

WORKERS WORLD



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Keep up anti-war actions Pentagon attack on Syria 'still on the table'

By Fred Goldstein

Sept. 10 — It happened just as President Barack Obama was gearing up to argue in a nationally televised speech that the U.S. should carry out missile strikes against Syria, supposedly in order to prevent its future use of chemical weapons. Now Obama has been forced to postpone the vote in Congress, a vote he most likely would have lost.

Russian President Vladimir Putin put forward a general proposal, agreed to by Damascus, for Syria to turn its chemical weapons over to international control, where they will be destroyed.

Many are hoping that this proposal will put the skids under the U.S. war drive against Syria. But that would be a fatal error and a complete misunderstanding of Washington, the Pentagon, the oil companies and the military-industrial complex, which are behind the drive to overthrow the independent, sovereign government of Syria.

The Syrian government is fighting for its life against reactionary insurgencies sponsored by the U.S. and Turkey, on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia and Qatar, on the other. All the while the CIA is in Jordan training mercenaries to fight the government in Damascus.

Whatever comes of the present maneuver, one thing is certain. Washington has not given up its goal of "regime change," first stated by Obama in 2011 when he said that "Assad must go." Nowhere in any statements has that goal been retracted.

Perhaps the Russian proposal and Syria's acceptance can slow down Washington. Or it can expose the hypocrisy of U.S. claims to oppose weapons of mass destruction while planning to bring death and destruction to Syria under a storm of cruise missiles. Washington is by far the greatest purveyor of weapons of mass destruction in the world today.



Los Angeles, Sept. 7

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

But moving the debate into the U.N. Security Council carries dangers for oppressed countries, because this body is dominated by the imperialist powers.

Only time will tell if the Russian proposal slows the tempo of U.S. aggression. Hopefully, it will give some respite to the Syrian people.

But only mass mobilization at home and around the world will stay the hand of the Pentagon in the long run. The hawks see Syria as a stepping stone to attack Iran and Hezbollah, and to drive the

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A brief history of 'marriage'

Social tensions facilitate transition from matrilineal clan to patriarchy

By Bob McCubbin

Lewis Henry Morgan used the Darwinian concept of "natural selection" to explain prehistoric transitions, first from hominin sexual promiscuity to group marriage and then on to the pairing marriage form. At the time Morgan and Frederick Engels were developing their view of human evolution, in the second half of the 19th century, natural selection was a new and exciting scientific breakthrough. But the genetic basis underlying this process was not known when Engels accepted Morgan's explanation and referred to it in his "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State."

In fact, the subsequent discovery of the genetic basis undermined Morgan's use of natural selection and forms, perhaps, a principal motive for the alternative hypotheses put forward by Evelyn Reed and Chris Knight (see Parts 10 and 11 of this series). Both of these hypotheses outline chronologically remote, prehistoric evolutionary processes (or "revolutions") in the relations between the sexes that set the stage, first, for the period of matrilineal clans and mother right and, later, for a transition to agriculture.

According to Knight's hypothesis, the male hunters were induced by a women's sex strike to share the product of their kills. Reed's basic argument is that the hominin hunters were induced by the hominin women to give up the practice of cannibalism and become farmers.

There is no necessary conflict between the evolutionary materialist ideas of these two pro-Marxist theoreticians. Viewed chronologically, Reed's two-part hypothesis would probably straddle Knight's, with Reed's hypothesis of male hominins overcoming cannibalism preceding Knight's hypothesis of the human female solidarity sex strike, which, in turn, would logically be followed millennia later by the push of human women of the matrilineal clans for the domesticated hunters to become farmers.

Kin-based vs. non-kin-based loyalties

As noted in previous installments, the pairing marriage characteristic of the matrilineal clans had an exogamous character; pairings were made between clans, with the "husband" visiting or relocating to the woman's clan from his own maternal clan. These moves had the benefit of initiating and building connections between clans, which meant building trust and networks of mutual support. But while the practice had the immediate effect of contributing to interclan alliances and solidarity, its long-term effect contributed to undermining matrilineality and the communal nature of the clan.

Reed writes in "Woman's Evolution": "It is the men who are most affected by the conflict between matrilineality and matrimony. The man who leaves his own community for that of his wife has divided interests and loyalties. All his basic rights, responsibilities, and allegiances are with his sisters and other matrikin. This inhibits the fuller development of his ties with his wife and her children." (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1975, pp. 319-320)

Further along she writes, "As against the husband-wife

pair joined in marriage, there arises what may be called a counter-institution, the sister-brother pair united in matrilineality. ... The antagonistic coexistence of sister-brother and husband-wife can be viewed as the harbinger of fundamental changes taking place in the matriarchal structure." (p. 324)

This source of social/sexual tension, resting on a contradiction between kin and non-kin relations, was by itself, however, insufficient basis for the qualitative transformation in social/sexual relations that was to come. Reed adds another kin/non-kin source of social/sexual tension that developed from the social pattern spelled out in many anthropological reports. She describes how potential "husbands" were accepted into the prospective wife's clan.

Winning the acceptance of the prospective wife's matrikin and, in particular, that of the prospective mother-in-law involved working for them. Reed writes: "He becomes a husband when he has passed through the ordeal and is ready to accept the work of husbandry. ... One meaning of 'husband' is 'a man who has a wife.' But a 'husbandman' is a farmer, a tiller of the ground. Thus the husband makes his appearance in history as a gardener working for his wife's kin." (p. 312)

Reed emphasizes the profound political significance of men embracing farming over hunting and how this development occurred in parallel with a new form of social/sexual relations between men and women, something much more akin to what is considered "marriage" in modern society: "From gardening it was a short step toward the care and domestication of farm animals, and these were the two elements required for a higher economy. Thus marriage developed side by side with the development of husbandry, a new occupation of men which more and more displaced their former occupation of hunting." (pp. 312-313)

The contradictory character of the gift

A further source of social tension among the matrilineal clans was a practice whose initial effect, like that of exogamous sexual relations, was to initiate and build networks of trust and mutual support among neighboring clans. This was the custom of gift exchange.

From an evolutionary point of view, gift exchange initially functioned as a largely symbolic extension to the interclan level of the intraclan sharing of resources that was an essential characteristic of communal, matrilineal society. Its importance was examined in detail by Marcel Mauss in "The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies." (Trans. by W. D. Halls. New York: Norton, 1990. Orig. pub., 1954)

Mauss stresses the collective and symbolic nature of gift giving in what he terms "archaic societies": "First, it is not individuals but collectivities that impose obligations of exchange and contract upon each other. ... Moreover, what they exchange is not solely property. ... In particular, such exchanges are acts of politeness ... in which the passing on of wealth is only one feature of a much more general and enduring contract. Finally, these total ser-

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Set international assembly

Detroit's workers mobilize to defend pensions

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Detroiters are mobilizing to defend city workers' pensions and city services in the wake of the municipal bankruptcy filed by Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr. This Wall Street bankruptcy attorney was appointed by Michigan's reactionary Gov. Rick Snyder to essentially act as a receiver over the city, supplanting the elected mayor and City Council.

On Sept. 7, about 500 people attended a rally sponsored by U.S. Rep. John Conyers and chaired by Professor Michael Eric Dyson, with panelists including the Rev. Wendell Anthony, president of the Detroit NAACP; City Councilwoman Joann Watson; Al Garrett, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25; and columnist Julianne Malveaux. The speakers stressed the need for mass mobilization in the streets to challenge the racist Wall Street attack on Detroit, a majority African-American city.

On Sept. 18 and 19, the first hearings in bankruptcy court will be held to determine whether or not Detroit is eligible for Chapter 9 bankruptcy. That is critical in light of Orr and Snyder's expressed intent of using the bankruptcy process to attack municipal pensions, which are guaranteed under the state constitution.

In a Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy, the first step in the process is the eligibility determination. The major unions and retiree organizations have all filed eligibility objections to the bankruptcy

Continued from page 2

vices and counter-services are committed to in a somewhat voluntary form by presents and gifts, although in the final analysis they are strictly compulsory, on pain of private or public warfare." (p. 5)

Summarizing his anthropologically based analysis, Mauss writes: "Thus, in four important population groups [of foragers and hunters] we have discovered ... the archaic form of exchange — that of gifts presented and reciprocated. Moreover, we have identified the circulation of things in these societies with the circulation of rights and persons. ... The number, extent, and importance of these facts justifies fully our conception of a regime that must have been shared by a very large part of humanity during a very long transitional phase, one that, moreover, still subsists among the peoples we have described." (p. 46)

But like exogamy, reciprocal gift giving produced contradictory pressures. The "compulsory" or obligatory nature of the exchange would become problematical when the evolving technology of agricultural food production and food storage began producing surplus beyond immediate needs. The inevitable economic inequality based on factors like differences in productivity that resulted in differential quantities of food surplus was, perhaps, first expressed in the phenomenon of feasting, a widespread practice among early agriculturalists that we'll consider in detail in the next installment.

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. □

through their attorneys, with the first hearing scheduled on Sept. 18.

Efforts have been made to slow the process and bring the masses into the bankruptcy proceeding itself. Former Detroit Corporation Counsel Krystal Crittendon, who was removed from her position after she challenged the legality of the imposition of the emergency manager over the city, assisted more than 100 community residents in filing pro se objections and intervening in the case. Judge Steven Rhodes, who has been trying to steamroll the process, has been forced to schedule a public hearing on Sept. 19 to give each of these community objectors an opportunity to be heard.

A deposition of EM Orr was held Aug. 30 regarding whether the bankruptcy court should approve a "forbearance agreement" he cut with Bank of America and United Bank of Switzerland. It would remove some of the most onerous of all the bank debts imposed on Detroit — the interest rate swaps — from the bankruptcy proceeding, which is where the debts could be wiped out if fraud or misconduct by the banks were proven in connection with the swaps.

From the horse's mouth, under oath

Under the interest rate swaps, which were sold to the city in 2005-2006, the city must pay the banks 6.3 percent interest on bonds whose actual interest rate is only 0.6 percent. The banks pocket the difference, amounting to \$50 million a year. They have already netted a profit of \$247.5 million between 2008 and 2012. The forbearance agreement that Orr arranged lets the city terminate the swaps — by paying a slightly reduced termination fee of another \$264 million!

Orr was questioned at his deposition by people's attorney Jerome Goldberg, who appeared on behalf of city retiree David

Sole. Orr acknowledged that terminating the swaps would necessitate the city issuing more debt, so that actual termination costs to the city would be closer to \$450 million.

