

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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Oct. 3, 2013

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\$1

## Backdrop to Oct. 5-6 People's Assembly **Detroiters resist banks & city's bankruptcy**

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
 Editor, Pan-African News Wire  
 Detroit

Contradicting the pro-bank position of the corporate media, multimillionaire Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder and his appointed Detroit emergency manager Kevyn Orr, 110 people filed objections to the forced bankruptcy of the city of Detroit. The court hearing took place on Sept. 19. Many of the people testifying were retirees, city workers and community organizers.

Outside the federal courthouse, members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs carried a banner reading, "Cancel the Debt: Jobs, Pensions, City Services, the Banks Owe Us!" Later a group of active firefighters gathered to demonstrate.

Retired Department of Health chemist Walter Knall, a member of the Stop the Theft of Our Pensions Committee, told the Detroit Free Press in front of the courthouse that what the banks and their operatives are attempting in the city could set a pattern for the rest of the United States. "I don't see how anyone could take [pensions] away from a whole generation of people who've worked hard for the city," Knall said.

**Testimony reveals broad opposition**

Jean Vortkamp, a lifelong Detroit resident and recent primary mayoral candidate, broke out in tears as she expressed her opposition to the illegal bankruptcy filing by Orr and Snyder. She said, "If this bankruptcy and the goal of pension cutting are allowed, it will impoverish my parents, sister, friends and neighbors."

Vortkamp continued: "If the undemocratic EM whom I did not elect is going to break union contracts and pensions, then he should also break the contracts Detroit has with financial institutions. Our assets are not for sale. It is not either the art [in the Detroit Institute of Arts] or the pensions. It is neither."

Vortkamp pointed the finger at the banks and their role in the financial ruin of Detroit. She asked, "Why haven't we sued for the LIBOR rig-

ging? Collected unpaid taxes from the wealthy and fines from blight and environmental violations? Detroit needs to protect our assets and get the forensic audits we have needed."

Michael Shane, a resident of a northwest Detroit neighborhood, told the bankruptcy court about the impact of predatory lending carried out by the banks and how it contributed to the city's economic crisis. "The financial crisis in Detroit was triggered by the housing crisis where an estimated 100,000 home foreclosures occurred and almost a quarter million people left the city. The banks issued predatory loans, targeting Detroit and other communities of color in a racist and illegal manner."

Shane emphasized to Judge Steven Rhodes, "The banks have already been fined tens of billions of dollars. And former bank employees are testifying under oath, confirming the illegal and racist practices of the banks. ... These banks include many of the same banks that hold Detroit's debt."

"Property and income taxes dropped precipitously during this crisis, causing huge losses to the city of Detroit," continued Shane. "And

*Continued on page 4*

**NOWHERE TO HIDE**  
 'Economy worse than 2007' 5



**FIGHTING POLICE TERROR**  
 N. Carolina & California 6

**TEXAS DEATH PENALTY**  
 Crime against humanity 6

**1963 BIRMINGHAM CHURCH BOMBING**



7

**FIST is back!** 2



**On the 5th Anniversary of the Federal \$700 Billion Bank Bailout ...**

# ALL OUT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY AGAINST THE BANKS AND AGAINST AUSTERITY

**SATURDAY – SUNDAY  
 OCT 5 & 6, 2013**  
 Grand Circus Park, Woodward & Adams  
 DETROIT, MICHIGAN, USA

We call on all activists fighting banker-imposed austerity – here in the U.S. and worldwide – to come to Detroit, Michigan, on Oct. 5 and 6, 2013. Join the people of this city under siege in convening the International People's Assembly Against the Banks and Against Austerity.



**Coalition for an International People's Assembly Against the Banks & Against Austerity**  
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# Young revolutionaries: 'FIGHT with FIST'



**WORKERS WORLD**  
*this week...*

By FIST youth

Two years after the mass resistance of Occupy Wall Street that awakened class consciousness for a new generation of young people, the capitalist crisis is still at a lockdown for youth. The acquittal of George Zimmerman, who killed Trayvon Martin, stands as a firm reminder that youth of color are at risk and that the system is failing us.

We are in year five of the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression and the president is poised to invade yet another country, with the mob mentality and logic of imperialism. Meanwhile our schools are closing and young people can't find jobs.

Crushing student debt weighs down on young workers, forcing many of us to work multiple jobs just to get by. Racist violence terrorizes our communities, leading us to ask: When will Trayvon's Law be passed instead of Stand Your Ground or Stop and Frisk? Backwards anti-immigrant policies destroy families and create a culture of fear and self-policing.

While the situation at this time is bleak, it is not hopeless for young people. The answer must be in collective struggle, with young people in the lead.

In July of this year, a gathering of young revolutionaries met in Detroit to discuss a youth-led response to the capitalist crisis. We come from all sectors of the working class and seek to continue the tradition of young people's militant resistance to the status quo that has been seen in groups like the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in the Civil Rights movement all the way to the Dream Defenders, who occupied the Florida state Capitol for almost a month this past summer.

At the gathering, we resolved to bring back to life and reform our national organization FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together. It's time for us to organize to build the type of society that puts people's needs first. FIST is dedicated to achieving such a society by building a multinational, multigendered organization of revolutionary youth that will organize and fight in the streets. We currently have young people organizing in Durham, N.C., Detroit, New York City, Rockford, Ill, Buffalo, N.Y. and Philadelphia.

As Ella Baker said in 1969: "In order for us as poor and oppressed people to become part of a society that is meaningful, the system under which we now exist has to be radically changed. This means that we are going to have to learn to think in radical terms. I use the term radical in its original meaning — getting down to and understanding the root cause. It means facing a system that does not lend itself to your needs and devising means by which you change that system."

Tommy Cavanaugh, who has just started FIST in Rockford, Ill., says, "We've received a very positive response in the community and have already had a number of youth step forward in wanting to join FIST and get involved in the struggle. It really shows how youth today are looking for a better way to live and the desire to fight for it."

FIST calls on young people across the U.S. to join us in fighting to abolish capitalism and to fight for socialism. To learn more about Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, check us out on Facebook or at [fistyouth.org](http://fistyouth.org) □



Durham, N.C., September 16

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

## Workers' rights now! Build Workers World!

Our name says it all: Workers World. That's what we're fighting for: a world where workers come first, where no one is oppressed or exploited on the job or in any facet of life. Where workers' rights are the law of the land, and everyone's needs are met by sharing the plenty we create.

An impossible dream? No way!

Marx envisioned this dream about 150 years ago, when he observed that all things of value are created by workers' labor. The major problem — the cause of oppression, poverty, want and wars — is capitalist ownership, which enables the 1% to skim off the cream (profits) from what the 99% create. Then, the bosses stir up divisions among us — racism, sexism, homophobia, class and cultural differences — forcing us to struggle for basic human rights.

Now the tables are turning. Workers who don't make a living wage are rising up and inspiring their sisters and brothers in the working class to unite with them for a better life.

But we have to trash capitalism. That's the only way we can take ownership of what we create.

By now you've figured out that Workers World is as diametrically opposed to the big-business press propaganda as you can possibly get. That means we don't solicit advertising with corporate strings or pander to the backward ideology of the 1%. We have been relying on support from our readers for 36 years to publish working-class truth and build many vital struggles.

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★ In the U.S.

- Detroiters resist banks & city's bankruptcy.....1
- Young revolutionaries: 'FIGHT with FIST' .....2
- Occupy protests on 2nd anniversary.....3
- Detroiters vs. Marathon, people vs. Tar Sands.....3
- San Diego activists: 'Free Marissa Alexander' .....3
- A brief history of marriage, part 18.....4
- Milwaukee rally against privatizing schools.....4
- Fed announcement hides bad economic prognosis.....5
- Of food stamps and a revolutionary life.....5
- North Carolina workers strategize on fightback.....5
- Durham, N.C., protest decries police brutality.....6
- Family demands justice for Ernest Duenez, Jr.....6
- Texas death penalty is the REAL crime.....6
- 1963 Birmingham church bombing.....7

★ Around the world

- Eyewitness: Syria's resistance to imperialism.....8
- Egyptian community protests military coup.....8
- Latin America briefs.....9
- Venezuela's former ambassador to Angola speaks.....9
- Greece: austerity, fascist violence bring fightback.....10
- Attack on Kenya's mall & U.S.-backed Somalia invasion ..11
- Haitian people protest U.S.-backed Martelly gov't .....11

★ Editorials

- Urgent appeal for Herman Wallace .....10
- The real WMDs.....10

★ Noticias en Español

- La brecha de ingresos .....12

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# Occupy protests on 2nd anniversary

By Caleb T. Maupin  
New York

Hundreds of people took to the streets Sept. 17 to celebrate the second anniversary of Occupy Wall Street. The protests began at 8 a.m., when Sumumba Sobukwe, the leader of Occu-Evolve, along with the People's Power Assembly, held a picket line in front of the McDonald's restaurant facing Zuccotti Park in downtown Manhattan. Hundreds of cops with shotguns, metal barricades and nightsticks had already assembled all across the Wall Street area.

With a large foam board and numerous signs supporting the striking fast-food workers around the country, a small crowd chanted, "We can't survive on \$7.25!" As the press gathered, activists from the People's Power Assembly and Occupy Wall Street went into the McDonald's and delivered a rose to each of the workers behind the counter as a gesture of solidarity. People's Power Assembly representatives announced that a large action demanding a \$15 minimum wage would take place on Oct. 24.

Then Occupy Wall Street and Occu-Evolve forces gathered in Zuccotti Park and held a press conference. People spoke about Occupy Wall Street and the need for more protests and rallies like those OWS had carried out. A postal workers' repre-

sentative spoke about the need to halt the closing of post offices. Labor leaders addressed the crowd, as did journalist Chris Hedges, who urged the crowd to help "stop the corporate security state."

As the press conference closed, the crowd began to march from Zuccotti Park uptown to Washington Square. Workers World Party members unfurled a banner reading, "Expand Occupy Wall Street, Shut Down Capitalism, Fight for Socialism!"

As the crowd proceeded through Manhattan, the police began picking people out of the crowd and arresting them for wearing masks. The arrests were violent — police throwing people to the ground — while Occupy activists gathered around chanting, "Shame! Shame! Shame!"

At Washington Square Park, the crowd held a rally against the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a new "free trade" agreement the imperialists are discussing that would have disastrous effects on the environment and on working people. During the rally, Workers World Party set up a literature table and talked to many young people about socialism, communism and the need for a revolutionary party.

About 1,500 protesters marched from 2nd Avenue and 47th Street to Bryant Park (at 6th Avenue and 42nd Street) starting around 5 p.m. This march, which included significant contingents from the



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

New York State Nurses Association, several Transit Workers Union locals and the Amalgamated Transit Union, the International Electrical Workers Local 3, and AIDS groups and other health activists, raised the need for a Robin Hood tax on stock sales, student debt amelioration, and an end to attacks on unions and the way big banks exploit the economy.

The march stopped at the headquarters of JPMorgan Chase bank, where speakers pointed out the size of the bank — its capitalization is one-ninth the gross domestic product of the U.S. economy — and how it has exorbitantly profited from student debt and denying municipal workers fair wages.

