

# MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 56, No. 40 Oct 9, 2014 \$1



# U.S. bombs Syria



Opening new war in Middle East, U.S. employs F-22 stealth jets. The first round of airstrikes on Syria cost over \$79 million — \$68,000 an hour for each plane.

By John Catalinotto

Sept. 28 – The U.S. military machine has opened up a new bombing campaign, this one within the boundaries of a sovereign state, Syria, without an invitation from the government in Damascus. Each escalation solidifies the new U.S. war against the people of that region.

The U.S. is bombing under cover of what President Barack Obama calls a “war on ISIL.” ISIL is one of the acronyms used for the organization that calls itself the Islamic State, also known as ISIS. Obama admits this war may last years. He makes the dubious claim that it will be waged without U.S. combat troops.

U.S. warplanes and ships began the attacks inside Syria on Sept. 23. This assault had no approval from the U.N. Security Council or even from NATO. Obama’s only figleaf of “international support” is his “coalition” of NATO lackies and Arab monarchies, which are at least as repressive and reactionary as the Islamic State.

The Sept. 23 New York Times reported that U.S. forces unleashed “a torrent of cruise missiles and precision-guided bombs from the air and sea on the militants’ de facto capital of Raqqa [in northern Syria] and along the porous Iraq border.”

These “precision-guided bombs” allegedly blew up buildings ISIS used as headquarters, destroyed some equipment and killed some ISIS fighters. Meanwhile, they killed at least eight civilians. Most of the heavy weapons ISIS possesses are U.S.-manufactured, much of it captured in Iraq.

In the following days U.S. warplanes, with minimal participation from U.S. allies, bombed oil refineries inside Syria that were in areas run by ISIS. They also reported that U.S. planes bombed ISIS positions in a

battle between ISIS and Kurdish forces going on in the Kurdish region of Syria near the border with Turkey.

The U.S. military named five Arab states – Bahrain, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates – that took part in the attacks. Later reports clarified that the Pentagon carried out nearly all the hours-long bombing and rocket attacks. The other states – monarchies and dictatorships that gun down or even decapitate their own civilian dissidents – came along as window dressing for this enforcement of U.S. strategic and economic interests.

Then Washington’s perpetual junior partner came on board. London had earlier joined the U.S. assaults on Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya. A year ago the British had to hold back from joining a planned U.S. assault on Syria when the British Parliament refused to OK it.

This time London joined the so-called war on ISIS when Parliament voted “yes” on Sept. 26 to back the U.S. once again. But it limited this approval to air strikes on Iraq, not on Syria. Australia, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark also joined, but the European powers said they will stay out of the bombing raids on Syria and will supply no ground troops.

### U.S. militarism faces contradictions

The emergence of ISIS controlling big areas of Iraq and Syria and challenging U.S. positions has placed Washington in a sea of obvious contradictions that are now debated on talk shows and editorial pages of the corporate media.

One is Washington’s ambivalent relationship with ISIS, al-Qaida and similar groups. The U.S. armed and praised these organizations in the 1980s in Afghanistan

and more recently in Libya against Moammar Gadhafi and in Syria against Bashar al-Assad. Saudi Arabia is the home office of al-Qaida’s fundamentalist ideology, and its wealthy rulers fund these groups.

Another contradiction appears when you see the forces in the region that are really fighting with “boots on the ground” against ISIS. There is al-Assad’s Syrian army, which the U.S. has demonized and treated as an enemy.

There is also the Hezbollah organization in Lebanon, more well-known for resisting Israeli aggression. And there are the Kurdish guerrilla organizations: the YGP (Kurdish People’s Protection Units) based in the Syrian Kurdish region and the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) based in Kurdistan in Turkey. Up to now, the U.S. has defined all three of these groups as “terrorists,” yet they are the main enemies of ISIS.

So far the administration’s plan to get “boots on the ground” consists of having Saudi Arabia train 5,000

*Continued on page 10*

**BLACK, BROWN LIVES MATTER** 6-7

**\$15 AN HOUR NOW!** 4

**Eyewitness UKRAINE** 8

**MADURO VISITS NYC** 9

**EBOLA: Send docs, not troops!** 11

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## this week

★ In the U.S.

- U.S. bombs Syria ..... 1
- Court denies Detroiters' right to water ..... 3
- U.N. water rapporteurs to visit Detroit ..... 3
- Hate crime reform a snake oil cure for LGBTQ oppression . 3
- Los Angeles: 'Still need \$15 and a union' ..... 4
- On the picket line ..... 4
- PSC members demand raise and contract ..... 5
- Laundry workers celebrate third anniversary ..... 5
- Postal workers, supporters protest cuts ..... 5
- Capitalism, greed and DNA ..... 5
- Latino/a community defends woman attacked by police . 6
- Mumia Abu-Jamal on the meaning of Ferguson ..... 6
- Justice for John Crawford! ..... 6
- Ferguson: Community protests racist power structure ... 7
- Durham: 'Black lives matter' ..... 7
- Milwaukee community protests police brutality ..... 7
- Venezuela's President Maduro speaks in the Bronx ..... 9

★ Around the world

- Stop the U.S. blockade of Cuba now! ..... 8
- Brief encounter with the Kiev junta's border guards ..... 8
- Lessons of the Air France strike ..... 8
- Venezuelans defend Bolivarian Revolution ..... 9
- Ebola crisis requires global response ..... 11

★ Editorials

- Free Sundiata Acoli! ..... 10

★ Noticias en Español

- El sexismo y el juego de la culpa ..... 12
- Aumenta apoyo sindical para los Cinco Cubanos ..... 12

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Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers' living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you're young, you know they're stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That's why for 55 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We've been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism's wars and aggressions. □

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# Court denies Detroiters' right to water

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Sept. 29 — U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Steven Rhodes ruled today to deny a moratorium on mass water shutoffs and dismissed a class-action lawsuit brought against the emergency-manager-run city of Detroit and the Detroit Water and Sewerage Department.

An entirely pro-bono team, led by prominent civil rights attorney Alice Jennings, had sought a temporary restraining order to stop the shutoffs, restore service to those households already shut off, and implement a six-month moratorium on further shutoffs to allow plans to be developed to truly help the poorest Detroiters.

A hearing on this motion took place Sept. 22 and 23 in the Detroit municipal bankruptcy case, in an adversary lawsuit filed by victims of DWSD's mass water shutoffs, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs, the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, the People's Water Board and the Michigan chapter of the National Action Network.

Jerry Goldberg, one of the plaintiffs' lawyers, strongly denounced the judge's decision: "He dismissed our case and injunction and said there exists no fundamental right to water, just like there is no fundamental right to a job or health care. Although he acknowledged the city's plan would leave thousands of Detroit residents without water and no way of making payments, he had the gall to state that the balance of harm would not be to these thousands of families, but to the creditors and bondholders.

"Rhodes said outright that the loss of potential revenue was a greater harm than loss of water to tens of thousands. He clearly wants the establishment of the regional Great Lakes Water Authority and privatization of DWSD," Goldberg told Workers World.

## Which side are you on?

It became clear on Sept. 22 when the hearing began where the two sides — the people of this majority African-American city and the emergency-manager-run, state-ruled city — lined up: The plaintiffs asserted that water is a fundamental human right, a necessity to health, hygiene and sanitation as well as quality of life. The defendants said "water

is a commodity which must be paid for," with absolutely no regard for the people facing shutoffs.

Lead plaintiff Maurikia Lyda, a mother with four children aged 5, 10, 13 and 14, testified that her water was turned off in June because of an outstanding bill of more than \$1,000. She receives Supplemental Security Income and could not afford her payments. "That day the truck came and shut off seven or eight other homes" on her block, said Lyda. She could never get through to DWSD and when she finally did, no one told her about a payment plan, asked about her income or if there were children in the household. "They basically didn't care," said Lyda. Her water service was miraculously restored July 21, the same day her lawsuit was filed in the bankruptcy case.

