

WORKERS WORLD

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Before Congress votes, say No attack on Syria!

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 2 — Anti-war, anti-imperialist and Syrian-American organizations inside the U.S. all see the coming week as the last chance to mobilize popular resistance to a military strike on Syria. Polls show the people are very worried about the political and economic consequences of another costly war, but this sentiment must be organized to affect the outcome.

After postponing the U.S. attack on the Syrian people until a debate in Congress, which will open on Sept. 9, the administration has launched a “full-press campaign ... for Congressional approval of its plan to carry out” a strike against the Syrian people. (New York Times, Sept. 1) The anti-war movement aims to press back.

Along with the dozens of protests held last week in the U.S. and hundreds of others worldwide, the anti-attack forces have called three major actions in the next week. These involve local and regional protests on Saturday, Sept. 7, and, at the initiative of Syrian-American groups, a convergence on Monday, Sept. 9, at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Hundreds march against war in Times Square, Aug. 29.

MORE ON SYRIA

IAC calls ‘Hands off Syria!’ action Sept. 7

Under the slogan of “Hands off Syria! Not another war!” the International Action Center called on its supporters to build for and attend local demonstrations and a major regional action on Sept. 7 at 42nd Street and Seventh Avenue in New York at 1 p.m. The call urges activists: “Let’s make our voices heard before the U.S. Congressional war vote.” Readers can go to iacenter.org to endorse, support and find an action near them.

Among other actions that day is one called by the Answer Coalition for Washington, D.C., before the White House at noon.

Sara Flounders, a co-coordinator of the IAC, said her group was also supporting an initiative by the Syrian American Forum to hold a “Hands off Syria, Don’t bomb Syria” march on Washington on Sept. 9, when Congress is due to reconvene. The group, which also supports the Sept. 7 demonstrations, is organizing buses from the Midwest, South and other areas, including New York. See syrianamericanforum.com/.

The United National Antiwar Coalition has endorsed these and other actions, including a coordinated day of varied actions directed at Congress on Friday, Sept. 6, from 4 to 6 p.m. See unacpeace.org/ □

- ▶ Obama’s new war tactic
- ▶ Protests across U.S. get public support
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Fast-food workers in Durham, N.C., strike for a living wage.

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

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The struggle continues for women's equality

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

By Sue Davis

The date of Aug. 26 was named Women's Equality Day in 1971 because that's the day in 1920 when women, after years of intense struggle, finally won the right to vote with the passage of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution.

That date is deeply ironic this year, given the recent Supreme Court ruling striking down key provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

Already Texas and North Carolina have enacted severe restrictions on voting. Similar laws have already been passed in other states, so the ruling gives a green light for more. The ruling allows states to create obstacles that in effect deny voting rights to people of color, the elderly, youth and rural people the most — and to thousands of women in the process. It is a ruling that violates the 19th Amendment.

So it's hypocritical to commemorate Women's Equality Day when state and federal governments do not promote women's equality.

'Most misogynist U.S. governor'

Take the dirty deeds Texas Gov. Rick Perry has recently dealt women. Not only did Perry sign the Texas voting bill, but he vetoed a state bill mandating equal pay for women. (State bills, passed by 42 states, make it much less costly for women to bring discrimination suits in state court rather than in federal court.)

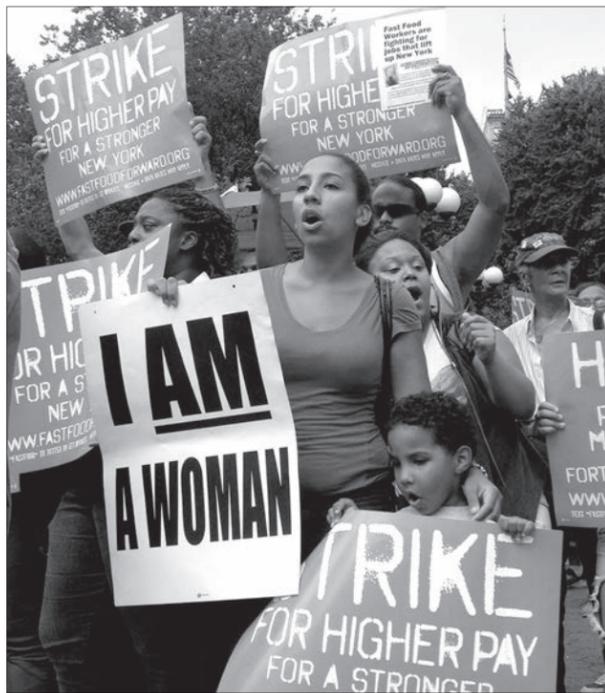
The Houston Chronicle revealed in early August that Perry had vetoed the bill after being lobbied by the Texas Retailers Association at the behest of million-dollar Macy's and Kroger Food stores. For that veto, Perry earns the title of "capitalist stooge."

For signing one of the most stringent anti-abortion laws in the nation, Perry wins the title of "most misogynist U.S. governor." The law will force 90 percent of abortion clinics in Texas — all but five out of 42 — to close because they do not meet totally irrelevant physical requirements as ambulatory health centers.

That means thousands of poor women, mostly those affected by the voting law, will also be denied many additional life-saving health care services provided at women's clinics. What adds luster to Perry's misogynist crown is that he has also refused to expand Medicaid coverage to people in Texas as mandated by Obamacare, denying thousands of needy women no-cost health care coverage.

State governors in Wisconsin, North Carolina, Ohio and Colorado are runners up in the misogynist category, since they also signed laws limiting women's right to legal abortion. According to a Guttmacher report released July 8, states adopted 43 restrictions on access to abortion in the first half of 2013 — as many as enacted in all of 2012.

On June 18, the House of Representatives passed a bill (228-196) that would restrict abortions after 22 weeks on the unscientific supposition that a fetus feels pain at that point in its development. Since it is a direct challenge to the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, the bill will never be passed by the Senate. The impetus for it, as noted by many sources, was to "energize" the Republicans' Tea Party base — as if limiting women's rights was an invigorating, kick-ass sport.



WW PHOTO: TERESA GUTIERREZ

Fast food workers on one-day strike, New York, July 29.

Women rising up

The fact that Sen. Wendy Davis conducted an 11-hour filibuster to try to stop the anti-abortion bill inspired a pro-choice upsurge lasting days at the Texas Capitol. Thousands of women, many wearing orange shirts, converged on Austin, with 1,200 signing up to testify at hearings against the bill on July 2. Meanwhile, 5,000 pro-choice protesters demonstrated outside. Their activism inspired women in states like Wisconsin and North Carolina to likewise defend their right to legal abortion.

One of the most far-reaching signs of an upsurge of women fighting for equality is their participation in the movement to end poverty-level wages in the fast-food industry. Strikes at places like McDonald's, Burger King and Wendy's have mushroomed from seven cities a month ago to about 60 cities on Aug. 29. And it's women, often single mothers, who are leading chants like "We can't survive on \$7.25!" Women are also demanding living wages and benefits at Walmart.

Taking note of that and of the fact that women are now 49 percent of the workforce, with an increasing number being their families' primary breadwinners, the AFL-CIO, in preparation for its Los Angeles convention Sept. 8-12, held several sessions for women workers to discuss their most pressing issues. The list included things like good paying jobs for all; equal pay for equal work; paid family leave; and quality, free education, child care and health care with the full range of reproductive justice issues, including no discrimination against lesbians, transwomen and women with disabilities. These are topics the women's movement has demanded action on over the past 40 years.

What's significant is that the organized labor movement appears, at long last, to be seriously listening to women. But it will take a long, hard, united fight to destroy capitalism, an economic system based on oppression and exploitation, before U.S. women can truly celebrate equality.

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'Justice for Trayvon Martin'

Peoples Power Assemblies go national, build unity against racism, poverty and war

By LeiLani Dowell

Events were held around the country on Aug. 28, the date of the racist murder of Emmett Till in 1955 and the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.

Organized by the Peoples Power Assembly movement as "Justice for Trayvon Martin Assemblies," they demanded an end to the war against youth of color, connected that domestic war to the impending threat of a new U.S. war against Syria, and provided a step forward in uniting different sections of the working class to build a movement fighting for the interests of the people.

More than 200 people rallied in **Oakland, Calif.**, at Oscar Grant Plaza in an action initiated by the Peoples Power Assemblies and the Hip Hop Caucus Virtual Town Hall. Cat Brooks of the Onyx Organizing Committee chaired the rally, and speakers included Cephus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson, Oscar Grant's uncle; Elaine Brown, former Black Panther Party chair; Jeralynn Blueford, Alan Blueford's mother; Minister Keith Muhammad of the Nation of Islam; Berta Hernandez of Dignidad y Resistencia; and Andre Dawkins, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board member.

Black youth participated strongly in the event, including wonderful entertainment from City of Oakland Youth Poet Laureate Obasi Davis, Youth Together and Young Oakland. The youth then led a spirited march all the way to Lil' Bobby Hutton Park in West Oakland. The lead banner called for "Justice for Trayvon."

Despite consistent rain, around 60 young people, students and community members marched through the Center City neighborhood of **Philadelphia**. Ewure Osyande, author of "Stand Our Ground: Poems for Trayvon Martin and Marissa Alexander," opened the march with his own poetry, then engaged the crowd with a fiery speech. Shakur Miller, a student with Youth United for Change, spoke courageously on the struggle of young people of color in Philadelphia, saying, "I hate when the melanin in my skin is mistaken for ignorance and criminality." Pam Africa, in her typical fiery brilliance, spoke on the need for young people to stay strong to defeat the system that undervalues the lives of young people of color.

The march was the first action organized by the Philadelphia Peoples Power Assembly. Darasia Selby-Adebisi, an Assembly organizer and member of Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, said, "I was really impressed by the youth that came; not only just their numbers, but their energy and their level of awareness of issues that impact their lives was amazing."

"This demonstration was just the beginning of the work for the Peoples Power Assembly. Many individuals and organizations came together to make this demonstration and that's what the Peoples Power Assembly is about: uniting people to bring practical change to our community," concluded Selby-Adebisi.

The march ended at a busy Center City shopping mall, where speakers denounced the impending U.S. war on Syria. Students spoke on the impact of 24 school closings and the layoffs of 3,500 school staff, demanding the right for



Philadelphia

CREDITS
LEFT PHOTO: DONNELL REGISTERS
CENTER PHOTO: AL OSORIO
LOWER - WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL



Young Oakland, Calif. performers.

young people to an education.

In **Providence, R.I.**, the largest march with an African-American majority in decades was held Aug. 28. Marchers gathered on Dr. Martin Luther King Bridge, in the shadow of the Rhode Island Statehouse. Before stepping off they listened to the words of Wayne Woods, Defend 'The Dream' organizer, as he rededicated the bridge to Dr. King and his struggle to end racism, poverty and war.

From the back of a sound truck, Woods led marchers in chants, interspersed with deejay Eric Palmer's magical mix of King's "I Have A Dream" speech and singer Curtis Mayfield's "Keep On Pushin." A giant orange banner saying "Justice for Trayvon! End Racism! Fin al Racismo!" took up the whole street.

The march swelled to 200 as it looped through Kennedy Plaza downtown, where hundreds were waiting for buses. Members of UNITE HERE Local 217, who are fighting for a union contract, joined the march at the Renaissance Hotel.