"We're still out here fighting for economic justice. The bankers still have all the power," protester Linnea Paton told AP. "They've bought our government and we need a people's movement to fight

that, and the movement is still here." Several leaders of the labor unions as well as activists with the AIDS group "Housing Works" were arrested when they held a planned civil disobedience action by blocking an intersection.

During all the actions throughout the day, members of Fight Imperialism — Stand Together were present. A new publication of NYC FIST entitled "Young & Furious" was handed out throughout the crowd. Hundreds of copies of Workers World newspaper were also distributed.

Two years after the historic occupation of Zuccotti Park, millions of people are still filled with outrage about the economic situation. The battle cry "We are 99%" has not faded away. Workers World Party continues to stand with the Occupy movement and to push for more uprisings against the horrors of capitalism in its monopolist, imperialist stage. □

## Detroiters vs. Marathon, people vs. Tar Sands



Letters read "48217 is dirtiest zip in MI."

Sept. 21 was a national day of action to "Draw the Line at Tar Sands." Demonstrations in hundreds of U.S. and Canadian cities protested the extraction, refining and transport of "dirty oil" from Canada's tar sands. "Draw the Line" actions opposed the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline, which would carry oil from Northern Canada to Texas.

Tar sands oil is "dirty" for a number of reasons. The climate impact of this oil is three to four times greater than that of conventional fossil fuels. If all of the carbon contained in Canada's tar sands oil is released to the atmosphere the impact will be devastating: "game over" for the planet, according to chief NASA climate scientist Dr. James Hansen. The immediate impact on local communities near refineries — many of them low-income communities of color — has been a spike in cancer, asthma and other life-threatening conditions. Dirty oil contaminates water, air and soil. The energy monopolies have flagrantly violated the sovereignty of Indigenous lands in Canada.

The Detroit Coalition Against Tar Sands demonstrated outside the Marathon Oil refinery, which refines tar sands oil. DCATS has been protesting the piles of the refining byproduct known as "pet-

coke" stored uncovered along the Detroit River, sickening residents. The owners of the piles are the notorious right-wing Koch brothers. Under public pressure from residents, activists and state Rep. Rashida Tlaib, the brothers agreed to remove the petcoke.

The petcoke is not the only concern of Southwest Detroiters. Marathon's release of toxic pollutants has made the surrounding neighborhood the most polluted zip code in Michigan. The level of contaminants is 143 times that of the zip code in the median range. African-American residents spoke at the rally about their family members who are dying of cancer.

DCATS members also carried signs reading "Remember the Kalamazoo," a reference to a July 2010 pipeline rupture that caused the largest land-based oil spill in U.S. history. Three years later, the Kalamazoo River is still contaminated by 180,000 gallons of tar sands oil. The pipeline was owned by Enbridge. Now eleven members of Michigan Coalition Against Tar Sands face charges — with four activists charged with felonies — stemming from civil disobedience at an Enbridge pipeline construction site in Stockbridge.

—Report and photo by Martha Grevatt

## San Diego activists: 'Free Marissa Alexander'



WW PHOTO: GLORIA VERDIEU

An hour-long rally was held in City Heights Park in San Diego on Sept. 14, in support of Marissa Alexander, the Florida woman sentenced to 20 years for firing a warning shot at her abusive spouse. No one was hurt, yet Alexander is in prison.

The rally was hosted by the Association of Filipinas, Feminists Fighting Imperialism, Re-feudalization and Marginalization (AF3IRM) San Diego. It was sponsored by the San Diego-based Peoples Power Assembly-United for Racial Justice, the Committee Against Police Brutality and the Committee for Prisoners Rights.

Christina Griffin of PPA-URC, and the San Diego Chapter of the NAACP acted as emcee for the event. "We're all out here today part of a national movement to bring justice and freedom to Marissa Alexander," Griffin told the crowd of 60 attendees and park onlookers. They applauded her opening remarks.

Griffin also noted that Alexander was

sent to prison for firing a warning shot in Florida, the same state where George Zimmerman was set free after killing unarmed teenager Trayvon Martin.

Speakers included activist Shamekia Watkins, Jerrett Grey of PPA-URJ, Gloria James of CAPB and Workers World Party, Cathy Mendonça and Amelia Ortega of AF3IRM, Sylvia Tafaró of African American Artists and Writers and hearing-impaired activist Kimberlyn Harris, who spoke through activist Norma Villegas.

They talked about Alexander's struggle. Many on the program connected her struggle with the broader movement against the injustices of the prison-industrial complex. Some speakers, especially from AF3IRM, focused on injustices against women.

At the event's end, attendees celebrated the Florida mother's 32nd birthday, and signed a card for her, wishing her well.

— Carl Muhammad

# The 'Privatization' of Marriage

By Bob McCubbin

Where did the innovation of private property — a concept totally alien to foraging and hunting peoples — come from? First, it should be noted that Marxists make a distinction between private property and personal property. Both your toothbrush and your home — if you're lucky enough to have a house with the mortgage paid off — fall within the realm of personal property.

For the foraging woman or the male hunter, her or his tools, weapons, personal ornamentation, ritual gear and other such materials constituted personal property. The customs of pre-class societies concerning disposal of this personal property upon the possessor's death varied. It might be destroyed or buried with her or him, or divided among surviving clan members.

One of the Supplementary Texts penned by Karl Marx in his book, "Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations," includes the passage: "As the last phase of the primitive formation of society, the agricultural community is at the same time a transitional phase to the secondary formation — i.e., transition from society based on common property to society based on private property. The secondary formation comprises ... the series of societies based on slavery and serfdom." (New York: International

Publishers, 1965, p. 145)

In "The German Ideology," a book which Marx and Frederick Engels co-wrote, they further develop this idea: "The first form of ownership is tribal ... ownership. It corresponds to the underdeveloped stage of production, at which a people lives by hunting and fishing, by the rearing of beasts or, in the highest stage, by agriculture. In the latter case it presupposes a great mass of uncultivated stretches of land.

"The division of labour is at this stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the natural division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves. The slavery latent in the family only develops gradually with the increase of population, the growth of wants, and with the extension of external relations, both of war and of barter." (New York: International Publishers, 1970, pp. 43-44)

## The 'commodification' of human beings

With regard to the institution of slavery, Engels writes the following in "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State": "We saw [in an earlier section of this book] how at a fairly early stage in the development of production,

human labor power obtains the capacity of producing a considerably greater product than is required for the maintenance of the producers, and how this stage of development was in the main the same as that in which division of labor and exchange between individuals arises.

"It was not long then before the great 'truth' was discovered that man can also be a commodity, that human energy can be exchanged and put to use by making a man into a slave. Hardly had men begun to exchange than already they themselves were being exchanged. The active became the passive, whether men liked it or not." (New York: International Publishers, 1972, p. 234)

In a related passage, Engels refers to the capture and purchase of women for marriage. Although in this passage he connects the origin and prevalence of these practices to the time when pairing marriage was still the dominant form, the objectification of women that such practices suggest is certainly more characteristic of the onset of patriarchal monogamy. (p. 112)

The factor that may have been in play during this earlier period was the tendency of matrilineal clans to regard both the male and the female members of other clans with whom there were no peaceful contacts as somehow less than human. Evelyn Reed deals with this aspect of early hominid life in her book, "Woman's Evolution." (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1974)

In any case, in "Origin," Engels further contextualizes his view of the evolution of purchase marriage: "With the preponderance of private over communal property and the interest in its bequeathal, father right and monogamy gained supremacy, the dependence of marriages on economic considerations became complete. The 'form' of marriage by purchase disappears; the actual practice is steadily extended until not only the woman but also the man acquires a price — not according to his personal qualities but according to his property. That the mutual affection of the people concerned should be the one paramount reason for marriage, outweighing everything else, was and always had been absolutely unheard of in the

practice of the ruling classes; that sort of thing only happened in romance — or among the oppressed classes, who did not count." (p. 142)

## Marriage as an instrument bolstering class rule

While it will be impossible in this series to offer more than the barest mention of the multitude of distinct features that characterized ruling-class marriages in the early kingdoms and empires, Stephanie Coontz offers a succinct appraisal of their economic and political basis in her book, "Marriage, a History": "More than four thousand years ago a few regional chiefdoms and small-scale warrior societies grew into mighty states in and around the Tigris-Euphrates Valley of the Middle East and the Nile Valley of Africa. Over the next two thousand years other states and empires arose along the Indus and Yellow rivers in India and China respectively, and by 800 B.C., military aristocracies in the Mediterranean region had established several powerful kingdoms there as well. A thousand years later the Mayan empire spread out across Central America. The Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of South America were relatively latecomers, but they developed in ways similar to their predecessors.

"These societies were separated from one another by thousands of years and a myriad of distinctive cultural practices. But in all of them, kings, pharaohs, emperors, and nobles relied on personal and family ties to recruit and reward followers, make alliances, and establish their legitimacy. Marriage was one of the key mechanisms through which such ties were forged." (New York: Penguin Books, 2006, p. 53)

Thus, as Engels noted in "Origin," the marriages of the people "who counted," the private property-based rulers under slavery and feudalism, had little or nothing to do with that precious human emotion called love.

*The next installment in this series will take up the distortions in human social/sexual relations and particularly the social status of women in societies based on slave or serf labor.*

## Rally against privatizing schools



PHOTO: KRISTEN DONAT

### Special to Workers World

Several hundred teachers, students, the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and other unions and community organizers marched Sept. 21 from the Milwaukee School of the Arts in downtown Milwaukee across the James E. Groppi Unity Bridge to the Forest Home Avenue School on the southside of Milwaukee. Their signs read in English and Spanish, "Public Education is a Right," "No privatization" and "No Take Over."

Students walked with large puppets and other art that they had made highlighting a quality public education. There was also a brightly dressed band playing union tunes.

When they arrived at Forest Home School, a rally was held including the featured speaker, John Stocks, the National Education Association president and the former executive director of the Wisconsin Education Association Council, the state teachers' union.

Stocks called on those teachers, parents and students present to fight back against Gov. Scott Walker and the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce efforts to privatize the schools through the MMAC's idea of a "recovery school district," which would take so-called low-performing public schools and privatize them. He denounced similar efforts that occurred in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and are being proposed in Detroit and other districts. He described Milwaukee as "ground zero" for the privatization effort. And he called on everyone there to fight back against the governor's efforts at privatization, saying "our beloved public education system is in jeopardy."

Other organizations present included Parents for Public Schools, Women Committed to an Informed Community, the Wisconsin Alliance of Excellent Schools, WI Bail Out the People, and teachers' unions from Milwaukee, Racine, Madison and surrounding communities. □

## Backdrop to Oct. 5-6 People's Assembly

# Detroiters resist banks

Continued from page 1

to make matters even worse, the banks refuse to pay property taxes on homes seized after foreclosure."

Another objector to the bankruptcy filing was Cynthia Blair, the widowed spouse of a Detroit police officer. Blair has been active in attempts to mobilize retirees and their families against the program of cuts and austerity being imposed by Orr and Snyder.

Blair said, "The bankruptcy could take [my] and my daughter's pension away. And we would be thrown directly to the welfare rolls."