Plaintiff Carol Ann Bogden testified that her water has been shut off since July. Now 68 years old, Bogden was an emergency-room trauma nurse for 18 years. Her spouse died eight years ago and she had to go on Social Security disability because of heart problems and seizures. She also cares for her adult son, who has chronic and acute pancreatitis, diabetes and hypertension. She fell behind on her water bill because of expenses related to his care.

Bogden said she found out she was about to be shut off when she came home one day and saw the "blue line" on the sidewalk in front of her house. "I was embarrassed and cried because of the blue line, because people knew what was happening." Because her purse had been stolen and she had no current state-issued identification, DWSD refused to allow her into a payment plan.

With a current bill of more than \$1,100, none of the agencies the city's Department of Human Services gave Bogden to contact had the funds to help her. "I used to be a person in the community that others would come to for help," she testified. "I never thought I'd be in this situation. I'm not looking for a handout. People who know me know it's always been vice versa."

Adverse witness Susan McCormick, general chief executive officer for DWSD, said that in 2013 some 24,000 residential shutoffs occurred. "How many of these homes had occupants?" asked a plaintiffs' attorney. "I don't know," she replied. When asked how many homes had service since restored; the number of

children living in each home; how many had people with disabilities living there; and the number of empty homes, her answer remained: "I don't know." Most of the spectators laughed derisively at the end of her testimony.

DWSD officials and representatives from Mayor Mike Duggan's office touted their new "10-30-50" payment plan as the solution to the water shutoff crisis. A resident in the plan can have their water service restored by paying 10 percent of the back bill, and then paying the arrearage off over 24 months on top of their current water bills. If they miss one payment, 30 percent of arrearage is required, and two missed payments require half. However, on examination by plaintiffs' attorneys and even Judge Rhodes, DWSD officials admitted that this plan will do little to help the thousands of Detroiters who cannot pay their bills, due to the terrible poverty existing in this majority-Black city.

Despite the payment plan, 300 to 400 Detroit homes per day have had their water shut off since the moratorium on shutoffs was lifted on Aug. 25, and at least 2,000 of these families continue to live without water in their homes, admitted Darryl Latimer, DWSD deputy director and head of customer service.

## People's fightback will continue

Water affordability expert Roger Colton testified that according to 2012

census figures, 20 percent of Detroit's population live on an income that is 50 percent below the federal poverty level; 40 percent of the population are below the federal poverty level, and 55 percent of Detroiters have incomes below 150 percent of the federal poverty line.

Colton proposed that the solution to the water crisis in Detroit is for the DWSD to implement a water affordability plan, where water rates are set at 2 percent of income or 3 percent with arrearages added. Two percent of income is the level recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Goldberg summed up: "The Detroit case boils down to the question of whether water is a human right or just another commodity whose provision is dependent on the whims of bean counters and bondholders. The fact that the new Great Lakes Water Authority, which is slated to take control of the DWSD, mandates that the anti-human, anti-union Veolia Corporation be brought in as an adviser on how to run the department makes clear where the city stands. Rhodes obviously agrees."

Activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and other groups assert that the fight for the fundamental human right to water and to stop the mass shutoffs will continue. On Oct. 18, two special rapporteurs on global water issues for the United Nations will arrive from Geneva to begin a three-day fact-finding visit to Detroit. □

## U.N. water rapporteurs to visit Detroit



United Nations special rapporteurs from Geneva "are coming [to Detroit] to conduct a 'fact-finding' mission relative to these mass water shutoffs," announced Maureen Taylor, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization leader, in an email to activists on Sept. 24. The three-day mission, beginning Oct. 18, will include a bus ride to neighborhoods to hold discussions with residents who have had their water shut off by the city and a town hall meeting/tribunal.

Taylor stated: "We are asked to offer a meeting with city officials, the mayor, the City Council, and any elected officials able to join the group. ... HUD [the U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development], HHS [Health and Human Services], EPA [the Environmental Protection Agency], and the local political machines are to be invited (the mayor's call), and the focus is that our special guests will share with them what other nations have done when economic conditions are unfavorable. They will set aside two hours after these meetings to take interviews with the press."

For more information on the U.N. visit to Detroit regarding the mass household water shutoffs being implemented, visit [moratorium-mi.org](http://moratorium-mi.org).

— Kris Hamel

## WW commentary

# Hate crime reform a snake oil cure for LGBTQ oppression

By Matty Starrdust  
Philadelphia

In the wake of the recent gay bashing in Philadelphia, let's not be fooled into thinking that cops and more incarceration will be our salvation.

On Sept. 11, a group of at least three people — including a daughter of the Chalfont, Pa., chief of police — allegedly attacked and brutally beat two gay men in Philadelphia. One of the victims sustained a broken jaw, a broken orbital bone and cuts to his face so deep that they required 24 stitches to close. Reports allege that one of the suspects repeatedly called the victims "f---ots" while attacking them. Even though the suspects were quickly identified via social media, the police delayed making arrests for nearly two weeks.

Liberal pundits and politicians, led

by state Rep. Brian Sims, have seized the moment to call for the expansion of Pennsylvania's hate crime legislation to include gender and sexual orientation as protected classes. If approved by the state legislature, the expansion would impose harsher prison sentences for people convicted of transphobic and anti-LGBTQ violent offenses.

Indeed, the need for action is palpable within LGBTQ communities. In Philadelphia and across the U.S., LGBTQ people are routinely subjected to institutional and individualized violence. Studies show that as many as 68 percent of LGBTQ-identified people have experienced employment discrimination. A 2014 survey of trans and genderqueer people revealed that as many as 90 percent report experiencing discrimination and verbal harassment at work. ([williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu](http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu))

And that's only counting those of us who are lucky enough to find work at all.

Faced with disproportionately high incidences of unemployment, underemployment, poverty and homelessness, many LGBTQ and trans people participate in underground economies like sex work and the drug trade. Deprived of the means to make a living in safe and tolerable conditions, LGBTQ people do whatever it takes to survive — and then are criminalized for doing so!

LGBTQ people are more likely to be sexually assaulted than straight and cisgender (sex assigned at birth) people. ([osapr.harvard.edu](http://osapr.harvard.edu)) Individualized violence against LGBTQ people, and especially trans women of color, has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. From widespread bullying in high schools, to domestic abuse and at-

tacks on the street like this recent one in Philadelphia, violence is everywhere.

## Targets of police brutality, murder

But let's not forget which side the cops and the prisons are really on. LGBTQ people have always been targets of police brutality and murder. The Stonewall Inn and CeCe McDonald are only the most well-known examples of bigoted cops beating, jailing and killing us. Amnesty International found that police abuse and harassment of queer and trans people are routine occurrences in the United States.

This isn't just a coincidence. Under capitalism the oppression of LGBTQ people serves the interests of the bosses, bankers and bureaucrats. Homophobia and transphobia exist to divide the working class

Continued on page 10

## LOS ANGELES:

**'Still need \$15 & a union'**

*Below are excerpts from a statement written on Sept. 9 by John Parker, who is a coordinator of the Los Angeles Workers Assembly and a leading proponent of the \$15 Minimum Wage Ballot Initiative Ordinance.*

In solidarity with fast food and retail workers demanding a livable wage, the Los Angeles Workers Assembly submitted a Ballot Initiative Ordinance in August for a \$15 minimum wage to take effect immediately after passage. So, we are glad to see that the pressure created by fast food and Walmart workers demanding \$15 and a union has gotten a response from Mayor Eric Garcetti as reflected in his proposal on Labor Day for a raise in the minimum wage in Los Angeles.

However, the increase of \$10.25 in the year 2015, and then \$13.25 two years later falls far short of the immediate need to end poverty and starvation wages.