Other organized labor participants included American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 94 President J. Michael Downey; Scott Duhamel of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades and the Rhode Island Building Trades Council; Michael Araujo, International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 23; Lenny Corrente and Manuel Marques, Laborers' International Union of North America Local 271; a representative of the Bricklayers and Allied Trades, rank-and-file members of postal worker unions, and members and staff of Jobs with Justice.

The march was followed by an MLK All Peoples Assembly. Speakers included Malcus Mills, event organizer and DARE member; Courtney Smith, organizer, UNITE HERE Local 217; Joseph P. Buchanan, event organizer and long-time community activist; Matthew Thomas, Chief Sachem of the Narragansett Indian Tribe; and Bill Bateman, event organizer and Chair of the RI Unemployed Council.

Theresa Price of the RI Peoples Assembly gave a history of the 1963 march. Then she and other speakers took turns condemning the failure of the U.S. government and society to fulfill "the dream," and explained the capitalist system's need to maintain racism, poverty and war as tools to divide and conquer the labor, land and resources of the peoples of this country and the world.

In **New York City**, a march targeting several police precincts wound its way from Harlem to the Bronx. A multinational, multigenerational group of several hundred people demanded an end to the New York Police Department's vicious



New York City

"stop-and-frisk" policy, and along the route called out the names of Black youth slain by the NYPD: Ramarley Graham, Kimani Grey and many more.

Peoples Power Assemblies were held in both Harlem and at the closing rally in the Bronx, where community members told about their experiences with the police, about the need to fight back against austerity measures like the closing of hospitals and schools, and about U.S. imperialism's latest deadly threats against Syria.

At the **Boston** Workers Alliance mobilization on Aug. 28, a coalition of neighborhood organizations, base-building community groups, labor unions, civil rights organizations and faith communities gathered to "re-remember, re-imagine, and relive" King's march. The mobilization, which numbered in the hundreds, included the Boston Peoples Power Assembly, Team Solidarity and USW 8751 Boston School Bus Union.

The featured speaker of the day was Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner. It was Turner's first public appearance since his nearly 3-year-long unjust incarceration in federal prison as a result of an ugly, racist, politically motivated frame-up. Turner condemned the capitalist system and called for a new fight for economic justice involving African Americans, Latinos/as, Asians and working class whites.

Community members in **Rockford, Ill.**, held a "March for Jobs and Justice" on Aug. 28. Roughly 30 people in this impoverished city marched downtown rally-

ing at multiple "Justice" system locations. They were joined by more people when they reached police headquarters, located across from the main bus terminal. The march continued to its final destination, Rockford's new Federal Courthouse.

Speakers there commemorated the historical significance of marching on Aug. 28. Issues raised included the funding of poor and oppressed communities, how structural racism has denied people of color the means of subsistence, the threat of a U.S. war on Syria, and the need for a united fight back against attacks on all poor and working people.

Bill Bateman, Tommy Cavanaugh, LeiLani Dowell, Terri Kay, Frank Neisser and Scott Williams contributed to this report.

On the 5th Anniversary of the Federal \$700 Billion Bank Bailout ...
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McDonald's and Wendy's workers rally together in San Diego.

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

With one-day strike for \$15 an hour Fast-food workers shut it down!

By Kathy Durkin

Fast-food workers turned off the grills, closed the cash registers and walked off their jobs on Aug. 29 to demand a living wage and the right to unionize. Thousands of workers in 60 cities, from Boston to San Diego and Raleigh, N.C., to Oakland, Calif., staged a one-day strike at 1,000 restaurants — the largest such action ever held in this industry.

This nationally coordinated strike day was the latest in a series of job actions in the 10-month campaign launched by community, faith-based and labor organizations, including the Service Employees union. Many fast-food workers are Black and Latino/a. Most earn the federal minimum hourly wage of \$7.25 or close to it. They are demanding that McDonald's, Burger King, Wendy's, Yum Brand and their other corporate employers pay them \$15 an hour. The Fight for \$15 campaign is gaining strength and support.

It's noteworthy that the strikers' numbers are growing and that these walkouts extended to southern and western regions of the U.S. — a first. On July 29, these job actions had occurred in just seven cities. The momentum has picked up as workers feel their power in unity and action and they attract more solidarity.

Most fast-food workers must work two jobs or even more to feed and house their families. They don't receive automatic raises and frequently are stuck with the same wages and the same dead-end jobs for years after their hiring date.

Meanwhile, the fast-food industry annually rakes in \$200 billion in revenue. These corporate tycoons reap profits by superexploiting their workers, paying them starvation wages. Today, as company earnings rise, the share going to wages is decreasing.

This makes the fast-food workers' struggle for decent wages an urgent necessity. Risking firing from jobs they desperately need, these workers are courageously standing up and asserting their demands. Their allies and other workers know this, as support is building for their just cause.

Highlights of Aug. 29 one-day strike

Chanting "On strike! Shut 'em down! Boston is a union town!" strikers and their allies closed down a



Domino's workers in New York make strike a family affair.

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Burger King and Wendy's for hours in Copley Square, Boston, and then caravanned — with a school bus and sound truck — to a Roxbury Burger King. There, Nation of Islam's Minister Don Muhammad led a strong strike support rally. Black and Latino/a strikers and relatives heard him report that he told management, "You need to negotiate with the workers now, or get the hell out of the Black community!" Strikers marched to bolster Dorchester and Roslindale strikers.

At Boston Common, Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Steve Tolman, SEIU organizers and other labor, civil rights and anti-war activists cheered and thanked the strikers for bravely defying the fast-food giants. They called for a minimum wage increase now, contrasting it to restaurant megaprofits.

City Councilor Tito Jackson and Mass Uniting organizer Darrin Howell led 250 angry workers into the Tremont Street McDonald's. They threatened strikes if the owners don't respond to the workers. At nearby Burger King, they delivered an unfair labor practice charge and insisted on no retaliation against Kyle King, 47, an African-American cashier who was suspended for strike support. King, whose hourly pay in-

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Low-wage workers picket Oakland Airport.

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

On the picket line

by Sue Davis

Walmart warehouse workers win raises, benefits

After an unrelenting two-year struggle, the 75 workers at the Walmart warehouse in Mira Loma, Calif., won a pay increase in mid-August from \$8.50 an hour to \$13.50 (a whopping 60 percent increase), health insurance, and paid sick days and vacations. How did these mostly immigrant, officially unorganized workers do it? By taking united actions — strikes, protests and lawsuits — as though they were in a union. Aided by Warehouse Workers United, which is backed by Change to Win, these workers filed a lawsuit two years ago against Schneider Logistics, charging wage theft amounting to millions in unpaid wages. Walmart had hired Schneider to run its huge warehouse (the size of 26 football fields), and Schneider in turn subcontracted with temp agencies to hire the workers. But all those maneuvers to cheat the workers changed after the lawsuit was filed and the federal judge hearing the case added Walmart as a defendant. That exposed Walmart's role in hiring layers of contractors as a way to duck legal responsibility for the super-abusive working conditions. Now the workers are no longer temps, but direct employees of Schneider, and Walmart is legally named as an employer as well. Though union recognition is still to come, the workers' united, persistent actions exposing capitalist greed and exploitation prove, once again, that the only way to win rights is to fight back. (In These Times, Aug. 21, and laborforumwrfg.podomatic.com, a radio interview by Workers World correspondent Dianne Mathiowetz)

California port truck drivers stage one-day strike

Truck drivers at the Port of Long Beach went on strike Aug. 26 because their employer, Green Fleet Systems, had been thwarting their right to unionize. The 24-hour strike was followed by a rally the next day with labor leaders and elected officials. The drivers say Green Fleet has hired union busters to intimidate drivers seeking to join Teamsters Local 848. In a complaint filed with the National Labor Relations Board in March, the Teamsters Port Division reported that a Green Fleet supervisor asked a driver to sign an anti-union petition in exchange for promises of better pay and benefits if the workers didn't join the union. The strike was called as part of week-long actions by low-wage workers, which culminated in the Aug. 29 national strike of workers at fast-food restaurants in 60 cities. (latimes.com, Aug. 26)

Protesting Trans-Pacific Partnership

Hundreds of labor, fair trade, environmental and community activists marched through downtown Minneapolis on Aug. 20 to protest the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a massive trade deal that could jeopardize U.S. jobs, wages, consumer safety, health care and environmental standards. The U.S. and 11 other countries bordering the Pacific Ocean met that week to discuss what could be the largest trade agreement in U.S. history. But the only people at the negotiating table were, not surprisingly, corporate lobbyists and government officials — not groups fighting for workers, public health, environmental regulations and consumer protections. While the draft of the agreement has not been made public, leaked documents reveal proposals that would grant multinational corporations new political powers, ration lifesaving medicines, extend restrictive intellectual property laws and more. En route to the rally, protesters stopped outside U.S. Bank and Verizon facilities — two of the many corporate "trade advisors" involved in the talks — to expose their avaricious role in the TPP. (mnaflcio.org, Aug. 21)

Maine Lobstering Union forms

Let's welcome a new frontier in labor organizing: the Maine Lobstering Union. "It was time," said lobster worker Magnus Lane, who called together dozens of these workers from all over Maine to formally establish a union, pay union dues and nominate officers in Bangor on Aug. 11. "I've been talking this talk for a long time, but the timing of what happened last year, and the excuses we got for our terrible prices were too much for me." Fellow worker Erick Blackwood added, "Not only prices were a problem, but everything going on in Augusta [the state capital of Maine] too. We had rules and regulations shoved down our throats without even knowing about them. Not anymore though. We're in the conversation now." (blog.aflcio.org, Aug. 19) □

Will changes in AFL-CIO aid workers' struggles?

Taken from a speech by Workers World Party First Secretary Larry Holmes to a WWP forum in New York City on Aug. 22.

The AFL-CIO leadership says its Sept. 8 through 11 convention will be an important landmark, where they will discuss changing their whole orientation. When organized labor, as represented by the AFL-CIO or SEIU or Change to Win, is seen as moderate, conservative, out of sync with the needs of especially the most oppressed workers, what can working-class militants and activists expect to happen?

It is essential that the Party and worker organizers appreciate what these changes mean. Our conception of the working class must be revolutionary and not stationary. Organized labor is entering a transitional phase. So many things are in a transitional phase, including the death agony of this horrible global capitalist system.

The phase is going to be long and uneven. Workers in the public and private sectors will continue to fight defensive battles — “Save our pensions, don’t close our school, save our health care, don’t bust our union, reverse this anti-union law, reverse what they did in Michigan and Wisconsin.”

But the labor movement can re-emerge from this transitional phase in a radically different organizational form, and it must change ideologically.

These changes are being compelled by changes in global capitalism itself.

Marx on tasks of trade unions

I will read excerpts from a speech Karl Marx gave in 1866 at one of the first meetings to organize the First International. His remarks apply today.

Marx calls the unions, “Too exclusively bent upon local and immediate struggles with capital.”

We are not against local and immediate struggles with capital. Usually class consciousness develops on a local basis before it develops on a larger basis, and it is usually around immediate needs. But Comrade Marx tells us that we must also be concerned about the larger picture, not only nationally, but globally.

Marx again: “The Trades’ Unions have not yet fully understood their power of acting against the system of wage slavery itself. They therefore kept too much aloof from general social and political movements.”

