Fed’s decision shows
No letup in capitalist crisis

By Deirdre Griswold

Despite all the soothing talk about the economy picking up, there can be no doubt that the gurus of Wall Street and their colleagues in government expect a rocky road ahead.

That was the message conveyed when the Federal Reserve Bank announced on Sept. 17 that it had decided not to raise the interest rate, which has been at a historic low, barely above 0 percent. This means that it will continue to be super easy for corporations and banks to borrow money from the government. That in turn is supposed to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Or so they say.

However, much of the money being borrowed today by the wealthy is not to increase production in any way that might “trickle down” into more jobs for the working class. They spend it in the billions on speculative items — art, real estate, luxury goods — all of which have risen in price to spectacular heights.

A painting by Paul Gauguin was recently resold for $300 million. A penthouse in Monaco is currently on the market for $400 million. Such astronomical amounts being spent by the super-wealthy on their personal possessions are becoming the new norm.

But even after spending such enormous sums, the super-rich are still awash in money. So why don’t they invest it in production?

Capitalism at a dead end

Here is where the total irrationality of the capitalist system comes in. In this high-tech age especially — when it is actually possible for all humankind to quickly leave behind the drudgery of the past and have machines do most of the work, with everyone enjoying a comfortable existence — the capitalist profit motive instead leads to shutdowns, mass layoffs and spreading poverty.

Without saying “he told you so,” it is more relevant than ever to understand the workings of this particular economic system, which was unraveled 150 years ago by Karl Marx in his landmark book on capital. It was Marx who proved that the exploitation of human labor is what creates all the wealth enjoyed by the ruling class. Machines themselves can be made to do much of the work in place of people, but they do not add new “value.” Only human labor produces more value than it costs.

However, machines do provide their owners with a competitive edge — until the new machines become widely used in a particular industry. Then the race is on to find even newer technology that can do the job with even fewer workers.

Since the crash of 2008, the capitalist system worldwide has been in a quagmire, and unemployment has remained high, even as new technology particularly digital has transformed work and communications. There is no going back to the old days.

In recent years, some new plants have been opened in the U.S. with much fanfare. They have cost hundreds of millions, even billions of dollars, yet they rarely employ more than a few hundred workers. (See Fred Goldstein’s book, “Capitalism at a Dead End.”) Tens of millions remain jobless, many not counted because they have given up looking for nonexistent jobs.

The situation is even worse in most other developed capitalist countries, and is disastrous in much of the developing world.

But in the long run, fewer workers actually working means less profits for the bosses. The whole system becomes a house of cards, propped up by countless shady deals, mergers and the narcotic of military production (paid for by the workers’ taxes).

Even in the U.S., capitalism has become increasingly...
Workers World Party conference Nov. 7-8

Refocus on the need for socialist revolution

By Monica Moorehead

As workers and oppressed peoples are constantly being inundated with the likes of Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and others running for president, Workers World Party will be calling out all the election hoopla with its annual national conference — 7-8 November in New York City. The main theme will be “Let’s refocus on the NEED for SOCIALIST REVOLUTION.”

This theme is intended to offer a real alternative for any worker, oppressed or activist on what is needed to combat the institutionalized racism, poverty and war that is plaguing the globe. The bourgeois candidates, be they Democrat or Republican, can say or do anything — too often something reactionary — to get the dollars they need to win upcoming primaries. That means they won’t utter one word about capitalism being the root cause of all the oppression and inequality in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Only an independent, anti-capitalist, multinational working-class party like Workers World Party has always spoken class truth since its 1959 founding to this very day.

From the end of World War II to 2007, the capitalist class of ruthless billionaire bankers and corporate bosses could count on the boom part of the business cycle to rescue their system from the bust crisis of overproduction. Every single time. Ever since the global, tidal wave of housing foreclosures sparked the 2007-08 crisis, the capitalist system has been in a permanent state of doom and gloom. Even the bank bailouts of more than a trillion dollars couldn’t reverse it. The recent tumbling of global stock markets is one stark indicator. The enormous expansion of the productive forces has trapped capitalism in a dead end with no escape. The capitalists are seeking to solve the crisis of their system on the backs of the workers, the oppressed and the poor.

Whether it’s the alarming epidemic of police brutality, including murders of Black and Brown youth, women and trans people on a daily basis; the unimaginable migrant crisis, where U.S.-NATO military aggression has forced millions of people — think Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya — to leave their homelands; or low-wage workers fighting for $15 an hour and a union; or working and poor women of color struggling for reproductive justice; or tens of millions of workers forced to accept low wages, job insecurity, deportations, occupation, global warming and general austerity — in all cases the criminal in the genocidal capitalist system.

None of these crises can be reformed under capitalism. Even if it appears a distant goal, only socialism can resolve the crisis, and only through a revolution can the workers and oppressed win socialism. The experiences in Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the former Soviet Union, the 1949 Chinese Revolution and others have shown that socialism as an economic system can only be realized by the full mobilization of the masses that uproots an oppressive system which inhumanely exploits their labor and their resources for profits.

Only socialism can liberate the workers from this exploitation and start the process of allowing them to use their labor to produce for their own needs as a class. Building a revolution for socialism in the most industrialized country — the U.S. — will be a giant leap forward to the downfall of capitalism worldwide.

The first step in this leap is to discuss these ideas in the framework of a political party. These are some of the fundamental issues that will be taken up at the 2015 Workers World Party conference. Be a part of this critical and timely dialogue. Go to workers.org/wwp for more information.

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This theme is intended to offer a real alternative for any worker, oppressed or activist on what is needed to combat the institutionalized racism, poverty and war that is plaguing the globe.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism, degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaires are bent on making that change. That’s why for 66 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

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Continued from page 1

Unpopular. Various politicians seeking to reform the system are popping up here and in many other countries. They are attracting support and promise to make things better. But a little bandaid on a gaping wound will not answer the question of a system in deep crisis.

Capitalism has to be reformed by an economic plan that is progressive, a social ownership of the means of production. That’s what socialism means: abolishing private ownership of the economy (not your personal property) and developing a plan for production to satisfy human needs – which in these days very much means a plan to restore the earth to health while making sure everyone shares equitably in what people now call “profit.”

It also means affirmative action to erase the vast injustices of colonialism, racism, sexism, classism and oppression on people because of their sexual orientation.

Whether interest rates go up or down, whether the system falls into another catastrophic crash of the financial markets or just continues to grind down the workers into ever deeper poverty, the movements for social justice must inevitably grow together into a revolutionary movement to end capitalism.

A study in solidarity
The Boston school bus drivers union

By Martha Grevatt

For more than two years, the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, has been in a fierce battle against union-busting, environment-polluting, privatizing corporate giant Veolia/Transdev.

The city of Boston hired Veolia in 2003 to manage school transportation. Transdev is the company created when the 150-year-old French company spun off its transit division.

The drivers are fed up with “Veolia/Transdev” and the bosses’ unwillingness to negotiate a decent contract. They are fuming mad that four elected union leaders were falsely accused of leading a wildcat strike in October 2013, an event that never happened. Transdev refused to reinstate the four illegally fired union stewards.

Though fired, President Andre Francois, Vice President Steve Kirschbaum, Financial Secretary Steve Gillis and Grievance Chair Gary Murchison are working hard through Team Solidarity at organizing the rank and file to resist Transdev’s egregious concessions.

While they aren’t in grueling, seemingly endless grievance sessions, this social justice union is out in the streets, fighting shoulder to shoulder with Boston communities. In fact, “civil rights unionism,” a phrase used to describe the anti-racist, left-led CIO unions of a previous era, is what defines the history of Local 8751.