Why? Because, in the first place, it's the work of low-wage workers that has created the extreme wealth of companies like Walmart and McDonalds. Without the labor of low-wage workers there would be no profit. While corporate profits remained and increased over the past 35 years, wages continually decreased over that same period, yielding the greatest gap between rich and poor.

The \$15 wage demand is actually the minimum necessary for basic human needs in current dollars.

According to a report titled, "Effects of a Fifteen Dollar an Hour Minimum Wage in the City of Los Angeles," which was underwritten by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO, in 2013:

"A living wage is conservatively defined as \$15 an hour, based on the criteria set in the Fair Labor Standards Act of a wage sufficient to support 'the minimum standard of living necessary for health, efficiency, and general well-being' ... in a high-cost urban area like Los Angeles."

The mayor's proposal doesn't even consider that the minimum standard of \$15, his \$13.25 by 2017, when it's proposed to become the new minimum, turns into \$12.78, adjusting for average price increases, — or a little over \$26,000 per year — still not a living wage.

Out of a concern for business interests who threaten a loss of jobs, he said that \$15 would not be a "responsible" increase and a much slower approach was needed.

Why is the concern for jobs only raised when workers want a raise? Since the Great Depression, this argument has been used by corporations with predictions of the world coming to an end if their profits are even slightly disturbed. However, the fear of job loss never gets raised when businesses are allowed tax incentives to ship jobs abroad. It's

never raised by the Chamber of Commerce or politicians when corporations execute massive layoffs to maximize already swollen profits.

And, it's not even raised against the multimillion dollar bonuses that raise the wages of the CEOs. A recent report by the Economic Policy Institute states that CEO compensation at the largest corporations has ballooned by 937 percent since 1978, when adjusted for inflation.

Unless wages are significantly increased by at least 66 percent in today's dollars, they will not end the trend towards greater and more severe poverty, homelessness, malnutrition, inadequate health care and even death.

The mayor justifies this increase by stating that it gets folks above the poverty line, based on a 50-year-old formula that does not take into account the changed percentage of income going towards basic necessities, for example, housing and medical costs. Also, it does not consider significant geographical differences. This is why New York City's charter mandates that it use an alternative measure to the federal poverty line.

The mayor's proposed increase ignores the advice of the city of Los Angeles' own charter and administrative code, which argues for a livable wage over the minimum wage, of \$10.30 per hour with health benefits or \$14.80 without in 2009 dollars, which today would be around \$11.38 for workers with health benefits and \$16.35 for those without.

As low-wage jobs have grown to close to 50 percent of all the jobs in Los Angeles, the rising cost of child care, health care, education and other services adds a disproportionate burden on low-wage workers, especially women and people of color — over 60 percent of low-wage workers.

Maria Fernandes died on Aug. 25 trying to catch a few hours of sleep between her four jobs. She was found dead in her car in the parking lot of a convenience store, still in her Dunkin' Donuts uniform, overcome by the fumes of a spilled gasoline container kept in her car to avoid running out of gas and slowing her arrival to the next job.

A real livable wage of \$15 and the respect for workers can only come from union recognition.

Low-wage workers and everyone concerned with ending poverty, including the Los Angeles Workers Assembly, will not stop fighting for a \$15 livable wage and will remain in solidarity with the fast food and retail workers fighting for \$15 and a union. And, we hope this proposal by the mayor will encourage even more people concerned with ending poverty and injustice to join the Los Angeles Workers Assembly in its petition drive to get the \$15 minimum wage on the ballot next year. □

*On the picket line*

by Sue Davis

**Nurses stage die-in to demand Ebola readiness in U.S.**

About 1,000 members of National Nurses United staged a die-in during their conference in Las Vegas on Sept. 24. They protested the lack of readiness in this country to confront the Ebola epidemic sweeping West Africa. Marching through the Planet Hollywood casino, they moved on to the Bellagio Fountain for the die-in. After protesters dropped to the sidewalk, others in hazardous materials gear outlined their "dead" bodies with chalk. Following that was a moment of silence for the thousands who have died from Ebola as well as the international health workers who have died while caring for them. "It's not acceptable that these people are dying," said RoseAnn DeMoro, NNU executive director. U.S. policymakers are in denial, she added. "It is going to come here." Protesters noted that nurses are the first line of defense against all diseases. (Las Vegas Sun, Sept. 24)

**Hotel workers rally in Seattle, get raises in L.A.**

On Sept. 25, housekeepers and other workers at two Hyatt hotels in Seattle held a rally to demand that the hotel owner recognize their right to join a union. In July 2013, UNITE HERE and Hyatt Hotels corporate management reached a national agreement. Since then, Hyatt workers in Long Beach and Emeryville, Calif.; Greenwich, Conn.; and Baltimore have joined the union. Workers are fighting for dignity and respect on the job, free from management intimidation, harsh working conditions and low pay.

Meanwhile, on Sept. 14, the Los Angeles City Council voted 12 to 3 that big hotels must pay at least \$15.37 an hour to workers. This will be one of the highest minimum wages in the country. The wage boost will apply to hotels with at least 300 rooms as of next July and to hotels with at least 150 rooms in 2016. Councilmember Mike Bonin, who sponsored the bill while working with a coalition of unions and community groups, said, "If we can do targeted incentives to help businesses, we can do targeted incentives to help those who are working and living in poverty." (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 24)

**Delta CEO confronted by Minneapolis airport workers**

On Sept. 23, three airport workers bravely interrupted Delta CEO Richard Anderson's speech at a Chamber of Commerce luncheon in Minneapolis. They questioned why Anderson's salary rose 50 percent to \$14 million last year while the workers who assist Delta passengers are struggling to survive on the minimum wage. Delta reported profits of \$2.7 billion in 2013. While no longer directly hired by Delta but by a contractor, these workers have been attempting to organize for the last few years like many passenger-service workers across the country. Outside the luncheon, workers and supporters with Service Employees Local 26 held signs reading, "Record profits for Delta, poverty wages for workers." (Union Advocate, Sept. 25)

**USPS must add 9,000 union jobs**

Two years ago the American Postal Workers Union filed a grievance against the U.S. Postal Service when the USPS began using part-time, non-union workers instead of union clerks at many lower-traffic facilities. That policy originated as a "compromise" instead of shutting the offices completely. On Sept. 5, an arbitrator ruled that in the next three months the USPS must establish 3,000 full-time union positions at offices open six hours a day, while offices open four hours must have 6,000 union-backed jobs for part-time workers known as postal-support employees. "This is historic," said APWU official Bob Johnson. "We haven't had APWU members in most of these offices in decades, and now to have full-time positions in six-hour offices — that's phenomenal." (Washington Post, Sept. 23)

**CNN must rehire workers**

The National Labor Relations Board found against the CNN cable television network in an 11-year-old labor dispute, ordering the network to rehire or compensate about 300 workers and former workers. The NLRB agreed with a November 2008 ruling by one of its administrative judges that CNN had improperly replaced a unionized subcontractor, Team Video Services, with in-house non-union staffers, due to "anti-union" bias. The board gave CNN 14 days to rehire the former TVS employees for "their former positions or, if those jobs no longer exist, to substantially equivalent positions." The Communication Workers union estimates that CNN will pay tens of millions of dollars to compensate the workers. The network is also required to restore any bargaining unit work it outsourced since previous contracts ended and recognize the employees' union. (aflcio.blog.org, Sept. 17) □

**The National Caravan will hit the road from NYC on Saturday, October 11!**

► **NYC Sendoff for Caravan**

**FRI., OCT. 10**, 7 pm at The Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave., Manhattan

Dozens of activists will be traveling to South Texas to demand refugee status for Central American migrants and legalization for all undocumented workers.

Along the way we will be holding press conferences, forums and other events. We will meet with local activists and learn about the situation for workers in that city as well as talk about continuing to build the movement for immigrant and all workers' rights.

