



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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Mandela mourned by millions in South Africa, worldwide

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

South Africa's masses poured into the streets and assigned venues to mourn the death and celebrate the life and struggles of Nelson Rohlhahla Mandela. From formal memorial services in Johannesburg to Mandela's remains lying in state in Pretoria, to community gatherings and those at his residences, all culminating in the state funeral in Qunu, people from inside the country and internationally expressed their grief and appreciation for the heroic contributions of one of the most notable political figures of the 20th and early 21st centuries.

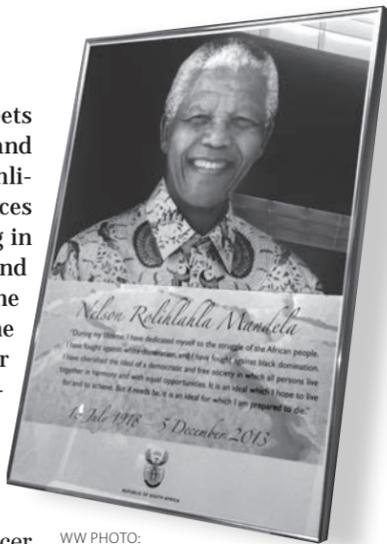
At the official memorial services on Dec. 10, which took place at the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg where the 2010 World Soccer Cup was held, more than 100,000 people gathered inside and around the stadium to express their condolences. There was live streaming of the memorial as well as activities surrounding the stadium.

Current and former heads of state attended, including Cuban President Raúl Castro, President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, along with the second African National Congress President of South Africa Thabo Mbeki, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff, U.S. President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron and others. Heavy rains occurred that morning, forcing many people to abandon their seats and stand under a huge shed at the stadium.

Tens of thousands of others marched and chanted freedom songs recalling the days of the armed and mass struggle that turned the tide in the long struggle to end legalized segregation and the super economic exploitation which characterized the apartheid system. Those who could not get into the stadium marched around the area carrying ANC and South African flags, chanting and praising the heroic struggle of the liberation movement and its leader Nelson Mandela.

President Raúl Castro of Cuba noted that "Cuba, which has African blood in its veins, rose up in the struggle for independence and for the abolition of slavery and, subsequently, has had the privilege of battling and building together with African nations. We shall never forget

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WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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Workers win jobs back at Domino's Pizza

By Workers World New York Bureau

Domino's delivery workers hung tough at the 181st Street pizzeria, and the Washington Heights neighborhood — with many people with roots in the Dominican Republic — rallied to support the struggle to win back their jobs. Finally on Dec. 13, New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman chastised management for illegally dismissing the workers and arranged an agreement that the Domino's franchise would hire back the 25 workers whom it had pushed out Dec. 7.

What might appear as a local class battle had wider repercussions. The confrontation in Washington Heights arose from the Dec. 5 national fast food worker actions. On that day, 20 delivery workers left their job to participate in the workers' rights march in the neighborhood and then another downtown at Foley Square.

These delivery workers are not even paid the national minimum hourly wage of \$7.25, but only \$5.65 an hour. Apparently as punishment for their labor activity, some were given extra shifts in the kitchen, where they couldn't earn tips. When they complained, they were told to like it or leave. Two dozen left, and the boss kept them out when they returned the next day.

It was important to the national drive to organize fast food and other workers at low-paid jobs — for example, in the big retail chains like Walmart —



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

that the popular struggle not permit the bosses to dismiss workers for their legitimate struggle to organize, to win a union and a higher minimum wage. Daily demonstrations began at the pizzeria. Neighborhood people and Dominican political organizations gathered in support, as did some unionists and local political leaders like City Councilperson Ydanis Rodriguez.

Workers World spoke with Larry Holmes, first secretary of Workers World Party and an activist with the People's Power Assembly movement, who attended three of the daily protests at the pizzeria.

"Neighborhood support was growing," said Holmes. "You could see it because each day the demonstration grew bigger. It was too important to this vital national organizing effort of workers in low-wage jobs to allow some boss to break all the labor laws and dismiss workers for exercising

their labor rights.

"For the last few decades the capitalist class around the world has cut wages for all workers. Now many more workers of all ages, even in countries like the United States, are working at jobs that pay less than \$15 an hour. The movement to fight for a \$15 minimum wage, and even more important, to organize workers in the fast food and retail chains that unions used to think were impossible to organize, is now on the order of the day," continued Holmes.

"This week alone, from Domino's in Washington Heights to the workers in Haiti demanding \$11 a day — that's a day — minimum wage, to the strike by Amazon workers in Germany, the workers in these low-wage jobs are fighting back. And we in the working-class movement should do all we can to assist this struggle and make it grow," Holmes concluded. □

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Amazon's technology drives worker speedup

Bulletin – STRIKE IN GERMANY: About 1,000 Amazon Germany workers walked off the job Dec. 16 from the company's distribution centers in Leipzig, Bad Hersfeld and the facility in Graben. The German Verdi Union also sent a delegation to picket at the company's Seattle headquarters that same morning, and workers from the Service Employees and the Teamsters unions joined in solidarity. The article below shows what Amazon workers face in Germany and worldwide.

By G. Dunkel

Amazon goes to great lengths to hide what happens after you use one mouse click to buy an item. This process relies upon tens of thousands of workers who get seconds to pick up an item purchased, seconds more to wrap and send it on its way.

"Cyber Monday" — which comes after "Black Friday" — marks the start of the holiday season. In 2012, Amazon sold 330 items per second on that day. It probably sold even more in 2013, because its total sales on that day this year were reported up by 46.7 percent. (Trefis.com)

Amazon has major operations in Europe, especially the Britain, France and Germany. In Britain last year, Amazon processed 3.5 million orders a day during the holiday season. (The Guardian, Dec. 1)

Amazon gives its pickers a scanner that lists the items ordered and the time it should take to get each one. The items are picked and then put on a cart for the packers, who wrap the items before sending them to the shipping department.

Pickers generally are allowed between 30 and 45 seconds to get each item on their list, in a warehouse that is generally 10 to 15 football fields in area. Their productivity is recorded every 5 minutes and uploaded every 15 minutes to a system in Seattle, Amazon's headquarters. Pickers generally walk between 10 and 15 miles a shift. (Le Monde Diplomatique, December 2013)

During the holiday season that kicks off on "Black Friday," Amazon more than doubles its workforce, hiring temps who are induced to work up to their last bit of strength by the faint promise of a full-time job when the peak is over. If they don't perform, they are fired; the same if they are late, sick or are injured on the job.

Amazon figured out early on that if it stored items wherever it had space in its warehouses, it could use space most effectively and keep its pick-package process running smoothly. (Brad Stone, "The Everything Store")

Adam Littler, a young BBC reporter, took a job as a picker in an Amazon warehouse in an economically depressed area of Wales. Amazon likes to locate its facilities in such spots because it has no trouble finding workers.

"We are machines, we are robots, we plug our scanner in, we're holding it, but we might as well be plugging it into ourselves," he said. (BBC, Nov. 24) A stress expert hired by BBC, professor Michael Marmot, said after looking at film that Littler had secretly recorded, "The characteristics of this type of job, the evidence shows increased risk of mental illness and physical illness." (BBC, Nov. 24)

Ever since the factory management system called Taylorism was developed in the 1880s, and especially since the development of computers in the 1950s and 1960s, workers' output has been systematically measured and monitored. Amazon has taken this process a step further: its workers are now part of the machine that Amazon has built to deliver merchandise.

Workers in France were shocked in the summer of 2012 when, after some of them collapsed in warehouses without fans or air conditioning, they were loaded on pallets so forklifts could take them to the medics. (Le Monde Diplomatique, December 2013) Amazon cleaned up its act after some strikes challenged its working conditions.

The Gawker blog has published emails describing life inside Amazon warehouses in the U.S., where rest and lunch breaks disappear because Amazon's warehouses are so big it can take several minutes of walking to get to and from your work station.

Pennsylvania's Morning Call reported Amazon's temp agency aggressively opposes unemployment compensation for workers who are laid off because of illness. Mother Jones described how Amazon workers can be fired if they burst into tears on the job. ("There's 16 other people who want your job. Why would they keep a person who gets emotional, especially in this economy?")

Jeff Bezos, the head of Amazon, is an investor in the website Business Insider. The online magazine, worried by these published reports, called on Amazon to ease up, saying, "It could take just a few months for its brand name to be turned into a byword for chiseling." (Aug. 3)

Amazon has a thinner operating profit — 1 percent — than Walmart, one of its major competitors, which has a 6 percent margin. But Amazon, according to Wolfram Data, has a revenue of \$746,100 per employee, compared to Walmart's \$214,000 per employee. More generally, Amazon has 14 employees for every \$10 million in sales, while brick-and-mortar stores have 47. (ILSR.org/amazonfacts)

Given that Amazon has become a \$46-billion-a-year company in less than 20 years, and sales from the Internet are growing precipitously, it is highly unlikely Amazon is going to change. It and its online competitors are relying on technology to reduce the workers they need to a minimum and more traditional methods to push the workers to their physical limits and sometimes even further. □

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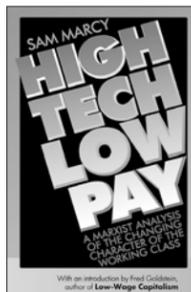
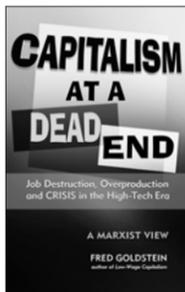
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Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era

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



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'Bipartisan' budget targets workers, poor

By Kathy Durkin

Wall Street: 100; Workers: 0. This is the scorecard for the federal budget, which was based on a proposal submitted by the Budget Conference Committee. The bipartisan body, led by Republican Rep. Paul Ryan and Democratic Sen. Patty Murray, agreed to the austerity budget, which was then authorized overwhelmingly by the House on Dec. 11, and is on its way to the Senate.

The most striking and immediate element of the agreement is that, in another blow to jobless workers, there is no provision to extend federal unemployment benefits. This is devastating news for the 1.3 million jobless workers who will lose their benefits on Dec. 28, and the 3.5 million who are expected to need them next year.

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2013 replaces \$63 billion of the "sequestration" cuts scheduled for 2014 and 2015 in military and nonmilitary programs, which were codified in the Budget Control Act, with other savings measures. Among other provisions, it ups passenger airline fees, increases federal workers' retirement contributions and reduces cost-of-living increases for veterans' pensions. It sets "discretionary" funding for the next two years, but does not end sequestration cutbacks.

Additionally, a number of mandatory sequestration cuts remain in place, including payment reductions to Medicare health providers, which have been extended for two more years, and reductions in federal funding to aid families in crisis.

Who gains? Who loses?

The main question for any progressive person looking at this budget agreement is: Who gains and who loses? It is clear that more hardships are in store for workers and low-income communities, while Wall Street prospers.

What this bill does not provide is immediately noticeable — jobs. Nor does it propose any infrastructure building or repair programs, which would put people back to work.

The bankers, billionaires and millionaires fared quite well. Special tax breaks, like the loophole for offshore corporate profits, were not eliminated or even changed. Low capital gains taxes were not increased.

The Pentagon gets \$20 billion restored in 2014 from sequestration cuts, with another \$2 billion tossed into their coffers. To no one's surprise, however, the Defense Department didn't have to shrink its spending on bombs, drones and military occupations this year, as it received many one-time allocations, despite sequestration.

Funding is slated to increase from sequestration levels in 2013 for such discretionary programs as Head Start, Meals on Wheels and the Women, Infants, Children Nutrition Program. Pre-sequestration, these programs were slated to receive \$506 billion in 2014 and \$520 billion in 2015. However, sequester cuts decreased these to \$469 for the coming year and \$483 billion for the year after.

