



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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\$1

HANDS OFF School Bus Union 5!

By Hannah Kirschbaum
Boston

Oct. 21— Since Oct. 8, the school bus drivers in Steelworkers Local 8751 have faced a continuously hostile barrage from anti-union employer Veolia, Boston Mayor Thomas Menino, Boston Public Schools officials and the corporate media. On Oct. 8, the school bus drivers refused to drive until Veolia agreed to meet to discuss the company's failure to adhere to the collective bargaining agreement they signed on June 18, 2013.

Since July 1, when Veolia assumed management of BPS transportation, the company has utterly repudiated the union contract, failed to respect the role of the union as the employees' exclusive representative, and committed numerous unfair labor practices.

Driver complaints include weekly substantial shortages of pay; unsafe, untimely and overcrowded bus routes;

Workers killed during BART strike 7

systematic problems with mandated benefits; refusal to restore the decades-long practice of employee time-stamped payroll documents (daily bus reports), which result in wholesale

failure to pay drivers for hours worked; and more.

Instead of granting the meeting on Oct. 8, the company ordered the drivers off the property under threat of arrest for trespassing and locked the gates, thus committing an illegal lockout. Workers then faced a relentless onslaught of union-busting media coverage. Headlines, editorials and commentaries claimed workers held a wildcat strike and called for terminating the "instigators." But the drivers stated they were engaging in protected activity, not a strike.

On Oct. 9, Veolia suspended Vice President, Pension Administrator and key benefits advocate Steven Gillis; and Chair of the Grievance Committee and local founder Stevan Kirschbaum. Days later, they also suspended Recording Secretary and Chief Steward Andre Francois; three-time former local President and Steward Garry Murchison; and Steward and local founding member Richard Lynch.

These Team Solidarity members and USW 8751 leaders are now known collectively as the School Bus Union 5. (Team Solidarity is a rank-and-file coalition of school bus union workers from the Steelworkers, Teamsters and Amalgamated Transit Union.) The discriminatory targeting of these particular leaders represents a calculated effort on the part of Veolia and Mayor Menino to break the organizational backbone and infrastructure of the union.

The Five have decades of recognized militant leadership among the rank and file of Local 8751. Their political activist record of standing with labor and the com-

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Boston School Bus Drivers Union 5: Garry Murchison, Stevan Kirschbaum, Andre Francois, Steven Gillis and Richard Lynch.

PHOTO: FRED FLOREAL

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Boston drivers shut out Veolia in response to fraudulent bid Oct. 19.

WW PHOTO: STEVAN KIRSCHBAUM

Why we fight for a \$15 minimum wage

By Sharon Black

On Oct. 24, community activists, students, members of the Occupy Wall Street movement, labor unionists and underpaid workers from every industry will rally to mark the 75th anniversary of the first minimum wage law. They will demand an increase from the current federal hourly minimum wage of \$7.25 to \$15.

In New York City, protesters will gather in Herald Square, home to hundreds of businesses that pay tens of thousands of workers \$7.25 an hour or, at most, \$9. Other protests are set for Baltimore, Boston, Providence, R.I.; Durham, N.C.; Los Angeles and San Diego, as well as other cities and towns.

Baltimore is in particular need of such a movement. One out of every four people lives in poverty. Along with joblessness, poverty wages are a major source of this continuing problem.

The original call for protests on Oct. 24 was initiated by the Baltimore and Maryland "We Deserve Better" Workers Assembly on Sept. 1, during the Labor Day weekend.

Seventy-five years ago, on Oct. 24, the first minimum wage in the United States went into effect. In the summer of 1938, Congress passed the "Fair Labor Standards Act." It mandated for the first time that beginning on

Oct. 24 of that year, employers would have to pay a minimum of at least 25 cents an hour to most workers.

This first minimum wage — an important part of groundbreaking New Deal legislation of that period — came about after years of struggle by the growing labor movement and the mass movement of underpaid and brutally exploited workers during the 1930s Great Depression.

Oct. 24 and the fight to raise workers' wages

No one can survive on \$7.25 an hour. Nearly everyone but the most exploitative business owners would agree. The major problem is that in this stage of capitalist development, low wages have become the norm for the working class.

It's worth looking at statistics from two studies reported in the Huffington Post. On Jan. 23, 2012, the HP blog reported the median annual income of U.S. workers was \$26,364. Then, it stated on Feb. 13 of this year, that "the minimum wage would be \$21.74 if it kept pace with increases in productivity."

This means what most Walmart and fast food workers know — that half of U.S. workers make less than \$15 an hour and are barely surviving, alternately choosing

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A FIST appeal to youth Attend Workers World Party conference



WORKERS WORLD
this week...

By FIST (fightimperialism.org)

The looming global financial crisis has already hurt young people, leaving nearly 75 million young people unemployed around the world. When countries suffer economically, young workers are usually the last in and first out. From a lack of social services to slim opportunities for housing or jobs, it's no shock that young people feel like they are left without any opportunities for prosperity or even stability.

Many young people know in their guts that the capitalist system is corrupt and is failing them. They provided on-the-ground leadership to the occupations of Zucotti Park that led to Occupy Wall Street and were on the front lines of the rallies, rebellions and protests following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin.

As the revolutionary, working-class youth of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), we are reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King's indictment of economic inequities in the U.S.: "Socialism for the rich and free enterprise for the poor."

We are excited to have the opportunity to invite young activists and freedom fighters from across the country to the Nov. 16-17 Workers World Party national conference in New York City, as we have been invited to be a focus of this year's gathering with our own workshop and plenary speakers.

The FIST plenary session will take place at noon on Nov. 16 followed by the FIST lunchtime workshop at 1 p.m.

We aren't content with the idea that our generation's future can wait. With the unique exuberance and revolutionary optimism of our generation, we are ready to lay the groundwork for organizing a society where people's needs come first.

The ruling class has its own schedule of meetings, summits and conferences to discuss how to divide and conquer the multinational working class here and abroad. From the United Nations to NATO to the Group of Eight, or G8 forum, leaders of imperialist countries, transnational corporations and military officials talk at length to build an analysis, strategy and plan on how to

maintain and increase profits.

That's why it's all the more necessary for working-class people of all nationalities, faith backgrounds, ages, gender identities, sexual orientations and abilities to come together and strategize our own united plans to take back our world from the ruling class.

In a society where we are constantly told that we aren't smart enough, good enough, beautiful enough or strong enough to deserve a life of happiness and dignity, many working-class people feel like they have nothing to contribute to the movement for liberation. FIST youth want to extend a welcoming and warm invitation to all young people. It's a rare opportunity for us as young activists to get to share the stage at these important discussions on building people's power, but we know that we represent a generation of creativity and innovation. The youth need a revolution!

For more information on conference registration, housing and a timeline of events, visit workers.org/wwwp. □



What will it take to defeat dead-end capitalism

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NOV 16-17
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- ▶ Irreversible capitalist economic crisis
- ▶ Fighting racism & national oppression
- ▶ Opposing imperialist wars & occupations
- ▶ Uniting all workers: organized & unorganized; documented and undocumented

Registration, plenaries, breakout groups & workshops:
Saturday, November 16: 8 am - 7:30 pm
Sunday, November 17: 9 am - 2 pm

Go to workers.org/wwwp for more updates.

JOIN US

Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young & old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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Activists demand: Stop the banks' looting of Detroit

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Oct. 18 — The ongoing struggle against the racist, undemocratic emergency manager regime in Detroit and its filing of Chapter 9 municipal bankruptcy is intensifying. City employees, retirees, residents and activists are coming together to say “No” to the looting of their city by the big banks and the emergency manager and to the bankruptcy process that benefits these looters.

A mass outcry forced James Bonsall, the chief financial officer for city of Detroit Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr, to resign his position on Oct. 15. The outcry followed revelations of racist treatment toward Cheryl Johnson, an African-American city employee demoted in apparent retaliation for whistleblowing on the racist and sexist work environment she and others endured.

When discussing his participation in a city anti-crime neighborhood campaign, Bonsall once asked in a meeting if he “could shoot someone in a hoodie” if he participated. He said this in apparent reference to the racist murder of Black youth Trayvon Martin.

On top of this vile racism, the people of Detroit face attacks to city services, workers' benefits and retirees' pensions. The Detroit Institute of Arts and other city assets have been threatened as part of a massive shift of wealth to the banks and away from the city and its residents. To administer this shift, Orr has already given away more than \$62 million of the

people's funds in “consulting” fees to high-priced lawyers and financial “experts.”

Fueled by these outrages, demonstrators massed in front of the federal courthouse in downtown Detroit the morning of Oct. 15. That was when U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Steven Rhodes began a hearing on the city's eligibility for the bankruptcy process.

Inside, people's anti-bank attorneys Jerome Goldberg and Vanessa Fluker addressed the court regarding possible fraud and other illegalities on the part of the banks. These possibilities must be investigated before a bankruptcy can be allowed to proceed.

Fluker asserted that Emergency Manager Orr was under a legal duty to investigate criminal activity that contributed to the financial crisis. She and Goldberg challenged how bankruptcy could proceed based on Orr's refusal to investigate United Bank of Switzerland and Bank of America, the banks that have cost the city hundreds of millions of dollars.

Orr not only won't investigate the banks, but he is seeking approval from the Detroit City Council for a \$350-million, short-term loan out of which \$250 million is to pay Bank of America and UBS termination fees on interest rate swaps. This gargantuan sum is on top of the over \$250 million UBS and Bank of America have already netted on these swaps based on the city paying them hedging derivatives amounting to 6.3 percent interest on bonds where the actual interest was only 0.5 percent to 1 percent.

Oct. 23 protest: 'Make the banks pay!'

The loan Orr wants, which must be paid back in no longer than three years, is secured by a first lien on the city's casino tax dollars, a second lien on income tax revenues and a lien on all other city assets worth more than \$10 million if the other liens are insufficient. The bank paid to service the loan is Barclays, which earlier admitted to fraudulent conduct in the LIBOR scandal. Incredibly, this short-term loan is tied to the LIBOR index.

Emergency Manager Orr negotiated a deal with the banks to keep the interest rate swaps out of the bankruptcy proceeding, instead of challenging the swaps as potentially fraudulent instruments within the bankruptcy and arguing that the swaps should be liquidated.

Bank of America and UBS are both clients of the Ohio-based Jones Day law firm. Jones Day is Orr's former employer and currently provides the legal team for the emergency manager regarding the bankruptcy.

Both Bank of America and UBS have faced numerous investigations and even criminal convictions for their conduct in the municipal bond market. Besides, they are also two of the most notorious subprime mortgage lenders. These lenders' practices caused over 100,000 Detroit home foreclosures in a five-year period.

In an Oct. 17 statement, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs wrote, “No wonder that rather than go after these banks, [Orr] is trying to award them this sweetheart deal.”



WWPHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Activists have called for a demonstration outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, 2 Woodward Avenue, at 1 p.m. on Oct. 21 prior to the City Council vote on the \$350 million short-term loan. The demonstrators plan to go inside and attend the 2 p.m. Council meeting to demand the Council members reject this giveaway to the banks.

A coalition of forces, including Moratorium NOW!, Detroiters Resisting Emergency Management and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25 have called a major demonstration on Oct. 23 to “surround the federal courthouse” as Judge Rhodes begins the bankruptcy eligibility trial.