**CARAVAN SCHEDULE:**

**SAT., OCT. 11:** Philadelphia & Washington D.C.

**SUN., OCT. 12:** Raleigh/Durham, No. Carolina

**MON., OCT. 13:** Atlanta, Georgia

**TUES., OCT. 14:** Jackson, Mississippi

**WED., OCT. 15:** Houston, Texas

**THURS., OCT. 16:** San Antonio, Texas

**FRI., OCT. 17:** Laredo, Texas

**SAT., SUN. & MON., OCT. 18-20:** South Texas including McAllen, San Juan & others

**Help with a donation:** Make tax-deductible checks payable to: IFCO/Solidarity Caravan 2014. Send to: IFCO 418 W. 145 St., New York, NY 10031

**Join us!** Call: 917.328.6470 may1.info CaravanSolidaridad@gmail.com

*Help make History*  
with the **NATIONAL CARAVAN**  
to the **MEXICO & TEXAS BORDERS**



*Ayude a hacer historia*  
con la **CARAVANA NACIONAL** a las  
**FRONTERAS de MÉXICO y TEJAS**

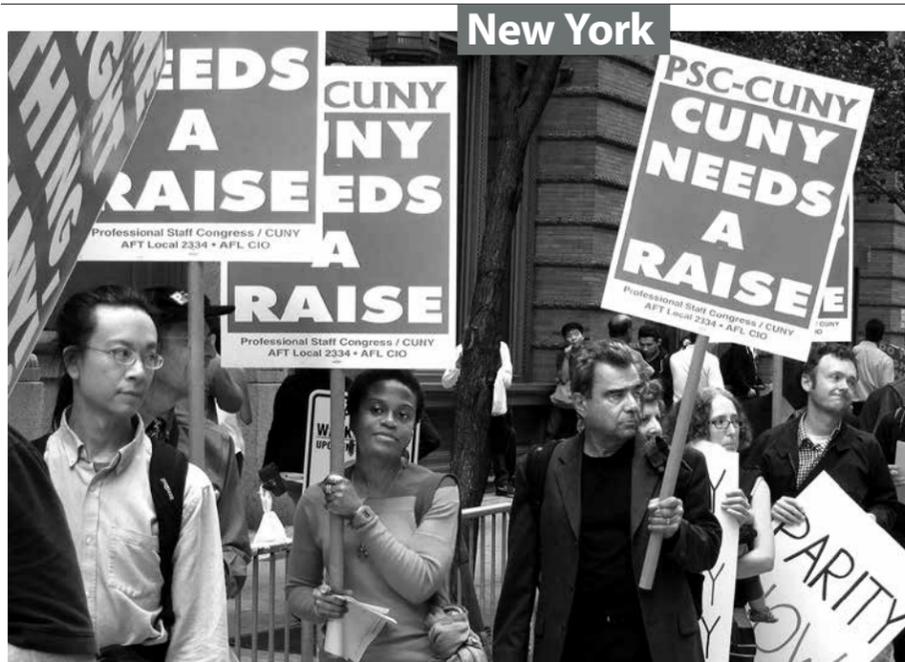
**SOME IMPORTANT HIGHLIGHTS:**

► **SAT., OCT. 11** The Caravan will pay tribute to the people of Ferguson and call for justice for Michael Brown and all victims of police brutality as part of a National Day of Solidarity for Ferguson, Mo

► **TUES., OCT. 14**, In Jackson, Mississippi the Caravan will be visiting the gravesite of Chokwe Lumumba, civil rights leader

► **SUN, OCT 19**, a National Day Against the Militarization of the US/Mexico Border will take place in South Texas, Arizona and California

► Renowned migrant rights advocate from Mexico, Padre Solalinda will be joining the Caravan from Mexico in South Texas with children and families displaced by war and economic turmoil



## PSC members demand raise and contract

The Professional Staff Congress represents 25,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York, who educate 270,000 students. Union members have had neither a contract nor a raise for the past four years. Led by PSC President Barbara Bowen, 100 or so members went inside the Board of Trustees meeting at Baruch College's Vertical Campus on Sept. 29, while 800 members protested and marched around the building.

Anger in the PSC is growing over the lack of a raise. In an open letter to the Board President, Bowen wrote, "It is unconscionable for the trustees of the University to fail to act when both the quality of education at CUNY and the well-being of the faculty and staff are at risk. We need a fair economic offer on the bargaining table and we need it now."

The PSC is planning further actions.

— Photo and report by G. Dunkel

## Laundry workers celebrate third anniversary

It was a warm and classy – in all senses of the word – event to celebrate the Laundry Workers Center's third anniversary on Sept. 27. The LWC addresses the need for community-based leadership development geared toward improving the living and working conditions of workers, as well as their families. Its work aims to combat abuses such as landlord negligence, wage theft, and hazardous and ex-

plorative working conditions, which are especially prevalent in low-wage jobs and communities.

Some 75 people from New York's progressive movement enjoyed good food, beer, meeting old friends and talking at the event, held at the Solidarity Center in New York City, all while contributing to the ongoing efforts of the LWC.

— Photo and report by G. Dunkel



## Postal workers, supporters protest cuts



WW PHOTO: JOHNNIE STEVENS

Members of the New York Metro and Mid-Hudson areas of the American Postal Workers Union, the National Postal Mail Handlers Union and community organizations, including Community Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services, participated in a day of action here on Sept. 9, holding a militant picket line and rally in front of the Westchester Hilton Hotel. They were protesting the presence of a high-ranking postal officer from Washington, D.C.

The focus of the picket line was four demands: save our mail service; stop the closings of postal and mail processing centers; boycott Staples; and no privatization of the postal service. Drivers riding

by the picket line showed their support by honking horns or giving a clenched fist.

Also protesting in front of the hotel were members of District Council 9 of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades. They were demanding that contractor AM Painting pay at area wage and benefit standards, as established by the council. An inflatable rat at the rally signified that AM Painting hires scabs and pays scab wages. Marching together in solidarity, this demonstration of postal workers and supporters was a building block for a national action to be held in November in Washington, D.C.

—Report by Joe Hirsch

# Capitalism, greed and DNA

By Deirdre Griswold

When some 5,000 people — mainly CEOs and other executives — gather at New York's Radio City Music Hall for the World Business Forum on Oct. 7-8, they'll shell out between \$2,700 and \$3,000 for a ticket. Do the math and you'll see the gate will take in almost \$15 million for the two-day event.

But that's peanuts for these folks. Almost any one of them could buy up the whole auditorium and still come out ahead for the year.

Outside will be an array of protesters demanding a \$15-per-hour minimum wage. Inside, raising wages — for workers, that is — won't even be discussed.

Does \$15 an hour sound like a lot? Just compare it to what big capitalists get. Take Larry Ellison, the retiring CEO of Oracle. He "earned" \$38,000 per hour last year. Even if we win the higher minimum wage, it would take a worker more than 15 months of 40-hour weeks to earn what Ellison gets in one hour.

In June 2012, Ellison bought the whole island of Lanai in Hawaii, and will rule over its 3,200 residents like a king. (New York Times magazine, Sept. 23)

The enormous wealth that is being amassed at one end of the pole and the extreme poverty plaguing the other is giving capitalism a bad name. In fact, a Pew Research Center poll published in December 2011 showed only 46 percent of young people in the 18-29 age bracket had a favorable view of capitalism, while 49 percent said they favored socialism. Since then, pollsters haven't asked this question again.

Another factor in the growing mass hatred for capitalism is its reckless destruction of the environment in the mad rush for profits. No wonder young people don't look kindly on this system. They'll be stuck with the climate change disasters bearing down on us — at the same time they're trying to pay off their student loans with minimum wage jobs, if they can find any.

All this could be cause for deep pessimism and inertia. Indeed, those under the influence of the right wing are preparing for Armageddon and circling the wagons in a racist frenzy against those least responsible for the state of the world.

