

Chileans defy curfew, state of emergency and continue their resistance

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 22, 2019

On Monday, tens of thousands of people took part in a massive national strike against the repression of protesters by the government and economic policies that have brought hardship to millions.



Do not give in to the oppressor. Photo: Frente Fotográfico

On Monday October 21, thousands of Chileans mobilized in different parts of the country as part of a national strike. Social movements, trade unions, students, teachers, women and human rights' organizations called for the strike to reject the neoliberal policies of the right-wing government of Sebastian Piñera and the heavy police repression of social protests during the weekend.

Chileans are also demanding that the government immediately withdraw the state of emergency declared in different regions of the country. This measure has allowed the government to deploy the military in several cities across the country to fulfill the role of the police. Social movements and organizations have pointed out that the military has not patrolled the streets of Chile since the last civic-military dictatorship under Augusto Pinochet. For the past several nights, curfew has been in place in several cities in Chile, including Santiago, Coquimbo, La Serena, Valparaíso, Rancagua and Concepción, restricting the mobility and liberties of residents.

The levels of repression against protesters in the past couple of days have been unprecedented. Reports by human rights organizations on the ground indicate that over 10 protesters have been killed, over 1,500 people detained and hundreds injured. There have also been reports of plainclothes police officers detaining protesters and dragging them into non-official vehicles. Several protesters have been tortured and even sexually abused.



People resist! Photo: Frente Fotográfico

On Sunday night, Sebastian Piñera gave a press conference where he responded to the current social, political and economic crisis occurring in the country, as well as criticism about the heavy-handed response to protesters. He declared “We are at war with a powerful, relentless enemy that does not respect anything, or anyone, and that is willing to use violence and crime without limits.”

Despite the climate of heavy repression, militarization and criminalization, Monday’s national strike saw massive participation from broad sectors of Chilean society. In addition to youth and students, several important trade unions pledged their support to and participated in the strike.

The Trade Union of Dock Workers of Valparaíso released a communique on Saturday, pledging their support to the national strike and denouncing the government’s economic policies and repression. The communique said, “If it is true

that today, the central motive of the social protest is the hike in the value of the metro fare in the capital, we must also underscore that this accumulated rage today is expressed by the rejection of the endless social, economic, and labor injustices that affect the working people. The union said that it considered the deeper problem to be the economic model of development which forces the working class to survive on miserable salaries and pensions, struggle with illnesses and poor social security cover and deal with exorbitant transport costs.

The union declared, "We want the political class to understand that all of us are Chile and that the solution to these injustices requires the transformation of the entire model."

The Trade Union Number 1 of Workers of the Escondida Mine also joined the strike. Their statement said, "We cannot continue working and allow these powerful companies to function as if nothing happened, knowing that they are colluding with this government that is attacking and oppressing us. We cannot not stop our activities, because history will condemn us as cowards and accomplices of these attacks on the working class..We cannot not stop our work because we will not be capable of looking at our families in the eye, especially our children that today are in the struggle, without feeling that we did not do anything to support them and defend them."

They called on their fellow mine workers "to stop work...to stop all of the mining in Chile along with other productive sectors until the military forces and oppressors in the streets retreat and until the government authorities are willing to sit down for dialogue on equal terms with the people who demand and fight for equality, justice, opportunities, work and a dignified life for our people."

The recent wave of protests in Chile was sparked by the government 's decision to increase the cost of public transportation services in the capital. On October 11, high school students began refusing to buy metro tickets en masse and jumped the

turnstiles to protest the hike.

The protests transformed into a demonstration against the neoliberal model imposed in the country since Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. It expanded and soon included different sectors of the Chilean society. [On October 18](#), a massive demonstration was carried out in the capital city, Santiago, and was violently repressed by the national police force, the Carabineros. Following the mobilization, Piñera declared a state of emergency in Santiago in order to suppress the popular indignation.

The social movements of ALBA also expressed its support and solidarity with the people of Chile in their fight against neoliberalism and denounced the state's repression of social protests. "We denounce the authoritarianism of Piñera's government and demand an end to the State of Emergency. No more repression and arbitrary detentions. We embrace and join in solidarity from all over Our America in support of the general strike this Monday, October 21," said ALBA in [an official statement](#).