Protesters will demand “Stop the looting of Detroit” and “Defend city services, assets and pensions,” as well as an end to racist, undemocratic emergency management and the city bankruptcy. Moratorium NOW! is calling for an immediate cancellation of all debt payments to the banks, which have destroyed the city's communities, and for the banks to pay for the rebuilding of Detroit. □

Michigan

Fight for marriage equality continues

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Jayne Rowse and April DeBoer never expected to be viewed as celebrities or heroes. Yet the two Michigan nurses, who are in a 14-year committed relationship and are raising special-needs children together, said at an Oct. 16 rally that they “are proud to be the ones representing the gay and lesbian community in this fight” for the right to marry. What began as a lawsuit to overturn state laws barring them from jointly adopting their three children has become a pivotal case that could overturn the ban on same-sex marriage in Michigan.

The 4-year-old and two 3-year-olds know Rowse and DeBoer as “Mama” and “Mommy” and relate to one another as brothers and sisters. Yet because Michigan law only permits second-parent adoption for married couples, and because the two are forbidden to marry under a 2004 voter-approved constitutional amendment, Rowse is the sole legal parent of two children and DeBoer the sole legal parent of the third. Prior to the adoption they were foster parents together to all three.

Now, they are legally strangers to children they are raising. Thus, if something were to happen to either of them, one parent would not have custody rights to the child or children legally adopted by the other.

“Our kids are the most important things to us and always will be the most important thing to us,” Rowse explained on Oct. 16, the day of a court hearing ex-

pected to decide their case. She and DeBoer sued last year for the right to second-parent adoption because they could not accept that their children were denied rights afforded to other children. It was not the couple, but Federal Judge Bernard Friedman, who decided to link the right to second-parent adoption to the question of the constitutionality of Michigan's ban on same-sex marriage.

Michigan's anti-marriage amendment is one of the strictest in the country, barring even the “appearance” of marriage. That language was used to deny health benefits to the same-sex partners of state workers. Michigan, therefore, was not the state that the marriage equality movement would have imagined as the next state to make marriage legal for all.

Last year, Judge Friedman refused to make a ruling on either the adoption or the marriage rights issue, choosing to wait for the U.S. Supreme Court to decide on the federal “Defense of Marriage Act” and California's marriage ban. In July, the high court struck down DOMA and the California ban but left other state bans intact.

Rowse, DeBoer and more than 100 supporters rallied Oct. 16 and then filled Judge Friedman's courtroom. They expected a ruling that day or at most within a few weeks. Couples around the state were lining up to get married the moment a positive ruling was issued. The state-wide civil rights organization Equality Michigan identified county clerks who were willing to issue licenses. Many couples wanted to marry as soon as possible,

anticipating that the judge would issue a stay if the state appealed a pro-marriage ruling.

State says women are baby machines

The state could not have advanced a more backward argument than that contained in the brief submitted by Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, who was elected in 2010 with Tea Party backing. “Responsible procreation and childrearing are well-recognized as legitimate State interests served by marriage,” Schuette argued. “One of the paramount purposes of marriage in Michigan ... is, and always has been, to regulate sexual relationships between men and women so that the unique procreative capacity of such relationships benefits rather than harms society.” The plaintiffs, Schuette claimed, “wholly miss this fundamental point.” (Huffington Post, Sept. 18, 2013)

Even today, what Karl Marx and Frederick Engels called “the status of women as mere instruments of production” in the “Communist Manifesto” still exists — to the degree that an elected official can claim “state interests” in upholding it!

Attorneys for the state repeated the same bogus arguments in court. Plaintiffs' attorney Carole Stanyar pointed to the consensus position of the American Psychiatric, American Psychological, American Medical and American Social Work associations that child development is not impacted negatively when they are raised by two parents of the same gender.

The judge's decision on Oct. 16 came as a surprise; he decided not to issue a ruling



WW PHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

April DeBoer (left) and Jayne Rowse address media after rally, Oct. 16.

at all, but to hold a bench trial on Feb. 25. He said he was “in the middle” and would have to hear “expert” witnesses from both sides.

The ruling was a disappointment, but the couple remains confident and determined to keep fighting until victory.

The lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer movement also expects to defeat a right-wing ballot initiative to overturn a nondiscrimination ordinance in the Detroit suburb of Royal Oak. “One Royal Oak,” the movement in support of the ordinance, has the support of numerous community and faith organizations; the Detroit Metro AFL-CIO has committed volunteers.

Beyond the immediate fights in the courts and at the polls, plans are underway for grassroots campaigns to win statewide anti-discrimination protection for LGBTQ people and to nullify the 2004 anti-marriage amendment. □

On the picket line

by Sue Davis

Baltimore longshore workers strike

Hundreds of members of the International Longshoremen's Association Local 333 voted to strike Oct. 16 over such local contract issues as workplace safety. Earlier this year, the ILA signed a six-year contract with the United States Maritime Alliance that generally covers East Coast and Gulf Coast ports, but local work rules, pensions and port-specific issues require a separate contract with local industry groups like the Steamship Trade Association of Baltimore. Three other ILA locals had already signed local contracts, but honored Local 333's picket lines.

The Oct. 18 Baltimore Sun reported that the port is one of the "region's big economic engines," employing about 15,000 people directly and affecting tens of thousands of jobs statewide. It called the port "the nation's No. 1 vehicle handler," with rules for autos covered by the local contract. No wonder the strike got the bosses' attention. An arbitrator arrived on Oct. 18, when a 90-day cooling-off period was instituted, which Local 333 agreed to. The Sun noted the two sides were "making progress" with the arbitrator.

Puget Sound, Wash., area grocery workers vote to strike

More than 30,000 workers at four major grocery chains — Safeway, QFC, Fred Meyer and Albertsons — in the Puget Sound area voted to go on strike Oct. 21. The three unions representing them — Food and Commercial Workers union Local 21, UFCW Local 367 and Teamsters Local 38 — have been negotiating for six months, but the chains haven't budged from their "austerity" offer. They are demanding no wage increase and massive cutbacks in the contract, including no time and a half on holidays, no 10 cents above minimum wage guarantee, and no health care coverage for anyone working less than 30 hours a week. (The Stand, Oct. 18)

Mine Workers win battle for retiree health care

It took nearly a year of protests, arrests, rallies, marches and court battles for the Mine Workers union to win benefits their members had already earned: retiree health care. The settlement announced Oct. 9 establishes a \$400 million fund that will provide health

care benefits to 23,000 UMWA retirees, dependents and surviving spouses, which Peabody Energy and Arch Coal agreed to when they set up Patriot Coal five years ago. However, the UMWA has maintained that Patriot was set up to fail, so it could claim bankruptcy, which it did in 2012, in order to shed these benefits. While UMWA President Cecil E. Roberts called the settlement "significant," he noted that "it does not provide the level of funding needed to maintain health care for these retirees forever." That is why the union is lobbying for federal legislation that will guarantee lifetime benefits. (blog.aflcio.org, Oct. 10)

Walmart workers strike in Hialeah, Fla.

About 80 workers at the Walmart in Hialeah Gardens, Fla., walked off the job as the store opened on Oct. 18, reported Salon that day. This is the first work stoppage since 20 workers were fired and 70 workers disciplined after an extended strike in June at Walmart headquarters in Arkansas. The workers are protesting "abuse and discrimination" by managers, as well as insufficient hours. For instance, Jose Bello, who has worked there for four years, is only assigned 29 hours a week, which is not enough to support a family. OUR Walmart, a labor group closely tied to the UFCW, has organized civil disobedience protests since last year. This year, it's again calling a national strike on "Black Friday," the major shopping day after the so-called "Thanksgiving" holiday.

Protests at NYC fast food restaurants

On Oct. 15, the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, which represents tomato pickers in Florida, protested "old fashioned exploitation" at Wendy's. The CIW is demanding that the chain adopt its Fair Food Program, giving pickers a penny more a bushel, which has been shown to improve wages. Already McDonald's, Burger King and Subway, among other chains, have signed on, as well as grocery chains like Whole Foods and Trader Joe's. Chanting "One penny more!" about 200 protesters marched from Union Square to the Wendy's on 14th Street.

On Oct. 16, a group of mostly youth of color, joined by some fast-food workers, led a brief occupation of a Burger King in lower Manhattan. Then they held a rally outside where they explained why the workers are demanding "\$15 an hour and a union." □

Shutdown = war on workers, poor

By Kathy Durkin

Media headlines did not convey the human toll of the federal government shutdown. Congressional rightists' 16-day action affected millions of people, especially those with low incomes, depriving them of essential programs and benefits. These reactionaries are all too eager to cruelly gut, even eliminate safety net services for poor and working people.

Each day, as the crisis went on, more women, children, seniors, and jobless and underpaid workers — many in African-American, Latino/a and other oppressed communities — lost services. Federally funded programs, including several that are life-sustaining, were reduced, causing great hardship. This is in addition to government sequestration cuts — with more coming.

Paychecks were issued to the congressional culprits who caused the crisis. Funding continued for national security surveillance, military occupations abroad and drones. Billions of dollars kept flowing to the Pentagon war chest, while children were kept home from preschool and seniors were left hungry.

The **Women, Infants and Children** nutrition program is relied on by 9 million pregnant women, new mothers and children under 5, including 2 million infants. This federal program has agencies in every state, but Congress must annually approve grants. The shutdown stopped its funding; its coffers held only \$125 million, not the \$7 billion — equal to \$7,000 million — needed. Utah and six other states refused new enrollees, while some funds for at-risk babies were uncertain. Some states closed WIC offices; some stores wouldn't accept WIC vouchers.

Head Start programs provide education, health and nutrition services to 1 million low-income children. On top of the 57,000 children dropped from the program by sequestration cuts, the National Head Start Association says the shutdown kept 19,000 more out of preschool. Some 23 programs in 11 states didn't receive funding. Florida, for one, closed several centers.

Washington stopped funding **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**, which allocates cash benefits to 4 million people. Arizona halted checks to the poorest families, but due to community and advocacy groups' pressure they were reinstated four days later. North Carolina cut off these benefits, which mostly pay for children's meals.

Meals on Wheels, which provides nutritious food to low-income seniors, was first hit by a 6 percent sequestration funding reduction. Then, the shutdown stopped funds entirely, jeopardizing Senior Nutrition Programs and causing hungry seniors to be turned away or put on waiting lists.

This newspaper heard reports from around the country from people who hadn't received their TANF checks, whose food stamp cards weren't usable or whose Section 8 subsidized housing funds hadn't come through.

2,000 women's shelters defunded

Washington stopped federal grants for 2,000 **domestic violence programs**. Some shelters, struggling to stay open, obtained community do-

nations, while others closed or turned away emergency callers. Although 64,000 requests come in each day for help, 10,000 more go unanswered.

"Even before sequestration," stressed National Organization for Women President Terry O'Neill, "80 percent of shelters nationwide [got] less funding from the government." She added that sequestration meant a \$20 million reduction in funding, which would result in 70,120 fewer women accessing recovery programs and shelters. More budget cuts are feared, just as more women seek help during the continuing economic crisis.

The **National Institutes of Health** normally enrolls 200 new patients a week for experimental treatment for life-threatening diseases, including 30 children, 10 with cancer. During the shutdown, the NIH had to turn away new patients. A father rightfully asked the National Priorities Project, "If even one kid can't get cancer treatment, isn't that enough to end the shutdown?" (Oct. 17)

Drug treatment and mental health services were also disrupted. Some applications for **disability benefits** were delayed, or not processed, including veterans' claims, because no staff was at work.