The current bill would bring discretionary funding up to \$492 billion in 2014 and the year after. However, these amounts are woefully inadequate to fund essential social programs, especially given inflation. To make matters worse, funding would be frozen at the 2015 level in following years.

The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities cautions that it will not be known until mid-January which programs would have any funds restored. The organization asserts that Head Start and housing aid for low-income families were severely hit by sequestration cuts, and should be funding priorities. Unlike the Pentagon, these and other social programs did not receive any one-time allotments in 2013 to make up for the deep cuts.

Egregious attacks on unemployed

This budget bill, which was approved by a House vote of 332 to 94 that included the majority of both Democrats and Republicans, with Tea Party reactionaries and some liberal Democrats voting against it, conspicuously omits extension of long-term unemployment benefits.

Heidi Shierholz, of the Economic Policy Institute, predicts that 12 percent of the labor force will be out of work in 2014 due to the weakness of the job market. She stresses that these workers will need unemployment benefits.

The EUC program was established to aid those who lost jobs during and immediately following the Great Recession. Government downsizing on federal, state and city levels in the last three years has

caused more layoffs, and few jobs are still available. Sequester cuts have led to more job losses and reductions in unemployment benefits by states.

Officially, 7 percent of the workforce seeking work, or 11 million workers, is unemployed, but since millions more have left the labor force or have had to accept part-time jobs, maybe 30 million workers are underemployed or unemployed. Employers are not hiring the long-term unemployed, whose numbers are at a crisis level, the highest since World War II ended.

More cuts for federal workers

In another of the bill's provisions inflicting more pain on the working class, higher pension contributions will be deducted from federal employees' paychecks. The American Federation of Government Employees, which represents 670,000 workers, objects.

Union President J. David Cox stresses, "It is disgraceful for elected officials to think that they can raid a fully funded retirement system to pay down a deficit that federal employees did not create." (Washington Post, Dec. 9)

Further, AFGE Local 374's blog explains, "Federal workers have sacrificed over \$113 billion for deficit reduction since 2011, including a three-year pay freeze, increased pension contributions for newly hired employees, up to eight furlough days caused by sequestration this summer, and a 16-day shutdown this fall."

Moreover, the Murray-Ryan budget does not include funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. All food stamp recipients saw their benefits cut by 13 percent on Nov. 1. Now there are unofficial reports that the Senate Ag-

riculture Committee is set to propose another devastating \$8 billion in cuts.

Although Social Security was not touched this time, the federal retirement program is still endangered. The capitalist class has its sights set on undoing this program, and would like to raid the Social Security Trust Fund, which belongs to the workers.

The very wealthy, who are raking in record profits and whose incomes are soaring, are demanding even more sacrifices by workers and low-income communities. The austerity budget is not just an obsession with reducing budget deficits, but it aims to transfer even more of the workers' hard-won salaries and benefits to the superrich.

These capitalists expect their representatives in Congress to do their bidding — to impose austerity policies while enabling the super rich to continue accumulating gargantuan wealth unencumbered by taxes or restrictive laws or policies.

National Nurses United President Jean Ross, RN gave the following valuable response to this bipartisan debacle on Dec. 11: "Austerity budgeting, reflected in the latest deal, continues the disturbing focus by politicians in both parties in Washington, who should be fighting for jobs at living wages, restoration of the disgraceful cuts in food stamps, health care for all, housing assistance, and other human needs, not simply how to please Wall Street and the banks."

It is time for a united fightback of all progressive forces, labor unions, community and retiree organizations. It is time to go to Washington and insist that Congress stop the horrific attacks on workers — organized and unorganized, the unemployed, and low-income and oppressed communities. □

Rally for school funding



Hundreds of students, teachers and parents marched in Philadelphia on Dec. 9 as part of national protests to demand fair funding for schools. The marchers started at the Philadelphia office of Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett and ended at the offices of Jim Reynolds, CEO of Loop Capital, which made millions of dollars in dirty profits from interest rate swap deals that negatively impacted Philadelphia and other city school districts.

— Report and photo by Joe Piette

Brooklyn workers fight to save hospital



In spite of freezing temperature and strong winds, Long Island College Hospital workers and supporters had a militant noon rally on Dec. 13 across the street from this institution that has faced closing for several years. Leading the rally were members of the New York State Nurses Association whose theme was: "Be thankful for LICH." Meanwhile, they are also conducting a toy drive for children living near the hospital who are still suffering from last year's Hurricane Sandy.

Holding a scroll of enlarged 15,000 signatures on petitions to save the hospital, these healthcare workers chanted: "All we want for Xmas is to save our hospital!" They unscrolled these petitions along the

sidewalk as speakers announced plans to fight back against the closing.

The workers are joining 1199SEIU, United Healthcare Workers East in a rally the morning of Dec. 18 to stop a bankruptcy court from closing Brooklyn's Interfaith Medical Center in the Bedford-Stuyvesant community.

On Dec. 19, NYSNA will take the petitions to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office, where they will rally to fight against letting the 1% give LICH to realtors who are seeking to make a deal with the state.

Many at the rally shared the sentiment that health care is for all, that health care is a right! Save our hospitals!

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden

Justice for Alan Blueford

An interview with his mom

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

Workers World interviewed Jeralynn Blueford, mother of Alan Blueford, on Dec. 13, a year and a half after young Alan was killed by Oakland Police Officer Miguel Masso. Now Blueford and her spouse Adam are coping with the approach of Alan's birthday and another holiday season without him.

Jeralynn Blueford: Coming up on the holidays, and Alan's birthday is five days before Christmas, it's double the pain. A year and a half later, it doesn't get any easier. But with that being said, the fight continues.

Workers World: What are you focused on now?

JB: We're working on the campaign to get [California State Attorney General] Kamala Harris to recognize the importance of reopening this case. Since Alan's death, there are still police shootings. Police brutality is continuing to go on, especially if they turn a blind eye and don't investigate officer-involved shootings.

WW: Didn't Alameda County District Attorney Nancy O'Malley do an investigation?

JB: If you want to call it that; it's not like they investigate. They just sign off, even when there's solid evidence that shows unjustified shooting. When you

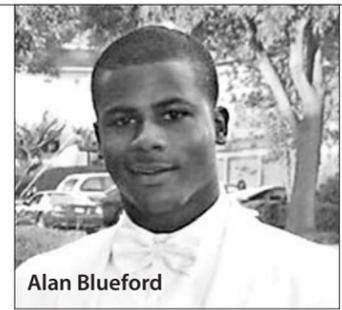
have over 2,000 signatures of people who live in the community who agree that the case should be reopened, it shows that the community is not so happy with O'Malley's investigation. [The district attorney's office] should be concerned as to why people are being shot. Yes, this is why we're taking it to Kamala Harris.

WW: Are other families also making demands on Harris to investigate? The Justice for Alan Blueford Coalition (justice4alanblueford.org) wrote a letter to Harris, asking that she investigate the killing of Alan Blueford by Officer Masso. It was presented to her office during the statewide demonstration against police killings in Sacramento on Oct. 22. All the families dropped roses for their loved ones into a coffin in front of Harris' office, which was a stop on the march route.

JB: I would imagine that other families will join the demand that Kamala Harris investigate the unjust shootings. [The cops] should be tried and convicted all the same. AG Kamala Harris has since refused to reopen the investigation.

It's really difficult as a family, and I imagine for the other families, during this time of year, [especially] with Alan's birthday being Dec. 20. ... He was a person whose job was to serve, working in the cafeteria, serving food; he had a giving heart.

One of the tools we're using during



Alan Blueford

this holiday season is to help heal the community. One of the things we're doing is a toy drive and canned food drive, with all the proceeds to be donated to the Mother Mary Ann Wright Foundation. They're going to be giving away bags of food and toys for the holidays to families in need. [Mother Wright] did a lot of work in the Oakland community, and it's a way to honor her years of service, as well as Alan.

We're getting a very good response. A lot of people are touched by Alan's story and his untimely death and his work at his former school. A lot of people stop by the Alan Blueford Center for Justice on 1st Fridays [a monthly street fair on Telegraph Avenue where ABC4J is located] and tell stories of having worked with him. [His] story has touched a lot of peoples' lives, so people are giving. A lot of people are supporting us because they want us and the community to heal. That's why it's really important. If you want to make a donation, drop it off at 2434 Telegraph, Oakland, CA 94601 between the hours of 12 noon and 6 p.m., Monday through Friday.

For more information, go to facebook.com/ABC4JUSTICE.

For new evidence that wasn't considered in the original district attorney investigation, see the article "New revelations challenge non-prosecution of cop who killed Alan Blueford" at workers.org.

Solidarity rally for Renisha McBride



WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

About 100 people rallied at Rainbow Park in East Oakland on Dec. 14 to show solidarity with the family of Renisha McBride. Nineteen-year-old McBride, who was African-American, was shot and killed Nov. 2 in Dearborn Heights, Mich., a predominantly white suburb of Detroit, when she asked for help in the middle of the night after having been in a car accident.

Speakers at the Oakland rally included families of victims of police killings, such as Dionne Smith, mother of James Rive-

ra, Jr., who was killed by Stockton, Calif., police; Cephus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson, uncle of Oscar Grant III, who was killed by Bay Area Rapid Transit police; and Jeralynn Blueford, mother of Alan Blueford, who was killed by Oakland police. Other Black mothers spoke too, about the fear of their own children simply asking for help and falling victim to racist murder.

After the rally, the group marched through the East Oakland neighborhood, passing out leaflets about Renisha McBride. They then returned to the park for a potluck meal, which was free to members of the community. □

WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

Teachers demand pay raise

Oakland, Calif., teachers and students protested at the Oakland Unified School District meeting on Dec. 11. Their demands included

community involvement in deciding how millions of dollars in new funding, based on a local-control funding formula, is spent. They want it to support low-income English language learners and foster youth, not administrators, consultants and central office programs.



The protesters also demanded the 0.5 percent pay raise guaranteed in the contract signed back in June; lower special education class sizes; and public access to the district building, where teachers were denied access in October.

—Report and photo by Terri Kay

Int'l Revolutionary Day honors Fred Hampton

By Eric Struch
Chicago

Dec. 4 -- Every year on this day, Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. and the Prisoners of Conscience Committee/Black Panther Party Cubs (POCC/BPPC) convene International Revolutionary Day (IRD).

This anniversary memorializes the martyrdom of Chairman Fred Hampton Sr. and Defense Captain Mark Clark at the hands of the Chicago Police Department on Dec. 4, 1969.

The event is a celebration of the life of Chairman Fred Sr., the Illinois state chair of the Black Panther Party and his revolutionary works on the day of his assassination. Each year, Comrade Mother Akua Njeri shares her painful memories of that bloody night when she was eight months pregnant with Chairman Fred Jr.

This year, four times as many people attended as in the past. The crowd of nearly 300 people included many from the West Side Garfield Park and South Side Englewood communities, church organizations, the Nation of Islam and Workers World Party.

L.Y.R.I.C. (Let Your Rhymes Inspire Creativity) Squad brought a whole school bus of youth to the event. The organization is a group of young poets, who also sponsor youth mentoring programs. The organization was founded by Kendria "K-Love" Harris and Teh'Ray "Phenom" Hale. This year, the L.Y.R.I.C. youth acted out a performance based on the Dec. 4 CPD death squad raid that assassinated 21-year-old Chairman Hampton Sr. and 22-year-old Defense Captain Clark. K-Love did a powerful spoken-word piece about revolutionary love and commitment from the perspective of Comrade Mother Akua.