Think of our own experiences when we try to get active participation — not just an endorsement — against something like the war on youth, or the LGBTQ struggle. The unions always seem to have their own interests, which are separate and apart from the general interests of

the entire movement.

This is Marx on the future of labor. He could be talking about the present:

“Apart from their original purposes, the trade unions must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the entire working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation.”

We should continue to support the union struggles but we should never forget Comrade Marx’s advice. A lot of trade unionists, even progressive trade unionists, have forgotten it.

Talking about organized labor, Marx says, “Considering themselves as acting as the champions and representatives of the whole working class, they cannot fail to enlist the non-society.”

“Non-society” is the unemployed. You have no standing if you are unemployed. His advice was to embrace the unemployed.

The organized labor movement needs to solidarize itself with the millions of young workers who are either unemployed, underemployed, part time or temporary, and particularly those who are more likely to wind up in prison.

The unions could call a march and invest the considerable union dues from workers who are able to pay dues in such a project. Not just out of altruism, but as a way to embrace the plight of youth in a meaningful way.

This is an act of self-defense because history has taught us that if labor doesn’t embrace the unemployed — another class will.

And he goes on to talk about the need to embrace migrant workers and especially the very poor. We would include women, the service sector and finally “to convince the world at large [not just the neighborhood, the city or the state or country] that far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions.”

Aims of working-class movement must change

The aims, methods and ideology of the working-class movement cannot be static. They change as the capitalist mode of production changes on a global basis and as the reorganization of the working class on a global basis under capitalism and imperialism changes.

The old way was to get contracts where possible, union representation, and then, from contract to contract, struggle with the boss to win a somewhat better share of what we call the surplus value that workers create. Then you sign the contract and you go back to work.

The problem is this requires capitalist stability. Instead, we face a global capitalist crisis that is both unprecedented and permanent and only likely to get worse.

I think for some time now there has

been an illusion of capitalist stability because the bourgeoisie, through the Federal Reserve and other central banks in Europe and Asia, have been pumping trillions of dollars into the financial markets, making a lot of rich people richer.

But the problem is — this is the contradiction they are coming to terms with — pumping all this money into the market has not changed the deepening crisis of overproduction. We face a possible return to what happened in 2008 — the collapse of the financial market, or maybe even worse.

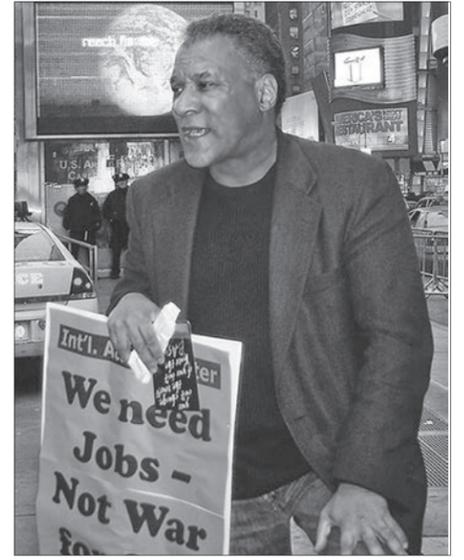
The conditions that the working class must fight under have changed. Many workers face depression-level unemployment, underemployment, outsourcing. Jobs move from continent to continent with the push of a button. Technology has had a radical effect on capitalist production.

There is a complete reorganization of work. Bosses can make workers compete not only with those next door but those in real time tens of thousands of miles away. The world is small. Athens, Greece, is no longer 6,000 miles away politically — it is New Jersey.

The old way, with the old aims that organized labor tried to function under, are gone and are not coming back. It does not mean that organized labor won’t try to pursue those old methods. But over time there will have to be a transition to organizing larger sections of the working class. The mass organization of larger and larger sections of the working class to fight in their interests should be central to any program.

The organized labor movement must of course defend those workers who are organized, fight the attacks on pensions and health care, fight union busting, and fight second — and third-tier wages. But with the overwhelming majority of our class nonunionized and often jobless — many undocumented, those under 30 condemned to no future — the labor movement has to transition to fight also for workers who are not in the organized labor movement. Not to do this is suicidal.

Consider some of [AFL-CIO head Richard] Trumka’s ideas. Deepen their alliance with bourgeois progressive groups like the NAACP, the National Organization for Women and the Sierra Club, that fights around the environment.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Larry Holmes at a Times Square rally in New York City.

He is so concerned that the AFL-CIO, if it does not change, could get isolated from other sections of the movement that he is willing to invite these groups onto the Executive Board, without paying dues, without a traditional union and to help the AFL-CIO figure out a strategy.

This is a current debate. Also, they are deepening their debate on how to deal with those sectors of our class who are not unionized and not in a position to have a union contract any time in the near future, if ever.

The union leaders worry that these workers won’t be able to give money to the Democratic Party. Can they even pay dues? But there are so many tens of millions of workers who don’t have a contract. The labor movement can’t ignore them.

Traditionally, organized labor has not paid much attention to workers in low-wage jobs. They felt that Wendy’s, McDonald’s, Pizza Hut, Starbucks, big-box store workers like Walmart were a waste of time to organize. But now they don’t have the luxury to organize manufacturing workers or the big service industries.

A few years ago the AFL-CIO set up what they call “Working America.” I think they say on their website that it has some 750,000 members. It was a way to bring workers who have no relationship to a union into the labor movement.

Trumka and others propose they help in organizing drives. If just 10 percent of them become organizers, that would mean 75,000 new activists supporting fast-food workers, workers at Walmart, immigrant workers. Imagine if they were on the streets, instead of supporting the Democratic Party or sitting at home.

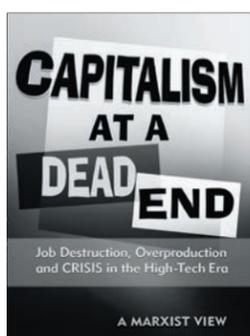
We don’t say the developments in the AFL-CIO are revolutionary. We do say they open the possibility for struggle and revolutionaries must pay attention to them. □



WW PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

A delegation from Community-Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services attended the national convention of Postal Office Women for Equal Rights, held at the National Association of Letter Carriers headquarters in New York on Aug. 24. The CLUPJS members saluted the work of POWER in affirming and advancing women in the workplace and fighting to save the U.S. Postal Service, which is in danger of being privatized. In a statement, they said: “Women’s leadership and sensitivity to women’s needs are critical at this time when the union movement must rebuild itself from the bottom up. That means organizing women workers, especially women of

color, single mothers and youth, who are often forced to take part-time or temporary jobs at poverty-level wages with no benefits. All workers must be guaranteed the right to jobs at living wages, with free health care and affordable housing and education.” □



Capitalism at a Dead End
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to www.LowWageCapitalism.com. Books are available at Amazon and other bookstores.

Faced with mass skepticism

Obama pushes war on Syria with ne

BULLETIN:

Another step to war

On Sept. 3, Republican senators John McCain and Lindsay Graham, brokers for the Pentagon hawks, met with President Obama and came away saying that they now support plans for missile strikes against Syria. Graham said the attacks were going to be “a little more robust” than he had thought. There was talk of attacks on Syrian aircraft, artillery and rockets, and assurances from Obama that the attacks would be aimed at “shifting the momentum on the battlefield.” McCain called the meeting “encouraging” and said it would be “catastrophic” not to support the strikes.

This message signifies a convergence between the Obama administration and the aggressive militarists in the Pentagon and the ruling class. It is another dangerous step toward a military adventure.

— F.G.

By Fred Goldstein

President Barack Obama and his administration are demanding that Congress underwrite a military adventure that will bring death and destruction to the Syrian masses, despite all the smooth, sanitizing phrases about so-called precision cruise missile “surgical strikes,” “limited targets,” and “deter and degrade.”

The intended attack on Syria holds the potential to trigger a much wider conflict, which will bring suffering and hardship not only to the people of the Middle East but to the workers and the oppressed in the U.S.

The whole world expected Obama to announce missile strikes on Syria on Aug. 31. But at the last minute he decided to opt for the tactic of dragging Congress into an endorsement intended to legitimize an act of imperialist aggression that has already been decided upon.

The fact that his move to take it to Congress has become controversial is a measure of the degree to which the Pentagon and previous presidents have obliterated constitutional legality, which says clearly that only Congress can declare war. But in his speech, Obama did not formally surrender the right to make war without congressional authority, he only said it would produce a “stronger” mandate — if the Congress does what it is legally required to do and votes on the question.

For the anti-imperialist movement, the most significant political development to emerge from the crisis is this: The material basis of popular support for imperialist war has been eroded by previous wars and by the devastating global economic crisis.

This stratagem of pressuring Congress into becoming an open accomplice to a military strike was made necessary when the attempt to drum up support for war with a battery of lies alleging Syrian government chemical warfare “atrocities” flopped.

Danger signals from London

A powerful signal of impending U.S. isolation came when the British Parliament voted against participating in the attack. The British capitalist government, which during the Iraq war was called a “U.S. poodle” by the British masses, backed away from being drawn into the U.S. military adventure.

In addition, the German imperialists distanced themselves from the adventure. NATO will not go along. The normally docile Arab League did not endorse the strikes. The U.N. Security Council would not endorse the strikes. And the ruling class in the U.S. is divided over what to do.

Only the French imperialists, the former colonial rulers of Syria with strong interests in the country, were willing to endorse the attack.

This time around, the imperialist allies are afraid of being dragged into a U.S. military adventure at a time when the working classes of the capitalist world are suffering mass unemployment, declining wages, growing poverty and inequality. The U.S. has engaged in at least three major wars in the last decade and the population knows that trillions of dollars have been spent on these military adventures. Yet austerity for the workers is deepening as the criminal bankers and bosses pile up record profits and incomes.

Still in the minds of the masses are images of former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell standing before the United Nations on Feb. 5, 2003, pointing to charts, reports and satellite photos that allegedly proved the existence of “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq. They also haunt the minds of bourgeois politicians, like former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose reputations and/or careers were ruined because they hitched themselves to the fraudulent deceptions of the U.S. imperialist establishment. Ten more years of war followed the Powell speech.

Flash forward to today. The allies all know that U.S. charges defy all logic and they fear future exposure. The Syrian government would not gas its own people — right in the suburbs of the capital, Damascus — at the very moment that it welcomed U.N. inspectors on to the site of the alleged attack. Nor would it resort to such weapons at the moment when it is making military progress against the counterrevolutionary forces.

In the struggle for world support, it would be suicidal for the government in Damascus to risk alienating world opinion by carrying out such an act. No one in the Middle East, except for the puppet governments of the Arab League and other allies of U.S. imperialism, even pretends to believe it.

The only one to benefit from such an act, if it took place, would be Washington, which has long planned to overthrow the government in Damascus and now feels it necessary to carry out direct military aggression, after all else failed.

Masses suffering from ‘intervention fatigue’

The Wall Street Journal of Sept. 2 aptly quoted James Lindsay, a former Clinton administration official: “The public has a clear case of intervention fatigue after 12 years of engagement overseas, the longest stretch in U.S. history.”

In fact, a Reuters/Ipsos poll taken the week that all the horrific reports of alleged Syrian atrocities were headlined in the capitalist media said that only 9 percent of respondents were for military intervention.

Rumors about a difficult upcoming vote for the strikes in Congress are being attributed to partisanship, factionalism, etc. But politics aside, in spite of the pressure for war, the politicians still need to get elected and many may not want to be tied to another disastrous military adventure.

