cooperation and patience.” Not long after Obama’s and Holder’s honeyed words proved unable to disperse the Ferguson masses, Holder announced he is resigning as Attorney General of the United States. So much for Holder’s “commitment” to the Ferguson protesters.

King Seals and others had learned and embraced as their own, something that comrade Lenin taught, but many who claim to be revolutionary Marxists dismiss. Said Lenin: “Without the struggle against opportunism, the struggle against imperialism is a sham and a humbug.” King Seals had learned from the Ball protests

to be distrustful of opportunist community leaders like Ferguson alderman Antonio French and the St. Louis black clergy who urged a voter registration drive in the wake of ongoing Ferguson protests or urged protesters to obey police curfews, i.e. whatever it would take to divert, disrupt and defuse the continuing mass mobilization against the armed forces of the U.S. state apparatus. Efforts of nationally known opportunist figures such as Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson to demobilize the growing movement were also unsuccessful. Instead, a number of ad hoc local groups were formed, including the Ferguson Freedom fighters, the Lost Voices, the Millennial Activists United, and Hands Up United.

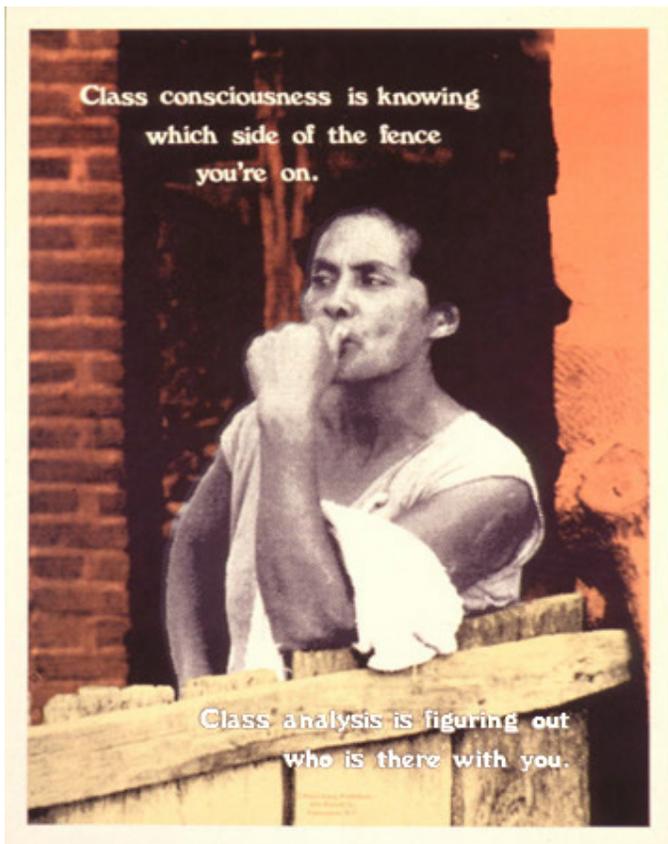
Because, from August 9th on, they continued to struggle against various forms of opportunism and kept their eye on the prize, the people of Ferguson and St. Louis County have continued to fight the powers that be. They have been responsible for turning a moment into a movement. Two years ago, there were a few powerful spasms of countrywide mobilization for Justice for Trayvon Martin. And a number of well known sports and entertainment figures, including Lebron James, took a progressive political stand for the first time in more than a generation. Similarly, mass protests emerged throughout the country in August in solidarity with the people of Ferguson. And again famous athletes and cultural figures have expressed solidarity. But this time, because the Michael Brown/Ferguson mobilization has been a continuous struggle in the streets, the mobilizations around the country have also been transformed into *parts of an ongoing movement with Ferguson as its nerve center*. The important U.S. imperialist mouthpiece, *Time Magazine*, was correct in selecting “the Ferguson protesters” as one of the most important new forces in the world in the year 2014.