Local 8751 fights for justice

In the 1974 deSEGregation struggle in Boston, when racist and fascist groups under the codeword of “fighting forced busing” instigated lynching mob attacks on children riding on school buses, the drivers got the children safely to school. Local 8751 has been involved in every struggle for justice in Boston: for affordable housing, decent-paying jobs, equal access to city services, in support of the disability rights community and special needs students, in defense of embattled community leaders, and against racism and fascism.

The union was a key part of the Coalition to Save Grove Hall Post Office, supporting all four postal worker union leaders who were fired and attempting to get the post office in the heart of Boston’s African-American community.

Local 8751 has stood shoulder to shoulder with the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer community long before it was a popular position. President Francois spoke recently at a Black Lives Matter Coalition “Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad” conference in May, which drew more than 400 delegates from the U.S. and Canada.

Previously because of the union’s political legacy – and the multiplicity of Veolia/Transdev’s venomous attacks on the workers and oppressed worldwide – the efforts to rehire the fired union leaders have been linked to the Black Lives Matter movement; the Palestinians’ Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign; the water rights movement; striking and locked-out steelworkers; Mumia Abu-Jamal’s struggle; LGBTQ rights; and the global anti-austerity fight.

For all they do, the four unionists have won the support of diverse forces, such as the Bolivarian Circles, the Palestinian community, Panmi Lavanlas, Pride at Work and Black community leaders such as Councillor Charles Yancey, former Councillor Chuck Turner, veteran leader Mel King and radio/TV host Charles Clemons. Recently, a new and historic relationship between Boston’s Black immigrant community and the city’s predominantly white labor leadership has emerged to support Local 8751, which is 56 percent people of color.

All of these forces are prepared to support a bus drivers’ strike, if necessary. Solidarity can beat Transdev.

Black Lives Matter to the class struggle

The attack by Veolia/Transdev has united the multinational membership of Haitian, African-American, Cape Verdean, Latino/a, Native and anti-racist white bus drivers. The majority Haitian drivers will tell their own history – how enslaved Haitians and their descendants liberated themselves and their own country by driving out the French colonials. They have confidence they can vanquish this racist, union-busting French company.

The outcome of this struggle will have far-reaching repercussions. Now, more than ever before, there is a convergence of the class struggle and the struggle against racism. National oppression is the biggest tool used to divide our class – but at the same time it is capitalism’s Achilles heel. This is where the horrors of capitalism are most sharply laid bare, from Gaza to U.S. cities, with the epidemic of genocidal police killings.

Capitalism is in an intractable crisis. The ruling class is threatened by this revolutionary model of social justice and civil rights unionism: the Boston School Bus Drivers Union.

However, from a working-class standpoint, this example needs to be replicated. Even now a clear position of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement is lacking in the U.S. labor movement. For example, United Auto Workers International President Dennis Williams has yet to utter the words “Black Lives Matter.” This is the union that bragged of having been one of only two unions to endorse the 1960 March on Washington, where Martin Luther King gave his “I have a dream” speech.

In the 1940s, there were “hate strikes” by racist white auto workers – often organized by management – who wanted to keep Black workers segregated on the worst jobs. The UAW refused to defend the racists when they faced discipline.

Civil rights unionism must be revived. When unions take the moral high ground and stand up to racism and bigotry, as Local 8751 has done for four decades, that is how they build strong working-class solidarity.

As early as 1848, Karl Marx said that the most important accomplishment of the trade unions was not a raise in pay or a reduction of hours, but the “ever-expanding union of the workers.” The building of labor-community solidarity, which expands the unity of workers and oppressed, will be the enduring achievement of the struggle to rehire the fired leaders.

Martha Grevatt is a 28-year UAW Chrysler worker. Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this article.

Baltimore Workers World Party and FIST hold Harper’s Ferry Retreat

By Sharon Black

Close to 20 activists took off the weekend of Sept. 19-20 to study the book “A Voice from Harper’s Ferry” and enjoy a camping retreat, organized by the Baltimore Chapter of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and Workers World Party.

First they went to Greenbrier State Park in Maryland and then to the historic site of the armory at Harper’s Ferry, W.Va., where John Brown’s raid took place October 17-18, 1859.

“A Voice from Harper’s Ferry” (World View Forum, 2000) is an account of the famous anti-slavery military action by 22 Black and white Abolitionists that preceded the Civil War. It was written by Osborne Anderson, a Black revolutionary who took part in the raid.

The book also contains important essays by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead, on “What is a Nation” and Vince Copeland, WWP founding member, who revived Anderson’s important account and authored the essay, “The Unfinished Revolution.” The group read these chapters aloud to each other by fire and flashlight.

This didn’t stop everyone from engaging in an adventurous weekend, including swimming in Greenbrier Lake, hiking up the mountain cliff overlooking Harper’s Ferry and building a campfire. The participants, who have been in the anti-Racism movement, recognized the difficulties of Black people, also toured many historic sites. This was the first camping trip for many, who returned to Baltimore tired but excited.

Copies of the book can be purchased from online booksellers.


Jobs threatened, two-tier pay stays

By Martha Grewatt

Just 19 hours after the old contract between Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and the United Auto Workers expired on Sept. 9, the company and the union announced that a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract had been reached. Work would begin to resume on Sept. 10. The voting process is expected to take about 10 days.

Under the new agreement, UAW President Dennis Williams told FCA members that “your bargaining committee has taken a thoughtful and strategic approach to addressing this inequality over time in a way that allows the company to continue to invest in our plants, develop new product and keep our jobs secure.”

The two-tiered system is often referred to as the “two-tier pay” contract and is a common feature in American manufacturing. It involves workers with different benefits and pay scales, typically with new hires or recently laid-off workers earning less than those who have been with the company for a longer time.

While workers are disappointed and angry about the continuation of two-tier pay, they are even more concerned about layoffs and job insecurity. The continuation of two-tier pay is expected to have a significant impact on workers' incomes and overall living standards.

In the UAW-Chrysler contract, which is characterized by the two-tier system, there are different tiers of pay and benefits. The highest tier, referred to as the “first-tier” pay, is reserved for workers who have been employed by the company for more than a specific period of time. Lower-tier workers, referred to as “second-tier” or “third-tier” workers, earn less pay and are often subject to frequent layoffs.

Support for labor unions is on the rise, according to an Aug. 17 Gallup poll. The nationwide survey found a 5 percent increase in approval of labor unions between 2013 and 2015. After dipping to an all-time-low 48 percent approval rating in 2009, union support has reversed course, which is dominated by conservatives opposed to major wage hikes. And Cuomo, who is rumored to want to run for president in 2020, may have taken this stance to broaden his otherwise dismal record on labor. Stay tuned.

Expect job losses

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‘Marriage is a civil right’ Interview with Kentucky lesbian activists

Shannon and Carmen Wampler-Collins, a lesbian couple for 20 committed years, with two children, fought to exercise their right to same-sex marriage on Sept. 14 in Morehead, Ky. That day, Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis returned to work after being jailed for defying the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage. Davis had refused licenses to same-sex couples, including the Wampler-Collinses. Minnie Bruce Pratt of Workers World interviewed Shannon about the couple’s struggle and resistance.

WW: You and Carmen met in 1989 and were married in 1999. Tell us a little about yourselves and how you met.

Shannon: Nowadays, I’m a chef. I went to culinary school in 2010, and I’m cooking in a restaurant — usually a man’s world and work! Carmen works with nonprofits as a grant writer and consultant.

We met while we were both working the counter at Bart’s Ice Cream in Northampton, Massachusetts. She was a “Socialite” going to Smith College, and I was a “townie,” where growing up we felt overpowered by Smith: “Those rich kids coming here.” But Carmen was not. She comes from a poor background.

We had the same sense of humor. We just hit it off and the connection just blossomed. We got together as a couple on my grandmother’s birthday. We were in love then, and we still are now.