Orr acknowledged that three top executives of UBS have been jailed and a Bank of America executive indicted in connection with the imposition of rigged and illegal bond deals, from their respective municipal bond divisions, on cities across the U.S. Despite the fact that Orr is mandated by law to initiate a criminal investigation of wrongdoing that led to Detroit's financial crisis, he admitted he has not conducted any such investigation of the banks, even in light of those indictments.

Orr testified he was aware of a Securities and Exchange Commission judgment against UBS regarding fraudulent activity in municipal bond deals, one of which encompassed the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department, and similar investigations of Bank of America by the SEC. He admitted he was aware of the Libor scandal, which implicated both UBS and Bank of America in manipulating the interest rate associated with municipal bonds, as well as the International Swaps and Derivatives Association price-fixing scandal, which has implicated both banks in fraudulently calculating termination fees for the swaps.

When asked by Goldberg whether his office has looked into potential fraud in connection with the Detroit bonds, Orr testified that he deferred that decision to his legal counsel, the Jones Day law firm. Incredibly, Orr admitted that Jones Day lists Bank of America as a client and has also represented UBS in connection with bond offerings, but saw no conflict in relying on their opinion that a fraud investigation was not merited.

Regarding the role of UBS and Bank of America in the subprime mortgage crisis,

which led to more than 100,000 foreclosures in Detroit, with 73 percent of Detroiters placed in racist, predatory mortgage loans, Orr testified that he did not think the banks' mortgage lending practices had anything to do with causing the financial crisis in Detroit.

Oct. 5-6 assembly vs. banks, austerity

Goldberg told Workers World: "Orr's testimony under oath confirms that the imposition of the Emergency Manager over Detroit, and the bankruptcy filing itself, are fundamentally geared to protect the interests of the same banks and financial institutions that caused the financial crisis in Detroit, at the expense of the jobs, wages and pensions of workers and retirees, and the maintenance of city services and even basic city assets." Orr's deposition testimony can be viewed on the city of Detroit website at detroitmi.gov/EmergencyManager.aspx.

Against the backdrop of this struggle, activists are hitting the ground organizing for the International People's Assembly Against the Banks and Against Austerity, taking place on Oct. 5 and 6 at Grand Circus Park in downtown Detroit.

Organizers say the struggle in Detroit has implications for cities across the U.S., like Philadelphia, Chicago, Los Angeles and Stockton, Calif., among many others, where schools are being closed and services eliminated to pay off debt service to the banks. It also mirrors the situation in Portugal, Spain, Greece and across the globe where workers are facing austerity measures imposed by the banks and finance capital.

For more information about the International People's Assembly, call 313-744-7912; email moratorium@moratorium-mi.org; or visit moratorium-mi.org, DetroitDebtMoratorium.org or InternationalPeoplesAssembly.org. □

Event honors Chairman Fred Hampton Sr.

By Eric Struch
Chicago

The Chairman Fred Street Party is a yearly observance by the Prisoners of Conscience Committee/Black Panther Party Cubs of the Aug. 30 birthday of Chairman Fred Hampton Sr. of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party.

The event takes place annually at Ground Zero, 2337 W. Chairman Fred Hampton Way (aka "Monroe St."), where, on Dec. 4, 1969, a joint FBI/Chicago Police Department/Illinois State Attorney's Office death squad assassinated Chairman Fred Sr. in his sleep during a cowardly raid that also claimed the life of Defense Captain Mark Clark. Clark was the only Panther who managed to get a round off during the murderous barrage of cop machine-gun fire.

The event began with Comrade Mother Akua Njeri (formerly known as Deborah Johnson, Chairman Fred Jr.'s mother) giving her harrowing account of what it was like to live through the cowardly terrorist cop raid.

Njeri said one of the death squad's members executed Chairman Fred Sr. after discovering he was still breathing, saying, "He's good and dead now," after



PHOTO: AMANDA AVILEZ

the fatal shot was delivered. After bringing her downstairs, the cops actually put a gun to her pregnant belly, threatening to shoot her.

At the event, Chairman Fred Jr. gave a talk on subjects ranging from the history of the Black Panther Party, the colonial land grab (gentrification) on Chicago's predominantly Black West Side, the necessity of using brutal terms to describe the brutal reality of the mass incarceration

of Black youth, to the importance of revolutionaries engaging with contemporary street culture as part of their organizing efforts.

Supporters of the POCC/BPPC reconvened later several blocks away at "The Wall," a beautiful mural of Chairman Fred Sr. painted by the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective from the Bronx, for a street party featuring live poetry readings by youth from L.Y.R.I.C. and a live DJ set. □

Oppose Five Borough Plan

Livery drivers protest, occupy Taxi Commission

By Johnnie Stevens
New York

Two hundred livery cab drivers, union members of the Coalition of Taxicabs of New York, demonstrated outside the headquarters of the Taxi Limousine Commission on Sept. 3 to protest the Five Borough Taxi plan sponsored by the TLC and billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

What started as a news conference at noon turned into a virtual occupation of the TLC by drivers, their family members and representatives of such community organizations as the New York Coalition against Hunger, Parents to Improve School Transportation and Community-Labor United for Postal Jobs & Services, with everyone staying until 3:30 p.m.

At the press conference, spokespeople for COTANY denounced the plans as an attempt to drive livery drivers deep into debt to the banks as well as to eliminate the livelihood of thousands of livery drivers across the city, nearly all of whom are

from the oppressed communities.

COTANY spokesperson Jose Basora Sueana told the media, "Borough Taxi would take away the jobs of 50 percent of livery drivers who already have to pay \$70 weekly to base companies that own the radio call for passengers, as well as for auto repairs and the fee for TLC inspections of vehicles. Adding these new costs forces drivers to take loans from the banks and the owners [of the vehicles]."

"This plan is racist and is taking the jobs from a lot of people of color from Latin America, Africa and South Asia."

There are some 38,000 livery drivers in New York City, who drive more than 24,800 livery vehicles, far more than the 12,237 yellow cabs. By law, livery service is "on call" only — drivers are prohibited from picking up "hailing" passengers. But the yellow cabs with the pick-up medallions seldom go into the oppressed communities outside of Manhattan, so livery drivers risk \$500 fines if they pick up people on the street who need transport

service in the boroughs.

Since the liveries do not require the purchase of taxi medallions, which can cost from \$500,000 to \$1 million each, city officials and their banker patrons have been seeking new ways to further enrich themselves on the backs of the livery drivers.

To pave the way for this new scheme, the New York Police Department has stepped up harassment of livery drivers. Radio commentator and COTANY supporter Eddie Moli told the press that the NYPD "Courtesy, Professionalism and Respect" unit has been stopping drivers, checking their licenses and vehicles, and even imposing the infamous stop-and-frisk procedure on passengers.

The new Five Borough Taxi plan demands that livery drivers pay a yearly fee of \$1,500.

Also, drivers would be forced to have their vehicles painted lime green, as well as have a meter, credit-card reader and a GPS unit installed, driving the total cost to \$5,000-\$6,000. Since livery drivers work in the oppressed communities on a cash basis without big tips, COTANY estimates that half the livery drivers will be unable to continue working.

COTANY Co-Chair Pedro Joaquin Aquillai said at the press conference, "We will bring the drivers' families and people from the communities, churches, school unions and other organizations, the peo-

ple who need this service, to the front door of the TLC commission office at 33 Beaver Street in Manhattan." Aquillai called jobs for the drivers "a constitutional right."

Norman Salce, a livery-cab driver in uptown Manhattan, told the Latin Times: "I definitely think that they want to get us out of uptown Manhattan so that the yellow taxis can get in there. As white North Americans have changed the area, they're coming up to uptown Manhattan to live. They're calling the Taxi and Limousine Office to send yellow taxis, because they don't want to use the black cabs." (Sept. 3)

New York Taxi Workers Alliance Director Bhairavi Desai told Workers World after the press conference, "We sent out 20 alliance workers to the base areas of livery cab drivers throughout the five boroughs to help organize the livery drivers to keep their jobs in the boroughs and to win benefits."

COTANY has organized a petition campaign that has already gathered 8,000 signatures. The petition states: "A great threat has risen against livery cab drivers; a great catastrophe is coming. ... An uncertain future is approaching; a dangerous storm that threatens to destroy us all is just around the corner!"

COTANY holds weekly meetings every Tuesday in the different boroughs; for information, call 646-841-7041 or 917-325-9571.

Stevens drove a cab for 23 years.

Vallejo, Calif.

Community remembers Mario Romero

By Terri Kay
Vallejo, Calif.

About 75 family and community members came to the First Annual Community BBQ in Remembrance of Mario Romero at Wilson Park in Vallejo, Calif., on Sept. 2. Later that evening, they held a candlelight vigil. Many of Romero's friends, from elementary through high school, participated with the others in a speak-out.

On Sept. 2, 2012, Romero was sitting in his parked car in front of his home when he was approached and gunned down by a Vallejo police officer, identified by multiple witnesses as Dustin B. Joseph. Public and court records indicate a series of complaints that detail a history of Joseph's abusive and questionable behavior.

Romero's sister, Cyndi Mitchell, recounted: "Mario never got out of the car. Once they killed him, they cut him out of the seat belt. He had been shot in the hands, wrist, face, mouth ... all indicating he had his hands up." Mario was killed 15 days before his 24th birthday.

For the past year, Romero's family and other community members have been organizing as part of the Justice for Mario Romero Foundation to try to get Joseph to be held accountable for Romero's killing. A year after the killing, this reporter asked Mitchell about what the group is doing now.

Mitchell replied: "We are working with other families who have been victims of police violence in Vallejo, trying to write up their stories. The barbecue was to let the community know that we appreciate how people came forward to support us. A lot of people don't know that he wasn't a parolee, despite rumors — not that that would justify his murder."

She said: "Most people aren't aware that drug and alcohol testing isn't manda-



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

tory for police officers, nor are psychological evaluations. We want to see that officers who patrol the community are drug and alcohol tested on a regular basis and especially after any incidents. We want a law to that effect, to enforce accountability. We want to prevent the ability of police to cover up the use of excessive force."

Mitchell discussed how she wanted "the community to know that this is an epidemic that is going on. We want to insure that the leaders elected for our community aren't intimidated by the police. People should be able to live where they want, free from terrorism. The police are terrorizing our community. The president of the U.S. is talking about war in Syria, while we are facing police terror at home. We're gearing up and connecting with the community and working to build for the statewide march against police brutality in Sacramento on October 22."