Movie about assassination filmed

The development that attracted such a large crowd to the IRD this year is that a movie is being filmed about the assassination of Chairman Fred. The first scene was being shot right at Ground Zero, 2337 W. Chairman Fred Hampton Way (aka Monroe Street), where the death squad action took place.

Everyone was told to show up there dressed in late-1960s-style clothing for

the filming. The first scene is to be the aftermath of the murder, in which the surviving Panthers gave tours of the apartment that was the site of the massacre to community members and the press.

The tour sought to counter the lies that were spread by then State's Attorney Ed Hanrahan that the massacre was instead a "deadly shootout" between cops and the Panthers.

Everyone was excited to be involved with such an important film project. Yasiin Bey (aka Mos Def) has been cast as Chairman Fred, and Robin Yvette Allen (aka Lady of Rage) has been cast as Comrade Mother Akua (aka Deborah Johnson). Other cast members include the famous Golden Age MCs Rakim Allah and Malik Yusef. A second scene was shot later that evening at the People's Church on the South Side.

As is the case with IRD every year, after the memorial at Ground Zero, everyone reconvened at Wallace's Catfish, a soul food restaurant across the street from The Wall, a beautiful mural of Chairman Fred Sr. by artists in the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective from the Bronx, N.Y.

An afterparty was thrown by L.Y.R.I.C. Squad, where people were able to meet members of the cast. The event was hosted by K-Love and Phenom and featured performances by L.Y.R.I.C. Squad members and DJ Monty.

Much of POCC/BPPC's activity consists of bringing the revolutionary proletarian politics of the Black Panther Party to a new generation of Black youth. An important part of that work is to avoid any misrepresentation of what the party stood for.

A former political prisoner who spent eight years in prison on a frame-up charge, Chairman Fred Jr. stated: "A lot of times when we commemorate such forces, especially revolutionary forces, there's an attempt to do it in an abstract type of way and water [the politics] down. We see it in the cases of Malcolm X or Marcus Garvey, or any of the forces of that caliber. Some of the same forces that had a disdain for, or went against, these forces, we see these people as representing them and trying to change what they represented. And so at this stage in the game, truths are being called out." □

Civil rights for people with disabilities

By Joyce Chediak

This article is based on a talk given by Chediak in New York City at the 2013 Workers World national conference on Nov. 17.

I am here to announce to you the recent formation of a caucus of people in WWP with disabilities, and to speak as its representative. I am a person with disabilities: I am hearing-impaired and dyslexic.

Civil rights for people with disabilities is a working-class issue. Our class suffers the greatest number of work-related disabilities from difficult and dangerous jobs. Workers also fight and die in imperialist wars they have no interest in and return home without limbs, with brain injuries, with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

The issue of rights for people with disabilities profoundly touches every community and political constituency we work with. Women and children with disabilities are more vulnerable to assault and sexual abuse. A great percentage of the homeless population is people with disabilities.

In the “stop and frisk” national climate, African-American, Latino and Latina and other people of color with disabilities are more likely to be seriously assaulted or killed by police than those without disabilities. Students with disabilities are disproportionately tracked into the school-to-prisons pipeline. The U.S. institution containing the greatest number of people with disabilities is the prison system.

The waves of federal, state and municipal cutbacks fall heavily on people with disabilities, regarding health care, housing and the right to access. The cuts are eroding measures gained via the Americans with Disabilities Act, won by huge struggles in the 1980s.

People with disabilities are most likely to be paid less. In fact, the 1938 Minimum Wage Act, which many in the progressive movement are using to call for raising the minimum to \$15 an hour, actually excludes people with disabilities. The federal government explicitly permits, and gives contracts to, companies that employ people with disabilities at subminimum wages in special and segregated workplaces. Today, the National Federation of the Blind is waging a struggle for a livable wage against Goodwill Industries, which pays workers with disabilities as little as 22 cents an hour.



Joyce Chediak

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

In response to these assaults, people with disabilities are taking to the streets. Veterans are demanding recognition of, and treatment for, PTSD and brain trauma. People with autism are battling discrimination and stigma. People with mobility impairments are demanding access. Workers with disabilities are fighting for a living wage and inclusion in the Minimum Wage Act.

‘Disability’ is a political issue

Why a caucus of people with disabilities in a revolutionary party? While society generally sees “disabilities” as a medical or physical question, we see it as a social and political one best expressed by disabled rights activists in the 1970s and 1980s: “Disability is a social condition of discrimination and unmerited stigma, which needlessly harms and restricts the lives of those with disabilities and results in economic disparities, social isolation and oppression.” (“A Disability History of the United States” by Kim E. Nielsen)

What the WWP caucus does

We have formed a caucus because we want to be part of these struggles for full

Two-DVD set

Disability rights and class struggle

A unique compilation. Speakers view civil rights for people with disabilities through the prism of Marxism and in the context of class society. Topics include: psychiatry and capitalism; an eyewitness account of disability rights in socialist Cuba; autism and the class struggle; perspectives and strategies for disabled revolution; veterans with disabilities

civil rights for all people with disabilities and against the discrimination, stigma, economic disparities, isolation and oppression that currently exist. We also want to strongly support and assert, where needed, the authority and opportunity of people with disabilities to be spokespersons for their own individual condition and disability. The capitalist system obstructs and disregards this voice at every turn.

As part of a party of workers and oppressed people, we also want to explain why the oppression and exploitation of people with disabilities is rooted in the capitalist system. We have explored this and other political questions in two forums marking the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Our members have given eyewitness reports on how in Cuba, people with disabilities run their own institutions and are supported and encouraged by the government. A caucus member with decades of struggle in the disabled liberation and independent living movement has discussed “Perspectives and Strategies for Disabled Liberation.” A Vietnam veteran has spoken on “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder.” Another member explained why we need to fight laws scapegoating “The Mentally Ill” for violence in capitalist society.

We have reviewed highlights and lessons of the disabled civil rights movement. We have described how the tool of Marxism contributes to understanding the oppression inflicted upon people with disabilities in class society. We have exposed the warehousing of people with mental and emotional disabilities in the racist prison system. These talks are now available for viewing in a two-DVD set entitled “Disabilities and Class Struggle.”

and post-traumatic stress disorder; and warehousing people with disabilities in a racist prison system.

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The caucus also wants to help broaden consciousness in WWP, in the political movement and in our class on the importance of this struggle for civil rights for people with disabilities. We have formulated a disability etiquette sheet to keep ourselves and others up-to-date on sensitivities concerning people with different disabilities. We are planning to translate this into Spanish and other languages. We ask for those who struggle for a livable wage to amend their demands to reflect “a livable wage for all workers, with and without disabilities.”

We strive to make WW meetings and forums accessible and inviting to people with disabilities, who need to know they are wanted in the struggle to build socialism. We are here for consultation on how best to do this, and expect to be listened to respectfully if we initiate such discussions.

Building solidarity, emphasizing abilities

Bourgeois society creates a false hierarchy of disabilities, then presumes to judge which people with disabilities are “worthy” of having their needs met, or having enough money to live on, and which are not. At the same time, ruling-class culture stigmatizes and shames all people with disabilities. The WW caucus of people with disabilities, which includes people with very different issues and needs, does not judge one person’s disability as against another. Instead, we strive to be highly respectful of, to learn from, and to build solidarity with each other. Placing solidarity high on our agenda is consistent with our membership in a revolutionary party that seeks to unite a diverse working class.

The caucus has taken as its own the slogan “From each according to our abilities to each according to our needs.” People here will surely recognize it as a variation of words Karl Marx used to describe social relations in an advanced stage of classless society, communism.

We use this slogan because we have found that to many people with disabilities this slogan is mass, immediate and speaks viscerally to the need for justice in their here-and-now lives. For those of us with disabilities, the most important thing about us is our abilities. We feel we have a huge amount to contribute and want the means to do so. We fight for our right to have our needs met so that we can make that contribution — to the political movement and to society as a whole. □

Demonstrators demand freedom for Nestora Salgado

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Demonstrators demanded freedom for Nestora Salgado, an Indigenous Mexican leader, at a protest at the Mexican Consulate in Seattle on Dec. 10, Human Rights Day. Demonstrations were held around the United States and actions took place in Mexico on that day.

Since Aug. 21 of this year, Salgado has been imprisoned along with other activists from her hometown of Olinalá, Mexico, in the state of Guerrero. Salgado was arrested for her role as a leader of an Indigenous police force which defended people in Olinalá from violent attacks. She is one of 14 people arrested and jailed in the local self-defense effort.

Salgado is also a U.S. citizen and a Seattle-area resident for more than 20 years.

She has made numerous material aid trips to Olinalá. The Indigenous community police force which she leads was responding to threats in Olinalá from corrupt officials and drug runners. Under the Mexican Constitution and Guerrero state law, Indigenous communities have the right to form their own police forces.

During the time Salgado was involved in community policing, there was a 90 percent drop in the crime rate. In performing her duties as police coordinator of Olinalá, she was arrested for kidnapping in the arrest of the local sheriff. The sheriff was accused of tampering with evidence after a double assassination.

Salgado was transported from her home some 2,000 miles to a high-security prison called El Rincón. There



Nestora Salgado

were big protests in Olinalá against this action, but the town was quickly flooded with over 1,000 federal troops and state police, who are preventing further demonstrations from taking place.

Since Salgado’s arrest, four human rights defenders have been assassinated in the state of Guerrero. Forty community police members have been detained this year in Guerrero; twelve, including Salgado, remain in state custody. Salga-

do has been confined to her cell 24 hours a day and been denied her badly needed medications and exercise.

At the Seattle demonstration Salgado’s spouse, José Luis Ávila, and daughter, Grisela Rodríguez, spoke out strongly for her freedom. Her lawyer, Thomas Antkowiak, announced an appeal to the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention for urgent action on Salgado’s behalf.

The demonstration was called by Libertad para Nestora/Freedom for Nestora — Seattle Committee. Leading organizers were Salgado’s family and the Freedom Socialist Party, with many endorsers across the U.S.

Dec. 10 actions for Salgado were also held in Mexico, the Dominican Republic and Australia. □

President Raúl Castro:

'Mandela is an unsurpassable example for Latin America and the Caribbean'



President Raúl Castro at the Mandela memorial in Johannesburg, Dec. 10.

We pay tribute to Nelson Mandela, who is recognized as the supreme symbol of dignity and unyielding dedication to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and justice; as a prophet of unity, reconciliation and peace.

Together with his comrades in struggle, he led his people in the battle against apartheid, in order to open the way to a new, nonracial South Africa, united in the search for happiness, equality and the

well-being of all its sons and daughters, and to overcome the consequences of colonialism, slavery and racial segregation.

Mandela is an unsurpassable example for Latin America and the Caribbean, which are advancing toward unity and integration to the benefit of their peoples, respectful of their diversity, with the conviction that dialogue and cooperation are the way forward for the solution of differences and civilized cohabitation

among those who think differently.

Cuba, which has African blood in its veins, rose up in the struggle for independence and for the abolition of slavery and, subsequently, has had the privilege of battling and building together with African nations.

We shall never forget Mandela's moving tribute to our common struggle when he visited us on July 26, 1991, and stated, "The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa."

A symbol of the sisterhood between Africans and Cubans, I recall his close friendship with Fidel Castro, who affirmed: "Nelson Mandela will not go down in history for the 27 consecutive years he spent incarcerated without ever renouncing his ideas; he will go down in history because he was able to expunge from his soul all the poison that such an unjust punishment could have created; for the generosity and wisdom with which, at the hour of the already uncontrollable victory, he was able to so brilliantly lead his self-sacrificing people, knowing that the new South Africa could never be constructed on the foundations of hatred and vengeance."