WW: When’s the ceremony for Kentucky activists?

Shannon: There’s still contention on the license we received. The ACLU is investigating. Kim Davis crossed off her name as county clerk and wrote in her name as county clerk. She will have to waive her license as second-class citizens. Carmen was born and raised in Rowan County!

We are waiting to hear more to have the ceremony a couple weeks after the 70-day time limit on the license. We planned something small — just peace, the lunch out. But the boys protested we’d have one wedding without them and are demanding something big. So we said, “If you want a wedding, you can plan the wedding!” They’re 16 and 11. They are activist children.

WW: You’ve said you two were married by your own ceremony long before the Supreme Court decision, but you want “legal protection” for your family.

Shannon: In Massachusetts, there’s co-parent adoption, but not in Kentucky. I adopted our younger son as a single mother. My sister carried him — and Carmen carried our older son.

We’ve raised both boys together as a family. But in Kentucky, I have no legal relation to our older son — who is my child too — if something happens. And Carmen wouldn’t have any to our younger son, who is also her child.

Carmen had a serious medical condition a couple of years ago, so the possibility is real and so scary.

WW: Would you describe getting into the County Clerk’s office on Monday?

Shannon: We live in Lexington now, an hour’s drive from Morehead. When we got to the courthouse, it was empty. Bigots had come from wherever they got them from, and were lined up in trucks along the street, using loudspeakers to shout ugly things.

Our people were right there, the Rowan County Rights Coalition. They gathered around us in a circle. They got us through the haters on the outskirts who lined the street, using the asterisk, to indicate the special situation a couple of years ago, so the possibility is real and so scary.

Then we went up to the counter, and Brian [Mason] was hilarious. He said, “I’ve been waiting for you two!” [Mason is the deputy clerk openly in favor of same-sex marriage licenses—WW]

As we were going out, one woman got in my face shouting, “Sex between two women is wrong!” I just want to fight with these people. I get so angry. So I said, “You must not be doing it right!”

WW: The people who got you safely into the courthouse — who were they?

Shannon: That’s the Rowan County Rights Coalition. One of the forefront leaders was best friends with Carmen’s aunt and mom, part of the family when Carmen was growing up. That woman is an activist extreme. She’s been involved in protest since the 60s and has worked with union organizing.

The coalition is outraged people, straight couples, gay couples, people who are trans* and bi, people from Morehead State, new people who’ve moved to the county and some who have grown up there. [“Trans*” is a word currently used, with the asterisk, to indicate the special situation a couple of years ago, so the possibility is real and so scary.]

We have a trans* couple Kim Davis actually signed a license for. One member of the couple identifies as male, but his birth certificate still lists females. Kim Davis looked at the two of them, saw male and female, and just assumed. People make all kinds of assumptions.

The coalition has rallied in front of the courthouse throughout. We had one side of the courthouse lawn. The opposition had the other. First, we were flashing words like transgender and binary, and then we started chanting: “Gay or straight! Black or white! Marriage is a civil right!”

WW: Right-wing, gun-toting “Keepers” threatened to show up to “defend” Kim Davis. What’s the sentiment of the local community?

Shannon: Protest here is a lot more personal. Familes are facing off against each other on both sides of the issue. It’s a small, quiet, tight-knit, keep-to-yourself place. Things go on as they have gone. While there are progressive people, it’s not a place where people rock the boat. People have conflicts, but they don’t like to talk about them.

This struggle opened up what has been bubbling underneath. There are gay and lesbian people living here. Until this, they kept it to themselves, lived in the closet, or maybe they were out but not loud about it. The progressives have not had a unified voice until now. This is making a difference. This isn’t just a small, isolated town. There are progressives here as well as fundamentalists.

WW: There’s a 30 percent poverty rate in Rowan County. On Facebook one of your local supporters said she saw a right-wing “Sodomy Is a National Sin” sign and wanted to replace it with “Marriage is a National Sin.”

Shannon: Poverty is a huge issue here. This used to be a big tobacco area. Lumber mills are a big industry. The hospital and Morehead State University are big employers.

For those with less education, Guard-ian Auto Glass, that’s considered a big, high-paying job starting around ten dol-lars an hour. Otherwise, it’s Walmart, Kroger, lower-paying, service jobs, no in-sur ance. Some people drive half an hour to local Stephens, where there’re more factory jobs. But they’re living in poverty, paying for gas to commute.

Morehead is not quite 7,000 people in Rowan County not much more than 20,000.

It’s not a huge place, but it’s bigger than a lot of towns in the area. It’s an important regional center in the surrounding rural Appalachian area.

We are trying to bring the good to it. Not to impose but to meet these people’s promise. There’s good here that I haven’t seen before.

We have a niece, 19 years old. She lives in Bothell and may live there forever. We want to make a better place for her.

People’s ‘walk-in’ defends public education

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

Educators, staff, members, students and communities are fighting the “walk-in” at 103 Milwaukee Public Schools on Sept. 18. This action was organized by the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association and Milwaukee County Education Rights Coalition, with support from dozens of labor-community organizations. Participants held rallies, informational presentations, and depictions of the school day before and after they “walked-in” to their respective schools. The walk-in eventually ended to Wall Street attacks on public education.

In a powerful solidarity action, similar grassroots “walk-ins” at 14 public schools in LaCrosse, Wis., near the Minnesota state line.

Over the past few years the right-wing-controlled Wisconsin Legislature has rammed through the greatest austerity cutsbacks in the history of the state in public education — both K-12 and higher education. Milwaukee, the largest city in the state, with a majority Black and Latino population, has for decades been the target of Wall Street forces. In particular, the banks, with the implementation of failing charter schools, have taken hundreds of millions of dollars from public education.

In the latest 2013-17 state budget passed by these reactionary legislators and signed into law in July by their crew, Gov. Scott Walker, even more draconian Wall Street austerity is planned. This includes the possible mass expansion of charter schools in K-12 education, as well as the reduction of shared governance and elimination of tenure for the University of Wisconsin system by state statute.

Stop the ‘Milwaukee Plan’

A provision in this budget is widely known as the “Milwaukee plan,” which is modeled on previous plans in Detroit, Philadelphia and New Orleans. The pri-vatizers’ goal is to take over so-called “failing” schools in the Milwaukee Public School District and turn them over to private corporations to operate.

Current state law says that an “Opportunity Schools Partnership Program” commissioner is to be appointed by Milwau-kee County Executive Chris Abele, a Democrat and major venture capitalist and realtor. The commissioner would have parallel authority to the elected Milwau-kee Public School Board and would be accountable only to the county executive.

The 55 schools be turned potential poten-tial gets have predominantly Black or Lati-no/a student populations and are in ar- eas of the city devastated by decades of de-industrialization and lack of social safety net programs.

All Milwaukee Public School work-ers employed at the “targeted” schools would be fired and forced to reapply for their jobs. They would have to waive their right to union representation in order to be considered for rehire.

Wall Street forces aim to begin the process with these schools this fall and then five schools every year thereafter.

Led by the MTEA, resistance has been in motion for months to shut down the “Milwaukee Plan,” going, with the Sept. 18 actions the high point thus far.

This organization stated in a press release Oct. 5: “The walk-in is a stepping stone toward building a network of school defense committees to protect and strengthen quality public education across Milwaukee. Parents, educators, community members and students will work together in the coming months to solidify this network of solidarity and prepare for an all-city summit of school defense committees on December 5, 2015.”

For more information, go to #ONMPSatakeover, mtea.wec.org, and schoolsandcommunities.org.
Defend Black Lives Matter! Fight racist attacks!