She added: "The pain doesn't get any easier. After a year, I'm just learning how to deal with it. I'm learning how to be more aggressive in letting people know what's going on. People tend to believe the police and don't know about their lies and cover-ups. We can't get information on a police officer when he's brutalizing the community. There are many complaints about the officer, Dustin Joseph, who murdered my brother. He should have never been on the streets in the first place." □

Women speak out against U.S. intervention in Syria

The following is a statement from the International Women's Alliance, of which the Women's Fightback Network, New York Chapter, is an executive board member, on the planned U.S. assault on Syria.

We, the member organizations of the International Women's Alliance, raise our collective voices against the impending interventionist war that the United States is planning to wage against the Syrian people.

The U.S. Senate's recent approval of a punitive missile strike on Syria constitutes a direct act of aggression masquerading as humanitarian action. Despite widespread opposition from the international community and lack of authorization from the United Nations, the U.S. remains hell-bent on attacking Syria, even as reports show that Syrian rebels funded by the Saudi government — a close U.S. ally — were the ones responsible for the March 19 simultaneous chemical assaults in Aleppo and Ataybah, which left approximately 26 people including 16 Syrian soldiers dead, with 86 more seriously injured.

Indeed, the Obama administration's obstinacy in waging war on Syria is reminiscent of Iraq, where the supposed existence of weapons of mass destruction was used to justify gross violations of national sovereignty and the people's right to self-determination. Contrary to their claims of protecting civilians and upholding democracy, history has unveiled the devastating consequences of U.S. military aggression, including rampant human rights violations such as rape, torture, detention and murder of innocent civilians.

As thousands of Syrians continue to flee the capital in fear of foreign military



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Women's organization Gabriela marches against war on Syria. New York, Sept. 7.

air strikes, the real motive of the U.S. becomes clearer — to advance its own geopolitical and economic agenda in the region, particularly to gain control of the country's massive oil reserves. Syria has one of the biggest conventional reserves of crude oil in the eastern Mediterranean, and exploration opportunities have largely been limited to Russia, making it especially vital to U.S. interests.

U.S., keep your hands off Syria!

Women, girls and children remain as the most vulnerable sectors in times of conflict and this most recent act of aggression by the U.S. will undoubtedly cause untold suffering for thousands of Syrian women, girls and children who will be displaced, harassed, violated, deprived of basic necessities, injured or even killed as they are caught in the crossfire.

We call on women's organizations, advocates and the entire global community to rise up and condemn this brazen war-mongering of the U.S. for oil. We are in solidarity with the Syrian people in upholding their national sovereignty and right to self-determination. □

AFL-CIO Convention draws low-income workers

By Joe Piette
Los Angeles

At a time of record poverty and massive government cutbacks, and under the threat of another war in the Middle East, the AFL-CIO opened its quadrennial national convention in Los Angeles on Sept. 8.

Delegates from as many as 57 national unions listened to labor officials as well as religious, civil rights, women and LGBTQ leaders speak on the necessity of attracting young adults of diverse backgrounds into the largest labor organization in the U.S. To make it more obvious, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker ordered everyone to stand up. "Now everyone 35 or older sit down," she continued. Of the 1,200 Black, Latino/a, Asian and white attendees in the Diversity Workshop, only about 40 young participants were left standing.

With seven out of 10 new jobs in the U.S. offering only poverty wages, many of the larger delegations represented low-income workers, including the International Domestic Workers' Network. IDWN was formed in 2006 to provide a voice for the voiceless and a face for the oftentimes invisible workers who clean homes, care for children and the elderly, and assist those in need, and is located in diverse places such as the U.S., the Dominican Republic, Hong Kong and Kenya. The network was given the 2013 George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights Award to a standing ovation.

Also present are leaders from the New York City Taxi Drivers Alliance, one of the new affiliates invited to attend. These affiliates are workers' groups not yet organized and not yet dues paying, but they provide an opportunity to reverse the decades-long decrease in AFL-CIO membership.

The Rev. James Lawson, who participated in the Nashville, Tenn., lunch counter sit-ins of 1960, electrified the diversity workshop crowd when he condemned today's racism, sexism and violence as the result of "plantation capitalism." He drew more applause when he said, "Missile attacks on Syria will kill children in our communities, just as the bombs dropped in Vietnam killed our children in the U.S., as Dr. King explained."

As the audience filed out of the hall, Workers World Party members handed out copies of an American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 2858 resolution against military involvement in Syria, eliciting many supportive comments.

On the other hand, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka told a noontime press conference that the federation has not yet decided its position on Syria. He went on to repeat the Obama administration lies on who was responsible for the chemical attacks on civilians there. The federation's Executive Council, and not the body of the convention, would put out a statement when ready, Trumka said.

When asked about the recent decision by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union to leave the AFL-CIO, Trumka said the dockworkers' union had lost several decisions in fair trials before a judge and decided to leave the labor organization. He emphasized that his organization has to be much more aggressive in preventing one union from raiding another for members, especially at a time when only 6 percent of workers are organized.

The labor federation has invited unorganized workers, environmental, women's and civil rights groups, and community activists to become members of the AFL-CIO. When told that construction unions' leaders had been meeting for more than three hours in opposition to his plans, Trumka replied that all coalition members will "work out the details and safeguards" together and work through the conflicts.

WW PHOTO: PAUL WILCOX

Laundry workers demonstrate outside AFL-CIO convention.



Members of Community & Postal Workers United and Community-Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services handed out "Privatization Hurts All Workers" fliers to incoming conventioners and gathered signatures on a petition against post office closings and job cuts. CLUPJS members were warmly received at the local monthly meeting of the National Association of Letter Carriers the previous night.

Workers World Party members also distributed "A Job Is Our Right" leaflets.

Laundry workers picketed and solicited petition signatures demanding better working conditions and wages in front of the Marriott Hotel, where many convention meetings are taking place. The hotel charges guests \$419 a night but their laundry contractor pays workers as little as \$320 a week.

The convention continues through Sept. 11. □

Open letter to the AFL-CIO leaders —

Oppose war on Syria

The following is an open letter from the first secretary of Workers World Party, Larry Holmes, written to the AFL-CIO leadership on the eve of their organization's national convention Sept. 8 in Los Angeles. If you agree with this statement, write an email to ww@workers.org.

Sept. 6 — At this critical moment, the number one priority for organized labor must be to publicly, unequivocally, and loudly oppose the president's plans to attack Syria.

Understandably, the question of another war, this one against Syria, was likely not on the agenda of the AFL-CIO convention beginning this weekend in Los Angeles. Recent events, however, have changed everything and there's no point in pretending that the situation is the same as before.

If the plans to attack Syria are denounced from the podium of the labor convention, this would mean that organized labor has risen to the challenge of becoming the militant, thoroughly progressive, independent movement of working people in the United States. Not to do it would reduce the leadership of the AFL-CIO to providing cover for the president's war plans.

The fact that President Barack Obama has cancelled his appearance at the convention is no reason to ignore the challenge this new war poses.

The most important lesson from the last twelve years of war against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya — and other countries where people have been bombed by U.S. drones — is not just that George W. Bush was an evil liar and a war criminal. Of course Bush was that and more. It is a humiliating miscarriage of justice that Bush, Rumsfeld and all of the other architects of endless war are not in jail or on trial for premeditated mass murder.

The most important lesson from the recent past, however, is that when U.S. presidents order the Pentagon to unleash its awesome killing machine, this is not done for humanitarian reasons. Another lesson is that the sole purpose of the demonization of Saddam Hussein or Bashar al-Assad is to herd the reluctant U.S. population into supporting a criminal war.

The real objectives of the Pentagon's wars are always to secure the empire and terrorize all who would dare to challenge U.S. imperialism. It is for the strategic and economic gains of the U.S. superrich. And it is always the working people and all the poor who pay the most for the war and make the greatest sacrifices.

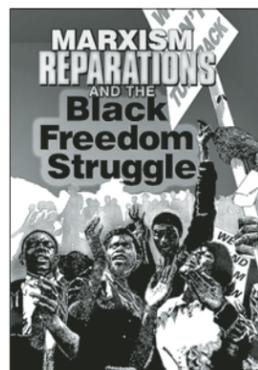
Again, this is the real goal of war plans against Syria.

President Obama, who was elected to end endless war, once again is betraying those who elected him.

At home and across the world, virtually everyone is against war on Syria.

The leadership of the organized labor movements has the responsibility to speak out against war. It must do this not only because it is in the interest of the U.S. working class, but also to prevent the millions of workers who oppose this war from following the right-wing, tea party, racist demagogues who pretend to be against the war — but who in reality oppose everything Obama does for the most reactionary reasons.

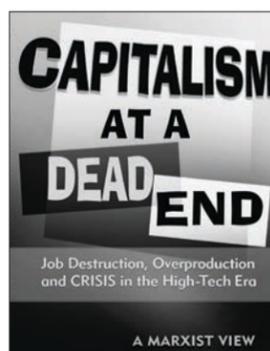
The AFL-CIO is meeting at a time when labor unions and workers everywhere are under relentless attack. For labor leaders meeting in Los Angeles, summoning the resolve, the clarity and the independence to stand up against another war can only bode well for the struggle of workers at Walmart stores, at fast food restaurants, and everywhere workers are resisting capitalist greed and superexploitation. □



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END

Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

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Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



Boston



New York

Protests across U.S. say 'No!' to war on Syria

By Tony Murphy

On the Sept. 7-8 weekend, reflecting deep opposition to the U.S. plans to attack Syria, anti-war demonstrations erupted in dozens of cities around the country and worldwide.

New York, Washington, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Philadelphia and Atlanta are just a few of the U.S. cities where people demanded "Hands off Syria!" and "Money for jobs, not for war!"

Overseas, a reported 100,000 people jammed St. Peter's Square in **Rome** for a four-hour vigil against U.S. military action. **Britain, the Philippines, Pakistan and Lebanon** all saw anti-war protests.

Most of the demonstrations took place on Sept. 7. Anticipating this upsurge in anti-war activity, on the same day the White House staged a media-blast public-relations campaign in which a handful of senators were shown videos of the chemical weapons attack that the government of Bashar al-Assad is supposed to have carried out.

In full war propaganda mode, the media treated the showing of these videos with an absurd amount of reverence. The videos in question had already been circulating on YouTube and provide no indication of who carried out the attack. The twist added by the White House is that they were now deemed "authentic" by the "intelligence community" — meaning the CIA.