Eternal honor and glory to Nelson Mandela and the heroic people of South Africa! □

Taken from a speech given by Army Gen. Raúl Castro Ruz, president of the Councils of State and Ministers, at the funeral honors for the historic leader of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, in Johannesburg, Dec. 10, 2013, Year 55 of the Revolution. The entire talk can be found at granma.cu

Cuban Five, three of whom fought in Africa for liberation: Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González are U.S. political prisoners. René González has been released.

'Mandela, sanitized'

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Taken from a Dec. 8 audio column recorded by political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal on prisonradio.org.

He was born Rolihlahla in July of 1918 in a nation of which he was not truly a citizen; into a country called the Union of South Africa, a part of the British Empire.

The world would come to know him as Nelson, a name given him by a grade school teacher. Nelson Mandela.

At long last after 95 years of life, Mandela has returned to his ancestors.

Between birth and death he has blazed an amazing life, of love and revolution, of struggle and resistance, of prison and isolation, of freedom and now death.

At his passing, American media have painted him as a kind of African "civil rights" leader; perhaps "Martin Luther King the Fifth" with a halo of white hair. An American president issued a statement lamenting his "wrongful conviction."

In fact, it is dangerously misleading to make of Mandela a "King" or a "Malcolm." He was neither.

He was, himself, an African lawyer who used every tool available to him — legal when he could, illegal when he must — to resist a system that crushed African lives like peanut shells. He was a revolutionary, an armed guerrilla and the commander of a guerrilla army — Umkhonto we Sizwe (or Spear of the Nation) of the African National Congress.

The South African government after 1948 became an instrument of the terror and torture that only a paranoid people like the South African Boers could muster. Under the banner of the National Party, the government erected the odious barrier of apartheid (Afrikaans for "apart-ness"), which took white supremacy and Black subordination to truly insane and dehumanizing levels.

South Africa became the embodiment of legalized white racism and blindingly brutal oppression designed, principally, to extract and exploit Black labor at the cheapest price. At every opportunity, it strove to sow humiliation, pain and violence in African lives. It corrupted every facet of African life, economy, education, health, jobs and family, to white ends.

When Dr. Nelson Mandela was thrown into prison, it was after being convicted of sabotage (as part of his paramilitary efforts), and he was sentenced to life.

The growing anti-apartheid movement and the subsequent divestment campaign, which forced Western institutions to disinvest in the apartheid regime, convinced the leading sectors of white South

African power to take to the negotiating table and to transform their politics.

They did so with one important proviso: They turned the political machinery over to the ANC and they removed the economy from political control.

Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of post-colonial Ghana, once said that "political independence without economic independence is but an illusion." Nkrumah's adage was proven true after South African independence, which opened the door to elected office, but closed the door to South Africa's vast wealth by putting it in private hands.

Dr. Nelson Mandela was hired to consolidate this state of affairs and today, South Africa is one of the most economically unequal nations on earth exceeded, perhaps, only by that of the United States.

That said, what Mandela did was lead a nation known as an international pariah and transform it into one of the world's most respected nations. He closed the door of history on a country that seemed to be seeking to succeed the Nazis in its racism and hatred.

A child born to the royal house of an African tribe — in a land claimed by the British Empire, in a nation where race and complexion entitled one to privilege or oppression — opened the door to a new nation by leaving the political prison house to enter the presidency.

This is the stuff of high drama, of dreams made real, of epic losses, of aching loneliness, of doing the right thing at the right time.

My brother-in-law and American diplomat once told me that South Africa was the most beautiful country he had ever seen, but that its racist politics and practices made it one of the ugliest.

Dr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela and the vast, global anti-apartheid movement, helped bring its beauty back. Mandela inspired millions, both in and out of South Africa. He inspired millions of whites and Europeans by what they called "reconciliation," but what they meant was that he and his government allowed them to keep their ill-gotten gains and lands.

Africans received pride and political domination; whites received wealth, land and economic privilege. Once again, Blacks paid the price for social peace and



FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

political compromise.

Apartheid may be gone but privilege ain't. To millions of South Africans the long walk to freedom still ain't over.

Mandela mourned by millions in South Africa, worldwide

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Mandela's moving tribute to our common struggle when he visited us on July 26, 1991, and stated, "The Cuban people hold a special place in the hearts of the people of Africa." (Read more of Raúl Castro's talk in this issue and online.)

Raúl Castro received a roaring round of applause in the aftermath of his address.

Also gaining a warm welcome was Republic of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, who along with the Cuban leadership is often demonized by the governments and corporate media outlets of the Western imperialist states.

Upon arriving back in Zimbabwe after attending the memorial, Mugabe told the Zimbabwe Herald newspaper regarding an alleged feud with Mandela, "I don't know about any feud. If anything, there was an alliance. We worked very well with him when he came out of prison. We gave him support." (Dec. 11)

Mugabe continued, "We established the principle of national reconciliation [at independence in 1980], they took it over and used it as a basis to create what they have now as the Rainbow Nation. There was no feud, where was the feud, what feud?"

Mass outpouring in Pretoria, Eastern Cape & the world

On Dec. 11, people began to line up to view Mandela's body lying in state at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) reported that approximately 100,000 viewed the coffin during the daytime hours for three days.

The procession was led by Mandela's widow, Graça Machel, and his former spouse, Winnie Mandela.

On Dec. 14, Mandela was taken on a jet by today's top military officials of the South African National Defense Forces, most of whom are veterans of Umkhonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), the armed-wing of the ANC founded by Mandela in 1961. The body was flown to the city of Umtata in the Eastern Cape where a military-led convoy drove to Qunu, the area where Mandela grew up during the 1920s and 1930s.

Thousands lined the streets and roads of the cities, towns and villages to get a glimpse of the convoy. The ANC government had constructed a marquee near the burial grounds where the party held its own memorial service on Dec. 14.

An overnight vigil was then held, and the following morning the official state funeral took place. The ceremony was attended by 4,500 people.

Speeches and tributes were made by current President Jacob Zuma and former President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia, where the ANC was based for many years in the capital of Lusaka. Kaunda recalled his efforts to convince the successive colonial white-settler leaders to release Mandela and other political prisoners.

United Republic of Tanzania President Jakaya Kikwete recalled Mandela and the ANC's close connection with this East African state, which was the base of numerous national liberation movements in Southern Africa. Under former President Julius Nyerere, Tanzania devoted considerable resources in training guerrillas and political cadres of the ANC and other organizations.

The death of the former guerrilla leader and political prisoner turned president was covered extensively through media

U.S. ACTIVISTS HONOR MANDELA

PHILADELPHIA

Godfrey Sithole, Philadelphia area representative of the African National Congress, led many local anti-apartheid era activists who came despite snowy weather on Dec. 14 to celebrate President Nelson Mandela's life. Particular attention was paid to Cuba's solidarity with the struggles of South Africa's masses. The highlight of the event was a video of Madiba's speech in Philadelphia in 1994, in which he thanked longtime supporters of the struggle to free South Africa, in contrast to those "who became our friends just yesterday."

iViva Mandela, Viva!

—Photo and caption by Joe Piette



Philadelphia

HOUSTON

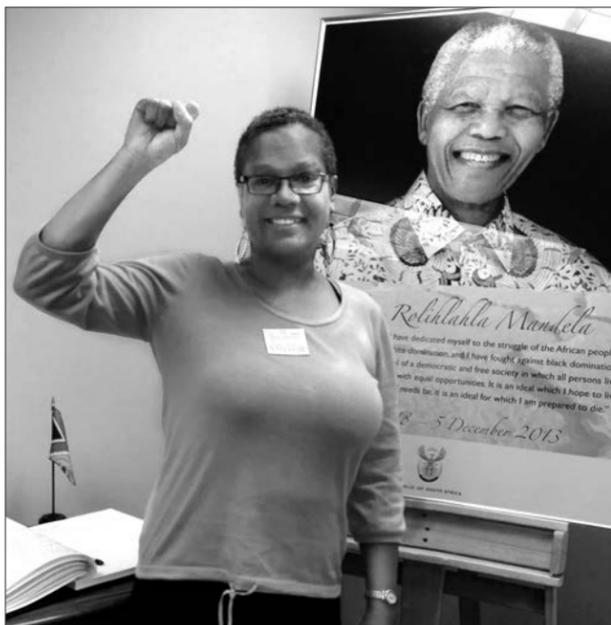
A community commemoration for Nelson Mandela organized by activists in Houston's African-American community brought people together at the Cultural Center of the Shrine of the Black Madonna on a cold, dreary Saturday, Dec. 14. Students, elders, religious leaders, activists and veterans of the Free South Africa movement shared remembrances, analyses and love. There were no politicians, no wealthy corporate leaders, only those who held Mandela close in their hearts, those who understood the enormity of his life, his struggle and his legacy.

The warmth of the event began with two South African women singing the African National Congress national anthem, "Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika." As four drummers kept a steady beat, speakers told of Mandela and his importance. Bongki Goba said: "I was born under apartheid. I had to carry a pass book. I didn't know what the world was like outside of apartheid. However there was a name we knew in our four-room houses in the quarters in Soweto — Nelson Mandela. And we knew others, Steve Biko and South African masses who struggled and sacrificed so that apartheid no longer exists."

The exciting spirit of the evening ended with a poem by M. Thandabantu Iverson, brought to life by local poet Hitaji Aziz. The words rang true for all present: "now that Madiba is dead ... beware the icon makers ... beware the speakers of phrases that

lie, they will disremember liberation struggles that have yet to be won, they will pretend that Mandela belonged to them, denying the people to whom he belonged ... remember to remember Chris Hani, remember to remember Robben Island ... then we will remember Mandela as he was, for he will live inside us, and the lies will no longer deceive, because the struggle will continue, and the last will be first at last."

—Story and photo by Gloria Rubac



Bongki Goba in Houston, above.

Monica Moorehead at South African Mission in New York, left.

PROVIDENCE

The Rhode Island Peoples' Assembly and its six allied organizations — The RI Rosa Parks Human Rights Committee; the RI Martin Luther King Coalition; the RI Unemployed Council; the Campaign for Work, Wages and Wellbeing; the RI SOS Save Our Schools Coalition; and the RI Council of Elders — paid their respects to the South African freedom fighter, Nelson Mandela, at a candlelight vigil on Dec. 10 in Providence. Mandela, a leader of the African National Congress, former political prisoner and first democratically elected president of South Africa, died on Dec. 5 at the age of 95.

—Photo and caption by Bill Bateman

NEW YORK CITY

Monica Moorehead, a Workers World Party secretariat and national committee member, signed a condolences book on behalf of WWP in honor of the late Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela at the South African Mission to the United Nations. Moorehead also signed the book on behalf of the U.S. Out of Southern Africa Network, which helped to organize protests against the role of U.S. corporations such as Mobil Oil, Coca-Cola and others in propping up the then racist, apartheid regime during the mid-to-late 1980s. From Dec. 10 to 13, the Mission opened its door to allow activists to sign its book. Flowers in front of the Mission remain present despite the cold weather.

—Special to Workers World

WORLDWIDE

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outlets worldwide. The state funeral and burial were reported live by the SABC and hundreds of other news outlets. An estimated 3,000 journalists covered the funeral in Qunu.

Memorials were also held in other parts of Africa and the international community. South African embassies and diplomatic outposts throughout the world provided books of condolences that were signed by many millions.

This widespread reporting is indicative of the contribution that Mandela and the South African revolutionary struggle have attained over the decades. □



Providence, R.I.

Leonard Peltier:

'Apartheid exists in America'

Taken from a Dec. 5 statement which can be read in its entirety at NativeNewsOnline.com/q7rncsnp. Political prisoner Leonard Peltier has been incarcerated for 37 years.