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

U.S. intelligence agencies and law enforcement departments recently announced that the Black Lives Matter movement, in the wake of the recent visibility for possible “terrorist” activity coinciding with the 14th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. A Sept. 14 BBC article noted, “Conservative American politicians and television pundits have increased their attacks on the Black Lives Matter movement. In the aftermath of the killing of police officers, [it has been mentioned as a] contributing factor.”

However, the BLM movement is not a terrorist organization. This is an “official website,” but many groups and demonstrators utilize the name. Many white activists have joined BLM demonstrations, although some actions are restricted to African Americans.

The state is attempting to criminalize the youth-directed efforts aiming at seeking justice for African-American victims of racist police and vigilante violence. The BLM movement is a legitimate and national response to desperately needing state terrorism. The history of African Americans and other oppressed nations in North America and worldwide confirms the strategies aimed at gaining national liberation. These movements uphold the rights to self-determination and use tactics including civil disobedience and nonviolent protest.

Since Trayvon Martin’s 2012 killing by vigilante George Zimmerman, the anti-racist movement has grown. Increasing intolerance of police violence against African Americans has swept throughout the U.S. Right after Zimmerman’s acquittal in July 2013, demonstrations sprung up from New York to California.

The BLM movement, beginning as a hashtag and slogan then, gained even more credence when police killed as a result of an automobile accident and transferred ownership to Fannie Mae, refused to grant a forbearance. Instead, Wells Fargo sold his home at a sheriff’s sale in June 2011. Beneficial’s decision for the Fannie Mae Buyback Program is now has severe disabilities. He was forced to leave his home address is 8789 Rexford Rd., Jackson, Mo., on Aug. 9, 2014. The people of Ferguson, Missouri, have announced that they will begin fasting in solidarity. For updates, visit fanniemae.com. Demand that Fannie Mae return the money paid for his property.

A rebellion erupted, along with continual mass demonstrations demanding Wilson’s arrest and prosecution. The movement of protesters, actions were held around the U.S. and Canada, supported by solidarity protests in every corner of the country, and the countrywide mass protests further exposed the U.S. as a racist state.

Despite the election of an African-American president, the governmental structures of racist capitalism impeded the realization of justice. Even though the Department of Justice investigated Trayvon Martin’s killing and the actions of St. Louis County police departments and courts — prompting a scathing attack on their actions — no federal civil rights charges were filed against Wilson or key players in the law enforcement, municipal governance and judicial systems.

There is no connection between the burgeoning struggle against racism and police brutality and the targeted groups allegedly responsible for the Sept. 11 attacks. This is also true of other domestic and international activities, conveniently labeled “Islamic extremist.”

These false allegations occur while some corporate media accuse the BLM of funding unrest and promoting the killing of police officers. Reactionary Bill O’Reilly of Fox News threatens to push BLM out of business for these reasons.

Anti-racist and progressive organizations nationwide reject these allegations. These sarcastic claims are designed to create an atmosphere where anti-racist activists can be criminalized and politically attacked.

Even the Sept. 3 New York Times editorial defended BLM from such egregious accusations: “They are not asserting that black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underselling an indispensable fact — that the lives of black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued.”

History of struggle and repression

The United States was born in violence by forcefully removing Indigenous peoples from the land and by the “legalized” enslavement and exploitation of African Americans brutally taken from their continent to the sugarcane and cotton fields of slave masters from 1600 to 1865. Even after the Civil War and the ostensibly abolition of slavery, Reconstruction’s failure portended the future status of African people. Lynching, Jim Crow racism, forced penal labor, disenfranchisement and social segregation were entrenched into the 1960s.

It took mass demonstrations, urban rebellions and court challenges to overturn U.S. apartheid, now recurring through increased killings by police and the legal system’s failure to hold police officers and racists accountable.

During the 1960s, some African-American organizations arose which advocated taking up arms to defend their communities against the capitalist state’s racist violence.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party sent shockwaves through the ruling class. The FBI under J. Edgar Hoover spent millions of dollars to disrupt and neutralize African-American liberation organizations and fighters.

A similar scenario is developing today, but under somewhat different circumstances. From the 1960s through the 1970s, when Cointelpro carried out operations against the African-American movement, there was a broad mass movement among youth, workers and farmers.

It encompassed elements from education, religious, industrial, agricultural and prisoners of war liberation.

Inspirations by the African-American struggle, other nationally oppressed groups developed their own organizations, including the Young Lords, built by Puerto Rican activists; the Brown Berets, made up of Chicano/as; and the African American Indian Movement. They fought against oppression and for self-determination. Additionally, lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer communities, women, environmentalists, people with disabilities, tenants and other marginalized. These organizations formed alliances to fight for common objectives: ending discrimination and demanding full equality.

The Peace and Freedom Party formed an alliance with the Black Panther Party in 1968, running its member of Information, Judge David W. in 1969, a National Convention for a United Front against Fascism was convened in Oakland, California, where an anti-repression convention was advanced.

On May Day 1970, militant actions shut down Yale University in New Haven, Conn., protesting murder trials of BPP leaders Bobby Seale and Ericka Huggins who faced possible execution. Yale President King Brewer Jr. said a week earlier, “I am skeptical of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States.” (New York Times, April 23, 1970)

Theorists use the BLP movement to railroaded into prison or driven into exile or underground. It is important today for people involved in anti-racist and anti-war activities and for organizations like labor unions to build strategic and tactical alliances to stop the racist state from isolating and attacking them. The world capitalist system is more unstable now than it was at any other time in the post-World War II era. A mass movement seeking fundamental change could shake the system at its foundation.

The recent movements for immigrant rights, Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter reflect the developing response to the failure of global capitalism to provide a stable future for the majority of people in the U.S. and internationally. The capitalist class will do whatever it can to retain its capacity to exploit the masses. A united struggle against the system can push that back.

S. Baxter Jones launches hunger strike for justice

By Mike Shane
Detroit

Sept. 20 — S. Baxter Jones continues to fight to regain his home, which he lost through foreclosure in Jackson, Mich., in 2011.

On July 28, a judge stayed an eviction order sought by Fannie Mae to evict Jones to take advantage of a recently announced Federal Housing Finance Administration and Fannie Mae plan to allow Michigan homeowners to repurchase their foreclosed homes at market value. Fannie Mae delayed the judge’s intent, refused to sell the home to Jones and, without notice, sold it to an investor. This is the same housing price for black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued. Baxter Jones Jones at front in wheelchair at protest on eighth day of hunger strike.

Jones, a Detroit public school teacher for 22 years and a former track coach, suffered traumatic brain injury in 2005 as a result of an automobile accident and cerebral hemorrhage. He’s been battling to return to work prematurely with an undiagnosed traumatic brain and spinal cord injury. In 2010, the injury was finally diagnosed, and that April Jones received a family medical leave approved by Detroit Public Schools. Then during summer break he was unjustly fired by DFS, which was then under the control of underheded Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb, because Jones could no longer fulfill his duties due to employment and rehabilitation requirements.

In violation of federal regulations, Wells Fargo, the loan servicer for Fannie Mae, refused to grant a forbearance or a loan modification for Jones while he was obtaining disability benefits. Instead, Wells Fargo sold his home at a sheriff’s sale in June 2011 and transferred ownership to Fannie Mae in August 2011. In 2013, Jones’ efforts to purchase his home at market value was turned down by Fannie Mae.

In a press release announcing commencement of the hunger strike, Jones said he had fed disfavored, constantly jumping through hoops of fire and being burned. I paid all that money and I have nothing to show for it. Federal housing authorities have stonewalled me at every turn. I can no longer accept this injustice.

I do not want this to happen to another person, even though my health issues, as a Godly man, I have decided to engage in a hunger strike for justice.”