### Detroiters say 'Cancel the debt!'

According to the figures released by Orr, Detroit has over \$22 billion in long-term debt owed to the very banks, bondholders and insurers that have played the most significant role in the decline of the city.

Orr is attempting to cut a deal with the banks and bond insurers where they will be paid 80 percent of what is owed to them by Detroit, while pensioners and

workers are being chained with massive obligations derived directly from financial practices dictated by Wall Street and the corporations.

General Motors and Chrysler were bailed out in 2009 by the federal government. The bankruptcy and restructuring that resulted led to the loss of tens of thousands of jobs, including at small businesses such as car dealerships employing skilled and often unionized workers.

Detroiters are saying that the municipality is not a private corporation, and that people have a vested interest in maintaining their jobs, salaries, health-care benefits, pensions and city assets. More and more people are agreeing with the slogans and program advanced by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, and they joining the call for cancellation of the bank debt and for holding the financial institutions and corporations accountable for the damage they have done to the city.

A recent survey conducted by the Detroit Free Press revealed that 75 percent of likely voters said they were against any

# Fed announcement hides bad economic prognosis

By John Catalinotto

The Federal Reserve Bank's announcement Sept. 18 surprised investors and many others and led to a quick rise in stock markets. The underlying message, however, is that the capitalist world economy and the U.S. portion of it have not really recovered from the 2007 downturn and may be facing another collapse.

For the past six months, Fed Chair Ben Bernanke had more than hinted that the Fed would gradually wind down its bond-buying program that committed it to buying \$85 billion in bonds each month. He based this step on expectations that employment rates would continue to improve and it would no longer be necessary to keep interest rates low on loans.

The Fed's reversal, which was backed by 12 of the 13 members of the Fed board,

is a sign that its earlier optimistic picture of the economy had been deceptive. The Fed also lowered its estimates for economic growth for the rest of 2013 and all of 2014.

In a statement after its announcement, the Fed said, "The tightening of financial conditions observed in recent months, if sustained, could slow the pace of improvement in the economy and labor market." (Reuters, Sept. 18) This is about as optimistic as the Fed could make the news sound.

Since the very rich have been growing even richer during the so-called recovery — and this group in the population has the loudest voice — many bourgeois economists have gotten away with unfounded optimistic projections. Regarding the rest of us, they point to the improving unemployment rate, which in August had dropped to 7.3 percent.

However, as Bernanke noted in the

statement, "The unemployment rate is not necessarily a great measure in all circumstances of the state of the labor market overall." (Wall Street Journal, Sept. 19)

What Bernanke was referring to is that this particular rate is deceptive as it measures only those unemployed who actively look for work. A better measure of a robust economy would come from the portion of the population in the active workforce. That number dropped from just over 51 percent in January 2007 to a little below 49 percent in August. It has been continuing to drop even as the official unemployment rate improves.

Basically, there has been no real improvement in the job market, with the possibility of another downturn facing the working class. Somewhere between 6 million and 15 million workers have "disappeared" from the U.S. workforce.

Not all bourgeois economists wear a

happy face. William White, former chief economist of the Swiss-based Bank for International Settlements, or the "bank of central banks," said, "This looks to me like 2007 all over again, but even worse." White had flagged risky investments before the 2008 crack. (British Telegraph, Sept. 15)

As Fred Goldstein has shown using a Marxist approach in his essential work, "Capitalism at a Dead End," because of rapid technological improvements in production, the capitalist system worldwide has found it impossible since 2007 to consistently start up profitable businesses. This has created an economic crisis that is not simply a cyclical downturn, but a permanent stall. The lessons are that workers can count only on their own struggle — not on a capitalist upturn — and that a revolutionary perspective is necessary to overcome both the crisis and capitalism itself. □

## OF FOOD STAMPS AND A REVOLUTIONARY LIFE

By Deirdre Griswold

This is a personal story about food stamps.

When my stepfather, Vince Copeland, was at home and dying of cancer in 1993, his sister tried to get food stamps for him.

She lived in Manhattan. He lived in Hoboken, N.J. The nearest place to apply for the stamps was the welfare office in Jersey City.

She spent several weeks going back and forth to the welfare office, waiting in line, finding out what forms to fill out, tracking down the necessary documentation, waiting in line again, and finally turning in the application. Then we waited for more than a month before the first check arrived.

It was for \$12. It was the only food stamp check he ever received. He died before the month was out.

I don't know how much money the agency spent on processing his claim, but it was certainly much more than \$12.

He had lived on a meager Social Security check, small not because he hadn't worked hard all his life but because most of what he did was unpaid.

In 1950, he had been fired from his welding job in the Bethlehem Steel plant in Buffalo, N.Y., after he led a wildcat strike.

He had helped to build a strong caucus of Black and white workers in the union to fight racism and demand plant-wide seniority.

Some 18,000 workers walked off their jobs trying to get him back, but in the repressive climate of the McCarthy witch hunt against radicals and the war against Korea, the firing stuck. He was red-baited for days by the Buffalo Evening News, the sole evening paper in the city.

He found various kinds of jobs after that, but mainly he put his energies into organizing on behalf of the most oppressed workers. He and his comrades in Buffalo, for example, led a successful struggle to get surplus food distributed to the unemployed — a precursor to the food stamp program.

He was one of the founders of Workers World Party in 1959 and the first editor of this newspaper.

He inspired many young people coming into the struggle in the sixties and

seventies with his vast knowledge of history, combined with his hands-on application of Marxism to the struggles of the day.

Much later, after moving to New Jersey, he gained the respect of many in the community for his militant efforts to keep open the Jersey City Medical Center.

In recent years, especially when the stimulus program was enacted to boost the economy after the 2008 financial crisis, it became somewhat easier to get food stamps — you could even apply for them online — and the amount paid out was more than in 1993. But as poverty in the U.S. grows, almost 50 million people depend on food stamps, most of them children.

And now a strong push is being made to cut them or even eliminate them. The Republicans are leading the charge in Congress, but they cite Democrat Bill Clinton's destruction of welfare as a pre-

cedent. And they are right about that. Both capitalist parties are doing what the super-rich demand of them: colluding in the whittling down of social programs won over more than 75 years by workers' struggles.

Back in the 1950s in Buffalo, progressives like Vince Copeland fought to get surplus food to those who needed it. Today, the productivity of agriculture in the United States is many times what it was then. There is no reason that anyone should go hungry, be malnourished or have to jump through bureaucratic hoops to get a meal.

My stepfather never got much from the food stamp program. He died after one measly check. But he led a life rich in struggle and solidarity. And he left behind a legacy of confidence in the revolutionary ability of the oppressed and exploited to eventually erase the wrongs of capitalism and rebuild this suffering world. □

### WW COMMENTARY

## and bankruptcy

cuts to municipal pensions. In addition, 78 percent responded that they also opposed selling off artwork at the Detroit Institute of Arts to pay the bankers. (Sept. 22)

The entire emergency management process was rejected by a majority of people in Michigan in a referendum held last November. Despite the will of the people, Snyder and his cohorts in the state legislature passed another law in December that reinstated emergency management, municipal dictatorship and austerity.

### People vs. banks, Oct. 5-6

An International People's Assembly Against the Banks and Against Austerity is being organized in Detroit by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and other community organizations. To date, more than 280 endorsements have been received for the Oct. 5-6 gathering at Grand Circus Park.

The two-day event will coincide with the fifth anniversary of the massive bank bailout in 2008. This bailout is continuing through compensation by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac for so-called toxic

assets, as well as the \$85 billion turned over by the Federal Reserve to the banks every month.

The assembly is drawing people from the city as well as around the country. Statements of solidarity have been issued from people's organizations in Brazil, Portugal and other countries facing similar crises.

The International People's Assembly will build for a mass mobilization on Oct. 23 when Judge Rhodes hears arguments on the state constitutionality of the bankruptcy filing. Members of the assembly coalition say that people should surround the courthouse on Oct. 23 to demand no bankruptcy and cancellation of the bank debt.

Organizers for the International People's Assembly are encouraging all those concerned to join the effort in solidarity with the people of Detroit. More information about the Oct. 5-6 gathering can be found at moratorium-mi.org, detroit-debtmoratorium.org and internationalpeoplesassembly.org. □

## Workers strategize on fightback



Low Wages have to Go! panel.

WW PHOTO: BEN CARROLL

The Southern Workers Assembly hosted a statewide North Carolina Workers Fightback Conference on Sept. 21 in Raleigh that was attended by fast-food workers, state employees, city workers, education workers, farmworkers, theatrical workers and many others from Greenville, Charlotte, Goldsboro, Durham, Raleigh and all across the state!

The major purpose of the conference was to unite workers that are in motion as part of the Moral Monday, Forward Together movement to fight against budget cuts, racist attacks, but particularly to unite labor around a program and campaign to fight for labor rights in this

Southern state with the least number of unions compared to the rest of the U.S.

The proposed House Bill 6 would make right-to-work (for less) laws and the ban on public sector collective bargaining -- both already law -- part of the state constitution, along with a ban on card check union recognition.

This is a major juncture for labor. The conference agreed to a Workplace Democracy campaign that includes the fight for \$15 an hour for all workers (or family-supporting wages), a Workers Bill of Rights, no to HB6, and to further build social justice unionism across the state.

— Dante Strobino

# Protest decries police brutality

By Jason Bowers  
Durham, N.C.

On Sept. 16, the Durham community organization FADE (Fostering Alternatives to Drug Enforcement) organized a protest against the racist profiling and brutality of the Durham Police Department. FADE was joined by the Durham branch of Workers World Party, along with Liberty and Justice for Carlos Riley Jr. Chanting and raising signs to denounce these crimes, more than 100 protesters marched from the Police Department to Durham City Hall.

Recent attacks by the Durham police include the fatal shooting of Jose Ocampo, a beloved Honduran father, as well as unwarranted, brutal assaults on both Stephanie Nickerson, a young African-American

can Navy veteran, and Carlos Riley Jr., a young African-American member of the Durham community. Moreover, on Sept. 14, another young African-American man, Jonathan Ferrell, a former Florida A&M football player, was shot 10 times and killed by Charlotte-Mecklenburg police officer Randall Kerrick. Then on Sept. 17, Durham police shot and killed 26-year old African-American Derek Walker.

Speakers at the event included Nia Wilson, an organizer with FADE, and David Hall, an attorney who was struck by a stray bullet during one of the police shootings.

The racist bias of the Durham Police Department is evidenced by the offensive public statements made by Police Chief Jose Lopez Sr. In response to allegations of brutality, Lopez was quoted as saying that Hall “deserved to be shot because he

was a public defender” and the other victims were criminals. (wral.com, Sept. 4) These statements were made despite the fact that there was no proof the victims were guilty of any crime.

The protest, however, did not just concern individual events or the bad behavior of individual officers. Rather, the problem is much more systemic. Racist profiling in Durham is alarmingly common. Although 252 complaints of misconduct were leveled against the police department over the last five years, only five of them were reviewed, and all of them were dismissed.

According to a study by University of North Carolina professor Dr. Frank Baumgartner, African-American drivers are more than 200 percent likely to be stopped by the police than white motor-

ists. Statistics like these show that the problem is not just a “few bad apples” or the misbehavior of individual officers. The problem lies, rather, in the systematic way in which the Durham Police Department behaves as a whole.