However, the momentum right now is with new progressive movements that are on the rise. Millions around the world are fighting the effects of capitalism — its

impoverishment of the masses; its imperialist wars; its racism, sexism and gender oppression; its lust for carbon fuels to power industries that create more and more goods with fewer and fewer workers.

### End the illusions!

What is needed, however, is a massive movement against the system itself, not just its effects. There are still many illusions about capitalism — that it can be made greener, more just, less greedy; that it can respond to these social, economic, political movements and be reformed.

These illusions also extend to capitalist democracy. It has been drummed into our heads that we choose our leaders through free elections. But for the people's choice to really make it into the halls of power is as rare as hen's teeth. A recent article confirmed that most majority Black cities — like Ferguson, Mo. — are ruled by white mayors and city councils. How many workers, how many union members are in Congress? The deep pockets of big business buy elections 99.9 percent of the time.

Yet illusions about how to overcome capitalism's crises persist.

The people who put together the agenda for the Business Forum are aware

of this. Their website for the event lists many speakers and their topics. One is "Conscious Capitalism: Building a Business Where Everyone Thrives." Another is about "corporate social responsibility." A third claims to have the key to "launch a creative revolution that will unleash the real potential of people and organizations."

The word "profits" is never mentioned. It's all "opportunity" and "creativity." Any would-be speaker who dared to suggest that their wealth is based on the exploitation of workers would never make it to the stage.

None of this is new. The capitalists and their army of apologists have long claimed that the wealth they amass would trickle down to the people eventually. But it doesn't, and a lot of people are not buying that argument any more. They are realizing that they must come together and fight just to get a living wage.

The environmental movement is also beginning to move beyond appeals to CEOs and government officials and talk about system change. At the huge New York march against climate change on Sept. 21, many placards, floats, banners and stickers hit capitalism as responsible

Continued on page 6

# Latino/a community defends woman attacked by police

By Anne Pruden

Just two months after the recent New York Police Department chokehold killing of Eric Garner in Staten Island, another video-recorded incident of NYPD brutality occurred on Sept. 20. When Sandra Amezcua, a pregnant woman, rushed to defend her teenage son, who was being detained by cops in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, one of several police present intervened, throwing her belly-first to the ground! The video shows the officer beating Amezcua with a baton, and then tasing her on her belly. The police push another woman so strongly that she rolls over in the street.

Supportive neighbors soon released the video coverage, leaving social media to defend another survivor of police brutality. The mostly working-class and Latino/a community of Sunset Park — which didn't find this brutality a new experience



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

— quickly mobilized. While the police officer responsible for attacking Amezcua and her supporter was moved to “modified duty” in response to public outrage, community organizers continued to make plans.

The result was a militant, spirited and colorful rally and protest on Sept. 27 that marched 20 blocks to Sunset Park's 72nd

Precinct police headquarters. Supporting Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, Black and white neighbors marched behind the Puerto Rican leadership of this call for “El Grito de [the Shout of] Sunset Park.”

The sexist nature of the attack was mentioned as children were marching with their parents. Juan Ramos of the NYC Congress for Puerto Rican Rights explained that “we're here to show solidarity ... against this systematic problem in New York City.”

These forces will unite again, joined by political groups such as CopWatch and Brooklyn for Peace, for a Sunset Park Town Hall on Sept. 30, where they will demand an end to racist police brutality. In the past week, a cop from the same command was suspended for repeatedly kicking a street vendor who was already subdued. The vendor had been ordered to leave a street and complained that he wasn't given time to depart.

“No justice! No peace! Stop the racist police!” □



Mumia Abu-Jamal on

## The meaning of Ferguson

Aug. 31 — Before recent days, who among us had ever heard of Ferguson, Missouri?

Because of what happened there, the brief but intense experience of state repression, its name will be transmitted by millions of Black mouths to millions of Black ears, and it will become a watchword for resistance, like Watts, like Newark, Harlem and L.A.

But Ferguson wasn't 60 years ago — it's today.

And for young Blacks from Ferguson and beyond, it was a stark, vivid history lesson — and also a reality lesson.

When they dared protest the State Street murder of one of their own, the government responded with the tools and weapons of war. They assaulted them with gas. They attacked them as if Ferguson was Fallujah, in Iraq.

The police attacked them as if they were an occupying army from another country; for that, in fact, is what they were.

And these young folks learned viscerally, face to face, what the White Nation thought of them, their claimed constitutional rights, their so-called freedoms — and their lives. They learned the wages of Black protest. Repression, repression and more repression.

They also learned the limits of their so-called “leaders,” who called for “peace” and “calm,” while armed troops trained submachine guns and sniper rifles on unarmed men, women and children.

Russian revolutionary leader, V.I. Lenin, once said, “There are decades when nothing happens; there are weeks when decades happen.”

For the youth — excluded from the American economy by inferior, substandard education; targeted by the malevolence of the fake drug war and mass incarceration; stopped and frisked for Walking While Black — were given front-row seats to the national security state at Ferguson after a friend was murdered by police in their streets.

Ferguson may prove a wake-up call. A call for youth to build social, radical, revolutionary movements for change. □

# Justice for John Crawford!

By Kathy Durkin

There is now no justice for John Crawford III, the 22-year-old African-American youth killed on Aug. 5 in a Wal-Mart store in Beavercreek, Ohio. A Greene County special grand jury did not indict Sgt. David Darkow and Officer Sean Williams, both white police officers, in the fatal shooting of this father of two, and found their actions “justified.”

The victim's father, John Crawford Jr., denounced the grand jury's Sept. 24 decision at a press conference the next day: “The officer went in and virtually shot him on sight. He did not have a chance.” (Associated Press, Sept. 25)

On the night of Aug. 5, 24-year-old Ronald Ritchie, who is white, called 911 and said that a Black man was brandishing a gun and pointing it at people, including two children, in the Wal-Mart store. According to Salon, “Ritchie claimed the police told Crawford to drop the gun, twice, but Crawford, ‘decided to swing the rifle to the officers, pointing at them, and that's when the officer shot him twice.’” (Sept. 26)

Crawford's family members, community residents and students demanded that Wal-Mart release the video of the shooting. However, it took a struggle to achieve this. Neither Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine nor Wal-Mart would release the video.

The Ohio Student Association (OSA) organized demonstrations in Cleveland, a 200-person march to the Beavercreek police station and protests at DeWine's office, calling for justice for Crawford and for the video to be made public. ColorOfChange.org reports that 60,000 people signed their petition demanding the video's release.

Finally, after the grand jury decision, the video was made public on Sept. 24.

What it showed was horrific. Crawford was talking on his cell phone and walking around the store. He picked up an unloaded BB air rifle from a store shelf. He was pointing the toy gun at the ground, not at anyone. He was standing alone. Police came near him, yelling and shooting, hitting him twice. Crawford was on the ground within two minutes of police entering the store. He was still on the phone. Crawford's last words to police were,

“It's not real,” stated Leecee Johnson, who was on the phone with Crawford. (Democracy Now!, Sept. 25)

After seeing the video, John Crawford Jr. stressed, “It was an execution, no doubt about it. It was flat-out murder.” (Guardian, Sept. 7.)

The coroner's office has ruled Crawford's death a homicide.

Now, Ritchie, the 911 caller, has reversed his story, saying, “At no point did [Crawford] shoulder the rifle and point it at somebody.” (Guardian, Sept. 7) Some progressives insist that he, too, be prosecuted.

The family's attorney, Michael Wright, said, “It was an unarmed black man that got shot and killed in Wal-Mart, and we can't hide from that.” (AP) He said that Ohio Attorney General DeWine and special prosecutor Mark Piepmeier had “clear bias” in favor of the police.