Not all government employees are guaranteed back pay while furloughed, including underpaid employees who work for contractors. Mailroom workers, many of them people with disabilities, are in this awful situation. These workers, like many others, struggle to pay their bills, dependent on every paycheck.

The right wing has vociferously demanded that adult food stamp recipients work, even in high-unemployment areas. Yet the shutdown severed funding to employment training programs for these jobless workers, who could lose their food benefits because of this absurdity.

Federal agencies are responsible for workplace and environmental safety. Due to the enforced absences of **Occupational Safety and Health Agency** workers, no job site inspections occurred. None happened at toxic-waste sites either, as **Environmental Protection Agency** employees were also furloughed.

The **Mine Safety and Health Administration** stopped its inspections, too. Three mineworkers died during the shutdown's first week. United Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts said: "Safety violations that would normally be caught and corrected [during] inspections are being missed. Even the smallest violations ... can lead to dangerous conditions very quickly in a coal mine." (Huffington Post, Oct. 8)

The **Food and Drug Administration** stopped food plant inspections, while the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** reduced its monitoring of food-borne and other illnesses.

Another similar governmental shutdown would further endanger essential services for working-class and low-income communities. Progressive forces active in every community, in every struggle and in every state must fight back against these cruel attacks and the rightists' concurrent racism and anti-poor bigotry. A decent quality of life must be guaranteed to all. □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Protest backs fast-food workers at a Brooklyn, N.Y., Burger King.

Shutdown crisis set back Tea Party, but

Mass struggle crucial to fight reaction and austerity

By Fred Goldstein

The government shutdown/debt-ceiling crisis evolved out of a civil war within the Republican Party between right-wing conservatives and the ultra-right Tea Party and its partisans.

These two vicious, anti-working-class tendencies were locked in struggle over how much austerity they could get away with imposing on the people. The Tea Party and its allies wanted to sink the Affordable Care Act, completely gut Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security, and cut the budget for all social services to the bone.

The so-called “mainstream” conservatives calculated that this would produce such a catastrophe that the Republican Party might never recover from it.

The big capitalists behind the conservatives wanted these issues settled without default, because that could threaten their interest payments. The vast majority of the ruling class were afraid that the reputation of U.S. finance capital was on the line globally. And they demanded an end to the shutdown. It was costing them money in contract payments, stock losses and business declines, among other things.

All classes suffered from the government shutdown and debt-ceiling crisis. The global reputation of U.S. finance capital was severely tarnished. But by far the greatest damage was done to the workers and the oppressed.

The Los Angeles Times of Oct. 12 reported that 500,000 federal workers were laid off and that many lived in “emergency mode,” struggling to pay mortgages, rent, car payments, credit card bills and the like. Some estimates of the number of workers laid off, including private sector workers, run much higher.

Federal funds were cut off for the Women, Infants and Children program, which provides food for 8.9 million pregnant and nursing women and children under age 5. This left the states struggling to find emergency funds to keep programs open. The same is true for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), which serves 4 million people. Many Head Start programs around the country that serve 1 million low-income children stopped providing services.

Banks bailed out but not workers

In fact, this ugly fight, carried on at the expense of the people, should never have happened at all. Beginning in 2008, when the bankers, stockbrokers and billionaires were suffering from a financial crisis after having profited from reckless gambling and cheating, the U.S. capitalist establishment found trillions of dollars to keep them afloat.

But during the current 16-day shutdown, the government and the financial establishment folded their hands and let the masses suffer while the two political factions in Washington fought things out. There is a great lesson in this: The people must not rely on the political and financial machines of big business to protect them.

The masses, especially the working poor, had a stake in the struggle.

The Affordable Care Act is severely flawed. It requires people to sign up or pay a fine. It fails to give universal coverage across the board, instead setting up complicated on-line exchanges. It forces people to buy insurance from private, profit-making health care plans. It taxes medical plans that provide decent ben-

efits, especially plans covering union workers.

Nevertheless, with all its limitations, millions of people immediately tried to register for coverage. This shows the desperate need among the 50 million uninsured for some form of health care coverage. Insofar as the struggle was about keeping the Republicans from undermining or defunding the program, large sections of the population had a stake.

Millions excluded from ACA coverage

Yet the Obama administration stood by passively when the Supreme Court on June 28, 2012, allowed the exclusion of millions of people from the plan. The ACA had specified that people with incomes up to 133 percent of the poverty level would be covered by expanding Medicaid. But the court ruled that states could opt out of this part of the plan.

So far 26 states have opted out, leaving millions excluded from coverage. This “will leave out two-thirds of the poor blacks and single mothers and more than half of the low-wage workers who do not have any insurance, the very people the plan was intended to help.” (New York Times, Oct. 3)

It is an outrage that after the elected president put forward a bill aimed at making health insurance available for millions and the elected Congress voted that bill into law, a group of nine (the vote was 7 to 2) unelected, appointed-for-life Supreme Court justices could gut the bill, affecting the lives and health of millions.

In the 1930s, when the Supreme Court was blocking New Deal legislation, President Franklin Roosevelt threatened to pack the court through legislation that would have allowed him to appoint new justices in place of those over 70 years of age. He lost that battle, but just having waged it resulted in pushing the court back. Eventually the essentials of the New Deal legislation were implemented.

The Obama administration, however, did not open up a fight for vital parts of its plan, even though it is touted as Obama’s signature legislative accomplishment.

Tea Party revival and roots of ultra-right

Illusions abound over the meaning of the latest defeat of the Tea Party faction in Congress. It must be remembered that this defeat is in the context of a revival of these racist reactionaries.

The Tea Party first emerged in 2010 with financing from right-wing billionaires to challenge the health care plan, taxes on business, cap-and-trade legislation to limit pollution, etc. It was conducted on a racist basis, with vile attacks on the first African-American president. Indeed, the national political conversation in the capitalist media during that entire period was largely about the Tea Party and its agenda.

That lasted until the fall of 2011 and the bold appearance of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Occupations began in New York’s Zuccotti Park and spread to cities from coast to coast. OWS denounced the 1% — more accurately, the super-rich capitalist ruling class. Occupy claimed to represent the 99%.

These bold occupations quickly shifted the national conversation to the obscene inequality engulfing capitalist society. The actions caught the attention of the workers and the capitalist media and also stimulated sections of the labor move-

ment. It began as a challenge mounted mainly by young adults, a majority white, who were being forced to take low-paying jobs or were shut out of the economy altogether.

Street assemblies set up by OWS were soon crushed in a nationally coordinated police campaign, organized by the Department of Homeland Security, which used violent repression in city after city. Unfortunately, the movement did not have the reserves to sustain the occupations.

With that the Tea Party made a slow comeback, aided by billionaire backers like the Koch brothers.

It is not likely that the reactionary currents represented by the Tea Party and other right-wing forces — the American Heritage Foundation, FreedomWorks, the Olin Foundation, the Bradley Foundation, the Scaife Foundation, etc. — are going to fade away and give up the struggle. On the contrary, in the wake of their congressional setback, they are likely to redouble their efforts.

Ultra-right-wing political reaction has deep roots in U.S. capitalism, going back to genocide against Native peoples, slavery, the defeat of Black Reconstruction and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan.

Since the beginning of the Cold War, the ultra-right currents in the ruling class have surfaced with different identities and shades — from the John Birch Society and Christian Anti-Communist Crusade to the Tea Party. A whole variety of ultra-rightist, racist, anti-women, anti-lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer, anti-immigrant and militarist groups have repeatedly emerged and faded under the impact of mass movements, and then reappeared under different names and using different issues. This is an enduring feature of U.S. capitalism.

It has been reported that the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and other big business organizations are discussing financing “mainstream” reactionary Republican candidates in the 2014 Congressional races to defeat the Tea Party types.

But the truth is, the big capitalists fight the ultra-right only half-heartedly, if at all. First, they share with the ultra-right their anti-labor, racist, bigoted, anti-immigrant, militarist, reactionary sympathies. And second, they do not want to destroy these elements altogether. They would rather keep them in the wings as a battering ram and shock troops to be used against the workers and oppressed when they need them.

An example is Heritage Action, the lobbying and legislative strategy arm of the Heritage Foundation, which shaped the current shutdown strategy and targeted the Affordable Care Act. This foundation was begun by the ultra-rightist and homophobe Joseph Coors, of Coors Beer. But its corporate sponsors include giant multinational corporations such as General Motors, Ford Motors, Procter & Gamble, Chase Manhattan Bank, Dow Chemical, Readers Digest, Mobil Oil, Glaxo Smith-Kline and others. (Right Wing Watch)

These corporations are pillars of the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Roundtable, and other associations of monopoly capital that are now complaining about the ideological rigidity of the Tea Party. Their problem is just that the Tea Party faction got out of control and threatened ruling-class interests for the moment.

Capitalist class and its political establishment

The relationship between the capitalist class and sections of its political establishment can become antagonistic at times. But this antagonism always exists within the framework of a common dedication to enforcing wage slavery and oppression and intensifying capitalist exploitation.

This struggle over the government shutdown and the debt ceiling should be a wakeup call to the workers, the oppressed, the trade unions and the entire progressive and revolutionary political movement.

The present period of realignment, finger pointing and jockeying for position in the 2014 and 2016 elections is just an interlude before the next struggle over how to attack the masses.

The budget negotiations scheduled for Jan. 15, in which the Obama administration is preparing to negotiate debt reduction with the Republicans, hold great danger for the people. Entitlements are going to be on the table, as well as many other vital programs.

The workers’ movement, the communities, the youth and the students, whose lives and futures are at stake, must not be passive observers in this political struggle or place their fate in the hands of the two big business parties.

Every form of organization should be used to mobilize against ruling-class plans for further austerity. Community organizations that are under the gun must organize. There are sparks of militancy in the labor movement, such as the BART strike in San Francisco, the Boston bus drivers’ struggle against the huge transnational Veolia Corp., among transport workers in Detroit and fast-food workers all over the country. These sparks should be taken as a signal by militant trade unionists everywhere to prepare to push back against the coming austerity negotiations in Washington.

Workers Assemblies and Peoples Assemblies are forming around the country and provide an ideal arena to develop mass mobilizations and direct struggles that can unite low-wage workers, organized labor, communities, students and youth.

The people must fight the right and the ultra-right with independent organization and politics. There is no other path to effective resistance. □



Capitalism at a Dead End

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

For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to

www.LowWageCapitalism.com

Available at Amazon and other bookstores.

Solidarity with Boston school bus drivers

Emergency protests held against Veolia

By Tony Murphy
New York

When Veolia Transportation committed an unfair labor practice lockout of 700 school bus drivers in Boston on Oct. 8 and suspended five leaders of Steelworkers Local 8751, the city's corporate media began attacking the union leaders.

Boston newspapers used every name imaginable to slander the leaders of a fighting union known for having some of the highest wages and best benefits for school bus drivers in the U.S.

If these so-called news organizations had any respect for the truth, they would have directed the name calling at Veolia.

All you have to do is Google "Veolia" and "protest" to find hundreds of articles about the company's union-busting reputation, support for Israeli apartheid and environmental catastrophes of all kinds.