In Buenos Aires, Argentina, Chilean activists, as well as Argentine social movements and organizations, mobilized outside the Chilean embassy to denounce the brutal repression of the government and stand in solidarity with the dignified struggle of the people. Their mobilization was met with heavy repression by the Argentine police and several people were arrested.

Chile is the country with the highest numbers of free trade agreements in the world. Chileans are tired of the austerity and anti-people policies introduced by Pinochet and intensified by Piñera. They are determined to fight against the capitalist government, inspired by the recent struggle carried out by [the people of Ecuador](#) and their subsequent victory.

Source: [Peoples Dispatch](#)



New Yorkers say: 'Lift the U.S. blockade of Cuba, now!'

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 22, 2019

Oct. 17 — People chanted “¡Cuba sí, bloqueo no!” as activists stood on the steps of New York City’s City Hall today to denounce the U.S. blockade of Cuba. A news conference was held to announce that a resolution against the blockade would soon be introduced in the City Council.

[Cuba's foreign ministry reports](#) that the blockade has cost the Caribbean country \$134.5 billion. Every year since 1992, the United Nations General Assembly has voted to denounce the blockade by overwhelming majorities.

Councilperson Inez Barron read the resolution, which pointed out that the blockade deprives both countries of cultural exchanges and scientific research. It keeps people in the United States from access to Cuban-developed vaccines for meningitis, hepatitis and advanced lung cancer, as well as monoclonal antibodies for kidney transplants.

Barron is one of the three sponsors of this resolution, along with council members Ydanis Rodriguez and Jimmy Van Bramer. Rodriguez called the blockade “a crime that we have to fight against.”

Longtime Cuba solidarity activist Rosemari Mealy announced that she had just come from Cuba. “I saw what this blockade is doing to the people of Cuba,” she said. “At the same time, I saw the resilience of the people.”

Mealy talked about the meeting between Malcolm X and Fidel Castro at Harlem’s Hotel Theresa at midnight on Sept. 19, 1960. Malcolm told the Cuban leader, “You have done everything in your country that we want here.” Mealy, who was a member of the Black Panther Party, wrote “Fidel & Malcolm X: Memories of a Meeting.”

Joan Gibbs, a leader of the New York-New Jersey Cuba Sí coalition that organized the news conference, said that both Detroit and Hartford, Conn., have passed resolutions against the blockade. In Chicago and Washington, D.C., activists are working to pass similar resolutions.

The 12 U.S. cities already on record are Richmond, Berkeley, Oakland and Sacramento in California; Seattle; Helena, Mont.; Minneapolis; St. Paul; Detroit; Pittsburgh; Brookline, Mass.; and Hartford, Conn. APALA, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, passed a significant union resolution in August. For information on how to pass a resolution in your city, contact the National Network on Cuba at ICanGoToCuba [at] nnoc.info

Watch the press conference on [YouTube](#)

<https://youtu.be/Q8f9bS2SQcs>



Housing is a right — Fight, fight, fight!

written by Struggle - La Lucha

October 22, 2019

New York — Hundreds of people filled the auditorium of Manhattan's Washington Irving campus near Union Square on Oct. 16 to fight for housing for all.

After years of skyrocketing rents, the New York state Legislature finally passed several bills in June to strengthen rent control. These bills eliminated some of the loopholes that landlords use to jack up rents and evict tenants. Rent control was made permanent — no longer would tenants have to travel to the state capital of Albany to beg politicians to re-enact it.

None of this would have happened without years of struggle. Now, the fight is to get decent housing for all. New York City landlords and developers [keep nearly a quarter-million apartments empty](#) instead of making the rent affordable.

Housing activists are demanding a "New York Homes Guarantee." This includes

universal rent control; fully funded and resident-controlled public housing; 600,000 units of affordable “social” housing; ending homelessness; and eliminating toxins like lead and mold from all housing.

Solving the housing crisis will take at least \$10 billion more annually in New York state’s housing budget. Taxing the billionaires and developers can pay for it.

‘That ain’t right!’

Speakers at the rally spoke in Spanish, Chinese and English. They spoke in front of a banner attacking New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s housing crisis. Andy’s daddy—former Gov. Mario Cuomo—stole \$8 billion that was supposed to be used for affordable housing and built prisons with it instead.