Of course, the CIA itself is helping train the Syrian "rebels." Wall Street and its lackeys are fumbling as they try to make the case for a war that is not only unpopular but could ignite a movement against the 1% on all issues — not only war, but police brutality, joblessness, cuts in education and more.

This weekend, the seeds of this movement were sown in every city. Given its shameless role as a cheerleader for war, it's fitting that CNN was the site of the protest in **Atlanta**. Called by the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition/Atlanta, the demonstration brought out members of the Syrian, Turkish, Indian and Iranian communities as well as students and activists.

In **New York**, more than 1,000 people marched from Times Square to Union Square in a joint action called by the International Action Center, World Can't Wait, the Syrian American Forum and the United National Antiwar Coalition.

A thousand also protested in **Los Angeles** — where President Barack Obama's scheduled appearance at the AFL-CIO Convention this weekend was suddenly cancelled. The Answer Coalition's **Washington, D.C.**, protest, which included an activist who had disrupted Secretary of State John Kerry's Senate testimony last week, rallied at the White House.

Hundreds rallied in Chelsea Manning Plaza in **San Francisco**. The rally was called by Answer and supported by UNAC

and Workers World Party, among others. Demonstrators then marched along Market Street, in record San Francisco heat, to the United Nations Plaza, chanting "Jobs and education! Not war and occupation!"

In **Boston**, protesters gathered at downtown Park Street to condemn the march to war. Speakers included representatives of the Syrian American Forum, United National Antiwar Coalition, the International Action Center, the Women's Fightback Network, the Boston School Bus Union, Veterans for Peace, United for Peace and Justice, Chelsea Uniting for Peace, the Pirate Party and many other anti-war organizations.

The anti-war protest in **Raleigh, N.C.**, held at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Gardens, was called by Black Workers for Justice. Workers World Party-Durham Branch; the militant youth group, Fight Imperialism Stand Together (FIST); South Asian and Arab Youth for Justice; and UNC (University of North Carolina) Students for a Democratic Soci-

ety also co-sponsored and helped organize the event.

The rally in **Philadelphia** was called by the Philadelphia Peoples Power Assembly and featured speakers Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; Gabriel Bryant from Sankofa Community Empowerment; Shesheena Bray of the Askia Coalition Against Police Brutality; Tauheedah Asad, a local Dream Defenders organizer; and media activist Dave Lindorff of the blog "This Can't Be Happening!" Disabled African-American veteran Joe Moore spoke of the many veterans who still suffer from the toxic effects of Agent Orange, a chemical weapon used extensively by the U.S. during its war against Vietnam.

The **Buffalo, N.Y.**, protest was held in a busy shopping area. Anti-war speakers included members of the national youth organization FIST (Fight Imperialism Stand Together); Burning Books Bookstore; Free Jalil Muntaqim; the Buffalo/Western New York International Action Center, which organized the demonstration; the Western New York Peace Center; and Workers World Party.

At the **Salt Lake City** Federal building, dozens of people shielding themselves

AFSCME local's resolution against war drive

Workers World Party members at the AFL-CIO Convention in Los Angeles were among those distributing this excellent anti-war resolution by the AFSCME local representing workers from the Illinois Department of Human Services. (afscme2858.com)

September 4, 2013

Whereas, the overwhelming majority of the people of the United States and the overwhelming majority of the people of the world oppose any involvement by the United States in Syria and;

Whereas, the enormous financial costs of bombing and war could be better spent on public services such as healthcare, education, jobs, safety for our children or to feed the hungry and;

Whereas, military action in Syria by the United States government can only have a harmful effect on the people of Syria and

can only lead to worsening of relations between the people of the United States and the people of the Middle East and;

Whereas, the death of innocents from bombings would come with no possible positive counter balance;

Therefore be it resolved, that AFSCME Local 2858 go on record opposing military intervention or bombing by the United States government in Syria;

Be it further resolved, that a copy of this resolution be faxed or sent to President Obama, Senator Kirk, Senator Durbin and all members of the House of Representatives from the Chicagoland area;

Be it further resolved that AFSCME Local 2858 endorse and encourage its members to attend the rally called for Saturday, September 7, 2013, in Chicago's Federal Plaza to "Tell Congress to Vote No on War with Syria." □



Boston

Worldwide opposi

By G. Dunkel

Sept. 10 — From Stockholm to Beirut, from Paris to Buenos Aires, demonstrations and statements against the projected U.S. military intervention in Syria have grown. A majority of public opinion, reflected in polls both in the United States and Europe, has been opposed to these strikes for a while, but in the past few days, this opposition has grown stronger. More people are saying they are "firmly opposed."

Governments in European, North African and Middle Eastern countries know that a U.S. attack on Syria can bring unpredictable escalations as well as arousing sharp domestic protests.

Roman Catholic Church officials said

Pope Francis drew over 100,000 people to St. Peter's Square Sept. 7 in what they called a vigil against a U.S.-led assault on Syria. This gathering, of a pacifist character, was the largest so far. We report some other protests here.

Mike Powers in Stockholm told Workers World that 4,000 protesters marched there during Obama's Sept. 4 visit before he went to the G-20 meeting in St. Petersburg. With the main slogan "NO to Big Brother Obama," the demonstration also raised "NO to mass surveillance!" "NO to U.S. war policies!" and "NO to NATO!" Opposition to U.S. plans to attack Syria dominated the speeches and the chants of the marchers.

In Paris, some 5,000 people, mainly Syrians living in France, marched Aug. 28 to protest France's agreement to join the U.S. in its



Washington, D.C.



San Francisco

WW PHOTOS: LIZA GREEN, STEVE KIRSCHBAUM, G. DUNKEL, CHERYL LABASH, SHARON BLACK, JOE PIETTE, TERRI KAY, DOLORES COX, ELLIE DORRITIE

Harlem rally says no to U.S. attack on Syria

By Dolores Cox
Harlem, N.Y.

An emergency protest rally was called Sept. 3 to inform the Harlem Black community of the impending U.S. attack on Syria. The rally was organized by the Black-led December 12 Movement and the Freedom Party in front of the Adam Clayton Powell Jr. State Office Building on 125th Street.

Passersby heard that a U.S. military attack on Syria would support armed rebels for regime change — and not about the Syrian government's use of any alleged chemical weapons. The U.S. is using this allegation as an excuse to attack Syria. The motives of the U.S. in Syria are no different than they have been in the Middle East in general — to evoke lies to destroy any government that resists U.S. domination, to engineer the assassination of its leaders, and/or to acquire that country's oil. The U.S./NATO military takeover of oil-rich Libya resulting in the brutal assassination of President Moammar Gadhafi is a prime example.

Organizers raised other examples such as U.S. implicit support for the recent mil-

itary coup in Egypt — where thousands died. The U.S. lied about Iraq having “weapons of mass destruction,” resulting in tens of thousands of Iraqis dying and tens of thousands more displaced.

The U.S. is the biggest chemical weapons manufacturer in the world. The U.S. and Israel have stockpiles of weapons and chemicals, paid for by U.S. tax dollars.

December 12 organizer Omowale Clay stated, “Wars are not in the interest of the Black community. We will not send our youth to make war in the interest of the rich. Black people cannot afford to be silent. We must send the message, ‘Hell no, not again!’ And ‘No to the Obama Administration’s proposed war on Syria!’ We oppose the war economy and its aggressive foreign policy.”

He went on to say, “There is a crisis here at home around health care, housing, education and jobs. Our war is on poverty and racism, not U.S. foreign wars. Black and poor communities get attacked every day by domestic terrorism and racist policies and practices. There is a centuries-long white supremacist war on African-American communities everyday.”

The organizers are urgently calling for



everyone to spread the message of “Not Another War,” including contacting local politicians and Congressional Black Caucus members to demand “No Attack on Syria!” □



Buffalo, N.Y.



Salt Lake City

Opposition resists threats of new U.S. war

attack on Syria. France, the former colonial overlord of Syria, is the only such country that has committed to military action along with the U.S. Another 850 demonstrators, mainly anti-imperialist students, rallied Sept. 7 to protest France's decision; earlier in the week there were smaller protests in front of the U.S. embassy and directed at the French foreign minister.

According to a poll conducted by the right-wing newspaper Le Figaro, over 75 percent of the French public opposes France's decision. Le Figaro also published an interview with Bashar al-Assad where he refuted the U.S. government's lies.

Pierre Laurent, a Communist Party senator in the French parliament, said, “A military intervention, directed by an isolated duo of Western powers, acting outside of

international law, would be completely unacceptable, with unpredictable consequences. You can't use war to protect people and assure their humane security.” (L'humanité, Sept. 4)

In Beirut, a small demonstration tried to march on the U.S. embassy Sept. 6 to protest the proposed attack on Syria but was blocked by barricades put up by security forces. (20minutes.fr) The Lebanese Communist Party issued a statement at the end of August calling on “all popular forces, unions, women's groups and the youth to say no to aggression against Syria.” That is one way the LCP sees to protect Lebanon.

The Greek Communist Party wrote a statement Sept. 2: “We, the communist and workers' parties, express our solidar-

ity with the Syrian people and denounce the military attack against Syria which is being prepared by the imperialists of the USA, NATO and the EU together with their allies in order to promote their interests in the region.

“We reject the pretexts of the imperialists which, as was demonstrated, were also used in the war against Iraq and in the other imperialist wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya.” Some 76 parties and progressive groups had signed this statement as of Sept. 9.

The organization of South American countries known as UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) meeting in a summit on Aug. 30 in Parimaribo, Suriname, condemned any strike on Syria as “incompatible with the United Nations

Charter” and rejected “all types of interventionist strategies.”

European public opinion polls conducted Sept. 7 estimated that 68 percent of the French public is opposed to intervention in Syria; 58 percent of Germans are opposed; 52 percent of Italians, with 57 percent opposed to use of Italian bases. The British Independent newspaper reports that only 29 percent of the people back Britain joining an intervention against Syria.

Opposition was at least as great within the U.S. A new Wall Street Journal/NBC News survey published Sept. 10 found that only 33 percent of those polled say Congress should approve the request to attack Syria, while less than 25 percent consider military action in the national interest. □

U.S. maneuvers to derail mass revulsion to war

By Fred Goldstein

Sept. 9 — President Barack Obama and the White House are struggling mightily to override global and domestic opposition to a military adventure in Syria by trying to get Congress to vote for war.

Washington is pulling out all the stops. White House Chief of Staff Denis McDonough went on all five Sunday morning television shows to push the war. Obama is appearing on six major TV networks tonight and will make a major speech tomorrow, all to try to reverse a growing momentum against the Syrian adventure.