For the anti-imperialist movement, the most significant political development to emerge from this crisis is this: The material basis of popular support for imperialist war has been eroded by previous wars and by the devastating global economic crisis.

This greatly strengthens the long-term prospects for mobilizing the masses against the Pentagon’s adventures, in Syria or elsewhere. The hawks in the Pentagon are moving in the opposite direction than the masses of people, and a clash is inevitable.

‘Chemical weapons’ frame-up long in making

There is a tendency in the capitalist media to call Obama inept for getting the U.S. into a bind. The fact is that the foundation of this crisis was laid back in March 2011, when Washington decided to foment an anti-government opposition in Syria with the aim of overthrowing the sovereign government of Bashar al-Assad.

In August 2011, after consultations at the highest level, with the hawkish secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, playing a leading role, Obama announced that President Assad had to go. In quick succession, British Prime Minister David Cameron, French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German President Angela

Merkel followed suit, calling for Assad to step down.

This was a definitive signal that U.S. imperialism intended to go all the way with “regime change” in Syria.

Washington and the Pentagon undoubtedly thought this was going to be easily achieved. But exactly one year after saying Assad must go, the government in Damascus was still there and fighting off the imperialist-sponsored counterrevolutionaries as well as the al-Nusra jihadists.

Thus, on Aug. 20, 2011, the Obama administration rolled out the “chemical weapons” frame-up plan. Obama, based on nothing, announced out of the blue that if Damascus used chemical weapons, it would have crossed a “red line” and changed his “calculus.” Such warnings and subsequent lies about the use of chemical weapons were repeated over and over by the administration and in the capitalist media, laying the groundwork for this latest frame-up.

What triggered this talk of chemical weapons was the military progress that the Assad forces were making against the reactionary forces, who were also suffering splits on the ground. This frame-up was prepared long in advance, and it is part of a larger goal of destroying the government of Syria.

War against Syria as preparation for wider war

But the war against Syria and the preparation for intervention must be seen as part of a broader Pentagon strategy. Syria is the front line of a de facto alliance of the forces of resistance to imperialism in the Middle East, including Hezbollah and Iran.

Many hawks in the Pentagon and in the capitalist government have wanted to attack Iran ever since it announced its nuclear program. Hezbollah delivered a defeat to the Israeli Zionist state and has played a key role in helping the Syrian government take back territory from the so-called “Free Syrian Army,” which is an instrument of the Pentagon and the CIA.

Russia has supported Syria diplomatically and militarily. Furthermore, Syria is Russia’s primary ally in the Middle East and, with Iran, one of only two countries in the region where Russian warships can dock. This relationship goes back to the days of the USSR and has been continued by the present reactionary capitalist leaders of Russia on a pragmatic basis since the overthrow of the Soviet Union.

In addition to supporting Syria, Russia, in defiance of Washington, has given refuge to Edward Snowden, the whistleblower who exposed the global spy network of the National Security Agency. In addition, President Vladimir Putin has been persecuting pro-U.S. businessmen and politicians in Russia. There has also been antagonism over the U.S. anti-ballistic missile systems and other issues.

On different levels, the war against Syria is both a war and an opener for a wider war, a proxy war against Iran, Hezbollah and Russia. The aim is to overthrow the Syrian government, break up the nexus of resistance which centers on Damascus, set up a regime that would threaten Hezbollah, close down Russia’s naval facility and port privileges, and drive the Russians out of the country. And this could set the stage for U.S. aggression against Iran.

This is the broader geopolitics of the struggle against Syria.

Syria and post-Soviet era of ‘reconquest’

This broader struggle must be understood in terms of the nature of imperi-



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

ew tactic

alism. It is a permanently aggressive, war-like and expansionary system, as Vladimir Lenin described in his classic work, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," written in 1916.

Syria is one of a number of countries that achieved independence and were able to partially or fully break with imperialism during the Soviet era. With all its contradictions, the Soviet Union was an alternative socialist system that was antagonistic to imperialism and gave varying degrees of economic, political and military support and protection to oppressed countries struggling for independence. The very existence of the USSR made it possible for hundreds of millions of people to break with imperialism.

The collapse of the USSR set the stage for the imperialists to try to take back all the territory and influence that they had lost during the three-quarters of a century marking the Soviet era.

The post-Soviet era has been the era of reconquest. This is what has driven imperialist war and intervention since the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe — just as the Cold War and the struggle between the two antagonistic social systems drove imperialist war and militarism after World II. And it was the struggle among the imperialist powers for domination of the globe that drove the two world wars in the first half of the 20th century.

This is what accounts for the wars against Yugoslavia, Iraq, Yemen and Libya, the permanent threats to Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and now the war against Syria.

Capitalist politics as the art of deception

Capitalist politics is the art of deception and, above all, deceiving the masses. When the decision to go to war approaches, the level of deception reaches staggering heights.

No one should be deceived for a moment by the lies told by Obama, Secretary of State John Kerry and the entire capitalist media, which are beginning to march

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Times Square, New York

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



San Diego

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

Coast-to-coast protests hit U.S. plans to attack Syria

By John Catalinotto

On Aug. 28, with Washington, London and Paris apparently on the verge of opening up another very unpopular and dangerous war by firing missiles at Syria, anti-war activists in the U.S. and around the world went to the streets before the rockets were launched.

The demonstrations were just the tiny tip of an enormous iceberg of popular opposition in each of the imperialist countries. By Sept. 1, British Prime Minister David Cameron had lost a vote in Parliament backing the war. President Barack Obama, with nearly no international backing, had announced he would ask the U.S. Congress for the support he lacked.

By a count of the listings on the United National Antiwar Coalition's website, by Sept. 1 there were at least 70 demonstrations, vigils or meetings in at least 50 U.S. cities. (unacpeace.org)

Reports from around the country — from Newark, N.J., to Dearborn, Mich., and Oakland, Calif. — showed that, while the protests were not as large as those leading up to the 2003 war on Iraq, they easily won the solidarity of those passing by.

In New York City on Aug. 29, hundreds of demonstrators, including a strong group of Syria-origin people from Allentown, Pa., marched for two hours to the beat of drums in and around the construction-disrupted streets of Times Square. They often blocked traffic as they



Los Angeles

PHOTO: MIKE CHICKEY

chanted, "U.S., NATO, hands off Syria!" The International Action Center and the Syrian American Forum initiated the action. Other groups also built and joined it.

Weaving through the congested sidewalks, the protesters came in close contact with the diverse Times Square crowd, arousing many friendly reactions and few hostile ones.

On Aug. 29 at the Westwood Federal Building in Los Angeles, hundreds called out by Arab Americans for Syria and the Syrian American Forum, along with the International Action Center, BAYAN-USA, the Union of Progressive Iranians, SOA Watch-LA, the Puerto Rican Alliance and UNAC-LA, demanded no bomb-

ing or rocket attacks on Syria.

Nearly 100 demonstrators in Seattle made their opposition to a bombing escalation against Syria very visible as the youthful marchers, including many from the Syrian community, marched across downtown from the Federal Building to the Westlake Center and back again on Aug. 31.

In San Diego, members of Workers World Party distributed the party's newspaper to Saturday park goers at famous Balboa Park as well as participants in a spirited rally demanding no U.S. attack on Syria. A banner reminded everyone of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assessment of U.S. militarism 46 years ago: "The greatest purveyor of violence in the world today

Continued on page 9

Thousands of actions

Worldwide protests reject U.S. attacks on Syria

By G. Dunkel

Thousands of protests throughout the world since Aug. 21 — from street demonstrations to public statements and resolutions — have rejected the projected U.S. attack on Syria.

Big-business media like the New York Times have attempted to minimize or ignore these protests. The semiofficial TV5 in France has shown protests in other countries, mainly the United States, while ignoring the ones in France. This station avoids exposing the "Socialist" Party now running the French government. The SP has a long history of supporting French imperialism.

The New York Times of Sept. 2 showed two examples of the paper's approach to these protests.

The article on the German elections mentioned, "Ms. Merkel stated more clearly than she had before that Germany would play no part in any military response to the apparent chemical weapons assault outside Damascus." There was

no mention that 140 protests have taken place in Germany since Aug. 21 against such a military response.

The article on a Sept. 1 Arab League meeting in Cairo says, "It was a major step toward supporting Western military strikes but short of the explicit endorsement that the United States and some Persian Gulf allies had hoped for."

The article reports that Morocco, a North African monarchy, agrees with the call to support "action required to stop the bloodshed," in the words of the Saudi foreign minister. The same article ignored Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, who reaffirmed Algeria's opposition to military operations against Syria. (Algerian Press Service, Sept. 1)

Othman Jérandi, Tunisia's minister of foreign affairs, underlined his country's opposition to "any foreign military intervention in Syria."

By reporting that two-thirds of the British public oppose Britain's participation in the attack, the BBC admitted that public war-weariness influenced the parliamen-

tary defeat of Prime Minister David Cameron's attempt to commit Britain to it.

The BBC discounted the role of the Stop the War coalition in mobilizing popular discontent and holding demonstrations of thousands in London. The U.S. media also minimized coverage of these protests.

In France, there were demonstrations in Paris, Marseille, Nîmes, Avignon, Toulouse and Annecy on Aug. 28 and 29. While not massive — at most 800 in Paris — they were militantly anti-war. The main center-right party in France, the Union for a Popular Movement, has called for a vote in Parliament, making note of polls that show two-thirds of the people oppose military action.

The French corporate press hardly mentions left opposition to military action. But on the solidarity website of France's Communist Party it is possible to find a call by the Party of the Left for a vote to stop French participation in the aggression.

In Turkey, which shares a border with Syria, the media have barely reported on

the significant protests. The corporate media present Turkey as a stable ally of the U.S., with its government allegedly so worried about an attack from Syria that it requested a Patriot missile defense system on its southern border with that country.

But the Turkish Workers Party organized major protests in Izmir, in front of the NATO headquarters; in Ankara, Turkey's capital, in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and in Adana, right outside the U.S. air base of Incirlik. A coalition of peace groups and nongovernmental organizations called a major protest in Ghezi Square in Istanbul on Sept. 1. (Turkish Weekly)

The RT news website has a slideshow showing some of the protests around the world — including Greece, the Palestinian city of Nablus on the West Bank, and Ukraine — and raises the question of what the progressive people of the world want to do. The power of masses of people acting together worldwide could defeat this imperialist machination of the U.S. and its few allies. □

Mine bosses to cut thousands of jobs

Downsizing comes amid rising workers' strikes

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

South African workers are continuing their struggles against the bosses. Strikes are spreading from the mines, automobile plants and air transport technology stations to construction sites.

On Sept. 3, thousands of members of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa are scheduled to march through Pretoria to the National Association of Automobile Manufacturers of South Africa headquarters. They will demand that the trade group pressure car production firms to settle a nearly three-week strike.

Anglo-American Platinum (Amplats) is the largest platinum mining company in what is the most significant industry in the country; it produces 40 percent of international platinum sales. The firm's most profitable region is located in Rustenberg, where police shot dead 34 miners at the Marikana Lonmin corporation facility on Aug. 16, 2012.

The platinum mining company has announced a restructuring program that could eliminate up to 7,000 jobs. Amplats owners had threatened to fire 14,000 workers but reduced their plan by 50 percent.

Similar developments are taking place throughout the country's mining industry.