“It’s not about one person,” said David Hall. “Removing one element will not change anything. We have to really examine the culture.” (tinyurl.com/msukvba)

Members of FADE distributed a manifesto at the event, which demanded that members of the police department be held accountable for their behavior and that, within the next 30 days, Chief Lopez, along with the city manager, the head of the civilian review board, and at least one city council member attend Phase-1 Foundation Training in Historical and Institutional Racism. □

# Family demands justice in police killing of Ernest Duenez, Jr.

By Terri Kay

*This reporter is interviewing a few of the many families of victims of police killings in California as they are mobilizing for a statewide protest in Sacramento on Oct. 22, as part of a National Day of Action against Police Brutality. Other interviews will be published in the weeks leading up to Oct. 22.*

Manteca, Calif. — On June 8, 2011, Ernest Duenez, Jr. was shot to death by Manteca police as he was exiting from the backseat of a truck, with a gun trained on him by officer John Moody. The shocking video which shows the killing is posted at tinyurl.com/muru7x4. It has been viewed by nearly 300,000 people.

Rosemary Duenez, Ernest’s mother, says that Moody is still working for the Manteca Police Department, doing mostly undercover work.

As Duenez explained to this reporter: “My son was considered a parolee at large, because he had tested dirty on a drug test, after he had been clean for almost a year. He was a new father, and was really trying to do his best. He was only two months from being off of parole for good. The cops ran with the drug test as a personal vendetta. The parole officer had put out a warrant for his arrest because of the drug test. Ernest had told me, ‘I promise I will turn myself in after the baby’s first birthday.’”

Duenez discussed the family’s civil suit

against the Manteca Police Department: “Our attorney, Ben Nisenbaum of John Burris’ law firm, hired a forensic expert to review the DA’s report and police video. They [the DA’s office] say they see a knife, then they say they can’t see it. They claim the camera can’t pick it up because ‘Ernest threw it so quickly.’ Our forensic expert sees no knife. Shell cases, however, are visible. The DA report says Ernest threw the [alleged] knife after the third shot hit his arm.”

The civil suit will be heard in the Eastern District Court in Sacramento by Judge Lawrence Karlton on March 25, 2014.

Duenez continued, “We have a lot of support from family and friends locally. I’m really grateful. A lot of it has to do with the video — once they see it, and how John Moody treated my son, even after they shot him.

“We feel that we’re not just fighting for our son, but for all the families who have lost loved ones. We’re trying to keep other families from going through what we have gone through. Last night, a young girl privately messaged me about her brother who was killed 12 months ago. She felt very much alone. I spent a couple of hours messaging back and forth. I’m limited because I work six days a week and am in a secluded location outside of the Bay area.”

When asked about the Oct. 22 statewide demonstration, Duenez stressed, “This will be a great event, even if we don’t get to talk to people in positions of power. It will be a powerful display of the unity of



WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

Rosemary Duenez, far right, holds photo of her son, Ernest Duenez Jr, killed by police.

all of us, bringing awareness to the public. They’re setting up meetings with staff of the various legislature representatives. I think this will help in the overall struggle.

“They should think about changing the rules related to police shootings, where they’re held accountable just like ordinary citizens are held accountable. They should be drug tested. They hide behind the Policeman’s Bill of Rights. They could be having mental or drug problems, but we can’t find out because they’re protected by the Policeman’s Bill of Rights.”

Duenez explained, “Some police who don’t commit these crimes are afraid to stand up and point out what’s going on, because the other ones won’t have their backs. We all are required to be drug

tested if we have an accident. If they [the police] shoot someone or beat someone up, they should have to have independent reviews. Even the local media won’t print things the local police tell them not to print.”

When asked about the California attorney general’s role, Duenez gave her view: “I’m disappointed in Kamala Harris, who was played up as a civil rights advocate, yet she is completely silent on cases of police murder and police brutality. Helping take down bad cops is not good politics for re-election. She should do more for the people who elected her.”

Duenez encouraged supporters to come to Sacramento on Oct. 22 to protest police brutality. □

# Texas death penalty is the REAL crime



Robert Garza on death row with his three children. He was executed Sept. 19.

By Gloria Rubac

In just one week in September, several events surrounding the death penalty in Texas go to the heart of its criminal inhumanity.

With the Sept. 19 execution of Robert Garza, many were shocked that a person who killed no one could be executed. Yet he was, like countless others. Garza was the only person tried under Texas’ Law of Parties and sent to death row after four women were murdered in the town of Donna in Rio Grande Valley, South Texas, in 2002. As Garza recently told a reporter: “Who and where was the party? I was the only

one convicted in this Law of Parties case.” (deathpenaltynews.blogspot.com, Sept. 18)

On Sept. 18 — one day before Garza’s execution — at a press conference, the American Bar Association’s Death Penalty Due Review Project released a 500-page report distributed to political leaders at the state Capitol in Austin. The team found a system riddled with flaws and shortcomings which undermine public confidence that innocent defendants will not be wrongfully executed.

Focusing on the fairness and accuracy of Texas’ death penalty system, the report found that “in many areas, Texas appears out of step with better practices imple-

mented in other capital jurisdictions, fails to rely upon scientifically reliable methods and processes in the administration of the death penalty, and provides the public with inadequate information to understand and evaluate capital punishment in the state.”

Though not part of the eight-member study team, former death row prisoner Anthony Graves — exonerated after more than 18 years in prison for multiple murders he did not commit — was invited to speak at the news conference.

Graves calls himself living proof that the system is flawed, stating: “I had two execution dates. I was almost murdered

## Watershed moment for Civil Rights struggle

# 1963 Birmingham church bombing

By Lamont Lilly

One of the most tragic acts of U.S. terrorism occurred Sept. 15, 1963, in Birmingham, Ala. The complete story of the murderous bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church very often goes untold. The lives of four African-American girls — Addie Mae Collins, Denise McNair, Carole Robertson and Cynthia Wesley — were unmercifully snatched away by Ku Klux Klan members, just after their Sunday school lesson had come to a close. The racist notion that African Americans are “less than” human is what sparked that bomb. Bigotry is what allowed it to explode and take four innocent lives.

The four girls — one of whom was 11 years old and the other three all 14 — were in the church basement when 12 sticks of dynamite were ignited and unleashed upon them and other unarmed churchgoers. Offices in the church’s east rear wing were completely destroyed. A gaping hole was blown into the church’s northeastern corner frame. Records indicate that up to 23 people were injured in the explosion. Surviving church members found the girls beneath a pile of fragmented cement, shattered glass and brick debris.

This bombing was bigger than four girls. It was bigger than local minister and activist, Fred Shuttlesworth and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. It was a vicious attack upon humanity, against the innocence of what it means to be a child without worry.

It was a murderous assault on the backs of the people and their struggle for equal rights; an onslaught against peace and a nonviolent movement. Collins, McNair, Robertson and Wesley became the Civil Rights Movement’s youngest known casualties of the war for freedom and justice — four deaths that still speak volumes to the devaluation of African-American life in the United States. The 16th Street Baptist Church bombing wasn’t just an act of racism. It was the culmination of white supremacy and U.S. government complacency.

The 16th Street Baptist Church was more than just the site of a historic bombing. It was the local activist headquarters for liberty and justice, the home base for freedom fighting and grassroots organizing. It was the local symbol of hope against oppression. Racists thought that such a heinous act would work to defeat the energy of the burgeoning Civil Rights Movement in Birmingham, attempting to brew fear and intimidation.

Instead, such a display of brutal racism ignited a new zeal among organizers, supporters and protesters nationwide — such sheer disregard for humanity challenged



the morality of even staunch moderates.

In laying out this tragic event, it is important that we understand the historical developments here; that we flush out the mitigating factors that created such an environment to begin with.

### The sordid history of ‘Bombingham’

Unfortunately African Americans were already living in hell before the loss of those four little girls. The 16th Street Baptist Church bombing was no far-fetched anomaly. Such a reign of violence was no isolated case. Nicknamed “Bombingham,” Birmingham had been the home of over 50 bombings directed toward African Americans since World War II. The city’s Black working-class community was targeted with so many explosives, local residents began calling it “Dynamite Hill.” Eleven days prior to Sept. 15, the home of civil rights attorney Arthur Shores was bombed.

In 1963, dogs and water hoses were being used against defenseless human beings, including children, all over the South, but especially in Birmingham. Jim Crow’s “separate but equal” doctrine was interwoven within the fabric of social life. Sticks of dynamite were part of the landscape. Police officers were part-time law enforcers and full-time klansmen. Birmingham’s commissioner of public safety, the notorious Eugene “Bull” Connors, was a prime example. However, Birmingham was changing drastically. Black folks were demanding to vote and to exercise their right to participate in local and state politics. Rallies, protests and demonstrations were sprouting up left and right. Young people were joining the picket lines, taking critical stances and being jailed in massive numbers. Just five days before the church bombing, the order for desegregation had come down from the federal government.

Considering the degree to which Alabama Gov. George Wallace was against integration, President John F. Kennedy was reluctantly resorting to federal authority to enforce such an order. As pro-

gressive change pressed forward, the struggle could not be held back.

Lost in the shuffle were the deaths of two additional Black youth during the evening of Sept. 15, 1963. Johnny Robinson, a 16-year-old, was fatally shot in the back by a police officer. Robinson was allegedly throwing rocks at white youth who were driving through his neighborhood bearing confederate flags. Thirteen-year-old Virgil Wade was shot and killed while riding his bicycle home amidst the chaos. Multiple fires were set ablaze throughout the city that night. A bomb from an unknown source was tossed into a neighborhood grocery store. Anger, tension and frustration spilled over. An uprising had ignited. Masses crying for justice and equality poured into the streets by the thousands. National Guardsmen, numbering 500, along with 300 state troopers, were called in to “restore peace.”

When the brutal attack against four innocent churchgoers hit the world stage, it revealed the true nature of U.S. democracy; the brutal truth of what it means to be “Black in America.” The news clips of Birmingham showing the four bodies being brought out of the church shocked the world: it was live coverage of bombs and state sponsored brutality that enlightened the globe about the conditions of oppressed people in the U.S.

People in Africa, Asia and Latin America saw this on the front page of their newspapers. And as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. so carefully noted, “They aren’t going to respect the United States of America if she deprives men and women of the basic rights of life because of their skin.” It was obvious that while democracy was favorably broadcast abroad, hate was the state’s primary mandate back home, at least for the lives of African Americans.

### Pursuing delayed justice

It would take 14 years and the election of a new Alabama attorney general, Bill Baxley, to bring forth even the slightest iota of justice. Up until November 1977,

klansman Robert Chambliss had received a mere \$100 fine and a six-month sentence at the county jail for simple possession of dynamite, 122 sticks to be exact.

Due to the efforts of Baxley and local activists, Dynamite Bob was finally tried and convicted of first degree murder of the four girls. He would go on to serve eight years until his death in 1985. When the initial bombing occurred, an eyewitness had identified Chambliss as the perpetrator who had indeed placed multiple sticks of dynamite under the church’s outside steps. However, “thanks” to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, no federal charges were filed against Chambliss.