Polls show that even after having been saturated with accusations of chemical warfare atrocities by the Syrian government — accusations which have been simply asserted over and over but remain unproven — the population is overwhelmingly opposed to going into a new war.

According to a Sept. 9 CNN/ORC International poll, nearly 60 percent of the people oppose a limited military strike. Some 55 percent said they'd oppose it even if Congress approved it, and 71 percent would oppose it if Congress turns it down.

This poll probably underestimates the opposition because widespread anecdotal accounts by various legislators speak about margins of 100 to one and more opposing intervention. A small fraction of the opposition is anti-Obama from a reactionary direction.

The G-20 meeting in St. Petersburg, Russia, highlighted the international isolation of Washington. China, India, Indonesia, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Germany and South Africa joined Russia in opposing U.S. strikes against Syria. These governments represent close to 3 billion people. The only support for Washington came from Canada, France, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. (New York Times, Sept. 7)

Washington has been waging a two-and-a-half year proxy war to try to overthrow the independent nationalist government of Bashar al-Assad of Syria. Tens of thousands of Syrian soldiers have died on the battlefield in defense of the country.

The pro-Washington forces, the so-called Free Syrian Army, euphemistically dubbed “the rebels” by the capitalist media, have been militarily ineffective, filled with factional strife, splits, turf wars, resignations and in growing conflict with the al-Nufra and other Salafist (Islamic) forces.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government and the Syrian army have shown their staying power, gaining on the battlefield. With the assistance of Hezbollah, they retook the major town of Qusair from the contras on June 6. Since that time the government forces have been gaining military momentum in Homs and other towns, and are on the offensive.

Thus the U.S. plan to frame up the Syrian government with repeated lies about President Assad's use of chemical weapons. Chief of Staff McDonough exhibited false bravado about the lies when he told the Sept. 8 New York Times, “No one with whom I've spoken doubts the intelligence. We're not really debating the veracity of the central charge.”

But McDonough undoubtedly had read the op-ed column in the New York Times of the previous day by Florida Democrat Alan Grayson of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. Grayson had attended a special briefing about the administration's “evidence.”

“The Syria chemical weapons summaries are based on several hundred underlying elements of intelligence information. The unclassified summary cites



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

Widespread war opposition impedes U.S. imperialist aggression. Boston, Sept. 7.

intercepted telephone calls, ‘social media’ postings and the like, but not one of these is actually quoted or attached — not even clips from YouTube. (As to whether the classified summary is the same, I couldn't possibly comment, but again, draw your own conclusion.)”

Grayson revealed that members who attended were not even allowed to talk to each other or question the validity of anything that was said! This is what the government does when it is covering up lies.

This has all the earmarks of the “weapons of mass destruction” fraud perpetrated by the Bush administration in its drive to get approval for the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

U.S. hypocrisy on weapons of mass destruction

It is the height of imperialist hypocrisy for the U.S. government to level charges of weapons of mass destruction against the Syrian regime and to claim humanitarian motives for carrying out an act of aggression.

Washington is the only government to have used the ultimate weapon of mass destruction, the nuclear bomb, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki to end World War II in 1945. Actually, the U.S. Air Force inflicted more casualties than the atom bomb by creating firestorms over the major cities of Japan, incinerating hundreds of thousands of civilians. The U.S. killed up to 135,000 people in Dresden, Germany, with a similar firestorm.

Washington dumped millions of gallons of Agent Orange pesticide on Vietnam, leaving a continuing legacy of cancer and birth defects, in addition to using napalm on the Vietnamese population. The U.S. military used cancer-causing depleted uranium shells in Yugoslavia and Iraq, leaving radiation that lasts thousands of years.

The U.S. used the 15,000-pound “daisy cutter” in Vietnam and Afghanistan. The largest bomb in existence, it explodes above ground into thousand of fragments and destroys everything within a radius of 600 yards.

In the battle for Fallujah in the second Iraq war, residents told reporters that the U.S. military used poison gas and rained down white phosphorous bombs on the city of 300,000 in an attempt to root out resistance fighters.

This record of atrocities puts the struggle of Washington against chemical weapons in a different light.

As far back as 2009, Hillary Clinton sent out a memo urging that a strong campaign be enforced to prevent Syria, Iran and North Korea from obtaining chemical weapons. Given the bloody his-

tory of the U.S. use of weapons of mass destruction, the idea that Clinton was motivated by humanitarian considerations is ludicrous.

In fact, the countries on her list were precisely the ones that became the Obama administration's “axis of evil” after George W. Bush destroyed Iraq. They are the countries targeted for overthrow, “regime change,” by U.S. imperialism.

Chemical weapons can be viewed as defensive by formerly oppressed countries trying to prevent invasion by imperialist “great powers.” The attempt by the “great” nuclear powers to deny independent, sovereign, formerly colonial countries the right to stockpile chemical weapons is a purely military measure by the colonialists. The campaign against Iranian nuclear development is part of the same strategy.

It is an attempt to eliminate these countries' defenses in advance of imperialist attack. All the talk of humanitarianism is just a ruse for a military stratagem by the Pentagon and the White House.

Washington's monumental miscalculations

The Obama administration, and the U.S. imperialists as a whole, have made a series of miscalculations with their Syrian adventure that have brought them to their present dilemma.

Washington miscalculated the degree of mass opposition to the war among the population in the U.S. It miscalculated the widespread international opposition to a new war in the Middle East. And it miscalculated the determination of a large section of the Syrian masses to resist having their sovereignty destroyed and their country taken over by imperialism.

Thus, after completely underestimating the mass resistance it would encounter, the Obama administration forced all the capitalist politicians into the position of having to face the ire of a war-weary population if they went on record approving an illegal act of aggression that could spiral into a massive conflict.

Obama and his advisers no doubt felt that they could use patriotic propaganda and scare tactics to easily galvanize the population and the political establishment behind a war. This would politically strengthen Washington's hand in the face of its international isolation. After all, there were many precedents: the 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia, two wars against Iraq, the war against Afghanistan and the war against Libya.

But the plan to attack Syria has brought to light the fact that this is a new period. The position of U.S. capitalism and imperialism has deteriorated at home and abroad during this past decade of war and economic crisis.

The disillusionment, disgust and anger at the Pentagon's wars that have accumulated over the past decade had few means of expression. There was no mass anti-war movement. But the sudden lurch toward a new war has revealed this widespread opposition, invisible until now. The masses are sick and tired of war after 10 years. And they are deeply concerned about the devastating effects of the current economic crisis.

Capitalist ‘opposition’ conceals class issues

The ruling class is split on the war. One only has to see the pages of the quintessential establishment newspaper, the New York Times. One day the front page has headlines and pictures against the war. The next day it has headlines and op-ed pieces for the war.

The fact that opposition to the war is

being carried out by capitalist politicians and imperialist spokespeople creates mass confusion and conceals class politics.

The so-called “opposition” resorts to arguments such as “lack of evidence,” or the war won't help the U.S. Sometimes it even goes so far as to say it is illegal.

But the issues of importance to the workers and the oppressed are submerged.

They are suffering prolonged mass unemployment, growing poverty, declining wages, cutbacks in social spending, racist attacks and police brutality, attacks on immigrant workers, the militarization of the borders, and a general decline in material conditions.

The war will only intensify this suffering by feeding hundreds of billions of dollars more to the military-industrial complex, the war contractors and all their subcontractors, while the cities go bankrupt, services are cut and the rich get richer every day.

This war will not only take its toll on the workers at home but will bring death and destruction to the Syrian workers and peasants, with whom the workers in this country have far more in common than they do with the oil companies that covet complete domination of the Middle East.

Nor is this bourgeois opposition exposing the Pentagon, which seeks strategic territory in the Mediterranean, or the merchants of death and the Wall Street bankers who stand to benefit from war.

The same bankers who are foreclosing on millions of homeowners, who are charging usurious interest rates to students and who are sucking the cities dry would love to set up shop in Syria, which is a commercial and economic hub on the Mediterranean.

The bourgeois “opponents” do not talk about the mounting casualties of post-traumatic stress disorder among veterans; the epidemic of suicides among soldiers and veterans who have been destroyed by having to carry out brutal imperialist aggression; the vast number of maimed veterans in the hospitals and homes; the broken families; and the jobless and homeless veterans. But these are the pictures conjured up by the threat of a new war.

All this highlights the decline of capitalism in the U.S. as well as the decline of global influence by U.S. imperialism. The imperialist allies are leery of being dragged into another disastrous military adventure by the overlords in Washington.

But the architects of U.S. imperialism are in a great dilemma. As the international enforcer of the world order, Washington and the Pentagon resist stepping backward. To do so would be to show vulnerability and weakness, something an aggressive, adventurous super-power that claims domination over the whole world cannot do.

Whether they find a way to postpone or step back from this new adventure for the moment, Washington and Wall Street are driven forward in their aggressive advance, all the more so as the economic foundation of their rule deteriorates with the economic crisis.

This decline has the potential to open up a new, more widespread, working-class resistance to imperialist war. The passive resistance must be mobilized into active, conscious resistance. Struggle is the only way to stop war.

Goldstein is 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.”

From Pinochet to Suharto

U.S. supported dictators who 'killed their own people'

By Deirdre Griswold

"He is killing his own people." How many times have we read and heard that?

It is the endlessly repeated phrase that is supposed to make us hate the head of Syria enough to justify the killing of many more Syrians with U.S. cruise missiles.

Do the people who sprinkle such phrases in their "news" reports even think about them?

When did the U.S. government suddenly decide that governments which kill their own people should be "taken out"?

This Sept. 11 is the 40th anniversary of the 1973 fascist coup in Chile that brought down the social democratic government of Salvador Allende, who had been trying to narrow the big gap between rich and poor in that country through a variety of social reforms. Allende was killed in the coup, along with thousands of other Chileans. Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who led the coup, was therefore responsible for "killing his own people" many times over.

Did Washington go to the United Nations to condemn the coup? Did it institute sanctions against Pinochet's brutal military regime? Did it do anything about it, other than make sanctimonious, toothless statements about human rights?

On the contrary. Pinochet was Washington's man. He was a staunch anti-communist. But it didn't matter that Allende was not a communist. U.S. corporations still wanted to get rid of him. Pinochet was their answer to the wave of progressivism that swept Latin America after the Cuban Revolution.

The role played by U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in installing and protecting Pinochet is on the public record. The book "Nixon, Kissinger, and Allende: U.S. Involvement in the 1973 coup in Chile" gives many of the details.