The importance of the Ferguson-inspired movement is underscored by the brutal police murder of twelve year old Tamir Rice in Cleveland for possessing a toy gun in late November, the day before the St. Louis County Grand Jury failed to charge the murderous cop, Darren Wilson, for killing the unarmed Michael Brown, and by the decision of a Grand Jury in New York City two weeks later not to charge the white police officer who had choked Eric Garner, the unarmed father of six, who then died of asphyxiation. As *Time Magazine* observed, “Ferguson was the spark that started a fire. Demonstrators couldn’t win the indictment of Darren Wilson, ... Yet they built a movement. ... Events that might once have slipped by unnoticed coalesced ... In this angry epic, thousands found a role. They clogged freeways in Miami and Chicago, carried coffins across the Brooklyn Bridge, clashed with cops in Berkeley, Calif., flooded streets in London and toted signs around Tokyo.”

The two key ingredients in building the Ferguson-inspired *movement* out of the tragic Michael Brown *moment* have been: 1.) They have been fighting the

(Ferguson Way Forward continued)

powers that be. 2.) They have fought against the opportunists of all stripes who, in the service of United States imperialism, in the service of the U.S. Empire, try to disarm the people, try to get the people to stop fighting the powers that be. Whatever the staying power or longevity of this new movement, it has already made a significant contribution to reviving a culture of resistance to U.S. imperialism among wide segments of the working poor and the oppressed within the U.S. multinational state, within the belly of the beast. This culture of resistance will be invaluable in the long run as the working class and the Afro-American people and other oppressed nationalities here are increasingly forced to deal with our ever worsening standard of living, with the austerity that the bankers have in store for us.



Question #6: Any final thoughts?

Answer #6: Yes. Just a few.

First, the opportunists leading much of the current country-wide spontaneous movement, including the Sharpton-led NAN, the NAACP and others connected to Obama and the Democratic Party, try to separate the fact that “Black Lives Matter” from the Iraqi, Syrian, Libyan and other Lives that Matter just as much that are being snuffed out by the same criminal empire and its violent state apparatus operating *outside* the U.S. borders as well as *inside*. One important contribution we can make is to link up the U.S. Empire’s War of Terror at Home and Abroad and to point up the need for international solidarity of oppressed peoples everywhere against the

counter revolutionary violence of the U.S. military/police apparatus. Another is to link up the question of the national oppression of the Afro-American people with the economic oppression of the working class as a whole within the USA and the need for “class warfare,” as the Obama-led austerity program carries out class warfare against us on behalf of Wall Street and U.S. imperialism. I hope this interview has helped to establish the validity of both these points.

Second, at the Protest March in Washington, D.C. on December 13th organized by Al Sharpton and NAN, Ferguson protesters rushed the podium, took the microphone, and made a brief speech criticizing the collaborationist message promoted by the Sharpton leadership. What an important sign of the dynamism of the new rising movement that internal criticism is already present and coming from the Ferguson epicenter.

Finally, for those who associate themselves with the Revolutionary Organization of Labor, USA, the ongoing, powerful mass and largely spontaneous Ferguson-led movement to “fight the powers that be” is a real opportunity to practice what we preach. We need to be actively involved in this struggle for justice and empowerment of the popular masses and especially of the youth. This is the path to building revolutionary organization and the Revolution itself.

Still stumped?! See answer below to front page mystery quotation.

Answer: **Sybina Fulton** is the mother of Trayvon Martin. Her clear and confident words of sympathy and guidance to Michael Brown’s family are a reflection of the fact that Trayvon’s murder in Florida, like that of Michael Brown in Missouri, had the character of a lynching. Furthermore, it took a mass movement in each case to compel the police powers and other parts of the state apparatus to provide even a minimal level of respect for these murdered teenagers and their families.

Finally, the mass struggle for justice for Trayvon Martin mobilized several million Afro-American and other youth, compelling the Sanford, Florida authorities to arrest and ultimately place on trial Trayvon’s murderer, George Zimmerman. This successful mobilization and the mass protest of the outrageous court decision that freed Zimmerman provided a collective experience to the people of Ferguson, Missouri and the rest of us around the country, providing the wisdom to create and maintain an ongoing struggle “against the powers that be” for justice in the aftermath of the brutal murder of Michael Brown by killer cop Wilson. It is this strong thread that is today producing the second (after the Occupy movement) significant progressive mass movement in the USA after decades of retreat and defeat.