Seventy-three-year-old Nathylin Flowers Adesegun spoke of being homeless after the rent on her Brooklyn apartment was tripled by a greedy landlord. When she confronted New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio last year at his gym about the housing crisis, DeBlasio replied: “I’m in the middle of doing my workout. Sorry, you can’t do this now.”

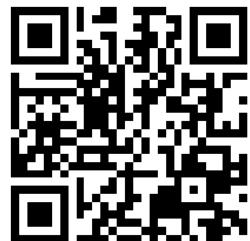
People in the audience yelled out, “That ain’t right!” Other speakers told their own bitter stories.

A moment of silence was held for the four homeless men who were beaten to death recently in Manhattan’s Chinatown.

A speaker from the Queensbridge Houses spoke in Chinese about how ovens would have to be turned on in order to heat apartments in the winter. An estimated \$31 billion is needed to repair public housing for 500,000 people in the Big Apple.

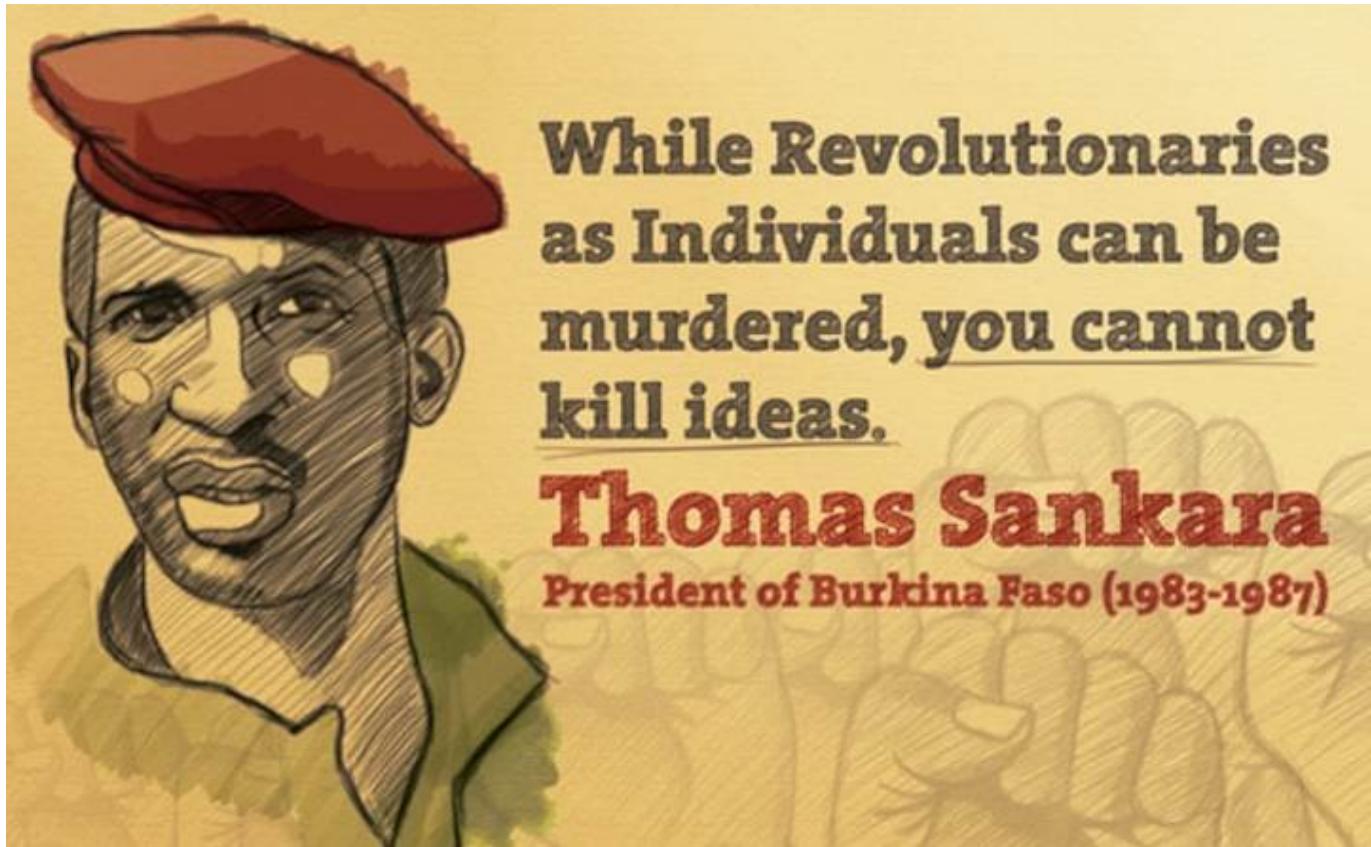
The main organizer of the impressive rally was the Metropolitan Council on Housing, which has been fighting for tenants for 60 years. Many other community-based