Corporate media reports blame widespread wildcat and official strikes for the job eliminations. Mineworkers are represented by two rival unions: 67 percent belong to the National Union of Mineworkers, and the rest are affiliated with the newer Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union.

NUM representatives say that negoti-

ations between the union and Amplats owners resulted in a compromise of 3,000 job losses and not the 6,900 the company announced. NUM has threatened to strike in response to the layoffs, but AMCU has said it won't support a strike until the job cuts are final.

"A month's notice period for affected employees will commence on 1 September," said Amplats CEO Chris Griffith, concluding plans to trim 6,000 mining and 900 white-collar jobs, supposedly to save \$400 million a year. He said other savings would come from "voluntary severance packages, early retirement, redeployments and the filling of internal vacancies." (AFP, Aug. 19)

Anglo-American, which is also involved in other extractive markets such as gold, has reported a 10 percent decline in value since 2013 began.

In the gold sector, a "war of words" took place between unions and bosses on Sept. 2, when workers threatened to strike the following day. They demanded 60 percent to 150 percent wage increases and better working conditions. Workers were prepared to walk out at AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields, Harmony Gold and Sibanye Gold.

Mining executives are responding to labor's demands by blaming the workers for the crisis and threatening to consider a preemptive lockout of the 120,000 workers who have threatened to strike.

AMCU leader Joseph Mathunjwa, whose union is not striking, warned that if the gold mine owners locked out the workers, tensions would rise sharply. Uncertainty over jobs and the decline of the South African currency, the rand, have led to a bleak financial forecast in the continent's largest economy.

"I have informed the minister of police that the manner in which the gold CEOs want to approach this wage negotiation, through an offensive lockout, will result in violence," Mathunjwa said. "A strike is not what we are after, we are being pushed into a corner." (Reuters, Sept. 2)

Large-scale cuts have taken place within the gold mining sector over the last two decades since the African National Congress came to power. South African gold, which previously dominated 80 percent of the global market, now only constitutes 6 percent.

Tripartite Alliance's economic summit

With these mounting labor struggles, the Tripartite Alliance, the three main pillars of South Africa's dominant political force, held an economic conference in Johannesburg from Aug. 30 to Sept. 1. This alliance consists of the ruling African National Congress and its two main allies, the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party.

The South African National Civic Organizations — a coalition of community organizations in alliance with the ANC — participated, too. These allies are essential in the ANC's electoral and governing strategy; the loss of support or lack of coordination among the Alliance would be to the ruling party's disadvantage.

At the summit's conclusion, a joint statement was issued reaffirming the long-term partnership among the organizations, while differences were downplayed over the country's future direction. These organizations pledged to carry out the second phase of the National Democratic Revolution initiated when the apartheid system collapsed in 1994

after decades of mass and armed struggle. The summit recognized that if this transition were not to be carried out, the revolution would be destroyed.

COSATU wrote, "Our Summit takes place in the context of the gravest global economic crisis since the 1930s. From 2007 its original epicenter was in the developed economies, notably the U.S. and Europe. ... The Alliance Summit agreed that we must correctly understand this global context, and rebut attempts from some quarters to shift the blame for the impact of this crisis on the South African government, or the labor movement. Instead, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to place our economy onto a new growth path that, amongst other things, lessens our exposure to currency and other market volatilities." (cosatu.org.za, Sept. 1)

Jeremy Cronin of the SACP said, "As we go to the elections, [we need] to communicate among ourselves and [with] South Africans. We need to deepen the relationship and effectiveness of the alliance ... working together." (Times Live, South Africa, Sept. 2)

Nonetheless, in acknowledging that the capitalist economic crisis is worldwide, the Tripartite Alliance must move the South African working class out of the system of exploitation through policies that will lead to the implementation of socialist planning. Outside of such a transformation, the ANC and its allies will not be able to provide job security, land redistribution, the eradication of poverty and the elimination of all vestiges of institutional racism and gender oppression inherited from the apartheid system of settler-colonialism. □

Hires Booz Allen Hamilton

Pentagon deepens role in Africa

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

As the corporate media focuses on the current war drive against Syria, Washington's militarist policies toward Africa continue to go relatively unnoticed by the public. Oil and other strategic resources imported into the United States from the continent are motivating an increase in Pentagon troops in Africa and the latest development: the hiring of private strategy and technology concerns as advisers.

In 2008 the United States Africa Command was formed, ostensibly to provide the Pentagon with a consistent military focus on the continent. The Bush administration sought to place AFRICOM's headquarters on African soil, but the proposal attracted such opposition that no African state would openly provide its territory.

However, the Barack Obama administration has continued AFRICOM and increased its funding and operational capability. The overthrow of the government of Col. Moammar Gadhafi was coordinated by AFRICOM, representing its first full-blown operation in Africa.

In December of 2012, the White House announced that it was deploying 3,500 Special Forces and military trainers to at least 35 states in Africa. The U.S. established a drone base in the uranium-rich nation of Niger, and the Pentagon aided France's invasion of Mali by transporting

troops and military equipment into the West African state.

Private firms advise Pentagon on war strategies

In August the Pentagon announced that its think tank, the Office of Net Assessment, had contracted with the Booz Allen Hamilton firm to conduct a study on the future of the U.S. in Africa from a military perspective.

This is the same firm that exiled intelligence analyst Edward Snowden worked for on a contract with the National Security Agency.

Booz Allen has a long track record with the ONA. In 2007, records indicate that the firm signed a \$45 million contract with the Pentagon.

USA Today reported Aug. 28 that "The Office of Net Assessment is an internal Pentagon think tank that tries to anticipate future needs through a series of studies and war games. Created in 1973, it has been run by the same person, 92-year-old Andrew Marshall, since its beginning."

The report points out that "Marshall, in turn, is a disciple of longtime military

strategist Fritz Kraemer, a key influence on former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and former Vice President Dick Cheney. ... While Democratic and Republican administrations come and go, ONA and its team of outside advisers remains the same."

The reason for the contract to study Africa, USA Today surmised, was related to fears about the rising influence of al-Qaeda and other so-called terrorist organizations in Africa. This is the same rationale provided for the escalation of AFRICOM operations and the placing of thousands of troops in various nation-states.

Yet the places where U.S. military operations have actually taken place in Africa are mainly areas where the capitalist class in the U.S. and other NATO countries have strategic interests. Libya is the largest potential source of oil on the continent and Niger is a vast repository of uranium.

In Somalia, where 17,500 African Union Mission to Somalia troops are propping up the federal government in Mogadishu, the U.S. is financing these military operations to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars per year. A CIA field station backs up this aid and directs ongoing drone strikes through outposts extending from the Horn of Africa to the Seychelles Islands in the Indian Ocean.

Booz Allen and other firms perform much of the ONA's work. The USA To-

day article notes, "Contract records show the office relies on studies from outside contractors at firms such as Booz Allen, Science Applications International Corp. and Scitor Corp., universities and think tanks, such as the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments and the Hudson Institute."

This article also points out that many ONA employees had previously worked for the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, such as Andrew Krepinevich of CSBA and numerous employees of the Hudson Institute. Other analysts, such as Stephen Cambone, the former undersecretary of defense for intelligence, were important functionaries of the Bush administration's Pentagon staff.

The role of corporations such as Booz Allen and others reveals how far privatization has gone within the U.S. military. These firms have a vested interest in expanding military planning and intelligence assessments aimed at broad segments of both U.S. and foreign societies and governments.

The U.S. government has charged former Booz Allen employee Snowden with espionage and theft. However, the war and intelligence crimes exposed by Snowden and other whistleblowers, such as Julian Assange of Australia and U.S. Army Pfc. Chelsea Manning, are swept under the carpet by the corporate media and the Obama administration. □

AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

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S. Korea arrests progressives

By Chris Fry

South Korea's secret police — the hated National Intelligence Service — launched two days of raids on Aug. 28 against the United Progressive Party, a left electoral bloc with six representatives in the legislature. Ten UPP offices and homes were raided and three party officials were arrested on treason and sedition charges. Travel bans were imposed on 14 other party members.

The spy agency has leveled sensational charges against the three officials: plotting to storm armories to secure weapons, destroy oil storage and communication facilities, and assassinate unnamed figures. The NIS also charged them with praising the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the north, an action which is banned by south Korea's repressive national security law.

UPP leaders and members strongly

protested the raids. On Aug. 29, a UPP leader called the charges fabricated. "It is a novel based on imagination," said Lee Seok-ki, a UPP lawmaker, one of the six UPP members in the south Korean parliament.

"Just as they attacked opposition supporters as pro-North Korean followers during the last presidential election, they are now strangling democratic forces with treason charges," said Lee Jung-hee, head of the UPP. (New York Times, Aug. 28)

Like many other members of the UPP, Lee is a former student activist who was imprisoned under south Korea's anti-communist national security laws for participating in a political party that was underground during the years of military dictatorship.

Lee was referring to the smear campaign against opposition party candidates secretly conducted by the NIS in last year's elections, which helped a

right-winger, Park Geun-hye, gain the presidency. After the illegal campaign was exposed earlier this year, NIS head Won Sei-hoon was indicted for violating south Korea's election laws.

The father of the current president was Gen. Park Chung-hee, who ruled south Korea with an iron fist for 18 years after grabbing power in a military coup in 1961. During his rule, thousands of dissidents were tortured and murdered at the hands of the NIS, most without trials of any kind.

The UPP's platform calls for "rectifying our nation's shameful history tainted by imperialist invasions, the national divide, military dictatorship, the tyranny and plunder of transnational monopoly capital and chaebol [south Korea's giant family-controlled business conglomerates]."

The UPP also demands an end to the U.S. military presence in south Korea. Some 28,500 U.S. troops are still stationed there, 68 years after the Pentagon

first rushed forces to southern Korea at the end of World War II. Their mission was to turn back a growing people's revolution that was liberating the country as Japan's colonial rule there disintegrated.

The UPP also calls for dismantling south Korea's "subordinate alliance with the United States" and the reunification of the north and south.

This program has brought down the wrath and hatred of not only the military and corporate powers in south Korea but also their masters in Washington. The NIS, formerly known as the KCIA, serves both the U.S. CIA and the U.S. National Security Agency.

The U.S. corporate media paint the regime in south Korea as a shining example of "democracy." With few exceptions, they have conveniently failed to mention this brutal attack on the political opposition by the secret police of this close U.S. ally. □

Korean autoworkers wage courageous resistance

By Martha Grevatt

Since the global recession began in 2008, the world's auto companies have been aggressively restructuring the process by which vehicles are made.

This has meant the lowering of wages, with multiple categories of workers doing similar labor for dissimilar pay and benefits. The restructuring has also meant the expansion of temporary — also known as "contract," "dispatch," "irregular" and, in the international labor movement, "precarious" — work.

Autoworkers around the world have been resisting the restructuring. This is especially true in south Korea.

Under south Korean law, contract workers are supposed to be made regular after two years of service. Hyundai Motor has ignored the law. The only exceptions have been individuals who won court orders to have their status changed. Of the 8,000 temporary workers at Hyundai, 1,900 have sued over the company's illegal employment practices.

On Oct. 17, 2012, two Hyundai workers scaled an electrical pylon to protest the company's illegal refusal to make the 8,000 temporary workers permanent. They are still up there.