Luckily, the union's good reputation extends far beyond Boston, and this weekend saw pro-bus driver emergency picket

lines at Veolia offices in New York, Baltimore and Oakland.

In **New York**, on Oct. 19, in front of Veolia's SourceOne water consulting firm, members of the Peoples Power Assembly and Workers World Party carried signs reading "Reinstate the school bus union five" and "Fight racism, stop Veolia." A representative from Transit Workers Local 100 joined the picket line.

In a YouTube video of the protest, Peoples Power Assembly leader Larry Holmes referred to Veolia's long practice of changing corporate names to hide its hideous reputation: "We're standing outside of one of Veolia's subsidiaries called SourceOne. They think they can hide by being a subsidiary. We're here to tell Veolia that they can run, but they can't hide!"

In **Baltimore**, on Oct. 21, members of the Baltimore Workers Assembly picketed in front of that city's Veolia office, where the company runs a para-transit and cab service. Workers Assembly leader Sharon Black went inside and hand-delivered a letter demanding that Veolia stop its union-busting campaign against the Boston union.

The **Oakland, Calif.**, protest on Oct. 19, in front of Veolia's East Bay Para-Transit office, attracted labor leaders such as Clarence Thomas, member of the executive board of International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 10 and co-chair of the Million Worker March, as well as Dave Welsh, retired postal worker and member of the San Francisco Labor Council. Richmond teacher and union member Judy Greenspan and Workers World correspondent Terri Kay also participated in the picket line, as did a member of the Colombian peoples' organization, Marcha Patriótica, as well as a bus driver from Amalgamated Transit Local 192.

The protest took place across the street from a Bay Area Rapid Transit station in Oakland on the second day of the subway

workers' strike. Almost at that very moment, two BART workers were killed by an automated train operated by management in a tragic and totally preventable accident.

Safety issues are one of the central issues of the strike, along with increased pension and health care contributions.

It's no accident that, for its negotiating team, BART hired Veolia Transportation Vice President John Hock at a cost of \$399,000. Veolia specializes in getting contracts for city services like water, waste management and transportation by promising local governments to "cut costs" through anti-labor and unsafe practices. □



New York City

Oakland

Hands off the School B

Continued from page 1

community in many struggles since the union was founded in 1977 — against poverty, racism and war and in defense of labor's rights — is well known and respected across the region and across the globe.

The Five are collectively responsible for retirement, enforcement of benefits, civil rights on the job, grievance and arbitration processing from the first step of writing through arbitration advocacy, and the first line of defense of the contract on behalf of the rank and file. Veolia's vile and slanderous campaign against the Five is not only a transparent effort to intimidate the local membership, but an open attack designed to break the union.

Ever since Oct. 8, Mayor Menino, BPS officials and the corporate media orchestrated a panic, falsely claiming that a "rogue element" in the local continued to instigate the threat of a wildcat strike.

Then on Oct. 18, Veolia General Manager Alex Roman issued a threatening letter to the entire membership of USW 8751, stating that any worker participating in the union's action called to protest the October Bid the following day would lose seniority rights on their route bid and would be subject to discipline.

On Oct. 19, from 4 a.m. onward, hundreds of workers picketed the gates of the Freeport bus yard to shut down the company's October Bid. The bid is designed to ensure safe on-time routes for the children and accurate pay for the drivers based on seniority, but Local 8751 viewed this bid as fraudulent given Veolia's many violations of the contract.

Despite threats from Veolia, Mayor Menino, BPS officials and the corporate media, the workers stood firm chanting as one, "Veolia, we say no! Union busting's got to go!" They demanded the immediate reinstatement of the five leaders and an immediate stop to any further attacks on the union and its membership. Not a single worker crossed the line to participate in the fake bid.

At 5:30 a.m. on Oct. 19, Charles Clemons, manager of Touch 106.1, Boston's African-American radio station, joined the protest, both expressing solidarity with the drivers' struggle and broadcasting live from the picket line. Clemons commended the union for its history of advocating for community issues, such as the successful campaign to save the Grove Hall Post Office, as well as firmly advocating for the rights of its members.

Labor solidarity contingents from UNITE HERE Local 26; American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees from Harvard University; and striking workers from "Insomnia Cookies" in the Industrial Workers of the

World joined supporters from the Women's Fightback Network and Team Solidarity members from Brockton Teamsters Local 653 at the picket.

Throughout the morning, Veolia management and the director of BPS transportation harassed the workers, both video recording the action. By 11:30 a.m., Veolia conceded defeat by closing and locking the gates. Once again, Local 8751, in solidarity with labor and the community, scored a victory in its campaign for justice!

On the morning of Oct. 21, steward and Team Solidarity leader Georgia Scott voiced the drivers' demands and exposed the company's illegal Oct. 8 lockout on Touch 106.1. This interview was an important step in building support for the School Bus Union 5.

The drivers say they are launching a full-scale campaign addressed to parents and the whole Boston community. Their plans include writing an open letter to the parents; a solidarity meeting hosted by the Committee for Equal Quality Education and the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts; and circulating petitions among and conducting a speaking tour addressed to the clergy, unions and community organizations of Boston.

On Oct. 21, USW International Attorney Alfred Gordon O'Connell filed a thorough 65-page brief in response to the "spurious and unsupportable allegations Veolia Transportation has leveled" against the five union leaders. The brief argues that the workers were engaged in protected activity protesting unfair labor practices as defined by the

Anti-racists s

By Scott Williams
Philadelphia

On Oct. 19, around 200 anti-racist activists, primarily young people, stopped skinheads in their tracks, physically confronting their gathering here in a triumphant show of people's power. Chanting "Racist, sexist, anti-gay, white supremacists go away!" the demonstrators held the line and stopped the racists from finishing their march.

For the seventh year in a row, the white supremacist organization Keystone United gathered for "Leif Erikson Day" on Oct. 19 on the banks of the Schuylkill River in Philadelphia.

The Philadelphia police force, itself a racist organization that consistently reigns terror on people of color, showed where it stood during the march by actively attacking the group of young activists and defending the racists. The cops took special



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

Why we fight for \$15 minimum wage

Continues from page 1

between paying rent or eating, getting medical care or having transportation. Low wages are a huge part of the equation in the growing income gap between the very wealthy and the working class.

For oppressed and women workers, the situation is more abysmal. In many cases, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Black workers make \$10,000 a year less than other workers, while Latinos/as earn \$15,000 below other workers' pay.

Why \$15 an hour?

The organizers of the Oct. 24 protests carefully chose the demand of \$15 an hour because it is the central demand of a new and dynamic movement of underpaid workers who are fighting for economic justice and the right to unionize. This movement has been spearheaded by workers in the fast food industry and at mega-box store chains like Walmart.

These brave workers have staged work actions and strikes over the past year and a half. Their movement is beginning to expand to underpaid workers beyond the big fast food and retail chains.

What is critically needed is classwide solidarity and support from the jobless, higher paid workers, students, community activists and labor unions.

Raising the minimum wage is beneficial to all workers, even the jobless, who have close family and friendship ties with underpaid workers — and who find themselves out of work at the bottom of the ladder. It would also greatly benefit part-time workers.

Organizers chose this demand after interacting with workers during weeks of mass distributions of literature, workers' surveys and feedback from participants at the Sept. 1 Workers Assembly. This demand resounded.

Workers Assemblies

The formation of workers' assemblies has the potential of representing all the workers, employed, underemployed and unemployed, on a classwide basis; in this case, it pertains to the fight of fast food workers.

Assemblies can serve as the support necessary to elevate the call to raise workers' wages into a political demand. Without this kind of support, it becomes very difficult, if not impossible, for these heroic workers to win. A victory would benefit the whole working class.

The writer is a representative of the Baltimore and Maryland "We Deserve Better" Workers Assembly. □



WW PHOTOS: OAKLAND, JUDY GREENSPAN; NYC, BRENDA RYAN

BART strike settled

Management-operated train kills two workers

Bulletin: After a tentative agreement with the unions, workers ended the strike Oct. 22.

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

Oct. 19 — With the strike by the Bay Area Rapid Transit workers in only the second day, two BART workers were killed by a BART train. It was a tragic but totally preventable accident. Resolving safety issues has been high on the two unions' demands from day one of the contract negotiations, but BART management has refused to acknowledge that there were any safety issues. Furthermore, despite union objections, management had begun to conduct some crash courses to train BART management personnel to possibly run trains during the strike!

The strike began Oct. 18 after negotiations broke down on the issue of overall work rules, including safety issues. BART management had refused to budge on these issues or agree to arbitration.

BART management claims the train involved in the accident was running on "automatic mode." Workers World talked to Clarence Thomas, a longtime member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board

and co-chair of the Million Worker March, about his experience in dealing with similar issues at the docks where management has installed automation to run the cranes and other equipment.

"Employers want to use technology to replace the workers," said Thomas. "It's all about production, to the detriment of the workers and the public. You need skilled people to do the job — who don't need to be worried about their wages and benefits."

"The use of technology to cut labor costs and speed up production is a worldwide issue. Someone had to be operating the train initially to put it in automatic mode."

This accident has the potential to materially change the balance of forces in the contract struggle in favor of the workers. An independent labor/community fact-finding investigation needs to be launched to look into this tragedy about who was responsible for the murders. Such an investigation would reveal the criminality of corporate union busting and expose how management's demands to control work rules have created unsafe conditions.

Union solidarity strengthens strike

Another significant force was brought into play the first morning of the strike



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

BART strikers picket maintenance facility at the Port of Oakland, shutting down shipping berths 30-32, with cargo worth millions waiting to be unloaded.

when the Transport Workers Solidarity Committee persuaded members of the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1555 to set up a picket at a BART maintenance site at the Port of Oakland. BART shares an entrance there with some multinational shipping companies, including TraPac, APL, MOL Logistics, and Hyundai Merchant Marine. The TWSC, which includes ILWU members, knew that ILWU members would refuse to cross the picket line.

The BART pickets shut down terminals 30-32. This effective action showed how solidarity between the unions can build pressure on BART management to settle the strike.

WW spoke with three union activists. ATU Local 1555 picket leader Nucion Avent said, "We have a BART facility here at this major hub for international transport, and it just so happens over \$1 million [worth] of merchandise won't be moved."

Maureen O'Connor, ATU 1555 steward and train operator, with 24 years of seniority, said, "[Our picket] line brought solidarity with other unions." She explained, "It's big business. BART doesn't care about the people in the Bay Area. [Its] Board of Directors was elected to look out for things, but instead everything is broken and dirty. We're not asking for anything unreasonable, but BART got dirty, underhanded and nasty."

'BART management caused strike'

After speaking at a joint Service Employees Local 1021 and ATU 1555 rally at the Lake Merritt BART station yesterday, Chris Finn, a member of the bargaining committee and ATU 1555 recording secretary, told WW about how BART put out a proposal that would essentially take away the unions' right to bargain.

"Why is BART management so intent on having a strike?" he asked. Finn described how management "has refused to negotiate. They caused this strike." He complained about a "number of issues introduced at the last minute" and said there were 60 proposed takeaways. Finn said BART management wanted to "implement changes to their working conditions at will."

In the Oct. 19 San Francisco Chronicle, Antoinette Bryant, ATU 1555 president, described how management's offer of a 12 percent raise (3 percent over four years) actually added up to a 1 percent loss, after subtracting the contributions BART management was demanding from the workers for pension and health care benefits. Bryant added that the outstanding work rule issues included the length of the working day and "when overtime kicks in."

