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written by Struggle - La Lucha

April 7, 2024

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Struggle-La-Lucha.org

Vol. 7, No. 7 • April 8, 2024

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Socialist Unity Party

Partido de Socialismo Unido

Twitter: @StruggleLaLucha

Facebook.com/strugglelaluca

email: info@struggle-la-lucha.org

Deadly bridge collapse exposes capitalist decay



By Sharon Black

Baltimore — In the very early morning hours of March 26, while it was still dark and most people were asleep, the massive 984-foot-long, 213-million-pound container ship Dali lost power, veered off course and struck one of the main concrete supports of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Within minutes, the bridge collapsed.

Shock and disbelief were immediate. Fear and grief followed rapidly.

Word spread quickly in Turner Station, the neighborhood closest to the Key Bridge. Oliver Baptist Church immediately called a prayer vigil for the lives of the immigrant workers from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Mexico who were laboring on the bridge at the time of its collapse.

Families in this tight-knit community hugged each other, deeply aware that many of their own members traverse the bridge daily.

Turner Station is a historic Black community. The town grew out of a need for Black millworkers to have a place to live while nearby Dundalk remained segregated.

During the “Great Migration,” people came to get jobs at Bethlehem Steel. But with deindustrialization and the closing of the mill, the area is now an industrial “Brownfield” — much of it abandoned or underutilized due to industrial pollution.

A giant Amazon warehouse complex, which employs thousands of overworked and underpaid workers, stands in place of the once-unionized Bethlehem Steel. The bridge could be seen in the near distance.

War on immigrants

Six immigrant workers died in the bridge collapse, changing the lives of their families and communities.

When the ship hit, eight workers employed by Brawner Builders were fixing potholes on the bridge. All were Latino immigrants from ages 26 to 49. Only two survived. One worker from Michoacán, Mexico, was hospitalized and is recovering from injuries.

All had partners and families who

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