One of the two occupiers was Choi Byeong-seung, 36, a member of the Hyundai Motor Irregular Workers' Union, affiliated to IndustriALL Global Union through the Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU). Choi was fired in 2005 from his position as an in-house subcontractor employee. The other occupier, Cheon Ui-bong, 31, is secretary general of the Hyundai Motor Irregular Workers' local.

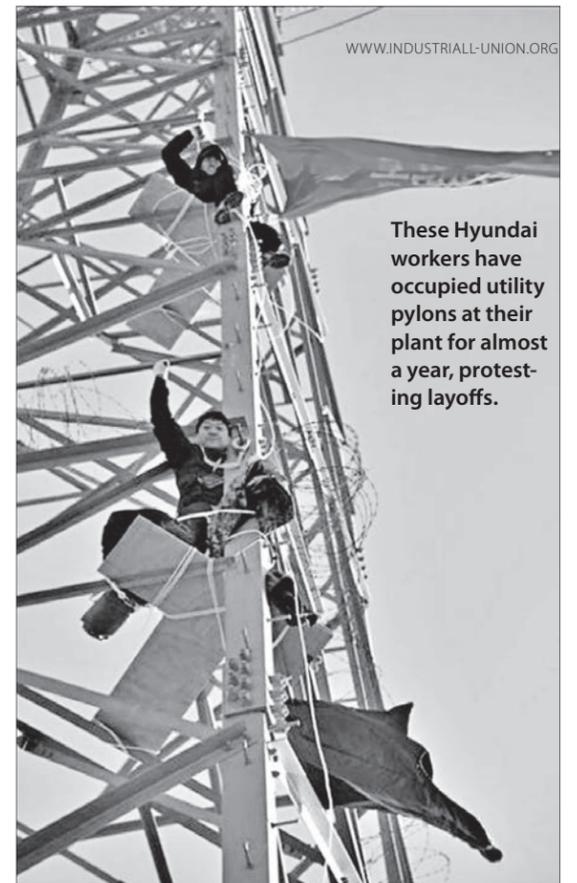
In February 2012, Choi had won a court ruling affirming that his firing as a subcontractor was illegal because he had worked in the plant for over two years. In March 2013, Hyundai finally offered to reinstate him — if he would end the protest. Choi refused. He and Cheon are committed to staying aloft — one at 45 feet and the other at 60 feet — until there is justice for all of Hyundai's contract workers.

Last Nov. 20, three Ssangyong au-

toworkers began a second pylon occupation. On March 13 of this year, one left the aerial protest for health reasons. Still occupying the Ssangyong pylon are Han Sang-gyun, 52, the fired former leader of the Ssangyong Motor chapter of the Korean Metal Workers' Union, and Bok Gi-seong, 37, senior vice-president of the dispatch workers' local at Ssangyong.

Ssangyong, a south Korean car company that produces primarily for the domestic market, was occupied for 77 days in 2009. It took a massive police force, employing water cannons and tear gas and dropping burn-causing chemicals from helicopters, to evict the strikers.

Since then, Ssangyong has failed to honor the strike settlement agreement to reinstate a percentage of workers who had been permanently laid off. There is great desperation among the



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These Hyundai workers have occupied utility pylons at their plant for almost a year, protesting layoffs.

fired workers; 24 have committed suicide.

The occupiers are seeking negotiations between their unions, the company and the government towards restoring the jobs of the laid-off workers, but Ssangyong has refused.

Han, Bok and the two Hyundai occupiers who have now spent over 320 days on the pylon, remain at their perches as courageous symbols of resistance. Mass solidarity rallies and religious ceremonies have been held below the pylons many times since the occupations began.

Workers at GM Korea, formerly Daewoo, have also resisted restructuring. After 13 days of intermittent strategic strikes in July, they won an agreement granting bonuses and promising no layoffs. South Korean autoworkers make 40 percent of all Chevrolet brand vehicles produced in the world.

The GM, Hyundai and Ssangyong workers are part of a general working-class upsurge in south Korea that has seen scores of strikes and occupations — including several other aerial occupations inspired by Choi and Cheon.

In response, the regime of Park Geun-hye, elected president this year, has cracked down on the left. The anti-communist National Security Law is being invoked in an attempt to repress members of progressive organizations engaged in the working-class struggle. The struggle, however, shows no signs of letting up. □

Protests hit U.S. plans to attack Syria

Continued from page 7

[is] my own government."

In Washington, D.C., hundreds of demonstrators marched in a demonstration the IAC called Aug. 31 before and during Obama's speech. Their chants reached into the Rose Garden. The Answer Coalition, Code Pink and the Syrian American Forum were also present.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, there were demonstrations in San Francisco on Aug. 29 around Union Square and on Aug. 31 at the United Nations Plaza. There was also a rally in Oakland on Aug. 31 in Oscar Grant Plaza.

Demonstrators gathered outside the University of Florida in Gainesville on Aug. 28. Anti-war protests also took place in Minneapolis that same day and in Chicago on Aug. 31. Reports can be found at fightbacknews.org.

Hundreds demanded "Don't bomb Syria" on Boston Common on Aug 31. Syrian nationals proudly displayed their country's flag and passionately



denounced U.S. plans to launch missile attacks against their people. Protesters marched up Boston's ultrarich, Beacon Hill neighborhood and pounded on the front doors and windows of Secretary of State John Kerry's mansion.

The People's Organization for Progress held a lively street meeting in Newark, N.J., on Aug. 31, protesting the attack on

Syria to the unanimous cheers of passers-by. The same day in the midst of a busy noontime crowd on Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee, over 70 protesters came out to demand "Hands off Syria!"

Terri Kay, Sara Flounders, Bob McCubbin, John Parker, Jim McMahan and Gerry Scoppettuolo contributed to this report.

WWW.PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

WORKERS WORLD
editorials

Unions must reach out to youth

The AFL-CIO Convention should put on its front burner how to win the loyalty of youth to organized labor. To win them, the unionists will have to do the right thing, the courageous thing. Taking this step is vital for the very survival of the movement.

At one time, the children of most union members would almost inherit loyalty to the movement that brought food into their homes. They often stepped into the jobs and unions of their parents. Neither the jobs nor the automatic loyalty still exist.

All strata of working-class youth — even from sectors slightly better off in access to education — have suffered from the severe capitalist economic crisis that festered for 30 years and exploded in 2008.

The first and most important step for labor, however, is to reach out to those young people who are the targets of a virtual war on youth. These are the youth of color, for whom the Trayvon Martin lynching and the acquittal of his killer is the tip of the iceberg.

The war includes police repression euphemistically called “stop and frisk.” It includes the incarceration of many tens of thousands of youth, particularly youth of color, who are caught in the net of draconian drug laws that punish them for not being able to get regular jobs. These youth suffer the “school to prison” pipeline — all coupled with record-level unemployment.

Labor unions must take a position on these social questions in solidarity with the youth.

The labor movement must stand in

solidarity with the millions of young workers who are either unemployed, underemployed, part-time or temporary workers in low-wage jobs, and particularly those who are more likely to end up in prison than to find a job.

It should consider calling an action and investing in such a project, employing funds unions possess from the workers’ dues. This would be not just out of altruism, or because it is a good idea, but to implement a more effective and meaningful way to help oppressed youth than simply lobbying for some legislation or supporting the Democratic Party.

Even if workers in Walmart or Starbucks or McDonald’s have no immediate prospect of getting a union contract, organized labor has to find a way to embrace them and their struggles. Organized labor must show these youth that the mere existence of unions helps them.

Such an act can win over all sectors suffering from the capitalist crisis. That includes those fortunate enough to have finished college. We have seen in the Occupy Movement that these youth don’t consider it a big advantage that the job they went to school for but couldn’t get would pay a little better than the low-paid jobs out there — plus they have a \$50,000 debt for their education.

As has always been the case in the history of the United States, building the necessary solidarity among all workers starts with fighting racism and all forms of special oppression. Only in this way can the labor movement win the allegiance of all working-class youth and attract them to the project of fighting for a better world for all. □

Obama pushes war on Syria with new tactic

Continued from page 7

in lockstep towards war.

Every word uttered by the administration is designed to conceal its predatory aims. The claim that cruise missile strikes — launching powerful warheads that can cause massive destruction — is not aimed at “regime change” is a complete falsehood. That is the fundamental U.S. government goal and has been since March 2011, when the counterrevolutionary campaign began.

Minimally, the strikes are aimed at helping the U.S.-supported forces on the ground regain the military initiative they have lost to government forces. Strikes would also be aimed at pushing back al-Nusra. But the main aim of regaining the military initiative is the overthrow of the Assad government, pure and simple — i.e., “regime change.” Washington has to deny this.

A time-tested part of capitalist pre-war deception is the attempt to create war fever by framing up the intended target of aggression as the aggressor. This “aggressor” invariably then carries out “atrocities,” possesses “weapons of mass destruction” or commits other acts that require imperialism to wage war.

Before or during every war since the invasion of Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines in 1898, down to the Gulf of

Tonkin frame-up of the Vietnamese in 1964 that resulted in the deployment of 500,000 troops to Vietnam, to the wars against Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya, the victims of U.S. aggression have been put in the dock by the politicians and propagandists of the war machine.

But they haven’t succeeded this time around. The attempt to drum up international and domestic war fever to get approval for an attack on Syria has fallen flat. Washington has been growing more and more isolated.

Whatever the immediate outcome of the vote in Congress, and whether the strikes are carried out as planned, Washington and the Pentagon will not give up their designs on ruling the entire Middle East.

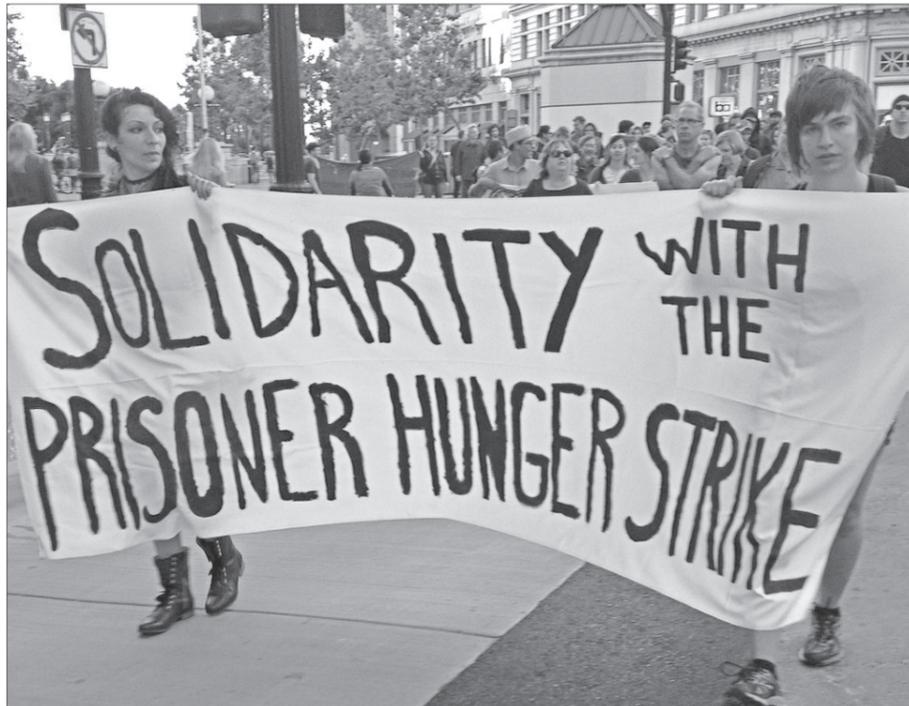
Nor will the system change its nature. Under imperialism, periods of peace are only interludes between wars. And the last two decades, since the collapse of the USSR, have been a period of perpetual war and intervention.