In an interview this week, Jones stated, “I am not on a hunger strike just to receive a fair trial or to try to highlight the injustices facing thousands of struggling individuals and families today, suffering inhumane water shutoffs, continuing tax assessments, declining schools, high unemployment, low pay, and vicious assaults by the police.”

Support for Jones is growing. A number of people have announced that they will begin fasting in solidarity. For updates, visit the Facebook page “HUNGER STRIKE HELPS S. Baxter Jones.”

You can support Jones by calling Katrina Jones (no relation) of Fannie Mae at 213-755-1400 or email katrina.jones@fanniemae.com. I am aware that Fannie allowed S. Baxter Jones to reclaim his home under the FHA Buyback Program. The home address is 8789 Rexford Rd., Jackson, MI 49201. Please refer to FHA file #11-15-1408.
By Betsy Piette

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of an estimated 10,000 prisoners in Pennsylvania suffering the ravages of untreated hepatitis C virus (HCV). Prisoners across the U.S. are being denied access to the direct-acting, antiviral oral treatment developed in 2014 that has proven to be highly effective in curing HCV. Earlier in September, lawyers for Abu-Jamal filed an injunction on his behalf seeking immediate relief through the administration of the antiviral drug. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has used the excuse that a dose of this medication costs upwards of $1,000. Yet even if given to all Pennsylvania prisoners estimated to suffer from the virus, the total cost would be less than 1 percent of the PA DOC’s annual budget. Usually one or two doses will cure the disease.

Recently pharmaceutical corporations, faced with impending generic versions of the drug, dropped the cost to around $400 to $500 per treatment. While still expensive, it would cost less to provide this lifesaving medication than to treat the chronic hepatitis or liver disease that commonly result from long-term, untreated hep C — conditions that won’t benefit by the receipt of proper treatment of the underlying disease.

In June 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons amended its guidelines regarding HCV infection to include use of the new medications and to prioritize treatment for HCV cases as having the most urgent need. Abu-Jamal’s symptoms first manifested over a year ago when he began suffering from severe skin rashes, lesions and swelling in his legs. His condition worsened in early 2015 when prison doctors failed to properly diagnose his illness. They also prescribed steroids and topical medications that only exacerbated the HCV.

In March 2015, Abu-Jamal, close to death, was rushed to a hospital after prison infirmary physicians allowed him to nearly fall into diabetic shock. Since then, family members and supporters worldwide have been demanding that the DOC cease in their efforts to murder Mumia through purposeful medical neglect.

In addition to the current legal remedy sought by Abu-Jamal’s attorneys, class action lawsuits have previously been filed on behalf of all prisoners incarcerated in Pennsylvania and other states. These lawsuits center on violations of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that prohibits infliction of cruel and unusual punishment.

Attacked by the legal neglect

After his lawsuit was filed the end of August, prison officials retaliated against Abu-Jamal during the first week of September by entering his prison cell while he was in the infirmary and boxing up all his belongings without his being present — a violation of their own protocol. There was considerable concern that he might be transferred to another prison, further denying him his receipt of necessary medical treatment.

Abu-Jamal’s legal complaint details his near death and hospitalization with renal failure and a near diabetic coma on March 30. His lawsuit states, “Extensive diagnostic tests have indicated organ failure (skin) and organ damage (liver) plus open wounds, hemoglobin deficiency, extensive fevers, weight loss and continued weakness.”

On Sept. 18, U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania Karoline Mehalchick issued a proposed order denying Mumia Abu-Jamal’s motion for preliminary injunction and his complaint seeking immediate treatment for active hepatitis C. This was done before Abu-Jamal’s attorneys even had a chance to respond to the PA DOC’s opposition, as allowed by court rules.

Mehalchick states that Abu-Jamal will not be irreparably harmed if he receives no care, even while acknowledging that hepatitis C is a “sufficiently serious” condition under the Eighth Amendment. While arguing that “it often takes significant time for hepatitis C to progress,” she ignored the fact that Abu-Jamal has had the virus for over 30 years, most likely contacted through a blood transfusion after he was shot by Philadelphia police and hospitalized in 1981.

Mehalchick also suggests that the PA DOC should be allowed to implement their own protocols for prisoners with hepatitis C. However, the current PA DOC “treatment protocols” is to deny testing and to deliver no treatment.

A full day of marches, rallies and events were held in New York City on Sept. 27, the fourth anniversary of Occupy Wall Street, to demand an end to racism, gentrification and police brutality. Called by the Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network, the day’s events included early morning rush-hour visibility and information actions and a midday protest in front of the New York City Housing Authority’s management office in Farragut Houses complex in Brooklyn, called by Families United for Racial and Economic Equality. It also included an action at the New York City Department of City Planning to “fight the rezoning of our communities,” a march across the Brooklyn Bridge and, finally, a speakout and sleepout at City Hall Park in Manhattan, called by Voices of Community Activists & Leaders.

In an email announcing the event, BAN states, “The corporations, banks, real estate developers and de Blasio administration are hell-bent on destroying the cultural, economic and social diversity of New York City. We must disrupt business as usual and take back our communities.”

“The case: Our City!” — Report by Leilani Dowell

For Mumia & other prisoners

Lawsuits challenge denial of hep C treatment

By Political Prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal

Sept. 15 — It is impossible to look at the current crop of political presidential aspirants and not be struck by their level of subservience to the wants and needs of the owner class.

Like puppies pining in the presence of their masters, the politicians, emboldened by the unconscionable Citizens United decision, are at the feet of the billionaires for scraps to better serve their betters.

Now, one millionaire can field a half-dozen poodles, and by so doing, can determine not just who runs, but who wins — and what laws will be passed.

Why not? They own them, don’t they? But still, that is not enough. For witness the emergence of New York real estate executive Donald Trump.

Trump, by his every opportunity, of his enormous wealth. By so doing, he intimidates his potential rivals, who are used to bending to their owner to such men. But he also represents the distrust of his class, for rather than hiring politicians, he runs himself, to lock in his class dominance.

Nor is this solely a Republican affair, for Democrats, who run on emotional appeals to labor unions and working people, once in power lead to the interests of Wall Street — the source of the lion’s share of their donations.

Their strategy, of talking labor while pleasing capital, was seen in the destructive NAFTA pact (the North American Free Trade Agreement), which decimated manufacturing jobs in the U.S. by the millions.

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“Whose city? Our city!”

— Report by Leilani Dowell
U.S.-backed ground war intensifies in Yemen

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Sept. 7 — An escalating ground war is taking place for control of Yemen, the most underdeveloped state in the Middle East. Reports claim that United Arab Emirates Special Forces have been on the ground in the country fighting against the Shia-led Ansarallah Movement, also called Houthi.

Some 45 UAE troops were killed on Sept. 4 in battles with the Ansarallah. Meanwhile, bombing is continuing by the U.S.-backed coalition led by the Saudi monarchy and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Saudi troops have also reportedly been killed. The Ansarallah forces have attacked inside Saudi territory in response to ongoing provocations against the resistance forces.

The Saudi- and GCC-led alliance, encompassing numerous states throughout the Middle East and North Africa, has made a concerted effort to drive out the Ansarallah from Yemen’s southern region for nearly six months. As many as 4,500 people have been killed in the fighting, which intensified last March 26 with a Pentagon- and CIA-supported bombing campaign in various regions of the country.

For several weeks the Saudi-GCC coalition has also built an alliance of political forces in the south of the country that waged an offensive against Ansarallah positions in Aden. This strategic port city has been bombed extensively in an effort to create a haven for U.S.-backed elements to dominate the Persian Gulf and the entire region, including the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa and North Africa.

Resistance to imperialist war

Despite the consistent bombing of Yemen for nearly six months, the people still resist imperialist domination. The failure of the air campaign to dislodge the Ansarallah forces has prompted an escalation of the ground war.