organizations helped to build it as well and taped their colorful banners to the auditorium's balcony. They included Churches United for Fair Housing; CAAAV, originally called the Coalition Against Anti-Asian Violence; the Court Square Committee; Make the Road While Walking; the Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition; and Woodside on the Move. Members of the Democratic Socialists of America came and worked to make the event a success.



Baltimore Oct. 27: Special Film Screening of “Thomas Sankara: The Upright Man”

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019



Sunday, October 27, 2019 at 5:00 PM - 6:30 PM EDT

2011 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21218

A documentary film about Thomas Sankara, former president of Burkina Faso. We are showing this inspiring film to commemorate the assassination of Thomas Sankara, who was known as "the African Che."

FREE & OPEN TO ALL! DOORS OPEN AT 5 PM

From [Struggle - La Lucha for Socialism:](#)

Thomas Sankara "Africa's Che Guevara"

On Oct. 15, 1987, Thomas Sankara, Burkina Faso's West African revolutionary

leader, was assassinated. Sankara, a Marxist and revolutionary, has been nicknamed “Africa’s Che Guevara.”

It is interesting to note that at a time when youth have focused the world’s attention on the dire issue of climate crisis, and workers and Indigenous people in Ecuador are rising up against the International Monetary Fund’s austerity demands — that Sankara spearheaded major programs in both areas.

He promoted and led a massive people’s campaign called the “One village, one grove” program to combat desertification of the Sahel (the area between the Sahara Desert and Sudanian Savanna). Over 10 million trees were planted. That legacy lives on.

Under Sankara’s leadership, Burkina Faso nationalized land and mineral wealth and refused aid from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, which incurred the wrath of both U.S. and French imperialism.

This began in 1983, when a group of revolutionaries under the leadership of 33-year-old Thomas Sankara led a popular revolt that took power.

One of the first acts of Sankara and the new revolution was to rename the colonial Upper Volta to Burkina Faso, which means “The Land of the Upright People” in Mossi. It was an act in defiance of French imperialism, which had coined the name “Upper Volta.” Burkina Faso was meant to instill people’s pride.

In just four years, amazing progress was made. Education and health care were made a priority. A national literacy campaign was developed and 2.5 million children were vaccinated against yellow fever, meningitis and measles. Women were appointed to government positions and their status was elevated so that they could go to school and work outside the home. Forced marriages, polygamy and female genital mutilation were all outlawed.

The assassination of Thomas Sankara and the overturn of this amazing revolution is reminiscent of the Paris Commune. While brief, the revolution's legacy deserves to be studied and remembered by generations to come. The spirit of revolution continues today in the fight of the workers and Indigenous people in Ecuador and those in the streets everywhere fighting capitalist crisis and imperialist domination and war.

Thomas Sankara, presente!

On [Facebook](#)



Chicago teachers strike continues

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019

Chicago, Oct. 21 — The joint strike by the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) and SEIU Local 73 continued October 18 and through the weekend as the office of Mayor Lori Lightfoot continued to refuse to meet the strikers' demands.

The teachers and school workers are on strike for "the schools our students

deserve": smaller class sizes, genuine sanctuary schools, and a nurse and librarian in every school. Among their demands are political demands, or what the CTU calls "bargaining for the common good." These include the demand for affordable housing for working-class Chicagoans, something that the mayor refuses to put into the language of the contract but which the teachers say is a key issue to resolve before they can return to work.

On October 18, the second day of the strike, tens of thousands of teachers, school workers and supporters marched through downtown Chicago once again. Before that, the strikers had been picketing at every public school in the city. It was on these picket lines that anyone could see the broad support the strike has among the public.