### Remember Michael Brown and John Crawford III

Activists have the raised similarities to Michael Brown's killing in Ferguson, Mo., on Aug. 9, and how local officials have dealt with both cases. ColorOfChange.org Executive Director Rashad Robinson said the Ohio and Ferguson press conferences showed that “the decks were stacked against justice. ... The video not being released, the political apparatus in Ohio had weeks to criminalize John Crawford in death, the same way that Michael Brown was criminalized in death.” (Democracy Now!)

OSA organizer Prentiss Haney said that Brown's death led to discussions about racism and close scrutiny of Crawford's killing. “I think that race has always been a part of it, but I think Ferguson exploded it.” (AP) Active in protests outside the grand jury sessions at the Xenia, Ohio, courthouse, Haney emphasized that this is “a national problem deeply rooted in racism that has plagued black and brown lives in our country.” (Guardian, Sept. 22)

James Hayes, also of OSA, observed that the prosecutor didn't really try to prosecute the police in Crawford's death, but seemed to be justifying their decisions. “We understand we must push forward, and it only strengthens our resolve to fight for

John Crawford III with infant.



justice for John, his family, and to fight for true systemic change that will make sure that there are fewer and fewer John Crawfords,” he said. (Democracy Now!)

The Crawford family is looking to the U.S. Justice Department to ascertain if their son's civil rights were violated. Soon after the grand jury's decision, the DOJ confirmed that it would carry out an “independent civil rights investigation” into Crawford's killing. The family's attorneys are examining other legal avenues as well.

Racism was the cause of John Crawford III's death. Will there be any justice for him? □

# Capitalism, greed and D

Continued from page 5

for the lack of any agreement to cut carbon emissions that cause global warming.

Yet this is still a far cry from building an openly anti-capitalist movement. For that to happen, there has to be some understanding of the alternative. What other economic system is possible?

### A scientific approach to system change

This is where Marxism comes in. It has been so attacked for more than a century that many people disillusioned about capitalism may think they can brush it aside so as not to draw the fire of the ruling class and its agents. But Marxism is science, and there is no substitute for science. If we are going to do more than mouth phrases about system change, then we have to understand the nature of this system, the social forces it has created, and how it can be overcome.

For starters, Marxism lays bare the inner contradictions of capitalism. It ex-

plains the dynamic of this system, the profit motive, which has revolutionized the means of production so rapidly that today's world would be unrecognizable to our forebears of just a century ago. While this revolution in technology brought vast wealth to its owners, it also appeared to some that eventually all classes — at least in the developed imperialist countries — would benefit.

But this dynamic, this constant need to develop the means of production while shedding workers, has led to the vast global labor market that now exists. And it is pitting higher-paid workers against those most impoverished. This is dragging down workers everywhere. The only way to fight it is to internationalize the struggle against capitalism.

Today's capitalists have more wealth than they know what to do with. They throw it at art, real estate, anything that might increase in value because of speculation. What they don't do is give it back to

## FERGUSON:

# Community protests racist power structure

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

Eight people were arrested on Sept. 28 as protests continued in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Mo. People reportedly threw rocks and bottles at police during the evening amid escalating tensions over a Missouri grand jury's failure to file charges against white police officer Darren Wilson in the Aug. 9 fatal shooting of Michael Brown, an African-American youth.

Five days earlier, one of the community's memorials to the slain 18-year-old was destroyed by fire. Crowds quickly gathered at the scene, prompting a police response that later sparked a small-scale rebellion. Windows were broken and several fires were set in protest.

The incident thrust Ferguson, a majority African-American town of 21,000 people, back into the national and international spotlight.

On the evening of Sept. 25, another demonstration was held outside Ferguson's police headquarters. Earlier that day, Police Chief Tom Jackson issued a belated apology to Brown's family and members of the public who felt they were mistreated by law enforcement officers in the days following the killing.

During the protest outside police headquarters, Jackson attempted to march alongside the crowd, which was demanding his resignation. Police officers shoved protesters. Then a scuffle erupted with officers, which resulted in further arrests.

Two nights earlier, a Ferguson police officer was reportedly shot in the arm by an unknown assailant. The authorities quickly claimed that injuring the cop had nothing to do with the mass demonstrations and rebellion that has been going on for nearly two months. An extensive hunt for the gunman was undertaken.

The press indicated that the cop's injury was not life threatening, and the officer was treated at a local hospital and released the same day.

Media agencies requested a copy of the video from the officer's camera; all officers are now mandated to carry cameras at all times. However, the media were told that this officer's camera was off during the incident. Later the police provided their own version of what happened in the shooting, which they said took place at a "city building."

Jackson's statement said, "The officer was conducting a routine building check of a city building that had closed for the night ... [to ensure] that the building is properly secured. ... [T]he building was supposed to be empty. He was not expecting to have interaction with anyone and did not have his body camera activated for the routine building check. He was suddenly attacked after interrupting a burglary attempt and sustained an injury from a gunshot. Generally, the body cameras are utilized with any interaction with members of the public and in any situation when an officer feels it is necessary, and has the opportunity to activate the camera." (USA Today, Sept. 29)

Since there was no video documentation of the incident and no eyewitnesses have been reported, the actual circumstances involving this shooting remain moot. Since the mass demonstrations and rebellions erupted after Brown's death, there had been reports of police being fired on.

## Demand Darren Wilson's indictment

There has been support for Wilson from some whites in the surrounding community and in the police department, which is overwhelmingly white. They oppose prosecuting Wilson for Brown's death. Some pro-Wilson actions have occurred in St. Louis County. Some police officers are wearing bracelets reading, "I am Darren Wilson."

The U.S. Justice Department is in Ferguson investigating civil rights issues related to Brown's shooting. An investigator's letter urged police officials to prohibit their personnel from wearing the bracelets while on duty and patrolling the majority African-American community. Additionally, officers' name plates should always be visible to community residents.

Christy E. Lopez, deputy chief of the Special Litigation Section of the DOJ's Civil Rights Division, wrote, "Officers wearing name plates while in uniform is a basic component of transparency and accountability. The failure to wear name plates

conveys a message to the community that, through anonymity, officers may seek to act with impunity." (Huffington Post, Sept. 26)

The people of Ferguson are determined to win some semblance of justice for Michael Brown. Demonstrations are still demanding that Wilson be indicted and that reforms be instituted involving police and community relations. The protests in Ferguson have further exposed the continuing national oppression and state repression so prevalent in the U.S.

From Oct. 9 to 13, a series of demonstrations are planned that will attract people from throughout the country to Ferguson and will be another opportunity to show solidarity with the community there.

President Barack Obama had to men-

tion the disturbances in Ferguson before the U.N. General Assembly, while prompting yet another imperialist war in the Middle East. However, neither his administration nor Congress provides any programs or policies aimed at eradicating racism and economic exploitation. Unemployment and poverty remain disproportionately high in African-American communities throughout the U.S.

Any real program of action to eliminate national oppression must emerge from the mass struggles in Ferguson and other cities and towns across the country. The organization and mobilization of the masses provide the only real solution to the escalating repressive and exploitative capitalist system. □

## 'Black lives matter'



PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

A diverse audience participated in a film screening and discussion entitled "From Ferguson to Durham: Black Lives Matter" at the Hayti Center in Durham, N.C., on Sept. 28, sponsored by the Workers World Party Durham branch and the group Black Is. The event included a lively discussion led by Workers World Party leader Monica Moorehead and Black Is activist Layla Brown.

Moorehead recently visited Ferguson

in late August. She showed a short video of interviews she did with Black youth there. The crowd connected local and international struggles with imperialism and found ways to show solidarity with Ferguson.

The group is organizing transportation to Ferguson for the Oct. 11-13 protest events. For details contact Lamont Lilly at [llilly1@eagles.nccu.edu](mailto:llilly1@eagles.nccu.edu).