Nonetheless, the forces led by the Ansarallah, in alliance with the military and political forces remaining loyal to previous President Abduallah Ali Saleh, are punishing the U.S.-backed forces. The increase in the deaths of military personnel from the UAE and Saudi Arabia demonstrates the intense opposition to the Pentagon/NATO-supported coalition.

In a Sept. 7 interview on Press TV, Middle East expert Jalal Fairooz based in London said of the aggressive forces bombing and launching ground offensives in southern and central Yemen, “They are supplied by the United States. They are being backed by the United States. The United States agreed on this aggression in the United Nations. Actually they have tried with the Russians and the Chinese not to have a veto against this aggression when there was a resolution in the United Nations. The Americans have actually agreed with the Saudis. The Saudis have told the Americans five months and so ago that they are going to start this war against the Yemeni people and that was the case; the Americans have agreed.”

This analyst goes on to emphasize that “sentiments of the airplanes which are bombing Yemen are being captured — they are being run — by the Americans themselves. These ships of the United States in the Arabian Sea are guiding the airplanes where to bomb in Yemen.”

The situation is becoming critical for the imperialist-coordinated military units. Other states allied with the Penta- gon and the CIA are now deploying their militaries.

On Sept. 7 the Qatari government announced that it was sending troops into Yemen to shore up the forces of the Saudi-GCC alliance. Whether this development will turn the tide of the war remains to be seen.

Reuters press agency reported Sept. 7, “Qatar has sent 1,000 ground troops to Yemen, Doha-based Al Jazeera television channel quoted the country’s foreign minister as saying, escalating Gulf Arab involvement in Yemen’s war ahead of a planned offensive against Iranian-backed Houthi holding the capital Sanaa.”

War with Iran resumes despite sanctions

The nuclear agreement with Iran is expected to become official with the up- coming agreement between the U.S., Iran, Russia, China, France, Germany, Britain, Italy, and the European Union, which is expected to come into effect in January 2016.

Meanwhile, bombing is continuing by the U.S.-backed forces allied with Tehran. The Obama government continues to bomb neighboring Syria under the guise of fighting the so-called Islamic State after creating the conditions for the weakening of President Bashar al-Assad.

At the same time, Iran, which the U.S. invaded in both 1991 and 2003 and occupied for eight years, is also being bombed under the U.S. pretext. The burgeoning migrant crisis impacting tens of millions is a direct result of these war policies of successive U.S. administrations.

The anti-war movement in the U.S. and Western Europe must take up the challenge of opposing imperialist intervention by explaining that it is in their own governments which must accept responsibility for the worst humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe since the conclusion of World War II.

In the U.S. and Western Europe unemployment, poverty and racial tensions are escalating. The militarization of the police from Ferguson and Baltimore to Detroit and New York is the domestic reflection of a policy of total domination of the world.

These factors provide the basis for linking internal struggles for jobs, guaranteed incomes and the end to police terror- rorism with the movements against war and imperialism. The working class and the oppressed in the imperialist states cannot be fully liberated until the repression and exploitation of the peoples of the world is halted.

Haitian elections under U.S. control

By G. Dunkel

Haitian President Michelle Martelly liked running the country without a parliament. He could do whatever tickled his fancy. But when his term approached its end — constitutionally, he only gets one — he had to organize parliamentary elections.

Maryse Narcisse, the Fanni Lavalas candidate for president, in a Face- book post called the Aug. 9 elections an “electoral coup” and an “electoral masquerade.” Fanni Lavales was original- ly formed to support former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was de- posed by a coup in 2004 and forced into exile by the U.S.

Along with supporters of a number of other parties, Narcisse marched in demonstrations demanding the elections be canceled. Several polling places were trashed by armed men; under armed threats, ballot officials had to either go into hiding or sign vote totals in the morning. (Haiti Libre, Sept. 11)

A number of fairly large marches in Port-au-Prince have both protested the conduct of the Aug. 9 elections and sup- ported presidential candidates like Narcisse.

Some 1,622 candidates ran for 129 seats in the Senate and 318 in the House. While official vote totals had not been announced as of Sept. 9, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has announced a few outright winners and, in some dis- tricts, the two candidates who will face each other in a second round.

Without official tallies, it is impossible to challenge results. The overall turnout was down.

Continued on page 9

Houston solidarity with Syrian refugees

Hundreds of people in Houston came out on Sept. 12 to welcome Syrian ref- ugees arriving in the city. The large, spirited and militant demonstration, organized by Arab youth and Latino/a immigrant organizations, drew a huge crowd, including the Free Radicals and the Free Radicals Under U.S. Control.

A leader of the campaign to find the missing Ayotzinapa students in Mexico told Workers World, “No one wants to deport him to Mexico, where he knows no one. He and his partner have lived in Houston for over 20 years and all their children are U.S. citizens.”

The theme of the Sept. 12 action was “Refugees welcome! No humans is ille- gal.” The demands were for the European Union member states to ease immediately their dehumanizing and repressive prac- tices and allow free access and move- ment of refugees and migrants to reach the destination of their choosing, without fear of coast guard patrols, borders, fences or cages. Also, for Washington to do its part in welcoming and resettling ref- ugees in the U.S. and for the Obama ad- ministration to pledge to accept at least 65,000 refugees from Syria for resettlement in the U.S. by 2016.

One man who was interviewed, Israel “Izzy” Torres, had been fighting his own deportation for almost two years. Just a few days after he attended this demon- stration and appeared on television, Im- migration and Customs Enforcement did deport him to Mexico, where he knows no one. He and his partner have lived in Houston for over 20 years and all their children are U.S. citizens.

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— Photo and article by Gloria Rubac

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Pro-Cuba group demands Free U.S. political prisoners, starting with Mumia

Organizers of the “Days of Action Against the Blockade of Cuba,” which took place this past week in Washington, D.C., issued the following statement in response to Cuban President Raúl Castro’s humanitarian gesture of releasing 3,255 prisoners in anticipation of the visit of Pope Francis. The organizers called on President Barack Obama to begin by releasing U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is being denied life-saving treatment for hepatitis C.

Obama should follow Cuba’s lead and free people in U.S. prisons

The organizers of “Days of Action for the End of the Blockade of Cuba” (in Washington, D.C., Sept. 16-18) are calling on President Obama to follow Cuban President Raúl Castro’s lead and release some of the more than 2.5 million prisoners currently in jails and prisons in the United States.

To mark Pope Francis’s upcoming visit to Cuba, the Cuban government has announced the release of 3,422 people in that country’s jails. This humanitarian gesture will include prisoners over 60, younger than 20, those with chronic illnesses, women and those close to their release dates.

“Why can’t Obama follow the Cuban example before Pope Francis continues on his tour to the U.S. on Sept. 22?” asked Alièza Jrapko, a spokesperson for the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples, which is co-sponsoring the Days of Action in the United States this week. The goal is to pressure the U.S. to end its failed blockade against Cuba.

The U.S. government pointed out, has the dubious distinction of having the largest per capita prison population in the world.

U.S. prisoners are overflowing with people who are primarily incarcerated for non-violent offenses, drug charges, or simply for being mentally ill and poor. The vast majority of those incarcerated are people of color.

“As his presidency winds down, Obama could do the right thing by releasing an equal percentage of the prison population as the Cubans did,” agreed Gail Walk of IFPO/Pastors for Peace, another of the groups organizing the Days of Action.

Now that Cuba has shown that a war-torn world could appreciate and a gesture of justice to the visiting pope. It would amount to freedom for tens of thousands of prisoners.