BART workers have not had raises since 2009, and gave concessions worth \$100 million to support BART during the last recession. BART has actually projected a \$125 million annual surplus for the next ten years. □

Bus Union 5!

National Labor Relations Act, which was followed by Veolia's illegal lockout. The meticulously detailed brief concludes, "The Company cannot possibly have just cause to discipline the named individuals and must therefore return them to work at once."

The battle of the bid demonstrated once again that Local 8751 members are prepared to fight until they win justice. Their struggle represents an inspiration to workers, not only in Boston but throughout the country.

For more information, see the Team Solidarity website at tinyurl.com/d5tntcg.

Protesters say 'No' to Christopher Columbus

By Benji Pyles
Huntington, W.Va.

An anti-"Columbus Day" demonstration took place on the campus of Marshall University in Huntington, W.Va., on Oct. 14. The event was attended by members of a campus group called "Students for Appalachian Socialism" as well as from Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST). The protesters handed out flyers reading "Columbus Day or Indigenous People's Day? You Decide" as well as informative literature on the genocide carried out by the violent racist Christopher Columbus and the European colonialist forces that followed, as well as their paving the way for the slave trade.

One protest sign included a quote by Columbus where he discussed his plans to kidnap and sell girls as young as 9 and 10 into the sex trade: "A hundred castellanoes (a Spanish coin) are as easily obtained for a woman as for a farm, and ... there are plenty of dealers who go about looking for girls; those from nine to ten (years old) are now in demand."

Columbus was known to engage in and promote rape of the Indigenous Taíno people he encountered upon landing on the island of Hispaniola. The life of slave labor and rape became so unbearable that the Taíno resorted to mass suicide. Pedro de Córdoba wrote to King Ferdinand in 1517: "As a result of the sufferings and hard labor they endured, the Indians choose and

have chosen suicide. Occasionally a hundred have committed mass suicide. The women, exhausted by labor, have shunned conception and childbirth. Many, when pregnant, have taken something to abort and have aborted. Others after delivery have killed their children with their own hands, so as not to leave them in such oppressive slavery." ("Lies My Teacher Told Me," by James W. Loewen, p. 54)

'A whole history people don't know'

The protest was organized by Marshall University political science major Genenahgehneh "Autumn" Lee who is of the Haudenosaunee people and a member of the Six Nations Reserve in Ontario, Can-

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Shut down white supremacists

care to strike young people of color on the front lines of the action. Despite the police presence, the anti-racist youth prevailed.

Fascist movements thrive on the divide-and-conquer tools of the 1% — racism, sexism and anti-lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer bigotry, along with destroying unions and attacking left-wing organizations while suspending all civil liberties. The Tea Party, a movement financed by billionaires, provides fertile ground for recruiting to more hardcore racist, sexist, anti-LGBTQ organizations.

Pro-socialist revolutionaries are continually building a powerful multinational, revolutionary workers' and peoples' movement to replace capitalism and the dictatorship of the rich with socialism. Standing up against fascist organizations, as the courageous activists in Philadelphia did, is a powerful way to unite the working class and the oppressed against their true class enemy — the tiny percentage of billionaire exploiters. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

First Nation protest tells SW Energy to 'Frack off!'

By **Betsey Piette**

Acting on behalf of a U.S. energy company, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police staged a surprise, early morning attack on an encampment of Elsipogtog First Nation (Indigenous) protesters engaged in a prolonged struggle to stop shale gas fracking on Mi'kmaq lands in New Brunswick, Canada.

The encampment was awakened by an RCMP paramilitary force of 200 armed and riot-ready police using rubber bullets, pepper spray, tear gas, taser guns and dogs on Oct. 17. The attackers leveled the camp, injured many elders and arrested 40 activists.

The provincial government claimed the police were unarmed, but videos taken by protesters as well as CBC News photos clearly show RCMP snipers with assault rifles taking aim at protesters.

Blockade to stop fracking

The weeks-long encampment targeted SWN Resources, owned by Houston-based Southwestern Energy, which had been exploring for shale gas deposits in New Brunswick since 2010. Laying claim to all underground mineral and gas rights, the New Brunswick provincial government gave SWN permission to conduct seismic tests to explore 2.5 million acres

of land for potential shale gas extraction by hydraulic fracturing — fracking.

Fracking involves pumping millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals through deep underground horizontal wells to break up shale rock to release natural gas. The chemicals used are known to be toxic and carcinogenic.

The testing, conducted with less than 24-hour notice to residents, involved “thumper” trucks that set off earthquake-like vibrations through the ground. In 2011, repeated protests forced SWN to temporarily halt operations.

When SWN escalated testing activities again in 2013, protesters began blocking their trucks from reaching remote testing sites. After months of direct action, on July 24 the Mi'kma'ki government council issued an eviction notice to SWN.

After negotiating with the Elsipogtog First Nation and the Mi'kmaq Warriors Society, SWN agreed to stop testing in the area. The company planned to resume testing in other areas in September but was stopped by Elsipogtog protesters, who set up the encampment to blockade a lot near Rexton, New Brunswick, where SWN's seismic testing equipment was stored.

Upon establishing the blockade on Sept. 30, Elsipogtog First Nation Chief Aaron Sock announced a sweeping

CANADA



Indigenous woman faces down RCMP.

Mi'kmaq land reclamation in response to Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper's lifting of protective environmental restrictions. “Let it be known to all that we as the chief and council of Elsipogtog are reclaiming all unoccupied reserve lands. We have been instructed by our people that they are ready, willing and able to go out and stake their own claims on all unoccupied lands for their own use and benefit.” (Tworowtimes.com, Oct. 9)

The Elsipogtog encampment grew to around 200 people, which included not only First Nations people but also non-Native Anglophones and Acadians in a coalition many have described as “unprecedented.” Signs attesting to the multinational alliance read: “SWN, Returnez Chez-vous!” [“Go home!”] and “Frack Off!”

Earlier in October, dozens of young First Nations activists left school to join the encampment. Raven Chanelle, who helped organize the student walkout, said: “People need to be more aware that they can change things. It's not up to the government; it's up to the people.” (Wagingnonviolence.org, Oct. 14)

Protesters also blocked coastal Route 134 to draw further attention to their struggle. The road is the site of two historic protests by the Mi'kmaq 15 years earlier that resulted in legal victories protecting their rights to hunt, fish, trap and harvest lumber.

What makes the current coalition so unusual is that during these previous struggles most non-Indigenous communities actively took the government's side. Today, the threat of shale gas drilling in New Brunswick has galvanized these communities to join forces with the First Nations to oppose SWN.

RCMP raid pre-empts attempts to lift injunction

On Oct. 3, claiming that the blockade cost them \$60,000 a day, SWN filed an injunction in Canadian courts to dismantle the encampment, and on Oct. 12 they sought an extension until Oct. 21. Elsipogtog blockaders were due to rebut the extension later in the day on Oct. 17, and

Haitians say:

'Martelly must go, we want

By **G. Dunkel**

Commemorating the assassination of Jean-Jacques Dessalines in 1806, thousands of Haitians marched in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, and in Cap-Haitien on Oct. 17, demanding Michel Martelly resign as president. They were also protesting the dire hunger crisis and the lack of jobs. The political forces and the demonstrations' demands resembled those at the Sept. 30 protests.

Dessalines, a hero of the Haitian revolution and the country's first leader, was assassinated by elements of the new ruling class who vehemently opposed his nationalizations and the democratic distribution of land formerly owned by the

Chief Sock had released a press statement outlining plans to resolve the issues that led to the blockade. It is clear that the early morning raid was designed to preempt any court decision that might have favored the protesters.

Court rulings in Canada have established that Indigenous people must be consulted when their land is considered for development. Indigenous people have won 186 lawsuits since the mid-1980s — a 90 percent success rate. (CBC News, Oct 19)

Former Elsipogtog Chief Susan Levi Peters stated, “According to our understanding we signed an agreement with the Provincial government that guaranteed consultation, and according to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People we have a right to free, prior and informed consent with our community before anyone is to drill or pursue something like shale gas, especially fracking.”

Global solidarity

Immediately following the RCMP raid, Elsipogtog solidarity events spread across Canada. Over 45 anti-fracking actions were organized — many led by Indigenous people blockading major roads and bridges in several Canadian provinces. Non-Natives organized actions as well, chanting slogans such as “Everybody take a stand! No raids on Native land!” There were also demonstrations outside Canadian consulates in New York and Washington.

Solidarity messages came from several pro-Palestinian student groups in Canada, and from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, whose spokesperson, Khalil al-Maqdisi, said, “We are very familiar with these weapons of oppression used by settler colonial regimes in order to colonize our land and dispossess our people. ... These were practiced first by Canada, and by the United States, against the Indigenous people of their land.”

Encouraged by these demonstrations of solidarity and undeterred by the attack and the injunction, Elsipogtog protesters have already re-established a limited encampment, letting traffic pass only on one lane of the highway. They want to make sure SWN does not get a foothold on their land. They vow to continue the struggle to stop shale gas exploration dead in its tracks.

On Oct. 21, Justice George Rideout denied the request by SWN Resources to extend their court injunction to prevent the Elsipogtog protesters from blocking their storage facility. □

Romanians protest Chevron fracking

By **Chris Fry**

“We will not let them drill here if we must die for this,” said Gheorghe Hrum, a Romanian retired forest warden. (AFP, Oct. 10)

Hrum was one of hundreds of Romanian protesters who conducted a convoy and rally at the village of Pungesti at a field where the giant, northern-California-based corporation, Chevron, plans to start fracking operations.

The protesters came in cars, trucks and even horse-drawn carts to confront cops and company goons. “They [Chevron] came with policemen and bodyguards to scare us but all we want is to be left alone, even if we are poor,” said Hrum.

Fracking is the process of extracting natural gas by pumping millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals through deep underground horizontal wells to break up shale rock and release gas. Although oil and gas companies won't disclose what chemicals are used, many have been found to be dangerous carcinogens that contaminate water wells.

A study published by the National Academy of Sciences in 2012 also shows a correlation between fracking and earthquakes. (corpwatch.org)

Opposition to fracking is strong in Europe. On Oct. 9, the European Parliament approved rules forcing energy companies to carry out in-depth environmental audits before drilling. (New York Times, Oct. 9)

France has banned fracking. Bulgaria outlawed fracking after major protests against Chevron's plans to drill in Dobrudja, the most fertile farm region in the country.

Romania is now the hotbed of the struggle against fracking in Europe. Chevron signed secret lease agreements with the Romanian government. Not one dime of royalties goes to local communities or

landowners — all goes to the government and politicians' pockets.

In August 2010, the U.S. Department of State launched its “Global Shale Gas Initiative” to promote the extraction of shale gas in other countries.

The U.S. ambassador to Romania at the time, Mark Gitenstein, is a former lobbyist for Chevron. He is a board member of Fondul Proprietatea, a joint stock company established by the Romanian state that holds shares in all major Romanian oil, gas and power generation companies. (New England Center for Investigative Reporting)

When the Romanian people found out about the fracking lease agreements, they organized massive protests of over 5,000 people at Bârlad, an impoverished town in an area where Chevron planned to begin drilling.