It saddens me to hear that a great man like Nelson Mandela has departed from this lifetime. He was a man who was truly inspirational and showed us the possibilities of how a continued struggle by Indigenous people could manifest itself in levels of freedom that have been marred by centuries of oppression.

Our Native people suffered the same types of oppression many times. It is not as overt and as easily distinguished as in some places; however, if you are dead because a policeman shot you, or dead because you could not stand the racial and cultural genocide, so you committed suicide — you are just as dead either way.

Nelson Mandela is known for leading the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. America talked about ending apartheid and put sanctions on South Africa. Not being all that adept at the English language, it is my understanding that "apartheid" means to keep someone apart from something. My people have been kept apart purposely from the sacred Black Hills of South Dakota. There were, and still are, measures that keep us apart from our true history, perpetrated by an education system that limits the truth of our being.

Right now in Canada, Native people are struggling to protect their original lands from fracking, which destroys the water tables and disturbs the natural



FREE LEONARD PELTIER

balance of the Earth. With an apartheid mentality, they seek to build pipelines across Native lands that have the potential of great ecological destruction.

Right now, there is an apartheid that seeks to separate us from the protection of the Constitution of the United States, which says treaty law is the supreme law of the land; which also says you have a right to an unbiased fair trial; which also says you have a right to

a jury of your peers. Right now our young Native people are tried as adults THREE times more than other groups and kept "apartheid" from their families and kept "apartheid" from competent legal representation.

We must all consider Nelson Mandela an inspiration, but I am also inspired by the least of our people who stand up for what is right, like the young man or young woman who peacefully mans a roadblock against developers or fracking companies or some factory that hurts our air.

I want to remember Wanbli Tate who tirelessly championed the rights of Indigenous people to bring attention to the wrongdoers represented in government and corporations.

I remember my brother Russell Means who was also tireless in his efforts in trying to bring about an end to this American version of apartheid that faces Native people.

In the spirit of all those who have gone before us in this struggle, stay strong and NEVER, NEVER give up.

In the spirit of Crazy Horse,

Leonard Peltier

Mitakuye Oyasin □

Auto crisis:

The reality behind the rebound

From a 2013 Workers World Party Conference talk by Martha Grevatt.

Some 30 million to 40 million workers in this country are unemployed or underemployed. Millions more are in the ranks of the so-called “working poor.”

This might be expected at the bottom of an economic downturn, but these are the human statistics four years after the U.S. recession supposedly ended in June of 2009 (according to the National Bureau of Economic Research). This is the new normal: permanent overproduction, which doesn’t mean the cycle of boom and bust has leveled out or disappeared, only that the baseline has been moved.

This stage is also marked by a record surge in profit-taking. By lowering labor costs, the bosses increase their own take of the wealth that labor produces. They increase the rate of exploitation. But the more exploited we become, the more out of reach become the very commodities we produce. This can only lead to another bust — on top of the permanent overproduction characteristic of the dead-end stage of capitalist development.

This is the context in which I view the hiring surge in the auto industry in which I have worked for 26 years. More than two dozen plants were closed and tens of



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Martha Grevatt

thousands of jobs were cut through the 2009 bankruptcy of Chrysler and General Motors and major restructuring at Ford.

Since 1979, more than 270 auto plants have closed, about 40 percent of them between 2004 and 2010. Half of them were in Michigan, especially in Detroit and Flint, which shrunk the number of Black workers holding good-paying United Auto Worker jobs. Ohio and Indiana were also hit hard. Even now, my autoworker counterparts in Brazil, Colombia, Germany, France and elsewhere are still fighting plant closings and mass layoffs.

In 2007, labor costs were estimated to be 8 percent to 10 percent of the cost of a car. It was predicted that contract concessions, particularly the two-tier pay system and the creation of a fund to cover retiree health care, would cut that figure in half. Then, as a condition of the 2009 bankruptcy, there were even more cost-saving concessions.

Now, under improved market conditions, companies have replaced the higher-paid workers who left, but with lower-paid workers. At the same time, they have brought in new, job-cutting technology. This is the profit formula that in 2011 the New York Times called “fewer and cheaper workers.”

By this year’s end, the combined profits of the Detroit Three should easily exceed \$10 billion after taxes and interest. They are making more in profits than what they pay in wages and benefits. Interest payments mean the banks also make profits off our labor.

But for workers, the rebound could be short-lived. If another recession hits the U.S. auto market, workers can expect a new round of layoffs. And the production process now requires even fewer workers.

This will be devastating to the second-tier workers. They make \$9 an hour

less than their higher seniority coworkers. Even that is 2.5 times the minimum wage. But most, especially single mothers, cannot afford the cars they produce. Under the new “Alternative Work Schedule,” they work 10 hours every Saturday and some are working swing shift, once unthinkable in a UAW plant.

Like workers in fast food and retail, most of these exploited workers are young and people of color, many of them women. They could be Trayvon Martin or Renisha McBride. In fact, McBride was a newly hired second-tier Ford worker.

Autoworkers were militant in the 1930s, with the sit-downs, and in the 1960s, with wildcats led by Black workers. A new round of indefinite layoffs could spark real resistance by young, low-wage autoworkers. There is already anger over unequal pay.

The Workers’ Assembly can give these young workers a voice. In fact, a Latina second-tier Chrysler worker spoke at the Detroit Workers’ Assembly last month.

What we, Workers World Party, offer young autoworkers is what we offer city retirees facing the loss of their pensions: **class conscious revolutionary leadership that is uncompromisingly anti-capitalist.** Build Workers World! □

Southern Workers Assembly vs. Tea Party

From a 2013 WWP Conference talk by Ben Carroll.

While the Democratic National Convention was unfolding in Charlotte, N.C., during the March on Wall Street South mobilization the Southern Workers Assembly held its inaugural meeting. The SWA brings together unions and worker organizations from throughout the U.S. South to report on the struggles being waged, develop an analysis of the tasks for this period and carry out a collective program for action.

This is a much needed development in the South, home to some of the most severe, anti-labor, right-to-work laws on the books, and which was built on a foundation of racism and national oppression. This part of the country has become a testing ground for some of the most reactionary laws, promoted by right-wing ideologues Art Pope, the Koch Brothers and others.

A lot has happened since the founding of the SWA. The “Moral Monday and Forward Together” movement has built a broad united front to wage a fightback against the reactionary, Tea Party-controlled North Carolina Legislature. That Legislature has been waging an all-out

war on the people of North Carolina.

With the “Forward Together” movement and the “Assembly” movement comes a recognition — especially in light of this major right-wing offensive — that no sector can survive on its own, and that the entire united front must be advanced together.

The SWA has participated extensively in the expanding “Forward Together” movement. Over the last year, the SWA held workplace speakouts in the North Carolina cities of Butner, Raleigh and Goldsboro; held a North Carolina workers’ assembly that brought representatives of the major worker struggles in the state; and is building local workers’ assemblies in Charlotte, Raleigh and Goldsboro.

In the last year, the SWA also participated in many important solidarity actions. This includes building support for the International Longshoreman’s Association when there was a potential for an East Coast portwide shutdown. And it includes working with comrades from BAYAN on the “Justice for Grand Isle Shipyard Filipino Workers” campaign in Louisiana.

On Nov. 4., teachers from across the state held “walk-in” actions and rallies at schools to challenge the continued state



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Ben Carroll

budget cuts to public education and privatization schemes that recently cleared the state Legislature. This was a broad, mass action. Some 150 people demonstrated on that day of action in Transylvania County, a small rural community in the North Carolina mountains.

The SWA has been moving forward a major campaign coming out of its September assembly — the workplace democracy campaign. This initiative will translate the fightback spirit of the “Forward

Together” movement into the workplace, in order to develop consciousness and organization — and to challenge injustice and the attacks on democratic rights.

The struggle against the right wing’s attacks cannot be confined solely to the state capital, but must be seen as a struggle that can be taken up every day, by workers on their jobs and in their communities. Building a democratic rank-and-file movement of workers is an important component in challenging the consolidation of power by the right wing, the banks and corporations — and the politicians who represent them.

This campaign is developing a fightback program that can challenge the Jim Crow Era ban on collective bargaining for public workers, the proposed right-to-work constitutional amendments and other attacks.

Hopefully, the SWA and the experiences in Baltimore and elsewhere can serve as examples to expand the “Assembly” movement, develop more organization among our class and yield more victories in the coming period.

Build the Southern Workers’ Assembly!
Organize the South!
All power to the people! □

Battle for \$11 – a day – minimum wage



PHOTO: BATAY OUVRIYE

By G. Dunkel

By the hundreds and thousands, Haitian workers marched and protested from Dec. 9 to Dec. 12, demanding that the Supreme Council on Wages (CSS) raise the minimum wage to 500 gourdes a day, which is about \$11.

Big protests took place in Port-au-Prince and smaller ones in Ouanaminthe, a processing center on the border with the Dominican Republic, and Caracol, a new south-Korean owned industrial park in northeast Haiti. These are the major textile centers in Haiti.

The current minimum wage for a day’s work ranges from \$1.55 to \$4.45 in fac-

tories. The CSS decided to raise the top minimum wage for a day’s work to 225 gourdes, around \$5.

Radio Kiskeya posted a video on YouTube on Dec. 10 showing thousands of workers — many of them women — marching and dancing through the streets of Port-au-Prince, waving green branches and demanding 500 gourdes. One of the leaders of the protest, who said he was on the executive committee of one of the unions involved in the march, told Kiskeya that he couldn’t feed himself and his family three meals a day on 225 gourdes. He would need at least 500.

Beyond the low minimum wage paid in

Continued on page 10

Eyewitness Honduras:

Families struggle after prison fire

By Sue Kelley
Comayagua, Honduras

Last month, a delegation from the International Action Center traveled to Honduras to assist with monitoring the presidential election there. Widespread fraud was expected and did indeed happen. The IAC delegation is unanimous in declaring the election as fraudulent. (See articles in WW: Nov. 26, Dec. 2, Dec. 9 and Dec. 19).

While in Honduras, the delegation also had the opportunity to meet with many Hondurans who have suffered under the brutal U.S. government-supported Honduran regime. One such meeting was in Comayagua, Honduras' original capital, with the families of men murdered in a horrific prison fire.

In January 2012, some 362 men died in a fire in the prison in Comayagua. Nearly every family in the town lost someone — 80 percent of the prisoners were from Comayagua, and all of them were poor. The fire started at 10:30 a.m.; at 10:35

a.m. all the prison gates were locked.

There is a large U.S. military base near the prison with fire-fighting equipment. In addition, a local firehouse is located three minutes away. However, when fire-fighters arrived, military police refused to let them help.

Many of the men who died had committed only very minor crimes of survival: for example, taking firewood in order to keep their families warm. One man was imprisoned for taking two chickens to feed his family.

A number of prisoners had already been scheduled to be freed when they died in the fire. One woman told the delegation that her husband was supposed to have been freed six months earlier.

Another man received a call from his son in the prison the night before the fire; a guard had told the son that something horrible was going to happen. The next day his son was dead.

Eighty prisoners escaped by putting on guards' uniforms. Many bodies were unidentifiable and most have never been

returned to their families. Prison authorities did not even know the names of all those who died. No prison employees died; the officers and most of the guards ran away. Four guards asked to help but were refused.

The families want to know who was responsible, why the doors were not unlocked, why the guards ran away. Although the evidence shows that the fire was deliberately set, only half of the families have received any financial help from the government.

The families have made many attempts to get the truth and to see those responsible punished. They know the death of their loved ones was genocide, but the investigation has been slow. The U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives has allegedly been involved in the investigation. What official inquiries there have been call the fire an accident, and evidence has been "lost." Not one person has been charged.

The families are expected to pay for forensic reports, which they cannot afford.