—the Editor

McCrorry Offers a Glass of Tears for North Carolina Citizens

by DRIKE JONES and PEARL HAINES

In several counties in North Carolina, tears may be the only source of uncontaminated water left for citizens to drink, since Governor Pat McCrorry signed the Energy Modernization Act (EMA) June 4, 2014. The EMA lifted a moratorium on issuing permits to companies to frack in this state. Fracking (the informal term for hydraulic fracturing) has been used to extract oil and gas resources in the U.S. and other countries around the world. Gas corporations have already bought drilling leases in several counties in this state, including Lee, Chatham, and Moore. In a statement, the governor said that the law will spur economic development and “job creation.” However, these projected benefits are overshadowed by the damage done to the environment, our citizenry, and our future. McCrorry claimed that “the expansion of our energy sector will not come at a cost to our precious environment.” But his decision not to veto EMA shows that he does not have the best interests of the people and environment of this state in mind. Evidence of this disregard was his connection with Duke Energy who was responsible for the coal ash spill in the Dan River last year. McCrorry held stock in Duke holdings a few months before the incident, which he failed to mention to the state ethics commission. Since he identifies with corporations and the 1%, he was also too slow to pressure Duke to correct the faulty coal ash pits and repair the damage to the environment.

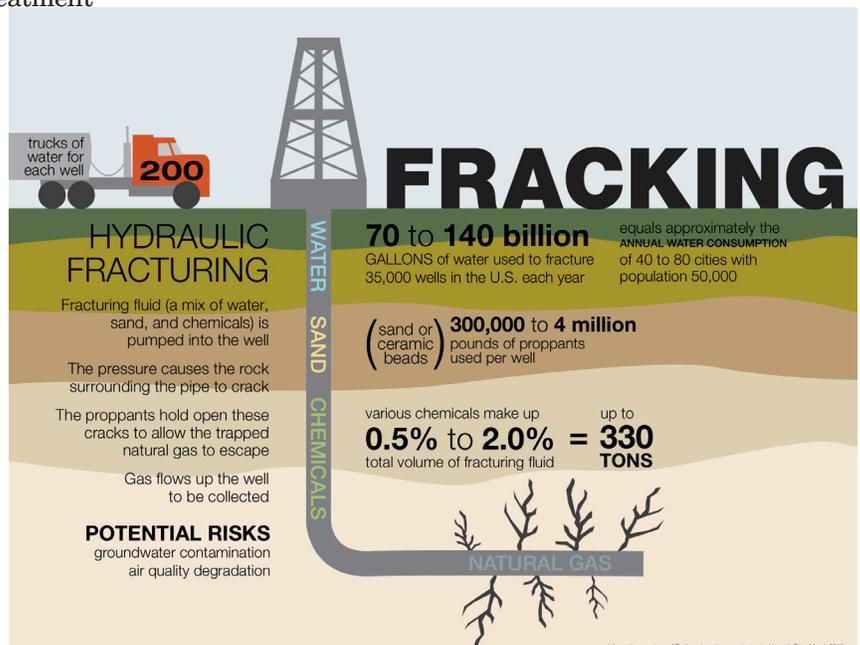
Two of our concerns with fracking are the huge amount and sources of water used in the process, and the disposal of the contaminated waste. The 4.4 million gallons of water needed every two to five days will be taken from North Carolina’s rivers and groundwater. One of the more frightening parts of fracking is the distribution of contaminated water. 5-90% of this water remains underground or in tanker trucks, disposed of at treatment plants, reinjected underground at disposal wells, held in containment ponds (remember Duke Energy’s failure with containment ponds), or recycled and used in other wells. Most of these methods lead to increased probabilities of groundwater contamination.

A study conducted by scientists at Duke University found that levels of flammable methane gas in drinking water wells increased to risky levels when those wells were close to natural gas wells. The group tested 68 groundwater wells in the Marcellus and Utica shale drilling areas in Pennsylvania and New York. 60 of the wells were tested for dissolved gas. While most of the wells contained methane, samples from the ones closest to the drilling wells had, on average, 17 times the level of methane more than the ones farther away. High

levels of methane in groundwater have been linked to explosions of houses near fracking sites.