Sean Orr, a UPS driver in the city, said that the support was unprecedented. "This entire week, there has not been a single block I have delivered on where at least one house didn't have a 'I support Chicago teachers' sign in the window," Orr said. "Every picket line I've seen is greeted by horn honks and people stopping the picketers to ask for a selfie with them. It's incredible."

Polls consistently show that the striking teachers have a greater share of public support than the mayor in these negotiations. It is time that the mayor's office meets the CTU/SEIU demands and give Chicago the school system that its children deserve.

Source: [FightBack! News](#)



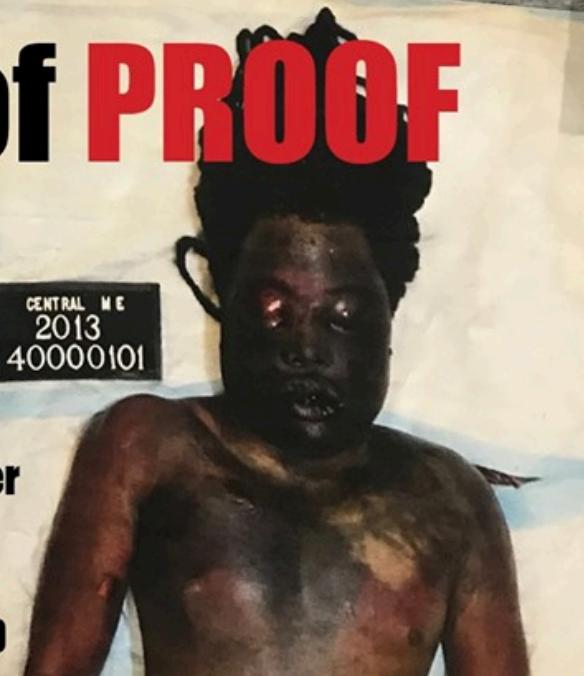
Los Angeles Oct. 26: Fight Racism Dance & Exhibit: Technical Foul/A Review and Offer of Proof

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019

AUSTYN RICH TECHNICAL FOUL @ A Review of ~~JUICED DOPE~~ the Case and an Offer of PROOF

October 26th
8PM

DOORS OPEN 7PM
Harriet Tubman Center
For Social Justice
5278 W Pico Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90019



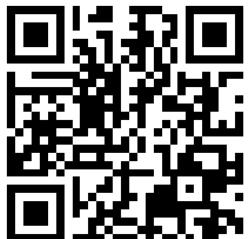
Hosted by [Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice - L.A.](#)

Saturday, October 26, 2019 at 8:00 PM - 10:00 PM PDT

Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice - L.A.
5278 W Pico Blvd, Los Angeles, California 90019

Dance /Multimedia Install that weaves together stories of historical and modern acts of subversive and direct violence against Black bodies. Doors @ 7pm

On [Facebook](#)



New York Oct. 26: Protest to free Palestinian prisoners and #BoycottPuma

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019

International
DAY OF ACTION
October 26 2019
ROUND 2

GIVE PUMA THE BOOT



**#BOYCOTTPUMA UNTIL IT ENDS SPONSORSHIP OF FOOTBALL TEAMS
IN ILLEGAL ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS ON STOLEN PALESTINIAN LAND**

bdsmovement.net/puma-day

Saturday, October 26, 2019 at 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM EDT

PUMA (609 Fifth Avenue, New York)
609 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017

Bring signs, flags, and banners in support of Palestinian prisoners to the citywide mobilization to [Boycott PUMA: End Israeli Apartheid!](#)

On the the Second Global [#BoycottPuma](#) Day of Action, during the International Month of Action to [Free Georges Abdallah](#) and an ongoing hunger strike by six Palestinian “administrative detainees” protesting their Israeli military internment without charge or trial, and in the aftermath of Israeli interrogators’ brutal torture of Palestinian political prisoners Samer Arbeed and Heba Al-Labadi, demand [PUMA](#) end its support for Israel’s regime of occupation, ethnic cleansing, and apartheid.

Support the Palestinian people, the Palestinian prisoners, the Palestinian Resistance, and the liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea.