The only way to stop war is to destroy imperialism root and branch and the monopoly capitalist system on which it rests.

Fred Goldstein is the author of “Low-Wage Capitalism” and “Capitalism at a Dead End,” which has been translated into Spanish as “El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida.”

OAKLAND

Support for prison hunger strike



By Judy Greenspan
Oakland, Calif.

For the second Saturday in a row, Occupy Oakland’s Antirepression Crew led a spirited march into the streets of this city on Aug. 31 to support California prisoners, incarcerated in security housing and administrative segregation units, who have been on hunger strike for 55 days. The protest focused on the violence, abuse and solitary confinement especially suffered by transgender prisoners.

At a short rally before the march to Oakland’s city jail, Janetta Johnson, representing the Trans Gender Variant Intersex Justice Project, stated, “Transgender prisoners are placed in the SHU based on the fact that they are transgender. It’s punitive.” The solidarity activists then marched down to the jail chanting,

“Close the jails! Free them all! Tear down the prison walls!”

Hundreds of prisoners remain on hunger strike and work stoppage to protest unfair lockdown and isolation policies that keep many in indefinite isolation. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and Gov. Jerry Brown continue to ignore the dire conditions faced by SHU prisoners, but support is growing nationally to support their demands. Most recently Amnesty International and the California Conference of Catholic Bishops have spoken out against the inhumane condition of long-term isolation. Some Bay Area state legislators are calling for public hearings on the prisoners’ demands.

For more information, visit prisoner-hungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com. □

Fast food workers

Continued from page 4

creased by only 25 cents over eight years, told Workers World: “I’m happy to be part of this movement. It’s for everybody who needs better pay.”

New York City was the site of many strike actions. Hundreds of chanting workers and supporters marched to, then filled, a midtown McDonald’s. Speakers at a Union Square rally of hundreds demanded a \$15 hourly wage and unionization rights. SEIU local leader Hector Figueroa called for challenging the “Big Three” fast food companies — McDonald’s, Burger King and Wendy’s. He threatened more strikes and pledged SEIU and other labor movement support.

Fast food workers in Greensboro, Charlotte, Durham and Raleigh, N.C., joined the one-day national strike. Workers from more than 60 stores across the state walked off their jobs. The Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II, president of the North Carolina NAACP, addressed an afternoon demonstration in Raleigh of more than 200 workers and community members.

Fast-food workers and supporters gathered before dawn outside an east Atlanta McDonald’s to launch the campaign for a \$15 hourly wage and the right to join a union. Workers from Church’s Chicken,

Subway, Krystal and other restaurant chains were on the streets, chanting and carrying signs. They told the media about the deplorable working conditions they endure for \$7.25 an hour. Fast-food workers, clergy and elected officials called for economic justice for the workers at an evening rush-hour rally at Five Points in downtown Atlanta.

Rep. John Lewis, returning from the 50th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, paid a surprise visit to the rally. Severely beaten and arrested multiple times during the historic Civil Rights struggle, Lewis urged the attentive crowd to “stay united and never give up” in the fight for justice. He praised the strikers for taking a stand and declared his support for their demands.

Midwest workers shut fast-food eateries

Striking workers shut down a McDonald’s on the Detroit/Southfield city line. Supporters joined them, so that 200 protesters filled the restaurant with signs saying, “We are worth more. Strike for \$15.” A Checkers and two Church’s chicken restaurants were closed down, too. Further strikes occurred in Pontiac, Flint and Lansing, Mich.

Job actions closed Milwaukee and St. Louis restaurants. Chicago workers dis-

A brief history of 'marriage'

PART 15

From matrilineal clan to patriarchy, polygyny in transitional societies

By Bob McCubbin

The transition to sedentary life and agricultural production was a process carried out in different ways and at different times in different parts of the planet's inhabited areas. Up to this point, we've been drawing on anthropological reports dealing with contemporary foragers and hunters and the generalizations made about them by anthropologists and archeologists. Our objective has been to generalize from anthropological data to hypothesize what social/sexual relations must have been like during the many millennia before people achieved the domestication of animals and cultivation of plants.

While it is still something of a leap from the patterns of life of transitional groups existent during the last few hundred years back to the originators of agriculture 10 or 12 millennia ago, it's less of a leap than that which anthropological theorists make in hypothesizing the hominin life patterns of hundreds of thousands of years ago. Therefore, our confidence is strengthened that we can glean from more or less contemporary reports some idea of the processes at work during the transition from the matrilineal clan to patriarchal families whose sustenance was obtained more from farming than from foraging or hunting.

Anthropologists David Schneider and Kathleen Gough co-edited a collection of essays with the title "Matrilineal Kinship" in 1961. The societies they chose for study, however, are more accurately classed as transitional forms, retaining some of the social features of matrilineal foraging and hunting societies but well on their way to patriarchal dominance based on the adoption of food production techniques characteristic of the agricultural revolution.

Schneider writes in the book's Preface:

"The selection of societies [for the section of the book he edited and contributed to] did provide a wide diversity of types of matrilineal system. Drawing them from four continents minimized the possibility that any constant features discovered might result from diffusion rather than from matrilineal descent. The traditional Navaho and Plateau Tonga societies were examples of loosely structured, acephalous [leaderless] tribes. ... Both rely not only on cultivation but also on herding — unusual for matrilineal peoples. Truk and Trobriand are examples of more tightly structured matrilineal systems with relatively settled cultivation, organized into chiefdoms. The Ashanti were a large, matrilineally organized state, while the Kerala castes were differentiated occupational and social strata within still larger states." (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961, p. xv)

Even this single paragraph from the Preface contains strong evidence of some of the paths taken in the transition to patriarchy that followed from the adoption of agricultural production.

The social significance of herding — and imperialism!

We think it odd that Schneider characterizes the Navajo and Tonga as "leaderless." In the chapter dealing with the Navajo, we learn that women in this society play a dominant role in the raising of sheep, an important source of material surplus. This, in turn, suggests significant economic and political power on their part, which would later be constrained and distorted, of course, by the imposition of reservation life. In 1862, the U.S. Congress authorized the creation of Fort Sumner as a strategic outpost for the forced movement of 9,000 Apaches and Navajos into a 40-square-mile reservation.

Judging from the coverage in "Matrilineal Kinship" of the Plateau Tonga of Zambia, it is Tonga men who control the raising of cattle, with resultant significant economic inequality. Like the Navajo, the Tonga suffered from imperialist domination. Under British colonial rule, a system was installed at the beginning of the 20th century taxing Tonga men, effectively forcing on Tonga society a cash-based economic system. It is perhaps the imperialist subjugation of the Navajo and the Plateau Tonga that suggests to Schneider that they are "leaderless."

Returning to Schneider's preliminary assessment that we quoted above, we note that none of the societies dealt with base themselves on foraging and hunting. A reasonable conclusion is that what exists of matrilineality in these societies represents not much more than a vestige of the social/sexual equality found in the matrilineal clans of foragers and hunters. How, then, are the nontransient social/sexual relations between women and men in these societies affected by economies capable of producing significant surplus and no longer governed by communality and sharing?

Polygyny among the Navajo and Tonga

Coverage of Navajo marriage in "Matrilineal Kinship" includes an extended discussion of polygyny. A late 19th-century report indicates that at that time, more than 50 percent of married men had two or more wives. Marriage was exogamous — partners had to be from outside the suitor's clan — and the preference, according to the report, was for two sisters or classificatory sisters — nonblood relations of the same clan and same age range — to marry the same man. A mid-20th century report suggested that "the large, polygynous family is helpful for livestock operations." (p. 120)

Another common pattern was for inter-clan marriages between two brothers and two sisters or between a brother and sister and a sister and a brother. This pattern would, perhaps, have facilitated inter-clan alliances even more than single marriages would. Levirate marriages, where the brother of a dead man would replace the dead man as his widow's new husband, and sororate marriages, where the sister of a dead woman would replace the dead woman as her widower's new wife, were also reported among the Navajo at the be-

ginning of the 20th century.

Significant economic inequality among the Navajo is indicated by the range of bride prices. Some casual marriages were effected with no bride price, but wealthy families might release their daughters only upon payment of from one to fifteen horses. This is a far cry from the foraging and hunting customs involving a modest food exchange between the clans of the husband and wife, or a labor commitment on the part of the new husband to the wife's clan.

Polygynous marriages are also a factor among the Plateau Tonga, according to the report in "Matrilineal Kinship," with 24 percent of married men having more than one wife. One of the important motives for polygyny among the Tonga is "to have the labor of a number of wives and their children to work the man's own field." (p. 61) For the woman, an interesting contradiction arises.

On the one hand, she achieves a certain amount of economic independence: "Each wife is entitled from the time of marriage to her own hut. When her separate household is established, she becomes entitled to her own kitchen, her own field, and her own granary. She can be required to work only in her own field and in the separate field of her husband. Neither she nor her children need work in the field of her co-wife." (p. 62) But on the other hand, with this new "freedom" the female solidarity and communal sharing characteristic of the foraging and hunting matrilineal clan has been lost.

And ominously, "The introduction of ploughing has reinforced the husband's rights over fields and crops. Because the plough and oxen used in the fields are usually his, he claims that he is entitled to all the proceeds over and above that needed for food without regard to whose field produced the crop. If he has also provided the seed, his certainty that he is absolute master of the crop is increased." (p. 71)

In the next installment in this series, we'll continue our investigation of marriage in societies on the road to patriarchy.

McCubbin is the author of "The Roots of Lesbian and Gay Oppression: A Marxist View," New York: World View Forum, 3rd ed., 1993. To order, send \$10 to World View Forum, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, N.Y., NY 10011 with name and address, or order from Amazon.com. □

shut it down!

rupted lunch-hour traffic and some 200 arrived at a River North McDonald's, chanting, "Hey, hey, ho, ho, poverty wages gotta go!" Balloons printed with the word "Unity" stood out at a rally in the Windy City, where protesters' red T-shirts said, "Fight for \$15." Many chanted in Spanish.

Striking Wendy's and McDonald's workers addressed a Fight for 15 support rally outside a downtown San Diego Wendy's restaurant. Present were SEIU and UNITE HERE! members and leaders. Also attending were unionists organizing taxi drivers and college security personnel, Teamsters activists fighting for a fair contract for United Parcel Service workers, an NAACP representative and other local activists who support the struggle for a living wage and good benefits for all working people. A rally high note was a local Muslim community leader's support statement.

More than 100 fast-food workers in Oakland, Calif., rallied early at a McDonald's in the Latino/a community and temporarily shut it down. Then they moved to and surrounded Kentucky Fried Chicken in the Lake District, and ended up at a final rally wedged between a McDonald's and a Taco Bell on East Oakland's Hegenberger Road.

Our Walmart workers' participation

boosted the last rally. They are also fighting for better wages and working conditions. Oakland airport workers came. Supported by UNITE HERE! Local 2850, they have fought for more than a year for union recognition and higher wages for airport fast-food and other concession workers. They just won a National Labor Relations Board-related settlement, forcing Subway and Jamba Juice airport concessions to reinstate fired employees and pay them back wages.