Since forming the group "Committee of Families of the Victims of Comayagua Prison," family members have been threatened, shot and fired from their jobs. They have insufficient food — many of the prisoners who died were also the main financial support for their families, since they were able to work inside the prison. Since the fire, these families feel trapped and fear for their children.

This is not the only such recent crime in Honduras. More than 800 prisoners have been killed in prison fires since a U.S.-supported military coup d'état in 2009 that overthrew the democratically elected government of Manuel Zelaya Rosales and returned the ruling National Party to power. Since then, the human rights of the Honduran people have been brutally violated.

Honduras is a story of assassinations, land grabs by the big transnational corporations, intense poverty and terrorism against the Honduran people, all with the backing of the U.S. government. It is also a story of continued militant resistance. □



Leilani Dowell

WWW PHOTO: SCOTT SCHEFFER

Report back on Honduras

By John Parker
Los Angeles

A gathering of activists, organizers in the Honduran community and leaders in progressive organizations fighting U.S. imperialism participated in an exciting reportback at the Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice in Los Angeles. Leilani Dowell was the featured speaker, along with Ramón Sánchez, a representative of the Libre Party, which ran a progressive candidate in the recent Honduran elections.

Dowell, representing the International Action Center at the Dec. 15 meeting, was one of the seven human rights observers sent by the IAC to Honduras. Sanchez gave the perspective of the Libre Party in terms of the result of the elections, future goals for the party and the struggle for self-determination of the Honduran people.

Dowell highlighted the fightback spirit of various sectors of the Honduran communities, including women and the lesbian-gay-bi-trans communities, giving examples of tremendous courage amidst U.S.-sponsored and U.S.-encouraged terror by paramilitary groupings and po-

lice. She also gave evidence proving that the Honduran elections were fraudulent, with payoffs both blatant and subtle. This fraud denied the people's candidate, the Libre Party's Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, a fair election, in spite of her overwhelming popularity, as witnessed by Dowell in Honduras.

Inspired by Dowell, one of the Honduran activists offered to organize a film showing about Honduras at the Harriet Tubman Center in the hopes of building greater solidarity in Los Angeles. To get more information about that film showing, contact 323-306-6240. □

At World Youth Festival

Meeting outlines Vietnam's fight for a socialist future

By Workers World Bureau
Quito, Ecuador

During the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students in Quito, Ecuador, the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union of Vietnam held a reception and presentation. Beneath a large tent in Bicentennial Park, several hundred youth delegates from many countries listened to a representative of the youth organization, which is the official youth wing of the Communist Party of Vietnam.

This was one of many events at the WFYS, which drew more than 10,000 young people from at least 83 countries all over the world to discuss social struggles, share organizing strategies and enjoy each others' company. Workers World Party sent a delegation of five comrades to the WFYS.

The Vietnamese youth's opening presentation gave a history of Vietnam beginning with the fight against French and U.S. imperialism. The presenter described how the U.S. military dropped more bombs on Vietnam than were used during the entire Second World War. The Pentagon also used a deadly chemical weapon called dioxin against the Vietnamese people. The speaker described how, following the defeat of the U.S., the Vietnamese people were still forced to continue fighting in Cambodia and the surrounding region,

not securing peace until 1982. He said it would take more than 300 years to repair all the damage inflicted during the decades of war on Vietnam.

He emphasized that since the end of the war, Vietnam has taken great measures to improve the lives of the people. Poverty has been reduced to less than 5 percent, and literacy is now universal. Young children in Vietnam are provided free health care, and the country is working toward the goal of providing free universal education and health care for all.

"We are not yet a socialist country, but we are moving in that direction," he noted. While capitalism exists in Vietnam, he stressed that it is closely regulated by the Communist Party and is used only to develop the economy so the country can move toward socialism.

Following the opening presentation, representatives from various Communist organizations around the world spoke in support of Vietnam. A rousing presentation given by an Indian communist ended with the chant, "Your name! My name! Vietnam! Vietnam!" The slogan was commonly chanted at Indian demonstrations in solidarity with Vietnam during the U.S. war.

Representatives from the youth of the Communist Party of Peru and the Kim Il Sung Youth of People's Korea also spoke. Many speakers expressed condolence

FIST delegation in Quito at World Youth Festival.



PHOTO: VIETNAMESE NEWS AGENCY

es on the recent death of General Giap, the Vietnamese military leader who led the people's army that defeated first the French colonial army and then the U.S. military occupation.

Representatives of Workers World Party in the U.S. were asked to give remarks. Bao-Hanh Tran, from the Los Angeles Branch, spoke in both Vietnamese and English, describing the struggle to know the truth about Ho Chi Minh and his heroic fight against imperialism. As someone born and growing up in the U.S., Bao expressed pride in having Vietnamese heritage.

Caleb Maupin, of the New York City WWP Branch, raised the need for U.S. imperialism to pay reparations to the Vietnamese people. He emphasized that

communists in the U.S. should work to link the struggles of U.S. workers with those fighting imperialism around the world. Pointing out that imperialism is the main enemy of all humanity, other WWP representatives wished the Vietnamese people success in constructing a prosperous socialist society.

An interview with Bao-Hanh Tran was conducted by a Vietnamese news agency, and her remarks were widely circulated in Vietnam.

More reports about the World Federation of Youth and Students will follow in future issues of WW. A video recording of part of the presentation by the leader of the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union can be found at youtube.com/watch?v=vosM2pBNCmk. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Defend socialist Korea!

On Dec. 13, the Korean Central News Agency, an official voice of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, reported that a high-ranking member of the government, Jang Song Thaek, had been tried and executed for having "perpetrated anti-party, counter-revolutionary factional acts in a bid to overthrow the leadership of our party and state and the socialist system."

The trial of Jang by a special military tribunal came after the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea held an expanded meeting and then issued a report to the nation.

The important thing to remember when reading the U.S. capitalist media's interpretation of these grave events is that none of it is objective or well-intended. Every word is calculated to undermine and slander the DPRK, with the objective of bringing down the government, the Workers' Party and the socialist system.

For 65 years, U.S. imperialists have failed in their efforts to destroy the socialist government in the northern half of the Korean peninsula.

Washington carried out a horrific war of aggression in the 1950s, followed ever since by unremitting military threats and sanctions meant to strangle the economy and promote divisions that would open the door to counterrevolution. Their failure shows the enduring strength of the Korean people's allegiance to their revolution and their leaders, who have refused to knuckle under to imperialism.

Over these long decades of struggle, the Workers' Party has chosen leaders committed to the path carved out by Kim Il Sung, the Korean revolution's great political theorist, organizer, guerrilla fighter and military commander.

At this critical time, the obligation of all progressives, especially in the United States, is to recognize and respect the sovereign right of the Korean people to control their own destiny and maintain their social system. This means exposing and rejecting any attempts by imperialism to intervene in the situation, whether by military, economic or diplomatic means. It also means rejecting the slanders concocted by the capitalist media against Kim Jong Un and other leaders of the DPRK.

The working class everywhere, including in the U.S., is already paying the price of imperialism's counterrevolutionary successes in Europe and Asia, which have opened up vast areas of the globe to super-exploitation by the profit-hungry transnational corporations.

Workers World affirms its solidarity with Comrade Kim Jong Un. As First Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army, he bears on his shoulders the responsibility for defending the DPRK and guarding against all efforts, both external and internal, to subvert the revolutionary gains won through the sacrifices of many generations of brave Korean resistance fighters. □

Haiti – minimum wage

Continued from page 8

Haiti, employers routinely cheat workers out of the pay they deserve under the current laws.

The Workers Rights Council, in an October report, quotes a study from the International Labor Organization and International Finance Corporation establishing "that every single one of the country's 24 export garment factories was illegally cheating workers of pay by failing to comply with the country's legal minimum wage." The ILO is a United Nations agency, and the IFC is a World Bank group dedicated to finding "private sector solutions for development."

The WRC calculates, based on ILO/IFC data, that 32 percent of the hours illegally due to Haitian workers, particularly textile workers, are stolen by their em-

ployers. The WRC then goes on to detail the hugely deleterious effects this wage theft has on workers' nutrition, health, education and housing.

In a podcast released Dec. 14, Yannic Etienne of Batay Ouvriye, a workers' support group in Haiti, said that employers had fired or suspended a number of workers who had participated in the strikes and protests during the week of Dec. 9. This act of retaliation denies the fired workers their customary year-end vacation. BO has undertaken a campaign to get their jobs back.

The fact that the minimum wage in Haiti for a day's work is much less than the minimum wage in the U.S. for an hour's work is a highly profitable reason for greedy corporations to move any job possible there. □

MUNDO OBRERO

El tratado nuclear de Irán

Continua de página 12

dijo Thierry Coville, un especialista sobre Irán de IRIS, un centro de estudios francés de relaciones internacionales.

Irán está planeando qué hacer más allá del acuerdo de transición por seis meses y está buscando maneras de ampliar sus contactos más allá de Peugeot y Renault para evitar futuras restricciones al comercio. También hay contactos en la Cámara de Comercio Alemán-Iraní. India anunció planes para acelerar un proyecto porteño en Chabahar para obtener acceso a los bienes iraníes que viven a través de Afganistán. La mayor compañía farmacéutica de Turquía, Abdi

Ibrahim, está indagando sobre la venta de medicamentos y dispositivos médicos. (Reuters, 29 de noviembre)

La larga lucha de Irán por la soberanía sobre sus recursos y su propio futuro ganará por lo menos un poco de espacio en esta ronda de guerra diplomática. Si las negociaciones son saboteadas, el pueblo iraní nuevamente aprenderá por su propia experiencia lo que es el imperialismo.

Al exponer las numerosas dificultades impuestas por las sanciones anteriores, el movimiento contra la guerra aquí se puede mantener enfocado en las demandas para poner fin a todas las sanciones y las amenazas de guerra contra Irán. □

90 years later –

Lenin's words dissect imperialist war

From a talk given at the 2013 WWP conference by Secretariat member Sara Flounders.

Our challenge is: Can we revive revolutionary politics and sustain a combative revolutionary culture here in the center of imperialism?

Next year is the 90th anniversary of Lenin's death. It is the 100th anniversary of the start of World War I — the first imperialist conflagration, where millions died and tens of thousands died in a given day. The scale of destruction gave rise to a jump in consciousness, revolutionary upheavals and the first successful socialist revolution in Russia — led by Vladimir Lenin and the Bolshevik party.

Is Lenin's analysis still an anchor for a revolutionary party? In the year ahead, we hope to revive the study of Lenin's contributions, deepen it within the party and make it a basis of discussion within the left political movement.

Lenin's many contributions on a revolutionary approach include:

1. On the national question, self-determination for oppressed nations and the importance of uniting the workers and the oppressed, important for the U.S., a country built on racism, slavery and genocide, truly "a prison house of nations," to use Lenin's formulation.

2. Understanding of the class essence of the state and its armed bodies. To bring about fundamental change, the capitalist ruling class must be overthrown; it can't be done through a deal, a reform or an election.

3. Lenin spent his life building and explaining the need for the working class to have a revolutionary, disciplined, centralized and democratic party, its own fighting force.

4. Understanding imperialism — the ruthless monopoly stage of capitalism — when banks, major industries and the military-industrial-banking complex rule, and wars are inevitable as the capitalists compete to divide, redivide and loot the world.

5. I want especially to focus today on Lenin's approach toward imperialist war. When imperialism succeeds anywhere, against any force, whether another imperialist country or an oppressed nation, the working class at home is weaker. When "our" imperialist rulers are pushed back, the working class as a whole is stronger.

Lenin said: "During a reactionary war a revolutionary class cannot but desire the defeat of its government" and "Hatred of one's own government and one's own bourgeoisie cannot be aroused unless their defeat is desired."