Fact is, the FBI had evidence but chose to conceal it from state and federal prosecutors, although Chambliss was responsible for several bombings previous to the 16th Street Baptist Church explosion. “Dynamite” Bob’s activities were well known. State and city officials knew exactly who he was and condoned his rash of bombings. Along with Chambliss, there were three additional offenders who joined in bombing the church: Bobby Cherry, Herman Cash and Thomas Blanton. Blanton and Thomas would not be indicted until decades later — both surrendering to murder charges in May of 2000. Cash died in 1994 without ever serving time.

### Struggle makes us stronger

I visited the 16th Street Baptist Church in March of 2009 on the Martin Luther King Jr. “Freedom Tour.” I was in that basement. I sat in the pews right next to where the bomb exploded. You could still hear the call of untimely death. You could still smell the rank of injustice looming through the air. That congregation never forgot those girls and neither should we. In 1963, their deaths were the catalyst of a new zeal of struggle. Fifty years have passed and their fire for freedom still burns.

The bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church isn’t just some sad story marked by 50 years of remembrance. For many African Americans, this story is still being told. This past Sept. 12, 50 years after the bombing heard around the world, all four girls who died were awarded congressional gold medals by President Obama. Viewed by some as an honorable gesture, gold medals don’t equal justice, especially now when the same brand of systematic racist injustice is still wreaking havoc today.

As many people already know, the 1960s were not the end of racism in the U.S. Quite often, Black and Brown youth are still the victims of racist killings, most of them by police officers. Lynchings have become weekly executions conducted by law enforcement officers. Black men are no longer hanging from Georgia pine trees. Today, the “strange fruit” that bears that peculiar stench hangs metaphorically in state prisons and jails.

The most important element here is not just to remember, but to allow remembrance to guide our actions and future deeds. As freedom fighters, we don’t have time to wallow in sorrow. Of course, our emotions bring sadness and heavy hearts when thinking of the four African-American girls, but that which brings pain must be used to fuel the good fight. This piece of tragic U.S. history has only made us stronger.

*Lamont Lilly is a contributing editor with the Triangle Free Press, human rights delegate with Witness for Peace and organizer with Workers World Party. He resides in Durham, N.C.*

by the state of Texas. Had these recommendations been in place, you probably wouldn’t even know my name today.”

Graves was exonerated in 2010 after a federal appeals court said the prosecutor intentionally withheld evidence that could have helped his defense. He has since been working nonstop to prevent other cases of innocent people being sent to death row and also working to end the practice of keeping all death row prisoners in Texas in permanent solitary confinement.

Texas recently reported that its supply of pentobarbital, the single drug used in executions, was expiring but their execution drug protocol would not be changed. This news was bizarre since there are now

no drug manufacturers who are willing to sell their drugs to prison systems to be used for executions. “We have not changed our current execution protocol and have no immediate plans to do so,” Texas Department of Criminal Justice spokesperson Jason Clark said in a statement to the Associated Press. (Sept. 20)

Activists based in Europe waged a serious struggle which finally resulted in the lack of execution drugs available to states within the U.S. that participate in capital punishment.

“How can anyone believe that what goes on with the death penalty is fair or logical? We know that the system is broken beyond repair,” Joanne Gavin, a long-

time activist with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, told WW. “With the execution of a man who did not pull a trigger, with the ABA report citing one wrong after another, with Texas scrounging for drugs to satisfy its addiction for legal lynchings — it is ludicrous for this racist madness to continue one more day.”

Texas has six more executions scheduled for 2013 and three already set for 2014. On Sept. 26, Arturo Diaz is to be executed in Huntsville. Garza’s execution was number 504 for Texas since executions resumed here in 1982 and the 12th this year.

Shut down death row!  
Stop ALL executions! □

## Eyewitness:

# Syria's resistance to imperialism

By John Parker and Sara Flounders  
Damascus, Syria

Sept. 20 — With the U.S. government keeping both massive bombing and regime change “on the table” for Syria in mid-September, we from the International Action Center, together with Syrian Americans and other anti-war forces in the U.S., believed it important to organize a delegation to visit this small country now facing imperialist attack.

Washington has coordinated a destabilization campaign against Syria for the last 30 months. The U.S., its NATO allies and the Gulf monarchies have flooded Syria with arms and mercenary fighters, while cultivating a vicious climate of sectarian violence.

The delegation plans to use the trip experience to continue to organize mass protests and educational campaigns in the U.S. that counter the demonization of Syria and expose all the fraudulent war propaganda.

Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and former six-term Congressperson Cynthia McKinney led the delegation, which included Dedon Kamathi, of the All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party, and the two writers of this article from the IAC. Johnny Achi, of the Los Angeles-based Arab Americans for Syria, met the group in Damascus.

The trip took place at a turning point in the war. With little international backing, the U.S. population massively opposing a new war and a possible defeat looming in the U.S. Congress, President Barack Obama had put the attack on hold.

Yet Secretary of State Kerry has said the U.S. will increase arms deliveries to the more than 1,200 marauding bands of mercenaries that make up the opposition to the Syrian government. It was a crucial time to intensify the global struggle movement opposing a new imperialist war.

Following an international forum in Beirut, Lebanon, on Sept. 16, the delegation drove along the narrow, winding, two-or-three-lane highway through the mountains to Damascus. The road on the Lebanese side showed the impact

of many past wars in Lebanon. On the Syrian side it became a well-lit, six-lane highway leading into Damascus. Except for the occasional thud of mortars, everything seemed calm and well functioning in a very modern urban center.

But that is only part of a complex reality.

### A third of Syrians displaced

More than one-third of Syria's 22.5 million people have been displaced by war. More than 5 million have been internally displaced, and another 2 million plus have fled to surrounding countries.

A visit to a center for displaced people at a Damascus school showed the scale of the disruption of family life. Most classrooms throughout the building were divided in two to accommodate families of sometimes eight or ten members. Conditions were orderly and clean, but crowded. Placing displaced families in schools meant that students have to be relocated and doubled up.

The proudest achievement of Syria is that schools reopened across the country in September, despite the war. In addition to offering emergency housing, the facility we visited provided a secure food source and medical care, plus classes for the children so their lives had structure and continuity. There were playgrounds and common areas.

We visited a classroom in the school basement where children were receiving new backpacks with school supplies. Printed on each bag was the slogan in Arabic: “Everyone has a right to education.” The children sat quietly and attentively at their desks. When their names were called, they came up and proudly received their gift.

One shy child could hardly look at us without giggling and hiding her eyes, while another little girl looked us straight in the eye as if to demand that we change this situation.

Parents, teachers and many volunteers participated in running the center. They told us that despite the war the government remains committed to maintaining free health care and free education for all, including graduate studies and medi-

cal schools. Syria has full literacy and the highest educational level in the region.

U.S.-led sanctions against Syria prevent deliveries of essential medicine for children. One father told us that his child, who was only knee-high, suffered from a growth-hormone deficiency that was treated with a drug provided free by the government, but it is now in short supply due to the sanctions.

Families told us of the trauma created when the mercenary bands of “rebels” kidnap and hold family members ransom.

### Conditions in Aleppo

Several Syrians described the horrendous conditions in the major industrial city of Aleppo near the Turkish border in the north. The “rebels” have held half of Aleppo for months. Large parts of Old Aleppo, even sites 4,000 years old, have been destroyed in car bombings and lootings.

Most of Aleppo's population — nearly 3 million people before the war — are without electricity and means of communication. Potable water is in a crisis, and food has been scarce for months.

Government forces hold the western part of the city. But even essential food convoys have faced sniper fire from opposition forces, which have proved unwilling to provide or incapable of organizing even the most basic social needs in the areas they hold, people told us.

The gangs' main activity is looting factories, communication towers, trucks, cars, museums, antiquities and anything else that can be quickly taken over the border to Turkey and sold. These mercenary bands even battle each other for plunder, equipment and funding.

### 'Over our dead bodies'

Syrian flags fly everywhere in Damascus; they are even sewn on clothing and headbands and appear as car decals. Women and men are trained to back up their patriotism in neighborhood defense units that patrol the streets and marketplaces. At a military hospital we spoke to one retired man from a neighborhood defense unit recovering from a sniper wound.

The Syrian youth at the “Over Our

Dead Bodies” encampment on Mount Qasioun outside Damascus brought this intense atmosphere of resistance to life. Mount Qasioun has a panoramic view of the entire sprawling city. On its peak are the city's TV and communication towers.

Because Mount Qasioun seemed a likely target in early September when massive U.S. bombardment seemed imminent, hundreds of youths set up a human shield, erecting tents and pledging to stay there to resist any imperialist attack on Syria. Hundreds of young people come every day to join the encampment.

These youths posted pictures of our visit on Facebook before we had even left the mountain.

Everywhere there was enormous interest in meeting anti-war activists from the U.S. The Syrians we met acted with enormous confidence that they would succeed in their efforts to defy U.S. domination and ruin.

People from all walks of life expressed confidence that Syria is not isolated. Many people had contacts with the Syrian-American community in the U.S. and had heard first hand of demonstrations in New York's Times Square, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., and in large Syrian-American communities in Allentown, Pa., and Dearborn, Mich.

### Meeting with President Assad

While Washington has had no problem backing the corrupt absolute monarchies in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates; the monarchies in Jordan and Morocco; or the Hosni Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt, the U.S. has claimed for two years that President Bashar al-Assad lacks legitimacy and must step down.

Washington has stopped every attempt to open negotiations by first demanding the Syrian government resign or be barred from participating. U.S. imperialism has made Assad the central issue in its attack on Syrian sovereignty. The U.S. proposes instead a coalition cobbled together of U.S. and Saudi-funded mercenaries and sectarians.

The anti-war movement must accept

*Continued on page 9*

## Egyptian community protests military coup

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

Outraged by the continuing massacres and crimes of recently extended martial law committed by the U.S.-backed Egyptian military following its July 3 coup d'état, the newly-formed Egyptian Americans for Democracy and Human Rights, New England (EADHR) took to Boston's Copley Square on Sept. 14 “to show solidarity with the freedom loving people of Egypt.”

Demonstrators, including many children, wore bright yellow shirts emblazoned with what has become an international symbol of solidarity with resistance to the Egyptian military's bloody coup, a four-finger salute. Mohammed Morgan, a protest organizer, explained that the use of the symbol -- based on “Rabba,” an Arabic word for “fourth” -- is meant to show support for the thousands of anti-coup protesters who were brutalized, with hundreds killed, when the military attacked and destroyed the Rabaa al-Adawiya protest camp and mosque on Aug. 14. Even



showing the Rabba symbol on the streets in Egypt is a courageous act of defiance, as the military has shoot-to-kill orders for even such symbolic protest.

Anti-coup Egyptians were joined by Palestinian activists on Sept. 14. They spoke of the extreme suffering and deprivation in Gaza since the Egyptian military closed the border to supplies following the coup, further assisting the Israeli colonial state in its criminal blockade and occupation of the Palestinian nation.

Members of the International Action Center came in solidarity with the rally

and to underscore protesters' demands that the U.S. immediately cease its massive financial, military and political support for the Egypt generals and the wealthy ruling class they prop up.