A one-day strike on Aug. 30 by 180 Oakland Airport food and retail workers, members of UNITE HERE! Local 2850, protested unfair labor practices, including an anti-union lawsuit by their employer, Host International. They have not had a contract for a year. Host seeks to gut their contract by reducing vacation and sick days, eliminating pensions, health insurance benefits and overtime pay, cutting wages of new hires and freezing them for longtime workers.

Fast-food workers are moving boldly. Their strength, determination and activism are a boost to all workers. The time for solidarity and active support is now.

Contributing to this article were Ben Carroll, G. Dunkel, Steve Gillis, Terri Kay, Dianne Mathiowetz, Bob McCubbin and Gerry Scoppettuolo.

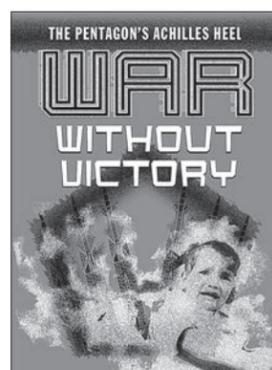


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— Ramsey Clark

gaza-resistance-book.com



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— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009; Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

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No a la guerra de EE.UU. contra Siria PROTESTAS DE COSTA A COSTA

Por John Catalinotto

Agosto 27— Sin presentar siquiera una pizca de pruebas sobre las acusaciones de Washington de que Siria ha utilizado gas venenoso, el secretario de estado John Kerry ha anunciado que es inminente un ataque con cohetes contra el estado soberano de Siria desde cuatro destructores estadounidenses en el Mediterráneo Oriental.

Cada destructor lleva 90 misiles de crucero, así que aunque sea un ataque limitado, podría causar enormes daños.

Esta amenaza flagrante e ilegal, apoyada solamente por los compañeros en crimen de Washington en Londres y París,— las antiguas potencias coloniales en el Medio Oriente — produjo una furiosa reacción inmediata de organizaciones contra la guerra en el mundo y en Estados Unidos.

El Centro de Acción Internacional, la Coalición Nacional Unida Contra la Guerra y la Coalición Answer emitieron declaraciones condenando los movimientos de guerra de Estados Unidos y llamando a manifestaciones de protesta para parar el ataque de misiles, además de otras que se celebrarán el “día de” o el “día



Times Square, Nueva York

MO/WW FOTO: G. DUNKEL

después” del ataque. El Comité Contra la Guerra en Chicago, la agrupación Árabes-americanos pro Siria en Los Ángeles, el Foro Sirio-Americano de New Jersey y las Mujeres Contra la Locura Militar en Minneapolis, se están movilizand.

Code Pink convocó una protesta durante el discurso de Obama en la conmemoración del discurso del Dr. Martin Luther King el 28 de agosto, reuniéndose en la Avenida Constitución. Hubo protestas en Nueva York, Chicago, Los Ángeles, Dearborn, Michigan y algunas ciudades de Florida.

El anuncio de Kerry se pareció a las palabras de la Reina en “Alicia en el País de

las Maravillas”: Primero la sentencia y el veredicto después. Kerry descartó completamente la cooperación del gobierno sirio con el equipo de investigación de las Naciones Unidas que procedía a examinar los hechos, diciendo que era “muy poco y muy tarde”.

Para las fuerzas contra la guerra en los Estados Unidos, la prisa de Kerry es sólo otra señal de que las potencias imperialistas ya habían decidido declarar la guerra a Siria. Los presuntos ataques con “gas enervante” de la semana pasada en las afueras de Damasco dan todos los indicios de ser una operación de los imperialistas y sus agentes en la oposición siria. La declaración que hizo el presidente Barack Obama hace un año, de que un ataque con gas enervante sería “una línea roja en la arena” para una intervención de Estados Unidos, dejó claro lo que tenían que hacer aquellos que buscaban un pretexto para la intervención.

Pocos creen en los imperialistas

A pesar de la reacción instintiva de los medios de comunicación imperialistas de abrazarse al patriotismo, la mayoría de la población estadounidense —el 60 por ciento en una reciente encuesta de Ipsos-Reuters— se opone a la intervención en Siria y el 89 por ciento está opuesto

a armar a los “rebeldes”. Hay incluso un debate entre los analistas imperialistas. Además, Rusia, Irán, China y los gobiernos de otros países se han manifestado en contra de una nueva agresión. Ésta ni siquiera tiene el aval del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU.

Los grupos contra la guerra en los Estados Unidos dicen que están seguros de que el establecimiento imperialista está mintiendo otra vez. ¿Por qué? Porque han mentido tantas veces antes y han sido cogidos en la mentira.

Para la guerra aérea del 1999 contra Yugoslavia, la invasión de Iraq en 2003 y la guerra aérea del 2011 en Libia, las disparatadas acusaciones de genocidio y de armas de destrucción masiva —que resultaron ser falsas— se plantearon como pretextos para la intervención imperialista, dicen los/as opositores/as de la guerra.

En lugar de aceptar en silencio otra agresión de Estados Unidos en beneficio de los intereses de las corporaciones y los bancos hambrientos de ganancias, el Centro de Solidaridad del IAC en Baltimore convocó una reunión para planificar acciones de protesta en Baltimore, Columbia y Frederick, Maryland y una manifestación regional en Washington, D.C. □

Jubilados/as de Detroit luchan contra robo de pensiones

Por La Oficina de Redacción WW/MO de Detroit

El 19 de agosto, la concurrencia más grande hasta la fecha protestó el procedimiento de quiebra de Detroit. Más de 200 jubilados/as y sus simpatizantes protestaron por horas fuera del edificio de la Corte Federal mientras adentro se presentaban mociones al juez federal de quiebras Steven Rhodes.

El Sindicato de Empleados Federales, Estatales, de Condados y Municipalidades (AFSCME), Seccional 25, convocó la manifestación y el grupo de bases Comité Alto al Robo de Nuestras Pensiones, (STOPC por las siglas en inglés), le dio un fuerte apoyo. Los/as jubilados/as, algunos/as en sillas de ruedas o con andadores o bastones — representaban a ex conductores/as de autobuses, trabajadores/as de oficina, policías, empleados/as del Departamento del Agua y otras posiciones.

Las pancartas y consignas exigían, “Manos fuera de nuestras pensiones. ¡Qué paguen los bancos!” y ¡“Detengan el servicio de la deuda a los bancos que destruyeron a Detroit!” Estaba claro para todos/as que la quiebra fue diseñada para pagar a los bancos destruyendo las pensiones, los trabajos y los servicios municipales. Una pancarta gigante leía, ¡“Cancele la deuda de Detroit — los bancos nos deben!”

El 16 de agosto, el abogado Jerome Goldberg presentó una objeción —en nombre de David Sole, un organizador de STOPC— a la moción de la ciudad de Detroit que eximiría a gran parte de la deuda de Detroit

del escrutinio del Juez de Quiebra. El gerente de emergencia Kevyn Orr había entrado en un “Acuerdo de Abstención” con algunos bancos grandes el 15 de julio.

La objeción dice: “los Swaps de tasa de interés sobre certificados de obligación por pensiones asumidos por la ciudad de Detroit con UBS y SBS/Bank of America, constituyen un drenaje de cientos de millones de dólares a los bancos del presupuesto de la ciudad con nada positivo a cambio para la ciudad. Básicamente, los swaps de tipos de interés obligan a la ciudad de Detroit a pagar intereses del 6,323% por \$800 millones en bonos a UBS y Bank of America, cuando la tasa real de los bonos es solamente 0,6056%.”

La protesta continúa: “los bancos, que presentan este ‘acuerdo’ como uno que beneficia a la ciudad, se embolsaron la diferencia entre el interés pagado a ellos y la tasa de interés real de los bonos como beneficio neto, que asciende a por lo menos \$45,1 millones al año [dice]... la declaración de Orr del 12 de mayo de 2013, en el Informe Financiero y Operativo, o \$160 millones desde el año 2009”.

Sole admite que no existe ahora ninguna prueba de fraude o acciones incorrectas, pero le dice al juez: “debe ser observado que recientemente ejecutivos de la división de bonos de UBS fueron condenados a penas de cárcel por sus actividades en relación con el mercado de bonos municipales. Un ex ejecutivo del Bank of America también fue acusado de participar en una conspiración para defraudar inversiones en bonos municipales.

“Ambos [BOA] y UBS han sido implica-

dos en el escándalo de la Libor, que potencialmente afecta a las cantidades de la ciudad de Detroit que en realidad deberían haber estado pagando sobre los bonos y los swaps, así como el ‘ISDA fijo’ que potencialmente afecta a los cálculos de los costos de terminación asociados con los swaps. ... [Ambos] [BOA] y UBS, según lo documentado en innumerables demandas y juicios de consentimiento con el gobierno federal y gobiernos estatales incluyendo Michigan, fueron grandes prestamistas de hipotecas de alto riesgo y participantes en la actividad ilícita de hipoteca que precipitó un virtual colapso financiero en 2008, y que especialmente implicó ciudades con grandes poblaciones afroamericanas como Detroit”.

Además, “la crisis financiera que precipitó esta quiebra de capítulo 9 [principalmente] fue el resultado de los efectos de préstamos abusivos de los bancos contra los/as residentes de Detroit, que dio lugar a decenas de miles de ejecuciones hipotecarias,... un descenso masivo de la población y una estrepitosa caída en los valores de propiedad”.

En un intento más por exponer la criminalidad de los grandes bancos, los/as jubilados/as de STOPC pidieron al senador Carl Levin de Michigan que ayudara para obtener la intervención de la Securities and Exchange Commission para que intervenga en el procedimiento de bancarrota de Detroit. La Ley de Bancarrota otorga autoridad a la SEC para que aparezca en cualquier quiebra. El Sub-Comité de Investigaciones del Senado de Levin publicó el informe Levin-Coburn el 13 de abril de

2011, que fue un ataque mordaz sobre los bancos por sus acciones criminales.

El 20 de agosto, el síndico del tribunal de quiebras revisó las aplicaciones de 100 jubilados/as para participar en un “Comité de Jubilados” autorizado por el tribunal para representar a más de 20.000 jubilados/as en estos procedimientos. Esto elimina aún más los derechos democráticos de la gente de Michigan. El Gerente de Emergencia se impuso inmediatamente después de que los/as votantes anularan una Ley de Gerencia de Emergencia en las elecciones de noviembre. Ahora, un grupo de jubilados/as escogidos por el síndico, se enfrentará a los bancos y a la corte, que les pondrá presión para ceder las pensiones duramente ganadas por los/as trabajadores/as.

STOPC ha pedido al “Comité de Jubilados” que convoque asambleas masivas de jubilados/as regularmente para informarles de la evolución y las maniobras legales y permitirles examinar todas las propuestas y dejarle saber al “Comité de Jubilados” de sus deseos.

La convocatoria nacional de la Coalición Moratoria Ahora de Detroit invita a las víctimas de todos los bancos a Detroit el 5 y 6 de octubre para una Asamblea Internacional Popular Contra los Bancos y Contra la Austeridad. Una reunión de planificación el 14 de agosto atrajo a 50 grupos e individuos. Los/as organizadores/as dicen que el ataque contra Detroit —y especialmente sobre las pensiones de los/as trabajadores/as — es un caso de prueba y si tiene éxito, se extenderá por todo el país. (moratorium-mi.org)