Obama could start by releasing political prisoners like:

- Black activist and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose health is in rapid decline from untreated hepatitis C.
- American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier, who just spent his 71st birthday in prison, and
- Oscar López Rivera, the Puerto Rican revolutionary-activist who has spent 34 years in prison on conspiracy charges.

Jan Susler, the lawyer for Oscar López, and Rafael Cancel Miranda, the legendary fighter for Puerto Rican independence, will be among the speakers at a human rights panel during the conference being held as part of the Days of Action for the End of the Blockade.

Days of Action Against the Blockade is co-sponsored by IFPO/Pastors for Peace, the Institute for Policy Studies; the National Network on Cuba; the Venceremos Brigade; and the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples.

Phony charges
A tool of repression in Colombia

By Hébert Ballesteros

Hébert “Huber” Ballesteros is a peasant leader from Fensuagro (National Unitarian Agricultural Trade Union Federation) and the Patriotic March. He is a member of the executive committee of the CUT (Unitary Workers Federation). He is a political prisoner in La Picota Prison in Bogotá, Colombia. In this article he highlights the Colombian regime’s brutal suppression of any form of protest.

Sept. 15 — The Colombian government has introduced laws and ratified international conventions of the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the International Labor Organisation.

The commitments made to these multilateral institutions would make one think that in our country the state defends human rights and guarantees the right of workers to organize in a trade union — but the reality is very different.

That thousands of trade union leaders have been assassinated and thousands exiled and imprisoned exposes the systematic repression that the state metes out to an organization that dares to oppose its policies.

It is in this scenario of repression of the trade union movement that I was arrested on Aug. 25, 2013, on the day I was in Bogotá approaching the government to negotiate the list of demands presented by agricultural organizations, which at that time had been on national strike since Aug. 19, of that year.

At that point, several comrades active in the strike in regions all over the country had already been assassinated or imprisoned.

From that moment to date, almost 100 members of the Patriotic March have been assassinated and around 300 have been imprisoned.

This is a situation completely incomparable with the Colombian people’s demands for peace and with what has been achieved by the government, which preliminarily agreed upon between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP insurgency at the negotiating table in Havana, Cuba.

Preliminary agreements have been reached on the land issue, political participation and on finding a solution to the problem of illegal drugs. How can one understand and explain to the international community that, while in Havana solutions to the problems faced by peasant farmers are discussed and provisional agreements are being reached, in Colombia those same peasant farmers are being assassinated and imprisoned for demanding solutions to the same problems?

How does the Colombian government intend to implement the agreements reached in Havana on political participation if it continues to persecute and assassinate trade union leaders and activists from the political opposition?

Something which worries us is that the Colombian regime also plans to implement the economic and political changes needed to achieve a sustainable peace.

It is not surprising that the so-called “justice” used in times of war appears to be maintained, even though there is a move towards peace.

This is an inquisition style of justice used as an instrument of repression at the service of the interests of the powerful.

This doesn’t mean to say we are not optimistic about the peace process. On the contrary, we are encouraged by its progress — but we are aware of the dangers it faces.

In my personal case, the prosecution accuses me of the crimes of “rebel activity” and “financing terrorism.” This case is based on the paid testimonies of people working for them and uses as “evidence” documents planted by the military intelligence services and police on computers supposedly captured from guerrilla leaders during military operations.

The entire legal process, including the supposed investigation into the charges brought by the prosecution before the judge, has been plagued by irregularities.

Everything has been clearly planned and directed by the executive branch of the state, and until now the judicial system has been the tool used to punish my trade union activity and public involvement in the political opposition.

We fear that the judge will not take into account all the evidence, which shows that all of this is a vulgar legal set-up whose aim was to stop the protest and resistance of peasant communities.

We are facing a legal system that is politicized and that works to impose the state policy of criminalization of social protest.

As a political prisoner, my hope for justice for myself and others and that our legal status before national and international standards can only be achieved with the support and solidarity of the trade union and social movement at a national and international level.

We also hope that an agreement reached on the issue of justice at the negotiating table in Havana will recognize that social leaders and trade unionists are not insurgents, that social struggle and critical thought are not crimes in a society that represents itself to the world as a democracy.

La Picota Men’s Prison, Bogotá, Sept. 2015

tinypet.org/pajerig

Continued from page 8

in the Aug. 9 vote was 18 percent, according to the CEP, and only 8 percent in the Department of the West.

Some 95 or so candidates are running for president. The first round of presidential voting will take place Oct. 25, which is also the second round of voting in the parliamentary elections. The CEP has been whittling away at the candidates, declaring one a Canadian citizen who is thus ineligible under the Haitian constitution. Another candidate, Jacky Lumacur, who poses a strong challenge to Martelly’s candidate, was kicked off the ballot because he didn’t submit a ballot because he didn’t submit a form he didn’t have a right to get. (Haïti Liberté, Aug. 20)

During recent years marking the departure of U.S. Ambassador Pamela White, it came out that the United States had donated $30 million to the Haitian elections to “ensure the results were predictable,” Ambassador White dismissed the problems with the Aug. 9 votes as minor glitches that didn’t affect the outcomes. She also pledged $5 million for the second round and the presidential contest.

The first presidential debate in the Haitian election took place not in Haiti, but on the campus of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 15.

With Haiti currently under military occupation by the U.N.’s Minustah operation, it is unlikely an election would pose the kind of challenge to imperialism that happened in the vote for Aristide in 1990. But Washington wants to ensure political struggles around the current elections don’t go further.
Youth of color abused under capitalism

Ahmed Mohamed is a ninth-grade student of Sudanese descent, who attended MacArthur High School in Irving, Texas. When he brought a digital clock he had made to his classroom on Sept. 14, police interrogated him, arrested him, took him away in handcuffs, fingerprinted him and the school administration suspended him for three days.

Why did this traumatic event happen to a young man considered by many to be a brilliant inventor? From initial reports, school officials, including Mohamed’s English teacher, said the clock looked like a “bomb.” Telling teachers it was not a bomb did not prevent the young student’s arrest. However, the trauma happened within days — this 14-year-old was targeted due to his nationality and his Muslim faith.

Mohamed Elhassan Mohamed, the youth’s father, stated that his son was a victim of Islamophobia. “He just wants to invent good things for mankind. But because his name is Mohamed and because of September 11, I think my son got mistreated.” (Washington Post, Sept. 16)

The Irving police, who originally asked him about his name during their interrogation, stated that Ahmed will be interrogated, arrested, fingerprinted and taken away right away. We will all take necessary precautions to protect our students and keep our school community as safe as possible.” (WaPo)

It’s outrageous that a student bringing an invention to school was deemed a “threat.”

However, there has been a lot of support and solidarity on Twitter at the hashtag #standwithAhmed, including from President Barack Hussein Obama, who has faced racism due to his name.

Indigenous youth targeted

Ahmed Mohamed is not the only youth of color who has been demonized by racism recently. Jakobe Sanden, a 7-year-old Indigenous youth, was sent to the principal’s office at his school in Santa Clara, Utah, during the week of Sept. 14 for having a traditional Mohawk haircut worn by his people, the Seneca Nation. Rex Wilkley, the assistant superintendent for primary education, wrote that Sanden’s haircut was “possibly in violation of the school district’s student grooming policy.” (WaPo, Sept. 19)

Such abuse suffered by Jakobe and Ahmed at their young ages can cause long-term psychological damage as adults.

Jakobe should be defended and supported for exhibiting his right to express pride in his Indigenous roots, as should Ahmed for his right to be Muslim without fear of reprisal.

The racist war against children, no matter their nationality, religion, status or age, can take many forms. Take the example of Tamir Rice, the 12-year-old African-American youth who was ruthlessly, fatally shot in Cleveland last November by white police officers. His crime? Having a fake BB gun. Tamir has become a poster child for the Black Lives Matter movement.