That is the essence of Leninism: We want the defeat of this criminal system. It is essential for the working class in the imperialist countries to always oppose their own government of thieves and pirates. It is essential to refuse to accept the chauvinism of the imperialist countries and to stand completely on the side of the oppressed countries.

This means seeing the world in terms of a continuing class war. No area is off-limits to an increasingly desper-



Sara Flounders

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

ate U.S. imperialism. Imperialist wars are fabulously profitable for a handful of the largest corporations.

The political establishment and its military machine use every weapon and commit every crime. The Pentagon's National Security Agency spies on the whole world. The Pentagon fires killer drones and uses assassination,

secret rendition and torture on a massive scale, and no longer even keeps it secret.

The U.S. imposes starvation sanctions, political destabilization and economic sabotage on any country not totally controlled by Wall Street. Though no crime is beneath them, the imperialist war machine is less and less able to prevail, which makes them even more dangerous and reckless!

Changing consciousness and Syria

In September, the U.S. was willing to risk world war, pulling in Russia and Iran, to impose regime change in Syria. With no political movement and no big demonstrations, this new war seemed unstoppable. We were one of the few voices opposing U.S. attacks on Syria. The social democrats were silent. The Democratic Party was for the war. Whole parts of the left were confused and silent, duped by the demonization of Syria.

But this war plan ran up against new subterranean developments in the world and here in the U.S. working class. When President Obama proposed a war vote in the U.S. Congress, a groundswell of opposition overwhelmed every congressional office in the country with thousands of messages, calls and visits, all opposing another war. In four days there were anti-war demonstrations in 100 cities.

Some 89 percent of the population here opposed another war. They knew it would be disastrous. The sentiment was far ahead of the organized movement.

A crisis of the system can create revolutionary potential. Consciousness is changing. It is reasonable to combine opposition to imperialist war with economic struggles.

Combined Syrian, Iranian, Lebanese, Russian and Chinese resistance forced the U.S. to back down from an all-out strike on Syria. But it was increasingly obvious to millions of people here that the system can't provide and won't provide for their most basic needs.

A peace concluded by imperialists can only be a breathing spell before a new war. The war threats on Syria continue through U.S. proxies: Israel and Saudi Arabia.

We need to be on the alert. The "pivot" to Asia reflects U.S. imperialism's concerted effort to assert its influence. There will be new threats on north Korea and a renewed stranglehold on the Philippines.

As working-class revolutionaries, we must think and strategize on how to build the unity of our class on a new basis and yet maintain a revolutionary focus. The challenge for us is to raise demands that are focused and understandable and continually mobilize against the crimes of this most vicious, racist and dangerous imperialist ruling class. □

UKRAINE

U.S., EU back pro-imperialist coup attempt

By Gene Clancy

Dec. 15 — With strong, almost universal support from the corporate media, the United States government along with the European Union is carrying out a propaganda blitz while threatening sanctions against the government of Ukraine.

On Dec. 15, Sens. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) and John McCain (R-Ariz.), with the full tacit support of Washington, traveled to Ukraine uninvited and spoke to demonstrators who are trying to overthrow the elected government. These demonstrators are protesting President Viktor Yanukovich's refusal to sign a trade deal with the European Union.

Such a deal would undermine Ukrainian sovereignty and allow the International Monetary Fund to impose onerous economic restrictions, while allowing the EU to flood the Ukrainian market with its exports. It would also open the door to NATO penetration of Ukraine, on Russia's border, according to former Congressperson Dennis Kucinich. (Huffington Post, Dec. 15)

After the pro-EU demonstrators rammed a bulldozer into a government building, the protesters expanded their demands to call for Yanukovich's downfall.

McCain told NBC News today that sanctions against Ukraine "would de-

serve serious consideration" by Congress if Ukraine signed a customs and trade union with Russia instead of entering into the trade deal with Europe. Speaking from Kiev, Ukraine's capital, the militarist senator then appeared on nearly every Sunday morning talk show in the U.S.

This was not the first time that there has been a threat of U.S. sanctions against Ukraine. On Dec. 11, U.S. spokesperson Jen Psaki said, "All policy options, including sanctions, are on the table in our view." (UPI)

Hundreds of thousands oppose EU domination

Among the masses, some of those organizations not part of the government have diametrically opposed positions. Nor is the pro-EU "opposition" in any way progressive or democratic, as the imperialist-based media make it out to be.

On one side was the Dec. 8 action in Kiev, led by the Svoboda ("Freedom" Party), in which a statue of Soviet leader V.I. Lenin was toppled. Svoboda set up its flag and also the flag of the World-War-II-era Nazi collaboration regime on the pedestal. The group's leader, Oleg Tyagnibok, boasted this vandalism was the "political murder" of communists.

Following this attack, the Communist Party of Ukraine issued an urgent call for solidarity from the international work-

ers' movement, warning that an attempted fascist coup is underway in the former Soviet republic.

As many as 200,000 demonstrators opposing the pro-imperialists mounted a rally in Kiev on Dec. 14 right next to Europe Square, where the anti-Yanukovich and pro-EU demonstrators are besieging the government and protesting the president's refusal to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. (Agence France-Presse, Dec. 14)

Speaking of the pro-EU forces, Prime Minister Mykola Azarov told the pro-government rally: "The politicians who promote hatred and division of Ukraine don't belong in today's politics. Their place is at the garbage dump." (AFP)

The so-called opposition contains some very unsavory characters and parties. McCain had met with some of them before making his threats. He wrote on Twitter that he had "good conversation and dinner" with the three main opposition leaders — Vitali Klitschko, head of the Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform; Oleg Tyagnybok of the Svoboda Party; and Arseniy Yatsenyuk of the Fatherland Party. He also met with the powerful Ukrainian Orthodox Patriarch, Filaret, who has backed the protests.

The Svoboda party's Tyagnybok deserves special attention. A pillar of his party's ideology is the glorification of the

Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which fought against Soviet forces in World War II when Nazi Germany occupied Ukraine and whose offshoots continued anti-Soviet armed actions right up into the 1950s. Svoboda regards the growing Communist Party of Ukraine as its mortal enemy.

Svoboda once organized a march against the Hassidic Jews who arrive in the thousands for a pilgrimage every year in the city of Uman, and opposed a singer of African origin representing Ukraine in this year's Eurovision Song Contest. (AFP)

Along with the pro-imperialist and fascist parties, some 40,000 Western-based nongovernmental organizations have been operating in Ukraine. (worldbank.org) These provide some of the services once provided by the socialist government, but they fully backed the pro-West "Orange Revolution" of 2004, which has since been pushed back.

By meeting with neofascists like Tyagnybok and threatening economic sanctions — which amount to an act of war — with the apparent full backing of the U.S. government and its lapdog media, McCain has made the imperialist intentions of the U.S. and the EU perfectly clear. Progressives and advocates of true democracy around the world should vigorously oppose these moves in solidarity with the people of Ukraine. □

Obama, U.S. media lied about Syrian nerve gas

By David Sole

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Seymour M. Hersh has written a detailed and devastating exposure of the U.S. government's manipulation of military intelligence to create a pretext for the war it very nearly unleashed against Syria last September.

Hersh's main conclusion is that President Barack Obama and many in his administration "omitted important intelligence ... presented assumptions as facts ... [and] failed to acknowledge something known to the U.S. intelligence community: that the Syrian army is not the only party in the ... war with access to sarin."

Hersh gained worldwide fame for exposing the My Lai massacre and cover-up in Vietnam in 1969. His 2004 articles detailed the systematic torture of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq directed by the U.S. military, the CIA and private contractors.

This latest article, published in the London Review of Books on Dec. 8, utilizes current and former intelligence sources to whom Hersh has a long history of access. Classified documents going back months before the Aug. 21 sarin attack outside Damascus, Syria, show that the U.S. government concluded that the al-Nusra Front, a major force in the Syrian rebel movement, had "mastered the

mechanics of creating sarin ... in quantity." Yet in his Sept. 10 televised speech, President Obama insisted that the Syrian government was responsible and that only they had sarin capabilities.

Some high-level intelligence officers went to Hersh about this misuse of intelligence. One compared it to the fraudulent Gulf of Tonkin incident that was used to justify widespread bombing of north Vietnam in 1964. "Obama ... and his cronies in the White House make up the intelligence as they go along," stated one officer.

By selective reporting, some major U.S. media also collaborated with the Obama game plan of deception. Nine days after the Aug. 21 incident, the administration delivered a document making the case for Syrian government culpability to a handpicked group of journalists. The Washington Post gave front-page coverage to how the U.S. traced every step of the attack, linking it to the government of President Bashar al-Assad.

When the Office of the Director of National Intelligence was forced to issue a correction days later, the Washington Post chose not to reveal this to its readers.

Similarly, the New York Times made use of a Sept. 16 United Nations report to claim that the munitions, the flight path and the length of the rocket flight conclu-

sively implicated the Syrian army as the source of the sarin attack. The report itself, however, warned that the rebel controlled area allowed the evidence to be "possibly manipulated."

When Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor of science, technology and international security Theodore Postol and missile technology expert Richard M. Lloyd later concluded that calculations of the flight path and range could not be as earlier reported, the New York Times failed to report this.

Hersh details months of intelligence warnings given to the White House about the danger that the radical Islamist al-Nusra Front had the capability to manufacture sarin. This included a four-page, June 20, top-secret report to David R. Shedd, deputy director of the Defense Intelligence Agency. The Joint Chiefs of Staff were also worried, according to secret reports, that should U.S. troops occupy Syria they could come under sarin gas attack by rebel forces.

Before Aug. 21, the CIA informed the White House that a former Iraqi army chemical weapons expert had moved into Syria. He was reported to be working in Eastern Ghouta, the same area that suffered the sarin gas attack.

The Sept. 27 U.N. Security Council resolution on the destruction of chemical weapons in Syria also indicates that rebel

groups are included. Since that time, the U.N. reports that the Syrian government has cooperated with the international inspectors to destroy their stockpiles of chemical weapons.

A big question still remains. After concocting the lies on sarin, why in September did Obama hold off a U.S. attack and do a 180-degree turnaround, agreeing to the Russian plan for destruction of chemical weapons?

Clearly the war drive never took hold among the people of the U.S. Public opinion polls showed more than 90 percent opposition to another war. Worldwide support for Syria remained strong, especially among Syria's major allies Iran, Russia and China.

In the face of this broad hostility, some sectors of the U.S. military and intelligence services may also have considered it unwise to go to war. It would be foolish, though, to count on these militarists to stop future wars.

On the other hand, what should not be missed is the power of the mass of the people in the U.S. and around the world to influence and change the course of history. These latest revelations should serve to strengthen the anti-war, anti-imperialist movements and increase the people's suspicion and mistrust of the U.S. government and its willing corporate media tools. □



GAZA Symbol of Resistance

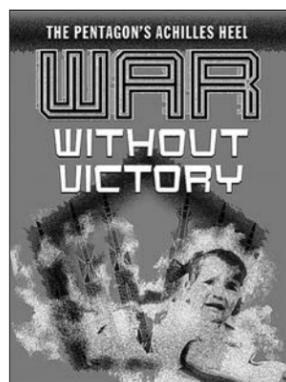
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Lo que está en juego con el tratado nuclear de Irán

Por Sara Flounders

El acuerdo nuclear de seis meses entre Irán y los "5+1" países, ha sido descrito como un gran avance, una salida, un desastre o una traición, dependiendo de quién esté hablando. Gran parte del texto del acuerdo alcanzado en Ginebra el 24 de noviembre huele a arrogancia imperialista.