— Durham, N.C., WW Bureau

## Community protests police brutality

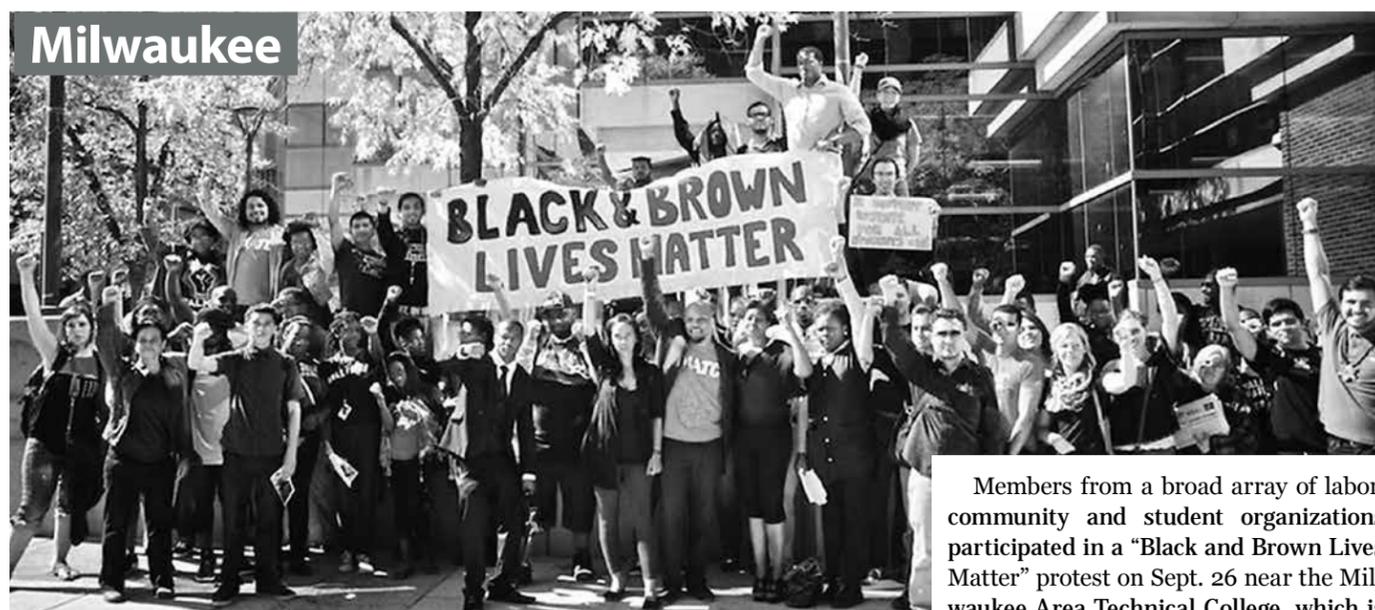


PHOTO: OCCUPY RIVERWEST

more obscene level. The rich no longer count their wealth in X number of cattle or piles of gold. They measure it in currency, and the sky's the limit.

Greed doesn't produce capitalists; capitalism produces greed. To survive in the dog-eat-dog world of competing corporations, each capitalist has to lower costs and use the money saved to expand and drive out competitors (while keeping some for incidental expenses like yachts,

private planes and 40-room mansions, all written off as business expenses).

What's the alternative? Breaking the stranglehold of the capitalists over the means of production. Liberating the technology we have produced so it can be used to solve the problems of hunger, homelessness and environmental destruction. Social ownership. Socialism.

And to get there? Revolution. □

Members from a broad array of labor, community and student organizations participated in a "Black and Brown Lives Matter" protest on Sept. 26 near the Milwaukee Area Technical College, which is across the street from a variety of police buildings. Speakers demanded justice for Michael Brown and others killed and brutalized by the police and vowed to continue their fights for justice, including support for a Sept. 30 Milwaukee rally to demand justice for Dontre Hamilton, a 31-year-old Black man who was unjustly shot and killed by Milwaukee police in a public park. Before the protest, Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow," spoke to a crowd of 2,000 at the college.

— Workers World Staff

NA

the workers who created it in the first place, even though their own economists are warning them that they are undercutting the market — that people would like to buy some of what is produced but don't have the money and have maxed out their credit.

And if capitalists do invest some of their wealth in new production, it is production that uses computers and robots — because that lowers labor costs. Which means even fewer actual humans can buy their products. Robots don't eat, don't drive cars, don't need furniture.

What is the reason for the capitalists' seemingly irrational greed?

### Greed not in our DNA

Greed is not in our DNA. We as a species of animal evolved over millions of years and succeeded because of our ability to work together and cooperate. Greed is a product of class society, which has existed for only a few thousand years.

Capitalism raised greed to a new, even

# Stop the U.S. blockade of Cuba now!



At the Climate Change March, New York City, Sept. 21.

By Chris Fry

U.S. imperialism remains unflinching in its campaign to crush the Cuban Revolution.

In 2004, then Illinois state Sen. Barack Obama said that he supported an end to the economic blockade in Cuba. Yet on Sept. 5, 2014, President Obama signed the annual memorandum that continues the U.S. blockade against Cuba under the infamous "Trading With the Enemy Act." Cuba is the only country in the world targeted by this act.

In 1962, President John F. Kennedy bought himself 1,200 Cuban cigars. He then declared an economic blockade against Cuba. Not only did this mean an embargo of all goods to the socialist country, but also a permanent campaign to discourage and punish other countries from doing business with Cuba.

And for the last 52 years, U.S. imperialism has maintained this blockade, this economic war against the government and the people of Cuba.

Why? Because since the 1959 Revolution, the people of Cuba have shown the world, particularly the people of Latin America and Africa, that despite being a small country; despite a legacy of cruel,

colonial rule; despite one dictator after another ruling with an iron grip to serve U.S. corporations; despite racism so powerful that the last of those dictators, who was Black, could not even go onto the U.S. hotel's beaches — despite all of that, an organized people led by determined revolutionaries could break U.S. imperialism's grip.

Further, the people of Cuba have shown that poor and working people can themselves run a government, an economy, a whole society themselves, without wealthy landowners and corrupt dictators who answer only to Wall Street banks and corporations.

Before the revolution, five out of six Cubans were in abject poverty, living in shacks or homeless. Two out of three Cuban children did not go to school. Hunger, disease, unemployment: that was the lot for most Cubans.

The U.S. economic war against Cuba has created more suffering for the Cuban people, with food and medicines cut off; with spare parts for cars and other machinery denied; with CIA-directed sabotage and even with a U.S.-sponsored invasion; and with the collapse of the Soviet Union removing economic support.

The Cuban government estimates that this economic war against their

country has cost their nation one trillion, 112 billion, 534 million dollars [\$1,112,534,000,000]. (cubannews.ain.cu, Sept. 25).

Yet, despite of all of that, the Cuban poor and working people and their government have created in their country a society designed to fill the needs of the people, not to fill the coffers of banks and corporations. The results are more than dramatic:

- There is almost no homelessness in Cuba. Eighty-five percent of Cubans own their own homes and pay no property taxes or interest on their mortgages. By law, mortgage payments can be no more than 10 percent of combined household income.
- Cuba's unemployment rate is only 1.8 percent. A recently developed urban agriculture program has created 350,000 jobs.
- The adult literacy rate in Cuba is 99.8 percent, almost a full percent higher than the U.S. rate. (CIA World Factbook)
- The infant mortality rate in Cuba is 4.7 per 1,000 live births. The U.S. rate is 6.0 per 1,000. (dollarsandsense.org, March/April 2009)

For more than 20 years, United Nations resolutions demanding an end to the U.S. blockade of Cuba have passed with

overwhelming majorities. The 2013 resolution in the U.N. General Assembly passed 188 to 2, with only Israel joining the U.S. in voting no. The same resolution is scheduled for October of this year, and the vote's outcome will undoubtedly be the same.