What ties millions of youth like Ahmed, Jakobe and Tamir together is that this capitalist system offers no viable future for them. For this reason alone, it cannot be reformed.

Ahmed Mohamed

By Phil Wilbayo
Richmond, Va.

Sept. 20 — When organizers of an international cycling race in Richmond, Va., the former capital of the Confederacy, were planning the event’s route, one of the things they said they considered was “showcasing the best the Richmond region has to offer.”

Then they did.

The UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) Road World Championships, one of the cycling world’s most prestigious events, had only been held once before in the United States. A series of races, one the nine-day event opened Sept. 19. More than 1,000 cyclists are expected to compete before 450,000 spectators and a worldwide television audience of 300 million.

“Richmond 2015,” the local organizing committee for the race, chose the more than 70-foot tall, city-owned monument honoring Jefferson Davis as the race’s halfway turning point. Davis was president of the Confederate States of America.

That means the committee chose a political entity formed to fight the right of slave owners to be slave owners to “showcase” Richmond.

The Davis monument is the largest of five that honor Confederate leaders on Richmond’s Monument Avenue, a broad residential boulevard listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Erected 25 years and more after the Civil War, the statues were meant to signal the return to power of the same white-supremacist Southern ruling class that was in power until 1865.

Besides Davis, the race route includes statues of Confederate generals Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart and Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson. All of these generals owned enslaved people. The route avoids the avenue’s one statue dedicated to an African American: Arthur Ashe, a tennis world champion. Ashe was a Richmond lover also known for his AIDS education work and active opposition to South Africa’s apartheid.

Far from a fringe group, Richmond 2015 is composed of Virginia’s corporate elite. Its four chairs are Gov. Terry McAuliffe, U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones — all Northern-born Democrats — and Thomas F. Farrell II, CEO of Dominion Resources, the state’s most politically powerful corporation.

Ana Edwards, who chairs the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project of the Richmond-based Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality, said her organization had asked the committee to move the race from Monument Avenue to save the city from an international embarrassment.

“They refused,” said Edwards, who counts among her ancestors two women sold from Richmond in the 1840s.

This is our heritage, this is who we are,” explained McAuliffe, a former chair of the Democratic National Committee who was born in Syracuse, N.Y.

The Defenders also wrote to the UCI International Committee in Europe, which did not respond.

Confederate symbols nurture racism

Edwards was the main speaker at a Defender-hosted press conference held Sept. 19 in front of the Davis monument.

More than 100 supporters attended.

“So we are here today to tell the world that most Richmonders do not support showcasing these monuments to Confederate military and political leaders during this world-famous sports event,” she said, “at a time when cities across the country are removing these symbols of the oppression of Black people precisely because they continue to contribute to the nurturing of racism in today’s world.”

Others speakers were Rebecca Wood, Keel of Black Lives Matter and Deric Beale of Virginia (“Fight for 825”).

Ravens Vs. Browns at Monument Avenue, Sept. 20

Ravens and Browns fans hung their signs on Monument Avenue near the U.S. Capitol.

The Defenders also produced a special edition of their quarterly newspaper, The Virginia Defender, explaining to visitors the significance of Monument Avenue. (www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com)

Helping to make the race route a national issue, the United National Antiracist Coalition set up an online petition supporting the position of the Defenders, a founding UNAC member organization.

A pro-Confederacy group, the Virginia Flaggers, short of forces to counterprotest the press conference on the ground, chose instead to hire a plane to fly with a Confederate flag above the site.

The Defenders have played a leading role in an ongoing campaign to prevent the mayor, backed by the governor, from building a baseball stadium in the heart of Shockoe Bottom. The two sides now have competing plans for the area’s development. For information, see SacredGroundProject.net.

PHOTO: PHIL WILAYTO
Ukraine’s Poroshenko: War criminal!

By Greg Butterfield

When Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko arrives in New York for the 70th United Nations General Assembly in late September, activists in solidarity with the Donbass People’s Republic and Ukraine’s left tend to protest against his plans to promote the illusion of autonomy to the rebellious Donbass mining region.

Besides demonizing Russia, these tales are meant to discredit the independent Donbass and Lugansk People’s Republics. People there voted overwhelmingly in 2014 for independence from the Ukraine government, which toppled the lawfully elected government of President Viktor Yanukovych in early 2014.

President Vladimir Putin will also be present in New York in his capacity as a full member of the UN’s Security Council. The trigger was a face-saving move by the pro-Russian Yanukovych government in the wake of its opposition’s popular uprising.

At the end of August, long-simmering tensions within the motley coalition of wealthy oligarchs, pro-Western neoliberal politicians and outright fascists that make up the pro-Western Ukrainian regime based in Kiev boiled over in an unprecedented wave of violence.

In Kiev, Ukraine, thousands of neo-Nazis staged a violent riot outside the Verkhovna Rada, or parliament, on Aug. 31. Two National Guard troops and one police officer were killed. Over 100 people were injured, including Deputy Interior Minister Vasyl Paskal. Thirty people were arrested.

Habor Holubnych, a National Guard officer, was also arrested for throwing a grenade that killed a fellow National Guard officer and a Sich battalion fighter, on leave from the [openly pro-fascist] Svoboda party memory. Holubnych confessed “and introduced himself as an anti-fascist rebel in the Donbass mining region.”

Democrat US aggression as in Syria.

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New Yorkers protest Kiev ultra-rightists here and plan to condemn Petro Poroshenko at U.N. on Sept. 29.

Infuriated by the current diplomatic maneuvering, they demand an immediate resumption of full-scale genocidal war against the rebellious Donbass and Lugansk republics — and against Russia too.

The Aug. 31 protest was led by the head of Svoboda, Oleg Tsyuhankov, a major figure in the 2013-2014 “Euro Maidan” movement that unseated Yanukovych. In the end, Poroshenko’s proposal was adopted by 265 deputies (out of 450) must be approved twice more before going into effect. (112.International, Sep. 2)

Service of Ukraine claims to have foiled the plot. (Fort Russ, Sept. 11)

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Draft constitutional changes

Ukraine junta in crisis: Behind the fascist riots in Kiev

By Greg Butterfield

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Photos quickly surfaced on social media

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Racismo y tenistas negras/os

La Estación de Radiodifusión Pública emitió recientemente un documental de "American Masters" sobre Richard Williams, padre de Venus y Serena Williams, quienes enfrentaron un tremendo racismo y prejuicio. Richard Williams, de la ciudad de Compton, California, es conocido por su disciplina y dedicación a enseñar a sus hijas, Venus y Serena, a jugar al tenis. Ambas hermanas Williams han enfrentado un horrores racismo junto con el de otras estrellas negras de tenis como Althea Gibson, que dominaron tanto en el tenis moderno como en el tenis moderno.

Las hermanas Williams comenzaron a jugar al tenis con la ayuda de su madre, Oracene Price, mientras aprendían a luchar por el derecho a ser reconocidas por sus habilidades, no por su raza. Serena Williams comenzó a jugar al tenis a la edad de seis años, y Serena y Venus Williams dominan ahora tanto como hacen en el mundo del tenis, no como negras. Cuando le preguntaron a cual atleta le gustó conocer hoy, Serena respondió "Muhammad Ali", debido a su postura heroica en 1967 cuando se negó a combatir en Vietnam.

James Blake: de pie mientras se es negro

El servicio secreto turco del director de Seguridad Nacional, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, respondió.

Régimen turco dispara contra kurdos e izquierdistas

Por John Catalinotto

El gobierno turco, así como elementos abiertamente fascistas, han abducido un amplio apartheid con luchas de izquierdas. El régimen de Ankara se ha comprometido a defender el interés racista de la población, no a defendiendo los derechos de los kurdos.

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