'Respect our right to work': LGBTQ2S rally at Supreme Court

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019





Washington, D.C. — On the morning of Oct. 8, several hundred LGBTQ2S people and allies defiantly rallied outside the U.S. Supreme Court to demand protections against discrimination in the workplace. The three cases being heard by the Supreme Court seek to extend federal anti-discrimination protections to cover sexual orientation and gender identity.

Lawyers for the plaintiffs assert that LGBTQ2S people should be covered as a protected category under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It bars discrimination on the basis of sex but does not address the question of sexual orientation or gender identity. It was passed years before the Stonewall Rebellion in New York opened up the modern LGBTQ2S civil-rights movement.

The three cases being heard as a group address workers who were fired after it was revealed that they were gay or transgender.

Gerald Bostick, a social worker in Clayton County, Ga., was fired after an article about a local gay softball league revealed that he was gay. Donald Zarda was fired as a skydiving instructor when he revealed that he was gay. Their consolidated cases, *Bostock v. Clayton County, Ga.*, and *Altitude Express v. Zarda*, are being argued together.

The third case, *R.G. and G.R. Harris Funeral Home v. EEOC*, involves transwoman Aimee Stephens, who after years of working at the funeral home was fired when she explained to her employer that she is transgender.

No right to discriminate

As the cases were being heard inside the court, outside, supporters of equality marched a short distance to the steps of the Supreme Court, until they were stopped by police barricades. They listened to speeches and chanted, "Don't roll back our rights!" Many carried placards or wore t-shirts that read, "Protect LGBTQ workers now" and "No right to discriminate."

When they arrived at the steps, they found that a small group of anti-trans bigots were standing off to the side. Part of the supporters confronted and drowned out their hate with continuous chants of "Transwomen are women!" The religious bigots were no match for the militant crowd.

After the hearings were over, Bostock and Stephens both came to the podium and thanked the crowd for the strong showing of support. Donald Zarda passed away in 2014, but his lawsuit continues.

As speeches continued on the steps of the court, a large group of nearly 100 activists from ACT-UP and Housing Works in New York marched down the street chanting and sat down while the rally crowd cheered. The activists were all arrested in an act of civil disobedience.

The Trump administration is hell-bent on pushing back against equality for LGBTQ2S people. Donald Trump has already reinstated the ban on transgender people in the military. It is one of the many things he has done to try to turn back progressive gains made under President Barack Obama.

Under the Obama administration, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission decided in 2015 that it would accept LGBTQ2S charges in its enforcement of Title VII. [The Washington Blade](#), a weekly LGBTQ2S newspaper in Washington, reports that approximately 1,800 charges have been filed each year since alleging anti-LGBTQ2S discrimination. Trump has done his best to erase all the beneficial things that were won for working and poor people under the first African American president.

The tremendous showing for equality outside the Supreme Court demonstrates that the LGBTQ2S community and allies have had enough of these right-wing attacks. The Equality Act, which was [passed by the House of Representatives](#), will have an uphill fight in the Senate in order to get passed out of Congress. If so, Trump will no doubt veto the bill.

However, it takes more than passage of a law to get full equality and respect. It will take a fundamental change in this country to destroy the system of capitalism that promotes anti-LGBTQ2S and anti-immigrant bigotry as well as racism and sexism.

Capitalism must be replaced with a socialist society that values each individual for what they can contribute to the betterment of society, instead of for making the bank accounts of the rich fatter.

SLL photos: Andre Powell



'You have to stand for something': GM workers speak out

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019



Nearly 50,000 members of the United Auto Workers are in the fifth week on their

nationwide strike against General Motors. Key issues for the union include ending the company's use of tiered wage plans that pay less to new hires; ending the company's reliance on temporary workers and creating permanent jobs for thousands of long-term temps; and pushing back GM's attempt to saddle workers with more health care costs.

<https://www.facebook.com/strugglelalucha/videos/518688925563913/>

Struggle-La Lucha visited UAW members in White Marsh, Md., northeast of Baltimore. Over 250 workers were forced to retire or relocate to out-of-state plants when GM ceased production at the 19-year-old White Marsh plant in May 2019. Today a handful of workers who remain employed at the plant are walking the picket line, along with forced retirees.