The Romanian Social Liberal Union party (USL) at the time voiced support for a ban on fracking. Yet, when they won elections and took power in 2012, the USL reversed course and now favors giving Chevron a free hand to conduct fracking wherever it wants in Romania.

Prime Minister Victor Ponta instructed his ministers to “go further on the right way, like the United States and not to be influenced by anti-fracking campaigns.”

Chevron's drilling royalties and tax payments to Romania are less than half of what it pays in the U.S. Local Romanian communities get nothing but contaminated water. Corruption among Romanian officials is said to rival that of Saudi Arabia.

Opposition to fracking by the Romanian people remains fierce.

Chevron organized a series of “town hall meetings” to promote fracking. At one of these, armed guards kept most local people out, claiming it was an “invitation-only” event. The next “town hall meeting” nearly ended in riots. (New England Center for Investigative Reporting) □

U.S. in Colombia

Gen. Petraeus distorts reality

By Teresa Gutierrez
New York

Students in New York City are so right on to protest David Petraeus' appointment as a highly paid professor at the City University of New York. Gen. Petraeus, retired from the Army in 2011 after a bloody reign in Iraq and Afghanistan and who was director of the CIA for a year, is a rabid warmonger and absolutely deserves to be thrown out of any educational institution.

On Sept. 24, Petraeus co-authored an article for the Brookings Institute ominously entitled "The Success Story in Colombia." The writers' comments are a good example of how the media in the U.S. turn truth on its head. Petraeus solidly represents the interests of the blood-thirsty Pentagon.

Those interests represent U.S. imperialist aims. In Colombia as in all of the Americas that means destruction, repression and death.

Petraeus et al. wrote: "We are on the right track with Colombia. We need to keep at it to consolidate one of the best stories on the national security front of the 21st century to date."

These words are chilling in light of the real situation in Colombia.

Over 220,000 have died as a result of a bloody civil war, over a million people have been displaced, most of them campesino/as, Indigenous people and Afro-Colombians.

The U.S. free trade agreement with Colombia passed in 2010 will bring the same kind of havoc that NAFTA brought to Mexican workers and farmers.

Therefore, the call by Colombian unions and mass organizations for the Oct. 15 International Day of Solidarity

with the Colombian Peace Process was indeed a welcome development.

Solidarity actions U.S. and worldwide

The week of October 14, solidarity actions with Colombia were held throughout the U.S. and the world. These actions were critical in light of the dire conditions in Colombia. They were vital in letting the Colombian workers know they are not alone and that the solidarity movement in the U.S. is with them.

The Alliance for Global Justice along with the International Action Center and many other organizations answered the call from Colombia and held solidarity actions in several cities throughout the U.S. that week.

The main demands of the actions were to support the Colombian peace process to demand peace with social justice, to highlight the repression against Colombian unionists and demand freedom for Huber Ballesteros, vice president of Fensuagro, the largest agricultural union in Colombia.

Over a month ago, Ballesteros was arrested and charged with "rebellion."

There is a worldwide movement demanding his release and there is deep concern for his safety as Colombia is one of the deadliest places for union activists in the world.

Solidarity events were held in New York City; Philadelphia; Tucson, Ariz.; San Francisco; Boston; and Los Angeles.

The Philadelphia chapter of the International Action Center held a tertulia (open discussion) and presented a video: "Postponed Dreams," a film by Liliy Obando, former political prisoner and human rights coordinator of Fensuagro, that depicts the conditions of Colombia,



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

and a message from Huber Ballesteros directly from prison.

In New York City and in Los Angeles, where there are Colombian consulates, activists submitted a letter to the consuls detailing the issues progressives are concerned with. The delivery of the letters signed by important leaders in the solidarity movement hit a nerve with these representatives of the bloody Colombian government.

In San Francisco, the call was also picked up by the Bay Area Latin America Solidarity Coalition.

In New York, Oct. 15 Ad Hoc Coalition activists dressed up in business attire and were able to get into the consulate, where they asked to meet with the consul about "business in Colombia." That may have moved them to the front of the line, and within minutes the delegation was sitting in a conference room with the consul.

To the consul's surprise, the delegation's "business" was not free trade business, but the business of demanding freedom for Ballesteros and a just peace in Colombia.

A few hours after the delivery of the letter, the delegation put back on their activist clothes and held a spirited and



important press conference and picket in front of the consulate.

The New York City press conference was joined by Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general; George Albro, secretary/treasurer, United Auto Workers Local 2325, and chair, UAW NY Area Community Action Council; Erl Kimmich and Stan Kaster, NYC representatives of the Alliance for Global Justice; Ricardo Prado and Amy Velez of Conscious Colombians in the Diaspora; Michael Kramer, Vets for Peace Chapter 021; Gail Walker, IFCO/Pastors for Peace; and this writer, Teresa Gutierrez, for the IAC.

Those who participated agreed that the day's events in New York and around the U.S. accomplished a great deal: it helped the progressive movement to remember Colombia and boosted its solidarity work with this besieged nation.

Colombians in the diaspora in New York City expressed deep gratitude to the solidarity movement for its efforts on Oct. 15. They vowed to work with everyone to keep up the movement for peace with social justice and the freedom of Huber Ballesteros and all political prisoners in Colombia. □

Protests hit Dominican Republic's expulsion of Haitians

By Rocio Silverino
New York

Imagine waking up to the news that the only country you have ever known has officially rejected you by a 9 to 2 vote.

That is what will potentially happen to hundreds of thousands in the Dominican Republic in the coming year.

The status of Dominicans of Haitian descent (born in the Dominican Republic) has mainly been one of marginalized,

second-class citizenship. But on Sept. 23, the country's Constitutional Court decided, with passage of the TC/0168.13 decision, that even that humiliating classification was not enough. The court ruled that "the children of undocumented migrants, who have been in the Dominican Republic and registered as Dominicans as far back as 1929, cannot have Dominican nationality as their parents are considered to be 'in transit.'"

For more than eight decades, Dominican-born children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Haitian migrants were registered as citizens under "birth-right by soil," or "jus soli." In the last decade several efforts by racist nationalists in the Dominican Republic have attempted to deny citizenship to Dominican-Haitians. That culminated in changing the Constitution in 2010 to discontinue the practice of "jus soli." Now the Constitutional Court ruled to retroactively denationalize an estimated half million Dominican-Haitians.

Activists and civil/religious groups in the Dominican Republic, along with many abroad, are denouncing this move as civil genocide by the racist nationalists in the Dominican government. A public statement issued by the Haitian Students Association states that "the ruling violates several principles, including the following: the due process of law to strip nationality rights from thousands of people with-



In Spanish and Creole, signs read, 'Dominican-Americans have rights; Haitian-Dominicans have the same rights.'

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Republic as a neocolonial state and in championing imperialism.

With the repression faced by immigrants all over the world, including the U.S., many are realizing the gravity of the TC/0168.13 ruling. Nearly 400,000 immigrants were deported from the U.S. in 2011 under the Obama administration. Coalitions are forming within the Dominican-American and Haitian-American communities to denounce this sentence and have the law repealed.

In New York City, within the large Dominican and Haitian communities, the response to this ruling has been outspoken. A Oct. 17 demonstration, conducted in Creole, Spanish and English, denounced the ruling as a violation of human rights. Angel Vicioso from the Dominican community said it was an attempt by "imperialism to divide two poor countries that shared the same island." He later said his citizenship could be challenged because he doesn't have birth certificates of his grandparents.

Weekly protests, on Thursdays, are planned near the Dominican Consulate in Times Square in New York. Also a forum hosted by the Service Employees union 1199 is planned on Nov. 15. It is being organized by the New York Coalition Against TC/0168.13.

G. Dunkel contributed to this report.

food, jobs'

ilies. As the protesters dispersed, police attacked with tear gas and live fire; no casualties were reported in the media.

The protest in Port-au-Prince was called by the Patriotic Force for Respecting the Constitution, which is close to Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party. Starting from Bel Air, a working-class community in the center of the capital, the march wound its way through the poor neighborhoods of La Saline, Cité Soleil and Delmas, where support for Fanmi Lavalas and Aristide is strong.

The demonstration reached Jean-Jacques-Dessalines Square. As marchers approached the Champs de Mars, the site of Haiti's ruined presidential office [it was

Continued on page 10

WORKERS WORLD
editorial

Why capitalists fear abundance

What is the big problem in today's world? Is it scarcity? Not enough food, shelter, clothing and other necessities? Not enough knowledge, science, technology to produce all these things in abundance to satisfy human needs and wants?

That certainly was the problem not that long ago for the vast majority of people on our planet. And we were told that the only economic system able to produce what was needed was capitalism, driven by the market, competition and the profit motive to constantly expand.

And expand it has. The world is an entirely different place than it was 150 years ago, not just in the rich, developed — and imperialist — countries, but in the areas that Europe, the U.S. and Japan conquered in the 19th and 20th centuries, both through direct invasion and through wars among themselves to redivide the world. The resource-rich areas of Africa, Asia and Latin America were first milked as outright colonies. Since decolonization, their labor and resources continue to be exploited by the transnational banks and corporations through neocolonial plunder.

During this whole period, the dominant colonial and imperialist powers did everything they could to suppress scientific and economic development in the rest of the world. Railroads were built and electric power installed in the colonies only to bring ore and other raw products to ports for export while the people lived in misery.

Schools were allowed only to train workers for menial jobs. For example, when Indonesia finally gained its independence after 350 years of Dutch colonial rule, only 100 Indonesian doctors and 10 Indonesian agricultural experts existed in a country of 100 million people.

Today, however, the genie has escaped from the bottle, and the scientific-technological revolution, although still primarily in the hands of the imperialists, holds the promise of lifting the entire world's population out of poverty and underdevelopment.

China alone, in the last 10 years, has developed huge areas of its interior and officially raised 300 million people out of poverty, showing that this can indeed be done, much more quickly than expected, when development is centrally planned and the infrastructure belongs to the state, not to private capital.

Does this make the future rosy for the world?

Only in the sense that the scientific-technological revolution is laying the basis for social revolutions. Development for the people can only be assured by breaking the grip that the small, super-rich class of capitalist owners has over the vast productive means built up by the workers of the world. For as long as capitalism continues to polarize the planet between paupers and billionaires, the promise of a better life is unattainable for billions of people.

How do the capitalists themselves see all this? One of them, a Wall Street investment banker named

Daniel Alpert, recently summarized his views in an op-ed called "The Rut We Can't Get Out Of." (New York Times, Sept. 30)

Abundance or 'oversupply'?

According to Alpert, the real problem is not what was being talked about in September: the impending government shutdown or the default that might result from the budget impasse. He says that what is really holding back the global economy is abundance: "We are in an age of global oversupply: an oversupply of global labor (hence high underemployment); an oversupply of global productive capacity (hence ultra-low inflation); and an oversupply of global capital (hence low interest rates)."

Alpert is a capitalist banker, but one who wants the government to intervene and get the economy going by creating jobs. His view runs counter, for now, to what has prevailed on Wall Street in this era of budget cuts, layoffs and austerity. In effect, he is advocating a New Deal, the Keynesian approach to a capitalist crisis of overproduction. Otherwise, he sees stagnation ahead: "the rut we can't get out of." His advice is aimed at others in his class. His goal is to preserve their control of the world's capital.

What about the workers? Don't we want the government to fund jobs? Of course we do. So many popular slogans — "Money for schools, not for jails," "Health care for all" — expose how little the government allocates to basic services and how much it spends on war and repression. With the vast sums in the U.S. budget, the talents of millions could be employed or redeployed to help people and the environment.