Tens of thousands of people in Boston's downtown area heard, many for the first time, how the coup is attempting to destroy the first democratically elected government since Mubarak's ouster from power in 2011. Many stopped to express their agreement that the U.S. needs to stop funding, causing and prosecuting wars throughout the Arab world.

In a statement titled “Egyptian Democracy Derailment,” the EADHR pointed out that resistance to the coup is a continuation of the movement when, “In January 2011, the Egyptian people took to the streets in peaceful mass protests that quickly became a people's revolution to bring down the authoritarian, corrupt military government of 30 years. The people's demands were highlighted by three basic aspects of human rights: an Honorable Living Standard, Freedom, and Social Justice.”

The EADHR statement concludes, “We stand with people of conscience throughout the world in condemning the Military Coup and all crimes it has committed against basic Human Rights. Elected Authorities and Rule of Law must be immediately restored. Furthermore, military and civilian officials with the blood of Egyptians on their hands must be held accountable for their crimes and brought to a quick and fair trial.” □

the responsibility of standing up to this U.S. assault on Syrian sovereignty. By having the opportunity to hear President Assad present his position, the delegation demonstrated resistance to imperialist demands that he leave office.

Meeting with the delegation Sept. 18, President Assad called the opposition in Syria “paid mercenaries and sectarian religious jihadist forces” who don’t want a secular Syria but a broken, divided country with one exclusive religious viewpoint. This would push Syria back into ancient history.

Assad said he was committed to keeping the progress being made in Syria and the secular nature of Syria that respects all religions and ethnicities. He emphasized that although Syria is committed to defending itself, civilian deaths must be minimized and ideas cannot be changed through violence.

Assad also said Syria was committed to the Russian-Syrian agreement to remove chemical weapons. He stressed that it is important to remind the world that it was Syria that introduced a proposal to make the Middle East a chemical-free and weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in 2003, but the United States opposed the proposal.

Assad made it clear that Syria has never used chemical weapons, but warned of the danger that the U.S. could still find a pretext for bombing and disrupt the present agreement.

In 2012 the Syrian constitution was changed, Assad said, to allow seven additional political parties to participate in elections with guaranteed television time to campaign. The next elections are set for 2014 when he will also stand for election.

Former Congressperson Dennis Kucinich conducted an interview with President Assad for Fox News on the previous day.

#### Meetings with religious leaders

Our delegation met with the Grand Mufti of Syria, Ahmad Badreddin Hasoun, the highest Sunni Muslim religious leader, who also stressed the importance of preserving the non-sectarian unity that has long been part of Syria’s tradition and history. He said he seeks to represent the interests of everyone in Syria: both Sunni and Shiite Muslim, Christian, Alawite, etc., and atheists.

The Grand Mufti said that he felt that President Assad’s government offers the best possibility of maintaining a secular state.

During a visit to the oldest Christian church in Damascus, dating from the 2nd century, senior clerics there underscored the message of unity and opposition to the elements who fight to exclude all religious groupings from Syria except their own.

There are more than 2 million Christians in Syria, or 10 percent of the population, from many different denominations. The terrorist “rebel” forces have particularly targeted Christian churches and communities. In front of the Virgin Mary Cathedral hung a banner urging prayers for two archbishops, the Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Aleppo and the Greek Archbishop of Aleppo, who were kidnapped in April somewhere between Aleppo and Antioch.

*John Parker is the West Coast coordinator of the IAC and Sara Flounders is co-director of the IAC.*

*Read the entire article at workers.org.*

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# LATIN AMERICA BRIEFS

Berta Joubert-Ceci

## ECUADOR

Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa launched “The Dirty Hands of Chevron” campaign on Sept. 17 to expose at an international level the criminal contamination that this company is responsible for in the Amazon region.

From 1964 to 1990, 18 billion gallons of toxic wastewater and 17 million gallons of crude oil were purposely spilled into the Amazon through unsafe and obsolete drilling practices by Texaco, which later merged with Chevron. In the campaign video showing the oil-ridden waters of one of the thousand open pits left behind by Texaco, President Correa stated that this damage is of enormous proportions, “85 times worse than the environmental damage caused by the BP spill in the Gulf of Mexico and 18 times more than the Exxon Valdez disaster in Alaska.”

This contamination has affected more than 35,000 area residents, mostly Indigenous people, resulting in more than a thousand deaths, the disappearance of Indigenous communities, an increased rate of cancer and many other illnesses, besides the massive negative impact on the Amazon’s environment. ([noticiaspia.org](http://noticiaspia.org))

Residents of the area first sued Chevron in 1993 in a federal court in the U.S. and in 2001 the federal judge ruled that it was not within U.S. jurisdiction, sending the case to Ecuador. In 2011, an Ecuadorean court found Chevron guilty and imposed a \$9 billion fine, which has risen to \$19 billion due to Chevron’s refusal to pay. The U.S. company instead has launched a cruel vilification campaign against Ecuador and its

Indigenous people, helped by the U.S. government, which has even refused, this September, to grant visas to several Indigenous representatives who were going to testify at the United Nations.

## VENEZUELA

In another act of imperialist arrogance and hostility, the U.S. denied Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro’s plane the right to fly through the airspace of its colony, Puerto Rico, on President Maduro’s flight to China. On Sept. 19, President Maduro publicly denounced it, adding that the U.S. had also denied visas to two members of the Venezuelan delegation to attend the upcoming General Assembly of the United Nations.

This was a reminder of the recent act of aggression by the U.S./NATO against Bolivian President Evo Morales when, on his return trip from Russia, several U.S.-allied European countries denied airspace rights to the presidential plane, putting his life in peril.

It was not until the protest of several Latin American countries that cited the violation of four international norms of diplomatic relations, plus the intense pressure from the Venezuelan government itself, that the U.S. government reversed its refusal.

Adding insult to injury, this U.S. act was also a cruel attack against the people of Puerto Rico. In this regard, nationalist leader Rafael Cancel Miranda told Telesur: “The insolence of the imperialists has no limit. What right do they have, to say who flies or not over my homeland? As a Puerto Rican, I feel more than honored to have comrade

Maduro visit my home, but as Maduro himself said, we are unfortunately a colony controlled by U.S. interests; we are what they would like all Latin America to be.”

## MEXICO

United States Vice President Joe Biden traveled to Mexico, not to offer any aid after the terrible devastation of three storms that took the lives of more than 100 people and caused enormous damage, particularly to the south of the country, but to support the neoliberal reforms of the current government.

President Enrique Peña Nieto last December signed the “Pact for Mexico,” an anti-people package of laws that would require changes to the current Constitution in order to be implemented. These laws would include among other items, the privatization of PEMEX, the national oil company, and a reform of the public education system that will hurt both students and teachers.

Although it merits a separate article, we need to at least mention here the awesome show of strength and determination of the CNTE, the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers, who have been in constant struggle since last July. They took over the Zócalo, the main plaza in Mexico City, until Peña Nieto ordered the Federal Police to evict them with violent repression on Sept. 13 in order to use the Plaza for the Independence “Shout” two days later.

The teachers, who have gathered support from other groups, have continued the fight against the reforms, taking over other spaces and demonstrating daily. □

# Venezuela’s former ambassador to Angola speaks in Houston

Jesús García, Venezuela’s former ambassador to Angola and a researcher and writer, spoke to a packed house at S.H.A.P.E. Community Center in Houston’s Black community on Sept. 14 on the African Diaspora and Racism in the Americas and the Caribbean.

García, a leader of the Afro Venezuelan Movement, spoke about the progress on the issues affecting African descendants during the presidency of the late Venezuelan president, Hugo Chávez.

Speaking with the passion of an activist, García described the legacy of racism that followed the end of Spain’s centuries-old slavery in Venezuela and explained that areas of the country with the largest African-Venezuelan populations had the highest levels of poverty.

Since the first election of President Chávez in 1998, progressive changes have been gradually instituted to address the problems faced by the African-Venezuelan community and to extend to them important social, political and economic rights. Chávez himself was the first president in Venezuela’s history to publicly



Jesus Garcia, Sept. 14.

claim and honor his African and Indigenous ancestry.

Many in the audience were surprised to learn that there were over seven million Venezuelans of African descent.

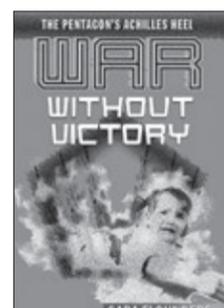
Sponsored by the Black Heritage So-

ciety, the event also honored two Houstonians who had recently died: African-American civil rights activist Ester King and Palestinian leader and activist Abu Obeida.

Interspersed between the evening’s speakers was African drumming by Runyararo Fana and Baba Ifalade.

The evening of discussion on the significant changes brought about during Venezuela’s Bolivarian Revolution ended with the presentation to Garcia of a beautiful cake with his photo on it, dancing to Venezuelan music and a dinner of Persian food.

—Report and photo by Gloria Rubac



## WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

PentagonAchillesHeel.com

“By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity.”

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**WORKERS WORLD**  
 editorials

# Urgent appeal for Herman Wallace

The United States has imprisoned so many people that some politicians and judges are finally questioning the laws that have put so many behind bars — like the draconian drug laws that snare only the poor and don't make a dent in real addiction. Some of this may be a reluctant response by the authorities to the dogged movement against the death penalty, the heroic hunger strike against solitary confinement by thousands of California prisoners, and the growing popular awareness that the U.S. "justice" system really is a "new Jim Crow."

But the main reason seems to be that locking up so many people just costs too much money, at a time when public services are being slashed and another budget crisis looms. While it's true that for-profit corporations today make big money off prison labor, they are able to do so only because state, county and federal governments cover the basic costs of incarceration. The state subsidizes the exploitation of these workers who are held against their will, but the profits go to the cronies of the politicians.

One of the worst hell-holes of this kind for over a century has been Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana. It is basically an 18,000-acre plantation — larger than Manhattan island — that became notorious for working inmates in the fields "from dawn to dusk" in the stifling heat. Today 5,000 men are held there in

maximum security. The conditions they endure continue to echo the system of human bondage that once prevailed in the South. And just like then, most of the men doomed to enter Angola are Black.

One who has endured Angola for 41 years is Herman Wallace. Many years ago Wallace helped form a chapter of the Black Panther Party in Angola. For that he and two other men were framed up after an uprising in the prison. Known as the Angola 3, they have attracted much support from the outside.

Today Wallace is 71 years old and dying of cancer, yet the authorities are keeping him locked up in a hospital ward. Ebony magazine in July compared Wallace to Nelson Mandela, and Amnesty International has launched a campaign for his compassionate release.

Wallace and his comrade Albert Woodfox are still appealing their convictions, as well as seeking an end to solitary confinement in 6-by-9-foot cells imposed on them for decades. Woodfox is also appealing for an end to the frequent and demeaning strip searches he has been subjected to since March.

We urge our readers to go to [angola3-news.blogspot.com](http://angola3-news.blogspot.com) and take action to demand compassionate release for Herman Wallace by following the link to the Amnesty International petition. Free Herman Wallace, Albert Woodfox and all political prisoners! □

# The real WMDs

Over the next few weeks heads of state and foreign ministers from predatory imperialist countries and developing nations trying to defend their sovereignty will take the podium at the United Nations when the General Assembly convenes.