Methane-polluted water is only part of the problem. One portion of the EMA makes it illegal to let the public know about chemicals used in fracking, such as benzene, lead, and radium. These chemicals can also contaminate drinking water in wells. The consequences of exposure to these agents can include anemia, irregular menstrual cycles, leukemia, damage to the central nervous system, harm to children’s neurological development, and a host of other ailments. McCrorry knows the possible dangers of fracking. The reason why he’s gambling with the environment of North Carolina and the health of its citizens is for his own personal gain and for the private capitalist profits of his political benefactors, the corporate energy giants.

The title for this article came from a little rhyme that one of the authors made up as a child: “What cha going to do when the well runs dry, sit right down and drink my tears as I cry.” We hope the readers of this article will do a lot more than sit and cry. We the people need to fight this capitalist example of “profits over people” by supporting the FRAC Act (the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act), which would make it illegal for energy companies to hide the chemicals used in fracking and get rid of its exemption from the Safe Drinking Act. We need to inform others about the dangers of fracking so we can build a mass movement that will possess the strength through unity to vote into office politicians that will protect our land and water, homes and citizens, and to ensure that these politicians will not be swayed by the corporations but remain on the side of the people.



(Salute to the Cuban 5 continued)

I had one memento that Casey had given me soon after he joined the Army. It was a gold charm with hearts around the edge, a small diamond in the middle and the inscription reads: "To Mom, With Love." After he died, especially, it became my most prized possession. Once when I was in Washington DC in 2005 for a major march, I thought I had lost it, but it was retrieved to my relief. The necklace has great sentimental value to me.

So, how does the story of the necklace fit with Cuba? Aw, you shall soon see!

After Casey was killed, I went on a very dedicated campaign to end the wars and see the Bush regime imprisoned for their war crimes and crimes against humanity. I am unfortunately still on that campaign, but in 2005, I camped out near George Bush's fake ranch in Crawford, Texas demanding accountability and for him to answer my simple question: "What noble cause?" That effort brought me a lot of international attention and I was invited to Venezuela in early 2006 to be a guest at the World Social Forum in Caracas. Besides meeting with then president Hugo Chávez and many others I also met Cuban officials and the families of the Cuban 5.

Until that very day, I had never heard one word about the case of the Cuban 5. I had heard my entire life, though, about how evil Cuba and Fidel Castro were. After all, I was born at the height of the Cold War. Didn't Cuba want to help the "evil" Soviet Union nuke the USA into oblivion? Wasn't Cuba the closest and direst threat to my way of life and me? Turns out, not so much.

The wives, sisters, brothers, and mothers, of the Cuban 5 laid out their story. How their loved ones: **Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González**, were being held in US prisons on false charges and convictions. I sympathized with the families, but I was truly so busy at the Social Forum (interviews, meetings, speeches, protests, Alo Presidente, etc.) that I really didn't have time to absorb what they were telling me. It was an extremely detailed case that I will try and briefly summarize here:

Basically, since the Revolution, Cuba has been the victim of terrible terrorist acts killing about 4000 Cubans and others over the years. The Bay of Pigs and Operation Mongoose are two noted US/CIA attacks on the Revolution, but perhaps the worst act of terrorism was the downing of the Cubana Airlines Flight 455 killing all 73 passengers and crew aboard.

That act of terror was planned and executed by two Cuban CIA-trained operatives: Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles. The ironic thing about these two terrorists is that Bosch was protected by the US until his death and Posada Carriles is still being protected. This fact is more evidence that the US Empire is the biggest provider of terrorism around the world.

So, to combat these heinous acts of terror, Cuba sent five intelligence agents to the Cuban community in Miami to infiltrate some of the worst counter-revolutionary groups that plan and execute these acts of terror, for example: Alpha 66 and Brothers to the Rescue. The 5 were battling terrorism in their homeland and sent valuable information to Cuba to prevent more harm. Also ironically, the Cuban government felt it should share some intelligence with the US government, and instead of steps being taken against the Miami-based terrorists, the Cuban 5 were arrested in September of 1998 and were subjected to some of the worst miscarriages of justice to date. It was even revealed recently that the USG paid news outlets to lie about the case and prejudice an already prejudiced community even further. To make matters worse, a change of venue was denied.