But that won't solve the basic contradictions of capitalism. It didn't do it in the 1930s, when the market crashed again in 1937, even after the New Deal took effect. Only the awful destruction of World War II, which got rid of so much of the world's "oversupply" of workers, productive capacity and capital, gave the capitalist system a new lease on life.

An abundance of labor and productive capacity is a prescription for unimaginable disaster under capitalism.

Under genuine socialism, whose aim is to abolish capitalist ownership and class divisions, it is the means to realize the promise of scientific and technological development: a better life for all. □

Haitians protest

Continued from page 9

devastated in the 2010 earthquake), it was met by a strong force of Haitian SWAT teams and the United Nation's Minustah cops. Although police forces broke up the protest with tear gas and live fire, the press didn't report any casualties.

By marching on the anniversary of Dessalines' assassination, the demonstrators added a certain sharpness to their demand for the removal of Martelly from the presidency. □



WW PHOTO: SEKOU PARKER

Anti-war delegates expose lies about Syria

Workers World Los Angeles Bureau

The Arab Americans for Syria and the International Action Center held an "Eyewitness Syria" forum that was filled to capacity Oct. 19 at the Glendale Public Library auditorium in Los Angeles. Former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark was the featured speaker, along with panelists Johnny Achi, representing the Arab Americans for Syria; Dedon Kamathi, of the All-African Peoples Revolutionary Party; and John Parker, IAC West Coast coordinator.

Clark and the three panelists recently returned from a fact-finding mission to Syria to counter the lies used as a pretext for U.S. bombing and mass slaughter against that sovereign country. Former Congressperson Cynthia McKinney and IAC Co-coordinator Sara Flounders were also on the peace delegation.

Clark painted a compelling picture of what Syria under U.S. domination would look like. He related the many contributions Syria has made in providing resources for victims of past U.S. wars, especially against Iraq.

Panelists shared their experiences, highlighting the devastation caused by the U.S.-led so-called "rebels" and fanatical religious forces, determined to end Syria as a secular and sovereign country. Parker and the others stressed the tremendous spirit of resistance displayed by youth on Mount Qasioun, putting their bodies in harm's way to protect Syrian communication towers from U.S. or Israeli bombs, and by hospitalized victims of sniper attacks.

The peace delegates talked with the injured soldiers and community volunteers who have organized armed resistance against the "rebels." The Syrians have converted schools into housing and health care centers that are dedicated to educating and keeping children safe when rebel forces violently uproot their communities and kidnap their parents and siblings.

Achi reviewed the history of Syria and explained the beginning of the recent conflict, countering the story given by the corporate media to justify U.S. war. He exposed the hijacking of peaceful opposition by the paid mercenaries who used extreme violence to draw the government into war.

Kamathi told of Syria's role in keeping the region from U.S. and Israeli domination. Kamathi, who has a program on KPFK, Pacifica's Los Angeles radio station, criticized the sometimes progressive media that parrot U.S. lies and help facilitate U.S. wars against Libya and Syria.

A small grouping supporting the so-called "rebels" tried to disrupt the forum but were quickly silenced by the crowd. Their questions were answered by the panel during the question-and-answer period. Some waved the mercenaries' flag, which was the old flag of Syria under French domination. Responding to the audience's anger at that flag, Parker compared it to the Confederate flag, which is a symbol of the enslavement and lynching of African people. He stressed that the old flag represented an imperialist country, which had slaughtered thousands of children. □

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News from Latin America

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

BRAZIL

Popular protests confront Brazil's government for the second time this year.

On Oct. 17, members of La Via Campesina and the United Federation of Oil Workers (FUP) occupied the Ministry of Mines and Energy in the capital, Brasilia, in response to the call for an indefinite strike by the FUP against the auction of Libra, the largest oil reserve discovered off the coast of Brazil. "Its reserves are estimated at 12 billion barrels of oil, 70 percent of the country's current reserves." (Telesur)

The FUP is composed of 14 unions, including the workers at the state oil company, Petrobras, and the strike was approved by regional unions that met in assemblies in 27 states. The FUP points out that the Libra auction constitutes handing this wealth over to foreign companies and is a form of privatization, threatening the country's sovereignty. They also affirm that Petrobras has the ability to exploit this oilfield without the need for foreign companies.

This auction takes place under a new government policy called "model of distribution or division of production" that replaces the model of "concessions" and ensures minimum participation of 30



Striking Brazilian oil industry workers protest the auction of Libra oil field in Sao Paulo, Brazil on Oct.17.

percent in Petrobras.

Since the day before, on Oct. 16, the union began to mobilize, paralyzing refineries and blocking terminals and platforms in several provinces. Although there was an attempt by the national government to approach the FUP for talks, to date there was no sign of the government's intention to suspend the auction, which was held on Oct. 21 at Windsor Hotel, a luxury hotel in Rio de Janeiro. The government deployed heavily armed security forces in the vicinity of the hotel, with a total of 1,100 troops, including members of the Army, Navy, Federal and Rio Police, supported by ground vehicles and a helicopter.

Social and student movements joined this national protest.

VENEZUELA

Six months after his election as president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro has intensified use of his model — "Government in the Streets" — to try to solve the most pressing problems in society, including rooting out corruption and stopping economic warfare. The opposition, largely funded by the U.S. government, has launched a wave of activities creating shortages of essential products, with the goal of fostering unrest in the population and splitting the people from the Bolivarian government.

On Oct. 8 in response to this attack, President Maduro called on the National Assembly to approve an Enabling Law that would allow him to take urgent and precise action against these attacks. A week later, the assembly appointed a special committee to review and discuss the law.

In a country where 70 percent of the gross domestic product is in the hands of big economic groups, there needs to be a decisive war against capitalism. In one of his speeches on the situation, Maduro said: "We still cannot talk about socialism if wealth remains in their hands." (VTV)

For this tough battle, President Maduro has called on the people to be an active part of this process to promote the country's economic stability. Already some of the measures against corruption, even before the approval and enactment of the Enabling Act, which has been heavily criticized by the opposition, have borne some fruit.

Hoarders have already been arrested in different parts of the country as a result of the actions of the audit staff of the National Cost and Price Authority (Sundecop) and the Institute for the Defense of People's Access to Goods and Services (Indepabis). These agencies will employ 1,000 women to advance the audit, said Dulce Medina, the deputy minister of the Ministry of Socioeconomic Strategy for Women and Gender Equality.

"We have continued the work of our Commander [Hugo Chavez], to Protect the People with the Government of Street heading towards Socialism." "Our goal, after the social advances of the Revolution, is Zero Poverty by 2019, despite the bourgeois sabotage; with our people, we will win!" (Twitter @ NicolasMaduro) □

U.S., France step up intervention in Africa

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

U.S. military operations on Oct. 5 in Libya and Somalia were neither isolated events nor solely prompted by the siege at Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi, Kenya, for which the Somali-based Al-Shabaab took responsibility. Since December, the White House has declared that it will intensify its presence in Africa under the guise of waging the "war on terrorism."

Recently, thousands of First Infantry Division troops targeted alleged bases of groups designated "enemies of the state" by the Pentagon and the CIA. Another 100 military operations are scheduled within the next year.

The Pentagon is also transferring U.S. troops from Spain to bases in Italy for use in military strikes in Africa. Some 200 of these troops, called Special-Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force Crisis Response, are on standby for possible

intervention in Libya, where the security situation has deteriorated since the Pentagon-NATO war destroyed Libya's sovereign government two years ago.

These developments are part of the framework established by the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), which was formed in 2008 under the George W. Bush administration and strengthened by Obama's.

Military.com blog reported on Oct. 16, "According to U.S. security specialist David Vine, the Pentagon has spent around \$2 billion ... 'shifting its European center of gravity south from Germany' and transforming Italy 'into a launching pad for future wars in Africa, the Middle East and beyond.'"

This blog noted, "Vine estimates there are now 13,000 U.S. troops in Italy at Sigonella and some 50 other facilities like Vicenza, ... with the 173rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), a rapid response force." The U.S. acknowledges one military base on the African continent,

Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti, which houses 4,000 troops and other personnel, but facilities also exist in several countries in Africa and on its islands.

AFRICOM's official headquarters is in Stuttgart, Germany. Nonetheless, the increase in Pentagon and CIA operations in Africa reveals U.S. goals of continued domination of the continent's mineral and natural resources, particularly oil and natural gas.

France increases presence in CAR

During his Oct. 14-15 visit to the Republic of South Africa, French President Francois Hollande announced that his government will increase its military presence in the mineral-rich Central African Republic.

On March 24, the Seleka rebel movement took control of the CAR capital, Bangui, where they have governed amid increasing instability, with the likelihood that security will deteriorate further. Seleka, under interim-leader Michel Dlotodia, is a majority Muslim coalition of rebel groups. French imperialism is utilizing this factor to justify intervention, claiming the situation will enable so-called Islamic "terrorists" to operate in CAR and throughout the region.

France, the former colonial power in CAR, has repeatedly intervened in its internal affairs, and now has 410 troops stationed there. In early October, France spearheaded passage of U.N. Security Council Resolution 2121, which authorized that an African Union peacekeeping force be sent back to CAR.

South Africa had sent troops to CAR with other forces, ostensibly to safeguard Francois Bozize's government. When the Seleka rebels entered the capital, a fire-fight with South African National Defense Forces killed 13 of Pretoria's troops. South Africa soon withdrew its forces from CAR but pledged to reenter under a broader regional force. In July, the African Union decided to create the new U.N.-approved force — the International Support Mission in Central African Republic.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius visited Bangui Oct. 13 to announce the intervention. Then Hollande visited South Africa and held high-level discussions with President Jacob Zuma. However, it remains to be seen how these arrangements can work, given France's historic record of plunder of Africa.

France invaded Mali in January after Tuareg separatists and Islamic organizations seized northern cities. France's role in Mali was criticized after former AU Commissioner Jean Ping of Gabon couldn't mobilize an Economic Community of West African States peacekeeping force to intervene in Mali.

Thousands of French troops still occupy northern areas of the country, with 1,000 soldiers to remain there into 2014. A recent national election in France attempted to legitimize the French operations, giving Paris the incentive to expand its intervention into its former colonial territories in Africa.

The U.S. had been involved in Mali prior to the military coup of March 2012 when Pentagon-trained Capt. Amadou Sanogo overthrew President Amadou Toumani Touré's civilian government. The U.S. provided material support to the Malian military, but these efforts worsened the security situation in the north of the country. U.S. Air Force planes helped transport French troops and military equipment into Mali during the January invasion.

Washington has also deployed 100 troops into neighboring uranium-rich Niger to establish a drone station there and assist with securing the Areva mining interests controlled by France. Niger, also a former French colony, has been the site of guerrilla operations by Islamic forces opposed to Western interventions there.

Although the U.S. and France claim they are involved in Africa to fight "terrorism," both are imperialist states that have direct interests in CAR, Mali and other countries on the continent. CAR has gold, diamonds and strategic minerals of interest to Western industrialized states. □

Protesters say 'No' to Columbus

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ada. Asked about her motivation for the demonstration, Lee told Workers World: "I feel it's important for people to know the history — the true history — of the U.S., and Columbus Day is just one of the many things that is corrupt in this country. There are other things like the boarding schools that started in the 1800s and went through the 1900s and didn't stop in Canada and the U.S. until the 1970s and 1980s. There is just a whole history that people don't know. They only know what they are taught by the conquerors."