The corporate media are full of speculation about what representatives of Washington and Israel will say about the plan announced by the U.S. and Russia, and agreed to in principle by the Syrian government, to supposedly defuse the war crisis there by handing over stockpiles of poison gas to an international agency.

What conditions will the U.S. impose on Syria? Will Washington agree to end its support for the armed opposition, which continues to ravage the country? How will this affect the U.S. attitude toward Iran? It has suffered under severe economic sanctions for years, supposedly for developing the capability to make nuclear weapons, but recently has indicated a willingness to discuss its nuclear program.

The words "weapons of mass destruction" will be heard many times, hurled indignantly against Syria, Iran and others. But the most stunning feature of this media blitz is that the issue of U.S. and Israeli nuclear weapons never comes up.

Only one country in the world has used nuclear weapons. Just two U.S. bombs obliterated the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and hundreds of thousands of people in them, at the end of World War II.

This horrendous act, coming when Japan was preparing to surrender, is

widely seen by historians as the opening shot of the Cold War against both the Soviet Union and the Chinese Communists, who had grown strong fighting Japanese imperialist invaders and China's brutal landlords and capitalist collaborators.

The Brookings Institution estimates that the U.S. government, between 1940 and 1996, spent at least \$8.52 trillion in present-day dollars to develop, test and build some 70,000 nuclear weapons.

The awful destruction wreaked by just two of these bombs has since forced countries that knew they could be in imperialism's crosshairs to contemplate building their own defensive arsenals, despite the enormous expense.

Even after the fall of the USSR in 1991 and a U.S.-Russian agreement to decommission their nukes, the U.S. as of 2010 still maintained more than 5,000 nuclear warheads and the facilities for their construction and design.

The only state in the Middle East known to possess nuclear weapons is Israel. It neither confirms nor denies this, but it has not signed the nuclear nonproliferation treaty so it's not obligated to allow inspections.

According to professor Avner Cohen, of the Monterey Institute of International Studies in California, who has written two books about Israel's nuclear arsenal, it was ratified by the U.S. in a still-secret 1969 agreement between Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and President Richard Nixon, when Washington became sure Israel possessed nuclear bombs.

When Israeli nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu leaked information about the program to the media in 1986, he was kidnapped by Israeli agents in Italy, taken back to Israel for a secret trial, convicted and served 18 years in jail, mostly in solitary confinement. ("What about Israel's Nuclear Weapons?" Washington Post, Aug. 31, 2012)

Iran, on the other hand, did sign the nonproliferation treaty and has agreed to periodic inspection of its facilities. But that is not enough for the imperialists.

While always speaking of peace, both the U.S. and Israel have many times used their formidable military to attack other countries that stand in the way of their aggressive capitalist expansionism.

These are the facts about the real "weapons of mass destruction" that threaten the world today. □

## GREECE

# Austerity, fascist violence bring fightback

By G. Dunkel

Greece's Prime Minister Antonis Samaras is making positive predictions: Unemployment has gone from 27.8 percent to 27.1 percent, though for youth under 25 it remained at 59 percent in the last quarter. He claims that in six years the economy should be back to where it was in 2008.

However, the trade unions involved in the struggle against the cruel austerity imposed by the European Union and the International Monetary Fund say that it is more likely that it will be 20 years until there is a full recovery.

Auditors from the Troika — the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund — are currently in Athens to approve the details of the Greek government's plan to cut the wages of 25,000 public workers by 25 percent for eight months and to fire 4,000 of them. Both these moves are unconstitutional, but to the Greek government, the demands of international finance capital take precedence over their Constitution.

In the week before the Troika's auditors came, teachers throughout Greece held a rolling, week-long strike, beginning on Sept. 15. They threatened to continue these strikes. Some teachers report salary reductions by 50 percent since 2008, when the current recession started in Greece.

Greek unions have carried out 30 general strikes in the past four years, but still haven't been able to budge the government's and the Troika's austerity measures. They realize that they have to do more, which is why the teachers stayed out for a week.

Other trade unions went out on a two-day general strike on Sept. 18 and 19.

Along with the financial attacks on the workers, the Golden Dawn, the Greek fascist party, has been actively violent. On Sept. 12, in a working-class district in Piraeus — Athens' port — members of the youth wing of the Greek Communist Party, who are also local trade union officials, were putting up posters for a festival.

Golden Dawn goons on motorcycles, scooters and cars came out of side streets and attacked the communist youth with metal bars and nail-studded clubs. Nine people were hospitalized with serious injuries, including Sotiris Poulikogiannis, president of the Metalworkers' Trade Union of Piraeus.

According to a Sept. 16 story at the English-language version of the Greek Communist Party website, "On Friday 13th of September, masses of working people, unemployed, youth, people from the poor popular strata joined together with the KKE (Greek Communist Party) and KNE (Greek CP's Youth Group)" to condemn this attack. ([inter.kke.gr](http://inter.kke.gr))

Pavlos Fyssas, a well-known Greek anti-fascist hip-hop artist, was stabbed to death by a Golden Dawn member on Sept. 17 as he was leaving a bar. As Fyssas was dying in the ambulance on the way to the hospital, he identified his killer.

In the protests after Fyssas's funeral on Sept. 19, thousands marched on the local Golden Dawn office in Nikaia, a northern suburb of Piraeus. It was organized by the Greek Communist Party, and "anti-fascist activists, members of leftist parties, anarchists, trade unionists, students and pensioners marched together," reported

the Greek Left Review on Sept. 21. The main demand was "Kick the neo-Nazis out of here."

The French newspaper Le Monde reported on Sept. 23 that two commanders in the national Greek police were removed for ties with the Golden Dawn, in connection with the investigation of Fyssas's murder; some other cops have been suspended. □

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# Attack on Kenya's mall related to U.S.-backed invasion of Somalia

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Sept. 23 — Billows of smoke emanated from the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, on the third day of a standoff among Kenyan, Israeli and U.S. FBI forces against members of the Al-Shabaab Islamic resistance movement based in Somalia, which had seized the mall. Reports indicated that at least 62 people have been killed since the incident began on Sept. 21, most of them civilian mall shoppers.

Many news sources reported that members of Al-Shabaab said their operation was in response to the ongoing occupation by approximately 2,500 Kenyan Defense Forces troops of southern Somalia.

The attack on the Westgate Mall is being portrayed by the corporate and pro-imperialist media in the U.S. and Europe as a new episode in the so-called “war on terrorism.” But there has been little news with background about the incident or of the significant role of U.S. imperialism in creating instability in the region.

Kenya, which shares a border with Somalia, sent its army into the troubled Horn of Africa state in October 2011 with U.S. blessing. President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga, close allies of the U.S. administration, led the Kenyan government then.

The KDF bombed the strategic port

city at Kismayo in the early phase of the operation. The city was a financial base for Al-Shabaab, which controlled lucrative charcoal exports from the country.

Since the intervention of Kenya into Somalia, resistance has continued in the country's south and has been escalating outside Kismayo, where Al-Shabaab fighters battle KDF occupation troops daily.

## U.S. role in the Somalia crisis

U.S. imperialism has attempted to influence politics in Somalia for decades. In the late 1970s, the Jimmy Carter administration armed Somali leader Mohamed Siad Barre against revolutionary Ethiopia, then in alliance with the Soviet Union and Cuba.

As a result Somalia was plunged into a disastrous war with Ethiopia over the Ogaden region. Somalia's defeat began a decade-long political crisis. By early 1991, the Barre regime had collapsed, leaving a vast security and political vacuum. U.S. troops went into Somalia in a phony “humanitarian” intervention until military casualties caused them to leave in 1994.

After Ethiopia's socialist-oriented government was driven out in 1991, Washington used its new clients in that country to gain more influence in the region. The George W. Bush administration encouraged Ethiopia to invade Somalia

in 2006 in order to displace the Islamic Courts Union government that had begun to consolidate its influence and stabilize the country.

With Somalia facing a grave famine, Ethiopian military forces withdrew in early 2009 and sections of the Islamic Courts were won over to a Washington-backed Transitional Federal Government. A youth wing of the Islamic Courts arose known as Al-Shabaab (Youth) and began to wage war against the TFG, demanding that all foreign forces be withdrawn from Somalia.

Beginning in 2007, the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) was formed. The bulk of its forces were from the U.S.-allied Ugandan government. U.S. and British bombing operations have been carried out against alleged Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda bases in Somalia. The country is also a base of operations for U.S. drone programs, and Mogadishu is home to a major CIA field station.

The combined AMISOM forces, now consisting of some 17,500 troops, receive training and funding from Washington.

The U.S.'s Somalia operation is part and parcel of the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM), which was formally started in 2008 under Bush but has been strengthened and enhanced by the Obama administration.

Kenya's intervention in southern So-

malia in October 2011 had been planned for at least two years. The release of WikiLeaks cables in 2010 documented the plans and the role of the State Department.

In addition to U.S. involvement in Somalia and Kenya, the state of Israel has close ties with the government in Nairobi.

Developments in Kenya and throughout the entire region of East Africa must be viewed in the context of U.S. economic and strategic interests in partnership with its NATO allies and the state of Israel. In recent years flotillas of U.S. and European Union warships have been occupying the Gulf of Aden off the coast of Somalia with the pretext of fighting piracy.

Both Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Vice President William Ruto are under indictment by the International Criminal Court in The Hague, accused of human rights violations following elections in 2007. Not only the Kenyan government but the entire 54-member nations in the African Union have rejected the ICC, which has almost exclusively focused its charges on Africa's leaders.

While Washington did not favor the government of President Kenyatta during the March elections, it is likely the U.S. will try to take advantage of the mall attack to increase its already strong presence in Kenya. □

# Haitian people protest U.S.-backed Martelly government

By **G. Dunkel**

Haiti and the huge problems facing its people have dropped out of the news recently. The Washington Post and the New York Times call the reason “donor fatigue.” However, that doesn't mean the tremendous difficulties Haiti faced before the January 2010 earthquake, which were worsened by that disaster, have lessened. It only means the big-business press has stopped talking about them.

## Hunger worse than ever

Hurricanes and floods last year left 1.5 million Haitians classified as “severely food insecure” — a fancy way of saying they're chronically hungry. A drought earlier this year exacerbated the situation.

United Nations World Food Program's figures based on Haiti governmental reports understate the problems. Three-quarters of Haitians live on less than \$2 per day; half earn less than \$1 per day. Some 6.7 million people — two-thirds — of an estimated 10 million are often hungry.

Over half the food is imported — including about 80 percent of the rice — meaning food prices can fluctuate drastically.

WFP's website states, “One-third of newborn babies are born underweight” and “23.4 percent of children suffer from chronic malnutrition,” while “58 percent of women 15-49 and two-thirds of children under 5” have anemia.

About 35 percent of Haitians can't access clean water. Some 77 percent of urban residents have access to potable water, compared to only 48 percent of rural dwellers. Nearly 3 million Haitians drink untreated water out of rivers and streams. Only 25 percent of Haitians have access

to sanitary facilities; nearly two-thirds face health dangers without them.