All 5 were convicted and before the remaining members of the 5 were released on the joyous day of December 17, 2014, Rene and Fernando had served their sentences and returned back to Cuba.

The morning of the 17th, I did what I usually do when I am home: I made coffee and opened my computer to check my email. Bleary-eyed, I must have passed the email that read: "The Cuban 5 are Free" about 10 times before my eyes finally focused on it. I opened it and started crying tears of joy! Reading what I just wrote also makes me tear up. This was the best Xmas present I have ever received since the birth of my youngest daughter on the 22nd of December: 29 years ago!

Of course, the entire propaganda that day was that a true spy, Alan Gross, a US "contractor" convicted in Cuba was returned home by Cuba for "humanitarian" reasons. It took literally hours before the US mainstream, sorry-excuse for a press, even mentioned anything about the Cuban 5.

(I am getting to my necklace).

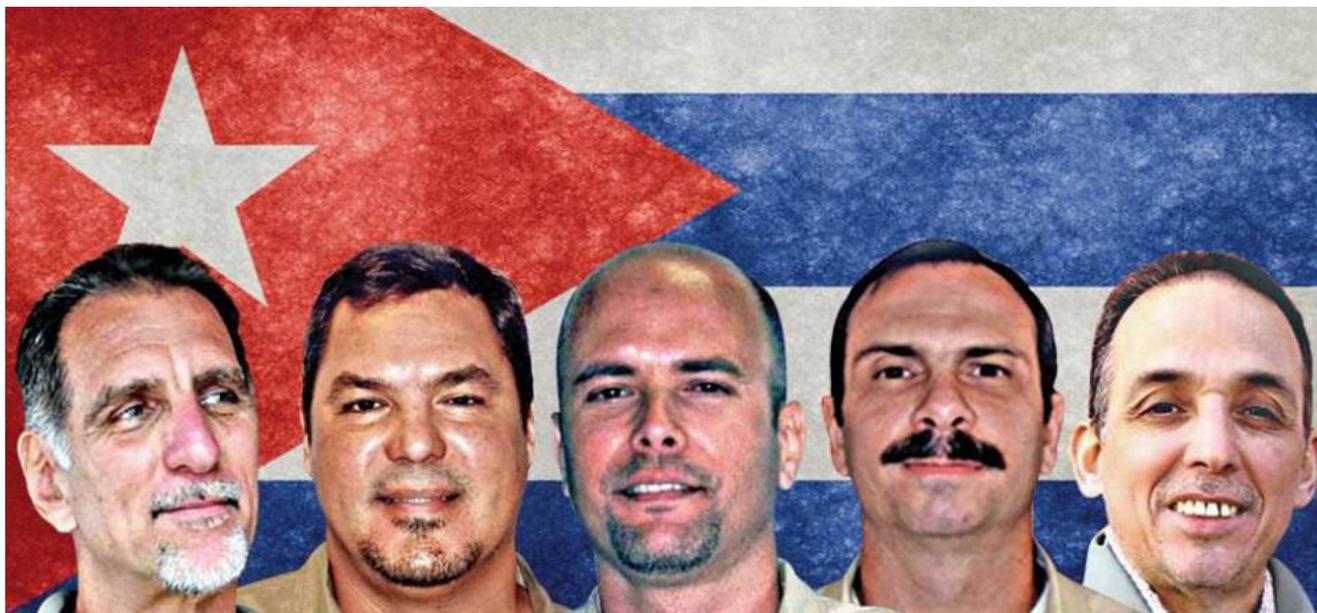
Once when I was actually in Cuba in 2011, I think, Obama made a statement that the US couldn't even negotiate for a normalization of relations with Cuba until Cuba "changed its society." Recently, he also said that Cuba was a "hermetically sealed society." The US

(Salute to the Cuban 5 continued)

has only “hermetically sealed” its citizens from Cuba; Cuba actually has full diplomatic relations with every other country on earth besides Israel.