Sylvia Heith, former GM worker and UAW member:

GM always wants to take so much from the worker, and without the workers, GM wouldn't have a product. We work hard for this product. This GM here in Baltimore has been here a long time and we fought to keep it here and they're taking that. So eventually you have to stand for something.

It's been generations of families here that have given and given and given and it's time to stop. We all have to stand together. We are a union and the purpose of having a union is solidarity.

Carlos Hernandes, former White Marsh worker, retired due to shutdown

I didn't see my children grow up because I had to transfer from Tarrytown, N.Y., to Maryland. It's tough to live apart from your family. Tarrytown is about three hours away. Every week, I would drive three hours back and forth.

I hope the strike will convince GM to keep this product here and appreciate people's

work more. I want to work, that's the thing. I just want fairness, job opportunities and job security.

Guy White, shop chairperson of UAW Local 239

I'm proud to say that we're standing up for social justice. Our biggest issue is GM's treatment of temporary workers. Take that issue out of these contract negotiations and we're back to work. I went to a conference a year and a half ago and they had the UAW from Ford, Chrysler and General Motors all under the same roof. They said, "Write down your top three issues and turn them in." And by far the top issue concerning everybody in the Big Three were temporary workers. We wanted to do away with temporary workers or at least get some kind of justice for them.

The temporary worker stands right next to someone performing the same job and makes roughly half as much money. ... And the thing is, they're not technically temporary. I call them permanent temps because they've been here two or three years. It's a crock. How do you say that they're temporary? Hiring temporary workers is a mechanism for cheap labor. It's a way that GM and the Big Three can reduce their labor costs. And that's what they do.

As a committee person here and as a shop chairman, you know a lot of members think a grievance will solve everything. And you know a grievance doesn't. Filing grievances is one tactic, but hitting their pocket is what grabs GM's whole and undivided attention. When I would write grievances, I would always tie money to it. I had a manager who asked, "Why do you do that?" I said, "To get your attention." If I just write it on the principle of the issue, then nothing will happen. I gotta put money on it or else he won't pay attention.

SLL: *Last November, the White Marsh plant was put on unallocated status. In May, everybody was informed that they'd be laid off.*

GM doesn't want to call it a shutdown. "Unallocated" means the plant is "idle." The verbiage in our contract says that they won't close, idle or shut down the plant. The contract with GM basically says we'll be building a product for the duration of the contract and GM violated that. In my opinion, we should have struck back when they made the announcement because we had some leverage since they wanted these transmissions for one of their cash cows — Flint Assembly and Arlington are their two big, big cash cows and we could have shut Flint down.

We made heavy duty truck transmissions. Allison A-1000 transmission. This automatic transmission is the only option you have for heavy duty pickup trucks. It's the benchmark for the industry. It's a bullet-proof, heavy-duty truck transmission. We also made electric motors.

In May, we had 250-260 hourly workers. And now there's seven of us. The reason the seven of us are here is so they can say they didn't close. I firmly believe that's the only reason we're here.

The option of job transfers has always been in our national agreement and we knew that would be an option for members to transfer to other facilities. We knew that was there, but here's the thing: every contract there are signing bonuses involved, there are special attritional packages for members, there's lots of things that come up in contract negotiations, and if you know what those things are, that might weigh your decision of what you want to do.

So, If GM truly valued their workers, it would have waited until the contract was up, let the workers stay on layoff status and then get a deal hammered out so the workers could see what's in the new contract and make their decision. If we're done here, then I'll retire or I'll voluntarily transfer to wherever. But GM didn't do that. GM wanted to be able to say it placed everybody in a job and that's what it did. White Marsh was the last plant to place people and GM was placing people just two weeks before the expiration of the contract. Some of these other plants don't even

need workers. GM was placing workers there just for the sake of it.

We have this whole group that were hired here in 1994. They're typically in their 50s. They're assemblers, that's what they've done for the past 25 years. At the beginning of their career, they were temporary, so that time didn't count. But they lost that time, so what do you do when you're 50 and the only thing you know how to do is be an assembler? It's too much to give up. You're put in a position where you've got to relocate.

It's just a bad deal and if they would have let these people wait until we had a new agreement, then at least you're armed with some new information and you can make a better decision.