After Pinochet had buttressed his rule through killings, torture and mass detentions, the path was cleared for U.S. corporations and banks to get back "their" property, which had been nationalized under Allende. Anaconda and Kennecott copper companies had squeezed fabulous profits out of Chile before Allende; once the generals were in power, they were welcomed back to do business as usual.

Indonesian bloodbath of 1965-66

The 1973 Chile coup was not the first time that the U.S. government helped install dictators who seized power by killing "their own" people. There is a very, very long list of them.

One of the grisliest of all was the 1965 coup in Indonesia, which led to a bloodbath of epic proportions. (See the pamphlet "Indonesia 1965: The Second Greatest Crime of the Century" at workers.org.)

The 1965 coup in Indonesia ushered in a slaughter of unarmed people that has not been equaled since. Some estimates put the number of those killed by the military and paramilitary bands at one million. The population of the beautiful island of Bali — today a high-priced tourist destination — was reduced by 10 percent as soldiers went from village to village, killing those singled out as leftists and progressive nationalists: activists in unions, student groups, and women's and peasants' associations. The

Indonesian Communist Party, which had been the largest in the world outside the socialist bloc, was decimated.

Again, there were no condemnations from Washington. No sanctions. Not a thought of U.S. intervention against the generals.

On the contrary, editorials and articles in leading bourgeois newspapers showed how the ruling class here welcomed the carnage. James Reston, associate editor of the New York Times at the time, wrote a column on June 19, 1966, about the massacres entitled "A Gleam of Light in Asia." The "savagely transformation" of Indonesia, he said, was "one of the more hopeful political developments" in Asia.

"There was a great deal more contact between the anti-communist forces in that country and at least one very high official in Washington before and during the Indonesian massacre than is generally realized," wrote Reston. "It is doubtful if the coup would ever have been attempted without the American show of strength in Vietnam or been sustained without the clandestine aid it has received indirectly from here."

Just as in Chile, the coup threw open the doors to Western corporations — mostly U.S.-based — to reap vast profits from Indonesia's abundant natural resources and low wages, made even lower by the destruction of the unions. When you read today about the mowing down of Indonesia's great rain forests for their precious hardwoods, think of the coup and its million victims.

Bipartisan support for coups

These two examples — and there are

many more, from the coup that installed the Shah of Iran to the massacre of Salvadorans and Guatemalans by U.S.-armed military dictators — show how both the two big pro-capitalist political parties backed U.S. imperialist foreign policy.

The Indonesian coup took place during the Democratic Lyndon Johnson administration. His "liberal" vice president, Hubert Humphrey, personally handled relations with the blood-stained regime of General Suharto. Humphrey was the "very high official in Washington" referred to in Reston's column.

The Chilean coup was under the Republican Richard Nixon administration. His secretary of state, Kissinger, was the point man for relations with Pinochet.

We now have a Democratic administration, headed by Barack Obama, who actually lived in Indonesia from 1967 to 1971 after his mother married an Indonesian geographer, Lolo Soetoro, who worked for the Indonesian army and later for the Unocal oil company. In his book "Dreams from My Father," Obama speaks of his years as a child in Indonesia and mentions the role of the CIA in supporting the generals. That book was written before he was elected to any political office.

Presidents come and go, but the think tanks funded by the wealthy corporate families of the U.S. shape policies, domestic and foreign, as well as the politicians who will articulate them. It takes more than elections to change these bloody-handed policies. It takes the building of a mass movement that rejects imperialist wars and fights in the interests of the workers and all the oppressed. □

COLOMBIA

Fired GM workers determined to win

By Martha Grevatt

For two years and two months a determined group of fired autoworkers have lived in tents outside the U.S. Embassy in Bogotá, Colombia. They, along with hundreds of their counterparts, were fired for the crime of suffering work-related injuries and disabilities. General Motors, their former employer, is still refusing to negotiate a just settlement with the Association of Injured Workers and Ex-workers of GM Colmotores (Asotrecol).

The U.S. Embassy was targeted because of Washington's ownership stake in GM and its role in the 2009 bailout of that company. These courageous workers have held three hunger strikes, with their lips sewn shut, to dramatize their hardship. Not only were they fired, but documents were forged to deny them workers' compensation.

Their struggle is hard. Their dire financial situation means their families sometimes go without food; some have been evicted and others are facing foreclosure. Without money for the surgeries they need, their physical conditions continue to deteriorate.

Their spirits were lifted tremendously, however, when a solidarity delegation arrived from Detroit. Two former UAW presidents, Melvin Thompson and Frank Hammer, joined the encampment and

lived with the families for two weeks. A week later, they were joined by the Rev. Charles Williams, president of the Detroit chapter of the National Action Network, and NAN activist Debra Simmons. Asotrecol support activist Paige Shell-Spurling from Portland, Ore., was also part of the solidarity delegation.

The five activists also demonstrated with a group of fired injured miners from another region of Colombia who have been inspired by Asotrecol. Not long after the U.S. activists returned to the encampment, the miners were brutally beaten by police. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world for unionists and workers rights advocates.

While the delegation was there, a second morale booster was the arrival, via Western Union, of almost \$900 donated by Detroit-area Chrysler workers who are members of UAW Local 869. This enabled one of the workers to have abdominal surgery, needed as a result of the hunger strike. It has been the donations of U.S. supporters, especially the \$10,000-plus contributed by UAW members, that have kept the encampment going as a symbol of resistance.

In August, after the delegation returned home, the Embassy attempted to illegally have the encampment — which is not on Embassy grounds — evicted. A fourth hunger strike began and Carlos



Colombian GM workers win solidarity in Michigan.

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Ernesto Trujillo, who was unable to work at GM due to shoulder injuries, strapped himself to a cross in a crucifixion protest. A mere 15 hours later, Asotrecol President Jorge Parra secured an agreement from government officials to call off the eviction. The agreement also stated that an executive at GM headquarters in Detroit pledged to engage in mediation on Aug. 22 with Asotrecol.

The mediation did not take place as promised. Asotrecol did meet with members of Colmotores plant management, but their issues remain unresolved.

Their struggle is, nevertheless, having a huge impact. Inside the Colmotores plant, major changes have taken place

in the area of safety and ergonomics. Injured and incapacitated workers are no longer being fired.

The solidarity delegation has been sharing their experiences with Detroit activists, including members of the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs. Most recently, Hammer and Thompson addressed the rank-and-file group Autoworker Caravan. "There is no separation between Asotrecol and us," Thompson explained. "Corporations employ economic violence. What we absolutely have to do here is all sing the same song."

Martha Grevatt is a 26-year UAW Chrysler worker.

WORKERS WORLD
 editorial

A crack that lets in light

In this age of horribly destructive weapons and the ability of U.S. government agencies to pore over everyone's private communications — if they are digitized, as most are — there is a tendency to regard the capitalist state as all-powerful, a juggernaut that can roll over everyone if it wants.

It isn't and it can't. But it takes an economic as well as a political crisis to make that apparent.

The state rests on force in the final analysis — armies, police, courts, prisons and all the adjunct agencies that buttress repression. When you count them all up, millions of people are involved in one capacity or another in making it work. Most of them don't see themselves as guardians of the capitalist-imperialist order. Yet that is what they are. And when the system goes into crisis, when tens of millions of workers face economic insecurity that could lead even to homelessness and hunger, the loyalties of many of those working for the capitalist state are shaken.

Right now the federal government has cut 10 percent from the budgets of many agencies and says it just doesn't have the money to fix the bridges, inspect the meat, give poor children a head start, keep the post offices open, and perform thousands of other vital tasks.

But it's got the money to send destroyers to the Mediterranean with hundreds of cruise missiles to attack Syria. That has provoked a huge reaction from the masses of people, who have clearly rejected such an attack.

And it has prompted some of those who at one time had top security clearance, who were trusted with the kinds of government secrets that aren't supposed to come out, to blow the whistle. Edward Snowden and Pvt. Chelsea Manning weren't the only ones. They may be symptoms of a much larger current of disaffection.

Keep up anti-war actions! Pentagon attack on Syria 'still on the table'

Continued from page 1

Russians from their naval base in Syria. It is meant to break up an alliance of the forces of resistance in order to establish complete U.S. domination of the oil-rich Middle East and pull Syria firmly back into the orbit of imperialism.

Pols, diplomats hurry to undermine Russian proposal

The forces of aggression in the imperialist camp are scurrying to find a way around the Russian proposal, to counter its obvious appeal and the cooperative spirit of the Syrian government.

Syrian Prime Minister Wael al-Halki stated that his government would go along with the idea, "to save Syrian lives." Foreign Minister Wali al-Muallem said that Syria agreed and was willing to become a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

This basic proposal to take away Washington's pretext for war sent the hawkish capitalist politicians and imperialist dip-

lomats scurrying to find a way to keep the missile strikes on the agenda.

Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham, mouthpieces for the Pentagon, and Sen. Charles Schumer quickly put together a "gang of eight" committee of senators to redraft the war resolution so it would demand that strikes take place if the weapons are not destroyed by an early deadline, and also if the U.N. Security Council fails to pass a resolution condemning Syria for carrying out chemical attacks on its own people.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria and the Syrian government have denied this from the beginning. The U.S. has not produced any credible proof. Assad went on the Charlie Rose show on Sept. 9, where he categorically denied carrying out such attacks.

Thus McCain, Graham, Schumer and Co. want to make implementing the Russian proposal conditional on the Security Council calling Assad a liar — a condition that the Russians have already said is unacceptable.

The latest sign of this is a public statement by the Steering Group of Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity which rebuts the Obama administration's charge that the Syrian military used poison gas on civilians in a suburb of Damascus.

A dozen former U.S. military and intelligence officials have signed the statement sent to Obama, which begins, "We regret to inform you that some of our former co-workers are telling us, categorically, that contrary to the claims of your administration, the most reliable intelligence shows that Bashar al-Assad was NOT responsible for the chemical incident that killed and injured Syrian civilians on August 21, and that British intelligence officials also know this."

Called "Is Syria a Trap?" the statement can be found on a number of different websites, including wikispooks.com. What it indicates is a much wider circle of dissent from within about the government's war policy, since the dozen retired personnel who signed the statement say they were briefed by people on active duty who have access to the raw data not being shown to the public, the media or even members of Congress.

The seemingly all-powerful state, therefore, is subject to the same stresses and strains that are forcing the masses of people to organize and struggle.

As we write this, the Obama administration may be pulling back from its full-court press for an immediate attack. It certainly risks more opposition if it does not even give the appearance of listening to the people.