I was there in Cuba. I have been to Cuba many times by now, and I am convinced that one of the reasons for the travel restrictions is that the Empire doesn’t want us to see what Cuba is really like after we have been lied to about it for decades.

I have always felt safe in Cuba. This past year the US itself is going up in flames over police violence and crackdowns on our freedom of speech. The US incarcerates more people per capita than any other nation in the world. Cuba has one of the best healthcare systems in the world and is near the top for literacy rate. Cuba sent doctors to West Africa during the Ebola crisis and the US sent troops. Typical, huh?



“The Cuban Five”

I want US society to be transformed into a peaceful place where healthcare, housing, food, and education are human rights, not privileges for the wealthy.

Now, here is the story of my necklace and its relevance to the cause of the Cuban 5.

When I had heard that Obama said Cuban society needed to be transformed, I was in Holguin attending the annual colloquium for the Cuban 5 with many other international activists.

On the last day there was a march and rally where I spoke. As I spoke, I saw Rene’s mother and Antonio’s mother standing in the crowd looking up at me. I grabbed my necklace as I often did—for comfort and inspiration. This time, I slipped it from my neck and called the mothers up to the podium with me.

I presented them with my most prized-possession telling them that it was a loan to them until the 5 Heroes were back on Cuban soil. It was my pledge to those mothers of my commitment to see their sons return home safely. I was sobbing and, Cubans being the warm-hearted people that they are, there was not a dry eye in the place.

Now, I can go back to my “home away from home” Cuba and get my necklace because their sons are home! When I let it go, I never dreamed I would be receiving it back so soon.

I just want to thank all the people all over the world who have worked so hard on this cause over the years and send them my sincere congratulations and love. I would also like to thank the Cuban 5 and the families of the 5 for their profound dignity and unwavering dedication to truth, justice and the Revolution and

for also welcoming me as a member of their extended family.

Most of all, I would like to thank the people of Cuba for maintaining their strength and dignity in the face of a most brutal embargo and an evil regime up in the states.

I hope travel restrictions will be lifted so my fellow USAians can go to the beautiful island and meet the wonderful people and see what they have been able to do to survive and thrive.

Viva la revolución!

Viva Cuba!

Viva el Cinco!

WHY PRESIDENT OBAMA FIRED HIS SECRETARY OF DEFENSE!

For those of you still clinging to the GRAND ILLUSION that the Democratic Party is a political vehicle for peace and/or anti-imperialist war sentiments —

What do **you** make of Democratic President Obama forcing his **Republican** Secretary of Defense, Chuck Hagel, to resign **because Hagel has been an obstacle to the Democratic President's Renewed Policy of Aggressive Expansionist U.S. imperialist Warfare all over the Middle East?!**

—*The Editor*



NOTE FROM CINDY SHEEHAN:

Ray O' Light Newsletter Now On Line!

Dear Comrades,

The Soapbox People's Network (www.cindysheehanssoapbox.com) has been diligently publishing everything that the ROL Newsletter sends us. We are receiving over 100,000 hits per month and the information is certainly getting out there.

The ROL page is at:

<http://www.cindysheehanssoapbox.com/ray-olight.html>

I can always be reached at my email:

CindySheehansSoapbox@gmail.com

In struggle,
Cindy Sheehan

* * * * *

*"The great appear great to us
Only because we are on our knees:
Let us rise."
— Camille Desmoulins*

Revolutionary Organization of Labor (ROL), USA is a revolutionary working class organization that fights for working class power and the elimination of all human exploitation. ***Ray O' Light Newsletter*** is the regular publication of ROL, USA. We believe, with comrade Lenin, that the working class "... needs the truth and there is nothing so harmful to its cause as plausible, respectable petty bourgeois lies." In the spirit of Karl Marx who taught that "our theory is not a dogma but a guide to action," we welcome your comments.

Comradely,
Ray Light, Editor

Boxholder, 607 Boylston St., Lower Level Box 464, Boston, MA 02116 USA