Sin embargo, cualquiera que sea la actitud de uno hacia el acuerdo, sobre todo es esencial que todas las fuerzas progresistas se unan y hagan un llamado claro para que se ponga fin a todas las sanciones y los ataques a la soberanía de Irán y al ataque de los criminales imperialistas contra la población iraní.

Al examinar este acuerdo provisional, primero debemos ver cuáles son las razones por las que Irán y EE.UU. firmaron y quién se beneficia.

Los cinco miembros permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU-- Estados Unidos, Inglaterra, Francia, Rusia y China-- más Alemania, son los "5 +1". Los EE.UU. y sus aliados han basado su posición en los repetidos cargos de que el desarrollo de la energía nuclear de Irán lleva a la producción de armas nucleares, lo que según éstos es una amenaza ominosa a la paz mundial.

Las seis naciones involucradas en las conversaciones con Irán han utilizado energía nuclear durante más de 50 años. Todas, excepto Alemania tienen un arsenal de armas nucleares. EE.UU. tiene el mayor arsenal "listo para detonar", es el único que ha utilizado bombas nucleares contra los pueblos y el imperialismo estadounidense sigue amenazando rutinariamente con primeros ataques nucleares contra países que no tienen este tipo de armas.

Hay un significado muy claro para el término que todos los presidentes de EE.UU. desde Truman han utilizado: "Todas las opciones están sobre la mesa". Portaaviones nucleares estadounidenses y submarinos nucleares Trident, capaces de destruir toda vida en la tierra en un solo lanzamiento, merodean los mares, incluyendo las aguas directamente cercanas a la costa de Irán.

Las conversaciones en Ginebra se basaron en la premisa de que EE.UU. y sus aliados suavizarían las sanciones que están estrangulando la economía de Irán y a cambio, Irán congelaría y luego reduciría su desarrollo de tecnología nuclear. Esta es la meta de los imperialistas, a pesar de que el Tratado de No Proliferación Nuclear (TNP) que Irán ha firmado, garantiza a cada país el derecho a desarrollar energía nuclear con fines pacíficos.

La legislación de sanciones estadounidense ha exigido que todos los países del mundo participen en el bloqueo de Irán o de lo contrario enfrentarían severas sanciones comerciales, bancarias y de aseguradoras por Estados Unidos. El bloqueo mundial resultó en el debilitamiento de la moneda iraní en más de un 60% y la producción de petróleo en más de un 50%.

No hay exigencias contra Israel, el representante de EE.UU. en la región. Israel posee de 100 a 300 armas nucleares, no ha firmado el TNP y nunca se ha sometido a una inspección.

Los términos del acuerdo

Vale la pena leer el corto "Plan de Acción Conjunto" de 1.500 palabras firmado con Irán. Comienza con esta indignante afirmación: "Irán reitera que bajo

ninguna circunstancia Irán desarrollará ningún tipo de armas nucleares". Por supuesto, ninguno de los 5 +1 jamás ha aceptado alguna promesa similar.

Para poder tener acceso a los \$7 mil millones de los más de \$100 mil millones de sus propios fondos incautados y congelados en cuentas por todo el mundo, Irán debe aceptar someterse a inspecciones diarias y sin previo aviso de su modesto programa de energía nuclear. Esto incluye sus reactores, talleres de fabricación, instalaciones de almacenamiento, las minas y molinos de uranio y todos los registros de estas instalaciones.

El desarrollo de armas nucleares requiere el enriquecimiento de uranio a más del 90 por ciento de la fisión del isótopo U-235. Irán debe acceder a no enriquecer su uranio en más del 5 por ciento y diluir su limitado inventario de uranio ya enriquecido a un 20 por ciento.

El acuerdo estipula que la aceptación de estas medidas intrusivas sobre la soberanía de Irán dará lugar a una pausa de seis meses a los esfuerzos de reducción de las ventas de crudo de Irán y la suspensión de las sanciones de Estados Unidos sobre la industria automotriz de Irán y sobre los repuestos para la aviación civil de Irán.

El acuerdo permitirá a Irán comprar, con fondos congelados por EE.UU., alimentos y productos agrícolas, medicamentos, dispositivos médicos y pagar la matrícula de los/as estudiantes iraníes que estudian en universidades en el exterior.

El relajamiento de la gruesa y restrictiva telaraña de sanciones demuestra lo invasivo y directo de las sanciones.

Las sanciones comenzaron con la Revolución de 1979

En la evaluación de este acuerdo, es esencial saber que la hostilidad de EE.UU. y sus sanciones impuestas, comenzaron mucho antes de que Irán reactivara su programa de energía nuclear.

Luego de que el derrocamiento revolucionario de la monarquía brutal impuesta por Estados Unidos en 1979 fundamentalmente disminuyera la influencia estadounidense en toda la región, comenzaron las primeras sanciones de Estados Unidos contra Irán. La convulsión antiimperialista -- con una corriente religiosa musulmana radical jugando un papel de liderazgo -- transformó la sociedad iraní. También liberó los recursos petroleros y gasíferos iraníes de los contratos desiguales que servían a las gigantes empresas petroleras de Exxon, Mobil y Shell.

La estrategia de EE.UU. desde 1979 ha sido la de desestabilizar al estado iraní y sabotear su economía con el fin de dominar una vez más los ricos recursos del país. Washington ha utilizado sabotaje industrial, asesinatos de líderes políticos y científicos y cerco militar.

En 1979, Washington se apoderó de 10 mil millones de dólares que Irán tenía en bancos estadounidenses. Con los años, Wall Street se ha apoderado de miles de millones en otros activos iraníes, que ahora suman más de \$100 mil millones de dólares en fondos congelados. La presión estadounidense incluyó rupturas económicas a través del Fondo Monetario Internacional, el Banco Mundial, el Banco de Exportación e Importación y la cancelación de cientos de contratos.

Mucho antes de que Irán reactivara su programa de desarrollo para energía nuclear para poder satisfacer las creci-

entes necesidades de energía, EE.UU. hizo todo lo posible a través de sanciones para bloquear la capacidad de Irán de construir refinerías de petróleo que refinaran su propio petróleo y gas. Irán era un importante exportador de petróleo crudo, pero se vio obligado a importar productos refinados del petróleo a costos mucho más altos.

Finalmente en 2011, después de la finalización de siete refinerías nuevas, Irán dejó de ser un importador de gas. Pero las sanciones impidieron los planes de Irán de exportar gas refinado.

Al desarrollar su economía independientemente del robo y la dominación de Wall Street y al controlar sus propios recursos, en tres décadas Irán se transformó de un país subdesarrollado a un estado moderno con una población altamente educada. Aunque las relaciones capitalistas prevalecen, la población ha sido capaz de ganar cuidado de salud garantizado, completo y gratis; educación gratuita incluyendo la universitaria; una infraestructura moderna; y vivienda con plena electrificación.

La educación de las mujeres se ha mejorado desde el analfabetismo de la mayoría a la plena alfabetización. Más del 60 por ciento de estudiantes universitarios ahora son mujeres.

La revolución iraní ha enfurecido a Wall Street y a todas las fuerzas de reacción y del poder feudal en la región por dar apoyo político y material a la lucha de liberación palestina, a la resistencia libanesa contra la ocupación israelí, y al gobierno sirio que está resistiendo el cambio de régimen.

Junto al fracaso de desestabilizar Irán, EE.UU. ha fracasado totalmente en estabilizar su gobierno en Irak, Libia y Afganistán, a pesar de la destrucción masiva. Sus planes para un cambio rápido en Siria también han encontrado resistencia, a pesar de los miles de millones de dólares en fondos, equipamiento y capacitación de las fuerzas mercenarias.

Mientras declina su situación económica, los planificadores de Washington están tratando de desviar su poder militar ya sobre extendido, hacia el este para enfrentar la creciente posición económica de China. El sentimiento apabullante en EE.UU. en contra de otra guerra también ha presionado a Washington tratar nuevas tácticas.

Tratos rotos de Washington

El récord de 200 años de tratos desiguales y rotos de los Estados Unidos con las naciones indígenas de América del Norte muestra que la diplomacia y las negociaciones siempre se han utilizado como una forma de guerra. Para Wall Street los intervalos de paz son períodos de preparación para la próxima guerra.

Más recientemente, en el 2003, EE.UU. acordó relajar la presión sobre Libia si ese país renunciaba a ambiciones nucleares. Para el 2006, todas las sanciones contra Libia fueron terminadas y se abrieron muchas ofertas económicas con el Occidente. Sin embargo, en el 2011 EE.UU. y la OTAN organizaron la destrucción de Libia.

El resultado de las conversaciones sobre los usos nucleares que continúan en Ginebra no va a cambiar la base de décadas de hostilidades del poder corporativo estadounidense hacia Irán.

El hecho de que Washington haya firmado este acuerdo provisional con Irán, sin embargo, ha demostrado que los

planes imperialistas para destruir totalmente un país oprimido se han quedado cortos. Si los imperialistas no pueden robar plenamente lo que quieren, eso significa al menos una victoria limitada para las/os oprimidos.

Estos tratados tienen semejanza con la lucha de clases representada en cada contrato sindical. Incluso con un fuerte sindicato, las/os trabajadoras nunca están pagados el valor total de su fuerza de trabajo bajo el capitalismo. Sin embargo, es una lucha y una victoria a ganar, aún un contrato sindical firmado aunque sea mínimo.

El gobierno iraní tiene años de experiencia en la duplicidad estadounidense. En 2003, el entonces presidente Jatami de Irán, con el actual presidente Rouhani como negociador mayor, suspendió voluntariamente el enriquecimiento nuclear y durante dos años permitieron que la Agencia Internacional de Energía Atómica hiciera inspecciones intrusivas, con la expectativa de que los imperialistas removieran las sanciones. El Presidente George W. Bush sin embargo, añadió nuevas sanciones y catalogó a Irán como parte del "eje del mal" y una de las tres naciones amenazadas con cambio de régimen.

Sectores de la clase dominante estadounidense podrían ver firmar un acuerdo con algunas fuerzas iraníes que los estrategas estadounidenses creen que podrían hacer un pacto con el imperialismo o que ellos pudieran utilizar para abrir una lucha más profunda dentro de Irán. Washington aprovecharía cualquier inestabilidad interna en Irán como una oportunidad para una nueva ofensiva.

Otras poderosas fuerzas corporativas estadounidenses que tienen muchos intereses en la guerra y el militarismo intentarán muchas formas de sabotear incluso este trato de corto plazo. Israel y Arabia Saudita, como agentes dependientes de EE.UU. en la región y cuya posición y miles de millones de dólares en equipo militar se basa en su papel promotor de guerra e inestabilidad, se sienten amenazados con cualquier forma de acuerdo con Irán. Nuevas sanciones del Congreso estadounidense podrían poner fin a esta mínima distensión.

¿Qué gana Irán?

Inmediatamente después del acuerdo, los fabricantes franceses de automóviles Peugeot, Citroën y Renault, junto a representantes de los fabricantes de automóviles alemanes, surcoreanos y japoneses, anunciaron que estaban enviando ejecutivos a una conferencia automotriz en Teherán a principios de diciembre, considerada el pistoletazo de salida en una carrera por negocios post-sanciones.

Antes de la última ronda de sanciones internacionales impuestas por EE.UU., Francia envió coches a medio construir a Irán como paquete de implementos para su montaje por empresas iraníes como Irán Khodro y SAIPA.

Más de 100.000 trabajadores del automóvil fueron despedidos cuando las sanciones golpearon a la industria manufacturera más grande de Irán, lo que obligó a las plantas operar a menos de la mitad de su capacidad.

El acuerdo de seis meses "tendrá un impacto muy rápido en un sector que es una gran fuente de empleos iraníes -- así que esto es algo más que simbólico",

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