But the forces of imperialism are not swayed by logic or appeals to conscience. The struggle against predatory wars for profit must be part of every progressive agenda, because war itself then becomes the excuse to inflict even more pain on the masses in the name of patriotism and sacrifice — none of which is extracted from the super-rich. □



WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

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The imperialist government of France, the former colonial power over Syria, is submitting a proposal to the Security Council threatening Syria with war if the weapons are not destroyed completely and immediately. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov denounced the French proposal as "unacceptable."

Putin demands U.S. rule out 'use of force'

While the war makers in Washington have intensified their efforts to approve the strikes, Putin was quoted in the Sept. 10 New York Times as saying on television: "Undoubtedly, all of this makes sense and can function, can work, only if we hear that the American side and those who support the United States in this sense rule out the use of force, because it is difficult to make any country — Syria or any other country, any other government in the world — unilaterally disarm if the use of force is being prepared against it."

Secretary of State John Kerry, who first

floated the idea of removing the weapons, is now trying to pretend he didn't mean it. He is busy covering his tracks with belligerent statements demanding quick action by Syria and declaring that "the use of force absolutely should not be off the table."

Never before has an attempt to stir up war fever among the people at home fallen as flat as Washington's current attempt to drum up support for cruise missile strikes. The hawkish Wall Street Journal reported Sept. 10 that a Journal/NBC poll found that support for the strikes dropped from 44 percent last week to 33 percent this week.

The anti-war movement should take this as a signal to broaden its appeal to the masses, who are disgusted by 12 years of war and five years of relentless economic crisis. Not only should there be no pause in the struggle against an imperialist attack on Syria, but that struggle should be accelerated, broadened and escalated. □

As U.S. sinks claws in African soil

Study reveals AFRICOM's reach

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Journalist Nick Turse's study, entitled "AFRICOM's Gigantic 'Small Footprint,'" reviews the increasing role of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) at TomDispatch.com. It illustrates why this issue should become a major focus of Western peace, anti-war and anti-imperialist movements. Little attention has been paid to imperialist interventions in the oppressed African nations.

Although there have been significant U.S. demonstrations against war threats aimed at Syria, the latest machinations of the White House and of the French Prime Minister François Hollande government should not be the sole focus of the anti-war movement. Pentagon and Central Intelligence Agency subversion and military intrigues in Africa also require close attention from the movement.

If these trends in Africa are presented cohesively, there could be an upsurge in actions about these events. The United National Antiwar Coalition's panel discussion, entitled "The War on Africa," at June's New York Left Forum attracted a standing-room-only audience. Its success illustrates that there is growing interest in Western imperialism's interventions in Africa. A plenary session on these issues could have had a stronger impact.

West intent on dominating Africa

Western efforts have intensified to dominate Africa, a continent which has been subjected to nearly six centuries of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism. With the People's Republic of China

playing a greater economic role there, the U.S. ruling class is scrambling to edge out Beijing by increasing its military and intelligence presence.

The Pentagon/NATO seven-month bombing campaign of Libya in 2011 demonstrated the extent to which the imperialists will go to overthrow and remake states. Yet, since Gadhafi's government fell, Libya has been plunged into economic distress and political chaos.

The U.S. is constructing drone stations throughout the Horn of Africa and in Niger, while it subsidizes a 17,500-person military force in Somalia — now the focus of oil exploration and exploitation, along with other East African states.

Turse says of the Pentagon, "They're involved in Algeria and Angola, Benin and Botswana, Burkina Faso and Burundi, Cameroon and the Cape Verde Islands. And that's just the ABCs of the situation. ... Skip to the end of the alphabet and the story remains the same: Senegal and the Seychelles, Togo and Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia. From north to south, east to west, the Horn of Africa to the Sahel, the heart of the continent to the islands off its coasts, the U.S. military is at work."

Turse tracks Pentagon joint military exercises with various African states and the construction of military bases within them. He reviews the building and expansion of the Camp Lemonnier base in Djibouti and the utilization of drone technology to monitor events and offensively strike targeted individuals and organizations.

The escalating Pentagon presence in Africa is also shown by AFRICOM-related bases of operation outside the conti-

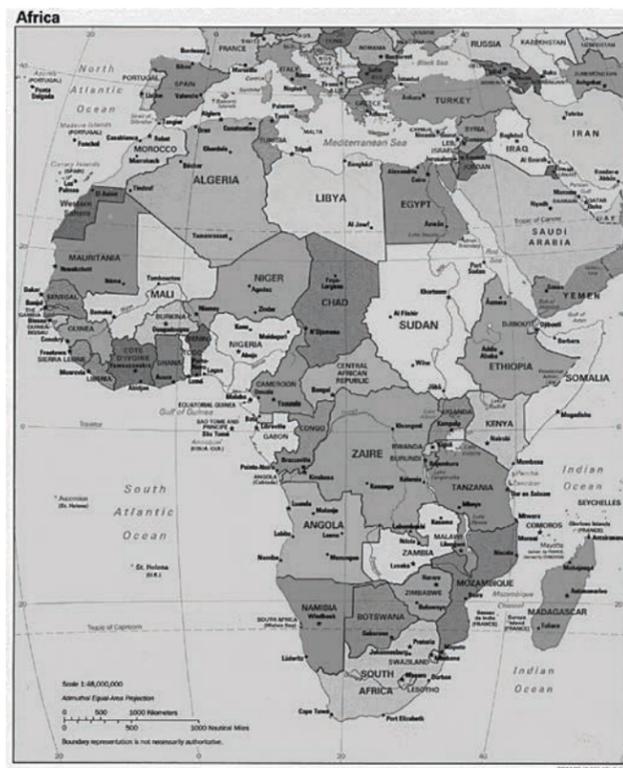
nent. Located mainly in European countries and in islands under their control, these facilities should concern the continent's left and anti-war forces, given the history of European colonialism in Africa.

Turse notes, "When considering the scope and rapid expansion of U.S. military activities in Africa, ... [note] ... key 'African' bases are actually located off the continent. ... AFRICOM's headquarters is located at Kelley Barracks in Stuttgart-Moehringen, Germany."

Turse reveals, "... The base in Stuttgart and the U.S. Air Force's Air Operations Center in Ramstein were both integral to drone operations in Africa. Key logistics support hubs for AFRICOM are located in Rota, Spain; Aruba in the Lesser Antilles; and Souda Bay, Greece, [and] Ramstein." AFRICOM maintains an operating base on Britain's Ascension Island, 1,000 miles off Africa's coast in the South Atlantic.

Anti-imperialist forces must protest

These findings should provide the basis for a more concentrated effort opposing the growing Pentagon and CIA presence in Africa. The organization of a clear anti-imperialist response would encourage revolutionary organizations and



movements in Africa, leading to alliances between Western progressive forces and those on the continent.

Study groups should review the history and current events related to imperialist militarism. Task forces should be set up to organize protests against military training facilities and boycotts against corporations involved in these events in Africa.

Pamphlets, books, papers, web pages and other resources should be developed to convey this concrete information to the people in the imperialist countries, Africa and other regions of the globe. □

South African autoworkers strike key industry

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Workers' struggles continue in South Africa despite the successful resolution of strikes in the automotive and mining industries.

Auto industry settlements were reached between the National Union of Metalworkers Union of South Africa and BMW, Nissan, Ford, Volkswagen, Toyota, Mercedes and General Motors. Union negotiators resolved the work stoppage by obtaining an 11.5 percent salary increase in the first year and 10 percent in the following two years.

Issues are still to be resolved between the workers and bosses at Toyota in Durban and BMW in Pretoria. It was not clear whether employees would accept the contract and return to work as of Sept. 9.

Some 30,000 workers went on strike on Aug. 19. The affected companies annually produce 278,000 automobiles for export to Europe, the United States and the African continent. The industry contributes 7 percent to South Africa's gross domestic product.

Nonetheless, other sectors within auto — including component producers, ser-

vice station workers and panel beaters — walked off the job on Sept. 9.

The sectors' 76,000 NUMSA members insisted on double-digit wage hikes and better employment conditions. Their absence can cripple the auto industry overall. The union says the non-represented workers in the sectors' 300,000-member labor force also have the right to strike.

Industry bosses say that such labor actions could potentially damage existing jobs. With 25 percent of South Africa's work force unemployed, the bosses utilize this as a bargaining chip.

The Sept. 9 Financial Times quoted Thapelo Molapo, Automobile Manufacturers' Employers Organization chair, "[W]hen they stop working we cannot operate. They supply us with the components [for] our manufacturing processes. If this thing goes on for any more than a week it will be affecting us badly. ... It is a high settlement ... we had no option ... it's going to have an impact, our industry ... [is] competing on a global scale. There's a lot of capacity [worldwide] to manufacture and in most places they can do that a lot more cost efficiently than we can."

Gold miners settle at Harmony

The National Union of Mineworkers has settled with the final company in a large-scale strike, beginning Sept. 3, that impacted gold production throughout South Africa. Workers had remained on strike at Harmony Gold despite settlements at Anglo American and other firms the previous week. On Sept. 8, the company finally agreed on an 8 percent pay

hike, opening the way for the resumption of full-scale production.

The rival Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, which represents about 20 percent of workers affected in the strike, did not participate in the NUM-initiated strike. AMCU rejected the 8 percent wage settlement, and is threatening to take its workers out if a larger offer is not made.

AMCU President Joseph Mathunjwa told workers in Carletonville, "We have confirmed and voted for a strike." (SABC, Sept. 9)

AMCU and NUM have competed over who will represent mineworkers. In 2012, in the Northwest Province's Rustenburg area, a police massacre killed 34 miners, and some lost their lives or were injured in internecine conflict.

Differences between NUMSA and Alliance partners

A struggle over the status of the Congress of South African Trade Unions Secretary General Zwelinzimi Vavi has erupted publicly. He was suspended over alleged misconduct. COSATU is the country's largest labor federation.

NUMSA has accused the ruling African National Congress and the South African Communist Party of unwarranted interference in its internal affairs as a labor organization. NUMSA says that COSATU should not be the ruling party's "labor desk."

In a sharp response to this crisis — which escalated as a result of a post-Tripartite Alliance economic summit re-

port — the SACP's Provincial Council in Guateng accused COSATU of attempting to undermine the Alliance. This Alliance has ensured ANC dominance in South African politics since 1994 when the first non-racial elections were held after the racist apartheid system collapsed.