SLL: *GM CEO Mary Berra made \$22 million last year. Do you think that GM has the resources to meet UAW's demands?*

GW: It's not just Mary Berra. She makes almost \$23 million per year counting any other stock options she has. When you look at the next level of corporate officer, they make in the tens of millions — \$16 million, \$18 million. When you look at the next level, they make single digits of millions — \$7, \$8, \$9 million. For every dollar the average auto worker makes at GM, Mary Berra is making \$280. To me that's just obscene. What justifies that?

Now where the Burnie Highway [Baltimore] assembly plant once stood-3,000 good-paying jobs-there's an Amazon warehouse where the average person is making \$15 per hour and there's a light that goes off that warns them if they're not packing fast enough and another light that goes off if you're in jeopardy of termination. It's crazy.

We've had random people come by and hand us a case of water out the window of their car. We've had people stop by and drop food off. We had a mother with a

toddler and a newborn come out and walk the picket line. We've had tremendous support from other unions. Maybe something like this is what needs to happen to mobilize labor.

GM operations in Maryland

- Background about “unallocating” White Marsh plant
 - 250+ workers
 - Workers had to decide whether to transfer or retire without knowing the content of their new contract
 - 19-year-old plant with high production
 - 7 workers left so GM can claim plant is not idle
- Shutdown of Burnie Highway plant
 - 3,000 jobs
 - Workers had to transfer then too
 - Now site of Amazon warehouse
- Temporary workers
 - 7-9 years at Burnie Highway, 2-3 years at White Marsh
 - Don’t earn credit toward pension/retirement while temporary
 - Made roughly one-half of what permanent workers doing the same job were making

Sharon Black and Leon Koufax contributed to this article.



Protest demands justice for Marlyn Barnes

written by Struggle - La Lucha
October 22, 2019



On Oct. 5, a few dozen activists with the Prisoner Solidarity Committee gathered outside the Harford County Detention Center in Bel Air, Md., to protest the untimely death of father of five Marlyn Barnes and demand justice for all prisoners suffering unjustly. The detention center is located approximately 35 miles northeast of Baltimore City. As documented in [The Afro](#), Barnes died on April 10 in the custody of the Harford County Sheriff's Office, which operates the detention center.

Local law enforcement declared Barnes' death a suicide after a rapid investigation.

Since then, the family has faced obfuscation, unclarity and stonewalling from the Harford County authorities and the Maryland state Chief Medical Examiner's Office. This has included a delay of two months in making the autopsy available, providing incorrect information to the family regarding public information act requests and general refusal to meet with the family.

Furthermore, when the family, through an attorney, finally did obtain surveillance video of the detention center from the day of Marlyn's death — it was exceedingly low in quality. The video was highly pixelated, inexplicably smudged and lacking audio. The most recent installment in this saga of misdirection and confusion was a letter from the Harford County sheriff, Jeffrey Gahler, denying the family attorney's request to meet and deferring to his office's legal counsel.

Sheriff Gahler does not seem to be interested in providing answers regarding what happened the day that Marlyn Barnes' life was tragically cut short. For this reason, family members, joined by local activists and community members, picketed the Harford County Detention Center on Oct. 5. Miss Marlyn Barnes addressed the audience, making it clear that she is only interested in truth and justice for her son. She also emphasized that this issue goes beyond just her son. Millions of working-class people, particularly Black and Brown people, experience abuse, discrimination and sometimes death in detention centers across the United States.

Local activists also raised the specific conditions at the Harford County Detention Center and a sheriff's office with a checkered past. Since 1996, over a dozen inmates have "committed suicide" at the Harford County Detention Center. This is the second highest rate in the state of Maryland. The number is especially high when considering that most prisoners in detention centers are there for no more than a few days. On top of this, the Harford County Sheriff's Office has come under scrutiny for racist police practices and its level of cooperation with federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

The Prisoner Solidarity Committee is calling for a full people's investigation into the death of Marlyn Barnes, including a meeting between the family's attorney and various Harford County officials. The committee has requested the full release of the names of individuals incarcerated at the detention center who are believed to have witnessed Marlyn's death. Moreover, the committee believes the entire Harford County Sheriff's Department should be investigated for racist policing practices and generally inhumane conditions at the detention center.