The boarding schools Lee referred to were originally built by Christian missionaries for the indoctrination of Native children into Eurocentric culture. The children were often required to adopt a Western haircut and were forbidden to

speak their Indigenous language or even use their given name.

In 1989, George H.W. Bush stated on behalf of his class about this despicable historical figure, "Christopher Columbus not only opened the door to a New World, but also set an example for us all by showing what monumental feats can be accomplished through perseverance and faith."

Many people wonder, especially after learning the facts, why Columbus Day is still a celebrated federal holiday in the United States. But it is really no surprise that the leading imperialist state in the world commemorates such a figure. After all, Columbus began the colonization of an entire land as well as the slave trade, both of which laid the foundation for the exploitative power of the U.S. capitalist class. □

Raíces políticas del cierre gubernamental y el techo de la deuda

Por Fred Goldstein

Artículos en la prensa capitalista dicen que el gran capital está perdiendo su influencia en el Partido Republicano. Pero esta no es la forma correcta de ver lo que está pasando. El gran capital ha perdido el control de una facción ideológica de la derecha en la Cámara de Representantes que en primer lugar, el mismo gran capital creó.

El gran capital ha pasado cuatro décadas fomentando la ideología de extrema derecha, y las organizaciones, publicaciones y candidatos/as políticos/as para exponer esa ideología. Durante la actual crisis gubernamental (cierre del gobierno/techo de la deuda), estas mismas creaciones hicieron que a los súper ricos les saliera el tiro por la culata.

Mientras la guerra civil en el Partido Republicano se desarrolla entre la facción del ultra – derechista Partido del Té (Tea Party) y la derecha convencional, son los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as quienes sufren. Los cheques de salarios se han detenido, los servicios se han suspendido; la supervisión de la seguridad en los puestos de trabajo y la labor de la Junta Nacional de Relaciones Laborales están paralizadas, la protección del medio ambiente se ha suspendido, y así sucesivamente.

En medio de esta crisis, el gran capital se preocupa sobre todo por los retrasos en los pagos del gobierno de los que depende. Sobre todo, la oligarquía financiera y el gran capital están preocupados por lo que va a pasar con el sistema de ganancias global en caso de que EE.UU. incumpla con los pagos de la deuda y no pague a los tenedores de bonos gubernamentales a tiempo.

Según el Washington Post, el presidente Barack Obama, el secretario del tesoro Jack Lew y la asesora principal de la Casa Blanca, Valerie Jarrett, tuvieron una conferencia telefónica el 11 de octubre con cerca de 150 ejecutivos de empresas quienes les instaron a evitar el incumplimiento. Después de la llamada, Jarrett se reunió con cabilderos de la Cámara de Comercio, la Asociación Nacional de Fabricantes, la Mesa de Servicios Financieros y otros grupos de negocios que representan a compañías aeroespaciales y de tecnología.

Jarrett le pidió a los grupos que “exhortaran a sus empresas miembros a que se comunicaran con los legisladores sobre la urgencia de encontrar una solución negociada”.

El grupo del Partido del Té es tan fanáticamente rígido y tan dedicado a destruir el programa de cupones de alimentos, acabar con cualquier programa de cuidado de la salud, destruir el Seguro Social y el Medicare entre otras cosas, que ha aprovechado la crisis de financiación/techo de la deuda gubernamental para exigir la rendición del Partido Demócrata y el gobierno de Obama a todas sus exigencias.

Sin duda, el gran capital no es enemigo de imponer medidas de austeridad para las masas. Donde difiere del Partido del Té es estrictamente en la cuestión del funcionamiento estable del sistema capitalista de ganancias y evitar un derrumbe financiero.

Como lo puso un periódico durante la crisis del límite de la deuda del 2011: “En la mayoría de las cuestiones económicas, el ala corporativa y el del Partido del Té del Partido Republicano están en sintonía. ... Odian a los sindicatos y a los impuestos progresivos sobre la renta. En casi todas las políticas económicas de importancia – protegiendo los recortes de impuestos para los ricos, privatizando el Seguro Social, oponiéndose a la legislación de límites de emisiones de contaminantes, ampliando la perforación mar adentro, oponiéndose a fuertes leyes laborales a favor de los trabajadores, reduciendo el seguro por desempleo, limitando la autoridad de la Administración de Drogas y Alimentos, y muchas otras – las dos alas del Partido Republicano están de acuerdo”. (Huffington Post, 9 de agosto del 2011)

Los tipos del Partido del Té son tan pro-empresariales que los empresarios los apoyan en las elecciones para favorecer su propia agenda corporativa derechista en el Congreso. Sin embargo, como un representante de la Federación Nacional de Negocios Independientes dijo: “Nosotros los aprobamos en los asuntos de negocios. Nosotros no los aprobamos en la cuestión del límite de la deuda”. (WP, 11 de octubre)

El Manifiesto Powell

Los fanáticos anti-inmigrantes, sexistas, homofóbicos, racistas y anti – sindicales del Partido del Té, crecen en el terreno cultivado por los mismos líderes empresariales que están ahora en el teléfono con Obama y los políticos tratando de que éstos eviten la actual crisis.

En 1971, Lewis Powell Hijo, un poderoso abogado corporativo de entonces y miembro de 11 juntas empresariales, escribió el famoso “Memorando de Powell”, dirigido a la Cámara de Comercio. Más tarde llegó a ser conocido como el “Manifiesto Powell”. Dos meses después, el presidente Richard Nixon lo nombró a la Corte Suprema.

La extensa nota era una dura crítica derechista de lo que Powell consideraba la funesta situación política y social de la sociedad capitalista estadounidense, la cual él – y sus secuaces – consideraba que estaba amenazada. Él estaba escribiendo en medio del movimiento contra la

guerra de Vietnam, la lucha de liberación negra y los movimientos de las mujeres y de la liberación gay.

La fuerza del radicalismo y el liberalismo estaba penetrando las sagradas instituciones del capitalismo, según Powell. Enfatizando los recintos universitarios y los medios de comunicación, Powell atacó la izquierda socialista y comunista, pero hizo hincapié en los sectores más amplios de la sociedad.

Condenó figuras como el abogado anti-racista y pro derechos civiles, William Kunstler, el defensor de los/as consumidores/as Ralph Nader y el profesor marxista Herbert Marcuse como ejemplos de cómo la vida pública estaba siendo dominada por la izquierda.

La nota pedía una contraofensiva organizada a largo plazo. Powell hizo un llamado a la Cámara para que se convirtiera en el centro principal de esta campaña. Abogó por la creación de fundaciones, centros de estudios, juntas de oradores, medios de comunicación de derecha (especialmente programas de televisión), y libros de texto para todos los niveles de la educación a fin de lograr una agenda derechista y pro empresarial en las escuelas. Propuso la publicación de libros, cuadernos y folletos que promovieran el capitalismo y las grandes empresas.

Denunció a los líderes empresariales por ser demasiado pasivos. Advirtió que la izquierda tenía personalidades atractivas e influyentes que eran escritores inteligentes, persuasivos y prolíficos.

Powell pidió a la Cámara establecer un equipo de intelectuales altamente calificados en las ciencias sociales que creyeran en el capitalismo. Los intelectuales debían revisar y modificar los libros de texto para contrarrestar la influencia de los grupos de derechos civiles y sindicales. Debía haber oradores de la más alta aptitud, incluyendo del gran capital.

Powell pidió monitorear programas de televisión como “The Today Show” y “Meet the Press” y ejercer presión sobre las redes noticieras y la Comisión Federal de Comunicaciones para que llevaran ideología derechista a los medios de comunicación.

Diseñó un programa para asumir el control de las maquinarias políticas, influir en los tribunales, movilizar a los accionistas para fines electorales, y muchas otras medidas.

Viniendo desde las altas esferas de la clase dirigente, el manifiesto engendró una prolongada campaña para superar la era progresista y radical que comenzó con el movimiento de derechos civiles en la década de 1950. Ha sido acreditado por conducir al establecimiento de la Fundación Heritage, el Instituto CATO, Ciudadanos por una Economía Sólida (Citizens for a Sound Economy) y muchas otras organizaciones [N. de T.:derechistas] poderosas.

Acabar con la oposición al dominio del capital

Este fue el comienzo de una gran contraofensiva consciente y coordinada por la vanguardia capitalista para revocar la era progresista del movimiento de

derechos civiles, el movimiento sindical y otros movimientos sociales. Su objetivo era aniquilar la oposición militante al dominio sin límites del capital.

La base del grupo actual de fanáticos derechistas fue creada durante décadas de condicionamiento. Todo el contenido del Memorando de Powell se ha hecho realidad a través del tiempo.

Este es el terreno de donde surgió el Partido del Té. Irrumpió en escena en 2010 con una campaña racista contra Barack Obama, utilizando su plan de seguro de salud como arma.

Y ahora esta odiosa creación del gran capital les ha salido como tiro por la culata en la crisis de la deuda. Generaciones de ideología salvaje, racista, anti-obrera y totalmente reaccionaria han sido promovidas por varios demagogos – desde Barry Goldwater y la John Birch Society, hasta la derecha cristiana, Rush Limbaugh y Glenn Beck.

Los fanáticos del Partido del Té son el resultado natural de la reacción capitalista. Están dispuestos a desestabilizar el sistema capitalista para promover sus ataques contra los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as – los mismos ataques que sus mentores corporativos les enseñaron a hacer.

El Partido Republicano ha sido el partido principal de la burguesía desde su fundación antes de la Guerra Civil cuando su énfasis se centraba en oponerse a la esclavitud. Después que ganó el Norte, el partido rápidamente se deshizo de su piel progresista. Abandonó la Reconstrucción Negra y, dejando a las masas afroamericanas del Sur a la merced de la antigua esclavocracia, entró en la era de los señores ladrones y en una guerra abierta contra los sindicatos.

El capitalismo estadounidense se convirtió en imperialismo con su intervención en Asia y América Latina a finales del siglo 19.

Hoy en día, ha entrado en su fase decadente, sin salida, acompañado por la reacción política que se refleja en el Partido Republicano.

Sin duda muchos millonarios y multimillonarios se sienten también muy a gusto en el Partido Demócrata. Y deben sentirse así, dada la naturaleza capitalista e imperialista de ese partido que hace guerra, recorta el presupuesto y promueve las deportaciones.

Pero el Partido del Té nace del Partido Republicano y de la burguesía en su conjunto. Al aislar las denuncias del Partido del Té de una denuncia de la clase capitalista y el capitalismo en su conjunto es mutilar la realidad. Después de haber creado este monstruo, la clase capitalista se enfrenta ahora ante el problema de rescatarlo del borde del caos financiero. Ahora se habla de financiar a opositores a la facción del Partido del Té en el Partido Republicano.

Por otro lado, la clase trabajadora se enfrenta a la tarea de movilizar contra los efectos devastadores del cierre del gobierno, así como impedir que las terribles consecuencias de un posible incumplimiento de la deuda, caiga sobre los hombros de los/as pobres y los/as oprimidos/as.

Goldstein es el autor de “El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida”.



¿Qué se necesita para derrotar al capitalismo en un callejón sin salida?

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