The SACP Sept. 8 statement claims, "The Provincial Council noted desperate attempts by the General Secretary of NUMSA, comrade Irvin Jim, to draw leaders of the SACP and ANC into problems facing [COSATU]. At its Special Central Executive Committee meeting held mid-August, ... it suspended ... Vavi." (sacp.org.za)

A report entitled "State of the Alliance: The Previous Five Years" was issued by the ANC following the Alliance's economic summit; it takes on the problems inside the coalition of national democratic forces in South Africa.

In it, ANC General Secretary Gwede Mantashe says, "In the bigger part of the five years the alliance has worked well and carried out common programs. However, assessing all the structures of the individual alliance partners, we ... conclude that the alliance is at its weakest at the moment." He also criticized the South African National Civic Organization, saying it now has no presence on the ground. SANCO played a pivotal role in the anti-apartheid struggle during the 1980s and early 1990s.

National elections are scheduled for early 2014. The Alliance's role will be crucial in the ANC's ongoing efforts to remain in power. □

AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

To order, send \$3 to World View Forum, 147 W. 24th St., 2nd Floor, NY, NY 10011. Include name and address.



Protestas de costa a costa contra planes de EE.UU. en Siria

Por John Catalinotto

El 28 de agosto, mientras Washington, Londres y París estaban a punto de abrir otra guerra impopular y peligrosa disparando misiles contra Siria, activistas en contra de la guerra en Estados Unidos y alrededor del mundo se fueron a las calles antes de que los cohetes fueran lanzados.

Las manifestaciones fueron apenas una pequeña muestra de la enorme oposición popular en cada uno de los países imperialistas. Para el 1º de septiembre, el primer ministro británico David Cameron había perdido una votación en el Parlamento apoyando la guerra. El presidente Barack Obama, con casi ningún apoyo internacional, había anunciado que pediría al Congreso de Estados Unidos el apoyo que le faltaba.

En un recuento de los anuncios en la página web de La Coalición Nacional Unida Contra la Guerra (UNAC por las siglas en inglés) para el 1 de septiembre ya había al menos 70 manifestaciones, vigiliadas o reuniones en al menos 50 ciudades estadounidenses. (unacepeace.org)

Informes desde todo el país — desde Newark, Nueva Jersey a Dearborn, Michigan, y Oakland, California,— mostraban que aunque las protestas no eran tan grandes como las que precedieron a la

guerra del 2003 en Irak, ganaban fácilmente la solidaridad de quienes pasaban.

En la ciudad de **Nueva York** el 29 de agosto, cientos de manifestantes, incluyendo un fuerte grupo de sirios/as de Allentown, Pensilvania, marcharon durante dos horas al ritmo de tambores en y alrededor de las calles obstruidas por construcción en Times Square. A menudo bloquearon el tráfico mientras coreaban, “Manos de Estados Unidos y la OTAN, fuera de Siria”. El Centro de Acción Internacional (IAC) y el Foro Sirio-Americano iniciaron la acción. Otros grupos también participaron.

Zigzagueando por las aceras congestionadas, los/as manifestantes llegaron en estrecho contacto con la diversa multitud de Times Square, despertando muchas reacciones amigables y muy pocas hostiles.

El 29 de agosto en el edificio Federal de Westwood de **Los Ángeles**, cientos respondieron al llamado de la organización Árabes-americanos por Siria y el Foro Sirio-americano junto con el Centro de Acción Internacional, BAYAN-USA, la Unión de Iraníes Progresistas, SOA Watch-LA, la Alianza Puertorriqueña y UNAC-LA, exigiendo que no se bombardeara o lanzara ningún cohete contra Siria.

Cerca de 100 manifestantes en Seattle mostraron muy visiblemente su oposición a una escalada de atentados

contra Siria cuando los/as jóvenes manifestantes, incluyendo muchos/as de la comunidad siria, marcharon a través del centro desde el Edificio Federal hasta el Centro Westlake el 31 de agosto.

En **San Diego**, miembros del Partido Workers World Party/Mundo Obrero distribuyeron su periódico a los/as visitantes sabatinos en el famoso Parque de Balboa, y a los/as participantes en una enérgica manifestación que exigía que Estados Unidos no atacara a Siria. Una pancarta recordó a todos/as la evaluación del Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. sobre el militarismo estadounidense hace 46 años: “el más grande proveedor de violencia en el mundo de hoy [es] mi propio gobierno”.

En **Washington, D.C.**, cientos de manifestantes marcharon en una demostración convocada por el IAC el 31 de agosto antes y durante el discurso de Obama. Sus consignas se podían oír en el Rose Garden (el jardín de la Casa Blanca donde Obama estaba). La coalición Answer, Code Pink y el Foro Sirio Americano también estuvieron presentes.

En el **Área de la Bahía de San Francisco**, hubo manifestaciones en San Francisco el 29 de agosto alrededor de Union Square y el 31 de agosto en la Plaza de las Naciones Unidas. También hubo un mitin en Oakland el 31 de agosto en la Plaza Oscar Grant.

El 28 de agosto, se reunieron manifestantes en las afueras de la Universidad de Florida en **Gainesville**. Protestas contra la guerra también tuvieron lugar en **Minneapolis** ese mismo día y en **Chicago** el 31 de agosto. Los reportajes pueden encontrarse en fightbacknews.org.

Cientos exigieron “No Bombardeo Contra Siria” en el **Boston Common** el 31 de agosto. Ciudadanos/as sirios/as mostraban con orgullo la bandera de su país y apasionadamente denunciaban los planes estadounidenses para lanzar ataques con misiles contra su pueblo. Manifestantes marcharon por el vecindario súper-rico en el barrio de Beacon Hill de Boston y golpeaban en la puerta principal y ventanas de la mansión del secretario de estado John Kerry.

La Organización del Pueblo para el Progreso celebró una animada reunión en la calle en **Newark, Nueva Jersey** el 31 de agosto, protestando por el ataque a Siria siendo muy aplaudida por los/as transeúntes. Ese mismo día, en medio de una muchedumbre en el ajeteo del mediodía en la Avenida Wisconsin en **Milwaukee**, más de 70 manifestantes salieron a exigir ¡“manos fuera de Siria”!

Terri Kay, Sara Flounders, Bob McCubbin, John Parker, Jim McMahan y Gerry Scoppettuolo contribuyeron a este reporte.

Protestas alrededor del mundo rechazan ataque de Estados Unidos contra Siria

Por G. Dunkel

Miles de protestas en todo el mundo desde el 21 de agosto —desde manifestaciones callejeras a declaraciones públicas y resoluciones— han rechazado el proyectado ataque estadounidense contra Siria.

Las grandes empresas noticieras como el New York Times han intentado minimizar o ignorar estas protestas. La semioficial TV5 de Francia, ha mostrado las protestas en otros países, principalmente de Estados Unidos, mientras ignoraba las de Francia. Esta estación evita exponer al Partido “Socialista” que actualmente administra el gobierno francés. El PS tiene una larga historia de apoyar al imperialismo francés.

El New York Times del 2 de septiembre mostró dos ejemplos del enfoque de ese periódico hacia estas protestas.

El artículo sobre las elecciones alemanas mencionó, “La Sra. Merkel declaró más claramente que antes, que Alemania no iba a desempeñar ninguna parte en cualquier respuesta militar al aparente ataque con armas químicas en las afueras de Damasco”. No había ninguna mención sobre las 140 protestas que han tenido lugar en Alemania desde el 21 de agosto

contra tal respuesta militar.

El artículo del 1 de septiembre sobre la reunión de la Liga Árabe en el Cairo dice: “Fue un paso importante hacia el apoyo a los ataques militares occidentales pero sin el respaldo explícito que Estados Unidos y algunos aliados del Golfo Pérsico habían esperado”.

El artículo informa que Marruecos, una monarquía del Norte de África, está de acuerdo con la convocatoria para apoyar “la acción necesaria para detener el derramamiento de sangre”, en las palabras del Ministro del Exterior de Arabia Saudita. El mismo artículo omite al ministro de asuntos exteriores argelino Mourad Medelci quien reafirmó la oposición de Argelia a las operaciones militares contra Siria. (Servicio de Prensa Argelina, 1 de septiembre)

Othman Jérandi, ministro de asuntos exteriores de Tunisia subrayó su oposición a “cualquier intervención militar extranjera en Siria”.

Al informar que dos terceras partes del pueblo británico se opone a la participación de Bretaña en el ataque, la BBC admitió que eso influyó en la derrota parlamentaria del intento del primer ministro David Cameron a comprometer a Bretaña.

La BBC descartó el papel de la Coalición Alto a la Guerra en la movilización del descontento popular y la organización de manifestaciones de miles de personas en Londres. Los medios de comunicación estadounidenses también minimizaron estas protestas.

En Francia, hubo manifestaciones en París, Marsella, Nimes, Aviñón, Toulouse y Annecy el 28 y 29 de agosto. Aunque no eran masivas — cerca de 800 en París — estaban militantemente contra la guerra. El principal partido de centro-derecha en Francia, la Unión por un Movimiento Popular, ha pedido una votación en el Parlamento, notando que las encuestas muestran que dos terceras partes de la población se oponen a la acción militar.

La prensa francesa corporativa apenas menciona la oposición izquierdista a la acción militar. Pero en el sitio web de solidaridad del Partido Comunista de Francia se puede encontrar un llamado del Partido de la Izquierda por una votación para detener la participación francesa en la agresión.

En Turquía, que comparte una frontera con Siria, los medios de comunicación apenas han informado sobre las impor-

tantes protestas. Los medios corporativos presentan a Turquía como un aliado estable de los Estados Unidos que supuestamente está tan preocupado por un ataque de Siria que solicitó un sistema de defensa antimisiles Patriot en la frontera sureña con ese país.

Pero el Partido de los Trabajadores Turcos organizó protestas importantes en Izmir, frente a la sede de la OTAN; en Ankara, la capital de Turquía frente al Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores; y en Adana, justo fuera de la base de la fuerza aérea estadounidense de Incirlik. Una coalición de organizaciones no gubernamentales y grupos de paz llamó a una gran protesta en la Plaza de Ghezi en Estambul el 1 de septiembre. (Turkish Weekly)

El sitio de la red de noticias RT tiene una presentación de diapositivas mostrando algunas de las protestas alrededor del mundo — incluyendo en Grecia, en la ciudad palestina de Nablus en Cisjordania, y en Ucrania — y plantea la cuestión de lo que quieren hacer las personas progresistas del mundo. El poder de los pueblos que actúan juntos en todo el mundo podría derrotar esta maquinación imperialista de los Estados Unidos y sus pocos aliados. □