While Port-au-Prince's streets are cleared of rubble, almost none of the destroyed housing, public schools and hospitals has been replaced. Hundreds of thousands of people are still living in tents and sheds, which continually deteriorate. Many people have moved back to their old housing, even if it suffered severe earthquake damage.

## Cholera: still a major problem

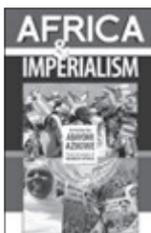
As of Sept. 9, says Haiti's Ministry of Public Health and Population, the cumulative total of cholera cases is 675,745, with 8,265 deaths. Since mid-August, 100 people have been diagnosed weekly, with half needing hospitalization. While the death toll has lessened since the epidemic started, survivors often face weeks of pain and debilitation.

Most of the world's cholera is now found in Haiti. Given the dire sanitation and water situation there, cholera spread rapidly in 2010 after U.N. troops dumped their excrement into a tributary of a major river. The U.N. — whose soldiers have occupied Haiti since 2004, replacing U.S. and French troops — adamantly refuses to accept responsibility for introducing the disease.

## AFRICA & IMPERIALISM

Articles by Abayomi Azikiwe from the pages of Workers World

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## 'Impeach and imprison Martelly'

As living conditions worsen, Haitian protests have grown against the corruption, brutality and profligate waste of President Michel Martelly's administration. Demonstrations have opposed Martelly since he came to power in May 2011.

Yet, they increased in intensity and size when the Aug. 14 Bois-Caïman anniversary was commemorated by big protests all over the country. That date marks the start of the Haitian Revolution in 1791.

In Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Pétionvil and Gonaïves and especially in the Cité Soleil sector of Port-au-Prince — where police tear gassed protesters — thousands of people marched, demanding the impeachment and jailing of Martelly and the end of his government. In Cap-Haïtien, protesters called for “Elections or resignation!” and “We want democracy, not demagoguery!” and they told Martelly he can't count on the North to stay in power.

Senator Moïse Jean-Charles, who represents this area in the Parliament and is leading the parliamentary struggle to

impeach Martelly, spoke in Cap-Haïtien. He stressed, “The struggle to safeguard democracy, the struggle to safeguard our democratic gains, the struggle against hunger, against misery must not be stopped until it has spread throughout the whole country.” (Haïti-Liberté, Aug. 21-27)

Haïti-Liberté reported that the government is preparing a budget some progressives describe as “a weapon to destroy the masses.” Jean-Charles says the proposed budget, with cuts in funding for essential social programs and greater allocations for the national police force and prime minister, shows preparation for political repression.

Another wave of demonstrations swept through Haiti in the second week of September. They were larger and more numerous than those in August, but also demanded “Impeach and imprison Martelly!”

The struggle will continue as long as the Haitian people face terrible living conditions, and repression is the only response of the U.S.-backed government. □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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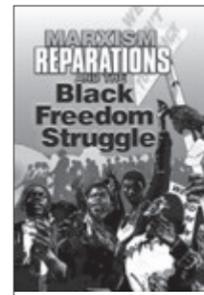
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## La brecha de ingresos se amplía

Por Deirdre Griswold

Por mucho tiempo, a los/as trabajadores/as nos han dicho que este sistema capitalista bajo el que vivimos funciona para nuestro beneficio. Claro, los jefes ganan más que nosotros/as, pero todo es por el bien de todos/as y que no podría haber ninguna producción sin sus conocimientos — y su capital.

Existen varios argumentos aquí que necesitan ser rotundamente refutados. Uno es que los capitalistas tienen la experiencia especial necesaria para la producción de bienes y servicios.

El desastre financiero del 2008 y el consiguiente desastre para la clase obrera demostraron una vez más que cualquier destreza — legal o ilegal — que los patronos tengan con el fin de hacerse ricos, no son las destrezas necesarias para dirigir una economía saludable — una que ponga las necesidades del pueblo como su objetivo principal.

Desde luego, fueron muy buenos en averiguar cómo romper las hipotecas en pequeñas partes y venderlas en los mercados financieros. O mejor dicho, los asesores financieros que contrataban eran muy buenos en hacer esto. Pero, ¿crear casas para que las personas vivan en ellas? Las habilidades financieras de los capitalistas realmente terminaron dejando a millones de personas en la calle mientras que lo que una vez fueron sus hogares — hipotecados, por supuesto — muy a menudo se arruinaban.

En este periodo, los salarios de los/as trabajadores/as que tienen la suerte de tener empleos, se han estancado o han disminuido. Pero después de unos cuantos billones de dólares en rescates gubernamentales, el capital de los empresarios está haciendo una vez más a los muy ricos aún más ricos.

¿Cuánto más ricos?

### Estudio confirma que brecha entre ricos y pobres es aún más amplia

Más de la mitad del ingreso en el año 2012 fue a sólo el 10 por ciento de la población de Estados Unidos, según un nuevo estudio por el economista Emmanuel Saez de Berkeley titulado “Enriqueciéndose aún más: La evolu-

ción de los ingresos altos en Estados Unidos (actualizado con las estimaciones preliminares del 2012)”. Poniéndolo de otra manera, el 10 por ciento más rico del país ganó cerca de 10 veces más el ingresos de los/as otros/as en el 90 por ciento.

Pero eso es sólo la mitad de la historia. El más reducido 1 por ciento abarcó más del 20 por ciento de los ingresos totales del país, uno de los niveles más altos registrados desde 1913. Esto significa que el 1 por ciento más rico de este país ha obtenido 25 veces lo que el 99 por ciento obtuvo.

Y eso no es toda la historia, porque mientras que los ingresos del 99 por ciento, en promedio, se han mantenido iguales desde el 2008, los ingresos de los mucho más ricos — el 0,01 por ciento — se han triplicado.

Recordemos, sólo estamos hablando de ingresos. Los activos de los muy ricos, que se acumulan durante décadas, incluso generaciones e incluyen mansiones, carísimas obras de arte, aviones privados y coches lujosos, etc., además de los miles de millones en capital que invierten para ganar aún más dinero — son monumentales en comparación a lo que podría poseer un/a trabajador/a promedio. Lo cual es muy cercano a cero.

De hecho, cuando estalló la crisis financiera en el 2008, la proporción de deuda de los hogares con los ingresos disponibles (lo que queda después de pagar los impuestos) en los Estados Unidos había alcanzado su punto más alto en la historia. Fue el 128 por ciento, lo que significa que los/as trabajadores/as debían mucho más de lo que ganaban y estaban en una carrera sin fin de pagos de deuda que podría durar para siempre. Lo que pasó fue que mientras la economía se hundía, millones de ellos/as perdieron lo que pensaban que poseían cuando los bancos y las financieras embargaron sus hipotecas, sus coches, etc.

El panorama no podría estar más claro. El capitalismo en los Estados Unidos — y en gran parte del resto del mundo — es muy eficiente en hacer a los ricos mucho más ricos, pero fracasa miserablemente cuando se trata de satisfacer las necesidades de los pueblos para tener una vida estable.

¿Es esto el resultado de políticas fracasadas o es parte del mismo sistema? ¿Si tal cosa como un/a capitalista

con sentimiento y comprensivo/a llegara, él o ella serían capaz de cambiar el sistema?

### Una persona que intentó reformar

En una época hubo personas así. Uno era el fabricante Robert Owen, de 29 años, que vivió a principios del siglo XIX y dirigió una fábrica grande de algodón en New Lanark, Escocia, en un momento cuando la vida de los/as trabajadores/as industriales era atroz. Federico Engels, colaborador más cercano de Marx, se refirió a Owen en el libro “Socialismo: utópico y científico”.

Engels describió cómo, bajo el liderazgo de Owen, la fábrica se convirtió en una colonia modelo. Los/as trabajadores/as que se habían desmoralizado por la pobreza y las largas horas de trabajo fueron capaces de estabilizar sus vidas y criar familias saludables.

Esta fábrica modelo tenía una jornada de 10 horas y media cuando todas las demás exigían 13 y 14 horas. Tenía las primeras guarderías de infantes, donde fueron atendidos/as niños/as de apenas dos años en vez de quedarse solos/as mientras sus padres y madres trabajaban. Cuando hubo una crisis de sobreproducción en el sector textil, que se prolongó durante cuatro meses, los/as trabajadores/as recibieron su salario completo.

Pero Owen mismo se dio cuenta de que incluso este gran éxito, que demostró que podían ser instituidas condiciones humanas y la fábrica aún podía producir ganancias considerables para los dueños, no cambiaría la industria. La gran riqueza creada por los/as trabajadores/as utilizando la nueva tecnología de fabricación seguía siendo la propiedad privada de los dueños.

Engels dijo que Owen llegó a darse cuenta de que “las gigantescas fuerzas productivas recién creadas, utilizadas hasta ahora solamente para enriquecer a los individuos y para esclavizar a las masas, ofrecieron a Owen las bases para una reconstrucción de la sociedad; estaban destinadas, como propiedad común de todos, a que fueran trabajadas por el bien común de todos”.

Tan pronto como Owen, quien había sido lisonjeado en la “sociedad” como un gran filántropo, apareció con este punto de vista comunista, fue atacado por todos lados. Finalmente decidió que la única manera que la sociedad podía avanzar era a través de la lucha de los/as propios/as trabajadores/as.

Owen renunció a su puesto en la fábrica y pasó el resto de su vida luchando del lado de los/as trabajadores/as. Debido a esto, fue elegido presidente del primer congreso de los sindicatos ingleses, donde se unieron en una sola gran asociación para luchar mejor contra los patronos.

### El capitalismo no va a reformarse desde dentro

Hoy en día, los capitalistas “reformistas” crean fundaciones y hacen discursos bonitos, pero ¿dejaría alguno de ellos sus fortunas para luchar por los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as?

Hoy en día, el mundo está enfrentando el “desastre natural” más grande de la historia: el calentamiento global. La industria es responsable de la mayoría de los gases de efecto invernadero en la atmósfera. Pero ni una sola corporación capitalista está dispuesta a renunciar a sus ganancias, ni siquiera para salvar al mundo. En cambio, han puesto nuevos mercados para el comercio — y para ganar dinero — vendiendo créditos para contaminar.

Y estamos supuestos/as a creer que ellos pueden reformarse cuando se trata de la creciente pobreza de los/as trabajadores/as. Pero, ¿qué más se puede esperar de una clase que obtiene ganancias enormes de la maquinaria de guerra e incluso de las prisiones donde millones de trabajadores/as, la mayoría de ellos/as gente de color e inmigrantes, son hacinados/as o mantenidos/as en confinamiento solitario, básicamente por ser pobre y no poder pagar un abogado?

Unidos en la lucha, el poder de la clase obrera organizada — todos los géneros, todas las nacionalidades, empleados/as o desempleados/as, documentados/as o indocumentados/as, adentro de o luchando por tener sindicatos, junto a las comunidades oprimidas — es la única manera probada y verdadera para revertir la degradación de los salarios y las condiciones laborales.

Tal lucha también lleva en su interior la posibilidad de reconstruir el movimiento para librar al mundo de este sistema arcaico, cruel y destructivo del capitalismo de una vez y por todas. □

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