Workers in the U.S. have in increasing numbers said that they too oppose the Cuban blockade. A February 2014 poll showed that 56 percent of the people here support normalized relations with Cuba, with an even higher 63 percent of the people polled in Florida — formerly a hotbed of anti-Cuba reaction — saying so. (Huffingtonpost.com, Feb. 11)

A June poll of people in the U.S. originally from Cuba shows that 52 percent of them want an end to the embargo as well.

Even many U.S. corporations have called for an end to the blockade, since it costs them billions in lost sales to foreign competitors from Europe, Asia and Latin America.

However, mired in its own economic crises with no solution in sight, the U.S. simply cannot tolerate a successful workers' state on its own doorstep.

Only a determined struggle by workers here will end this cruel economic war against the people of Cuba. □

## Ukraine

# A brief encounter with the Kiev junta's border guards

By Greg Butterfield  
Simferopol, Crimea

*"You need a valid passport to enter Ukraine. If you are a U.S. citizen, you do not need a Ukrainian visa if you will be in Ukraine for fewer than 90 days." (Website Ukrainian Bureau of Consular Affairs)*

While visiting Simferopol, Crimea, in mid-September, I had the opportunity to visit some cities in Southeast Ukraine to interview and talk to people about the impact of the civil war and the oligarch/neoliberal/fascist coup in Kiev.

As you can see from the above quote, a U.S. passport holder is not required to have a visa to enter Ukraine for under 90 days. I was skeptical, but could not pass up the opportunity to speak with people who were bravely continuing the struggle under the junta's occupation.

I rode on an overnight sleeping train that runs from Simferopol to several cit-

ies in Southeast Ukraine, primarily transporting local working-class residents visiting their families. I crossed the Russian border with no problems, although the Russian border guards seemed a bit surprised at my presence.

Then, in the middle of the night, the train was boarded by armed Ukrainian soldiers who woke everyone and inspected our paperwork. Not armed with holstered sidearms like the Russians, mind you, but with unslung rifles.

### People face dangers in Southeast Ukraine

They took one look at my passport and ordered me into an adjoining car. None of them spoke English, and my Russian is limited to a few basic phrases. The head guy seemed to indicate that I didn't have the right paperwork. Perhaps they didn't know about U.S. passport holders not needing a visa. Or just as likely, it was the fact that I was entering Ukraine from Crimea, now part of

the Russian Federation.

In any case, I didn't feel like I was in any position to argue with them, given the language barrier and the potential danger if they suspected my mission and political views.

I was sent back to get my things and marched off the train under armed guard. I was taken into the train station at Melitopol, and then inside a large room filled with people (mostly Crimean residents) who had been pulled off trains because they did not have junta-approved paperwork.

Armed Ukrainian soldiers stood and sat around the periphery of the room. I saw other people who were removed from my train, including a senior woman carrying several heavy bags and a father holding his young, sleepy daughter.

Fortunately, they did not search my backpack, which contained my laptop and copies of Workers World. Nor did they do any kind of research on me so far

as I could tell. I was able to use my cell phone to text my location to friends back in Crimea. I stayed within the character of the naive U.S. American tourist, and they didn't challenge this.

After about an hour and a half, I and the older woman were put on a train heading back to the Russian border. Our passports were not returned to us, but given to the train steward.

Unfortunately, as I later learned, the train was not going to Simferopol. When we arrived in the town of Dzhankoy in northern Crimea, the Russian border guards returned my passport and suggested I get off there. I had to take a taxi 60 miles back to Simferopol.

While there was nothing to indicate I was ever in any real danger, the experience certainly gave me added insight into the very real dangers people in Southeast Ukraine face every day. And added respect for those who continue to resist, from exile and from underground. □

# Lessons of the Air France strike

By G. Dunkel

An airlines strike in France highlighted the French bosses' attempt to attack or evade French labor laws, which are stronger in protecting workers' rights than other countries in the European Union, let alone in the anti-labor United States. The strike also provided a lesson in the bosses' tactics aimed at dividing the working class. These two elements make a study of this strike useful for all workers battling austerity.

The French National Union of Airline Pilots (SNPL) called off its 14-day-long strike against Air France on Sept. 28, even though deep, serious issues remain. The company and union have agreed to continue negotiating.

In a statement posted on its website, the union said it called off the strike "in the interest of the passengers and the company." An hour after this post, however, the company announced it was going forward full tilt to enforce the anti-labor issues that the union had struck over. Jean-Louis Barber, president of the SNPL, said, "We are outraged by the attitude of the company, which is putting the serenity needed for the resumption of flights in danger."

Air France publicly estimates that the two-week strike cost it nearly \$350 million and it won't be able to begin full service until after Oct. 1.

Air France is a privately owned company in which the French government has a 16 percent stake. Its management had

planned to invest \$1.28 billion in its low-cost subsidiary, Transavia, to compete with budget airlines like easyJet and Ryanair and move a lot of the work outside of France.

Pilots who fly for Transavia get paid considerably less than Air France workers, work more hours and have less time off between flights.

A major issue in the strike was the pilots' demand that a single contract cover Air France and Transavia and that pilots in both continue to work under French law.

Currently, there is a major dispute in France between the federal government, with the firm support of the business community, and many of the trade unions and progressive forces, about

adopting a "pact of responsibility." This pact would increase the work week, cut holidays, make it far easier to lay workers off, and cut social security, family grants and welfare payments. The French Communist Party estimates these measures would transfer \$70 billion a year from workers' wages to bosses' profits.

The French government wants to impose this pact on every sector of the French economy, so the airlines strike was a direct challenge to the French working class for its full support.

French Prime Minister Manuel Valls attacked the union, calling the strike "unsupportable" for passengers, the company and the country. Articles in the

Continued on page 10

## In the Bronx

# Venezuela's President Maduro says revolution 'will not fall'

By Teresa Gutierrez  
Bronx, N.Y.

When the history books in the U.S. are finally written by the working class, they will write about the special relationship between the people of the Bronx, N.Y., and the Venezuelan Bolivarian Revolution.

Since the advent of the revolutionary movement ushered in by President Hugo Chávez Frias, the community of the Bronx has been the center of a rich connection between the two.

And on Sept. 24 President Nicolás Maduro of Venezuela continued that rich tradition with a rousing address to a very welcoming crowd at Hostos Community College in the Bronx.

Over 1,000 overwhelmingly Latino/a students, community activists, union members and progressives gave an exciting welcome to the President. Unlike many other such events, President Maduro entered the well-known auditorium through the back, instead of in the front through the stage as most VIPs and speakers usually do, with a cheering reception from the surprised audience.

And true to his trademark, the "Peoples President" Maduro sat with the audience in the auditorium to listen to the first part of the program. The event opened with an amazing performance by the Up Beat NYC Youth Orchestra, which is a nonprofit, community-based group modeled on El Sistema youth orchestra in Venezuela. The audience gave the youth orchestra a wonderful standing ovation.

President Maduro began his remarks by offering Up Beat a trip to Venezuela, which also brought cheers from the crowd.

Other speakers on the program included Wanda Salaman, executive Director of Mothers on the Move in the Bronx, as well as Joe Kennedy II, who talked about the fact that over a million families have been provided heat in this country thanks to the aid provided by Citgo, a subsidiary of Venezuela's oil company.

The Rev. Danilo LaChapel gave the opening invocation and talked about the inspiration the revolutionary movement in Latin America is giving to the world. He also stressed the importance of solidarity with the Haitian people.

In the audience were former New York City Councilmember Charles Barron; Rukia Lumumba, the daughter of late Jackson, Miss., Mayor Chokwe Lumumba; Natasha Lycia Bannan, the president of the National Lawyers Guild; Puerto Rican and Cuban solidarity activists; and many revolutionaries from throughout the area.

### President Maduro speaks truth to power

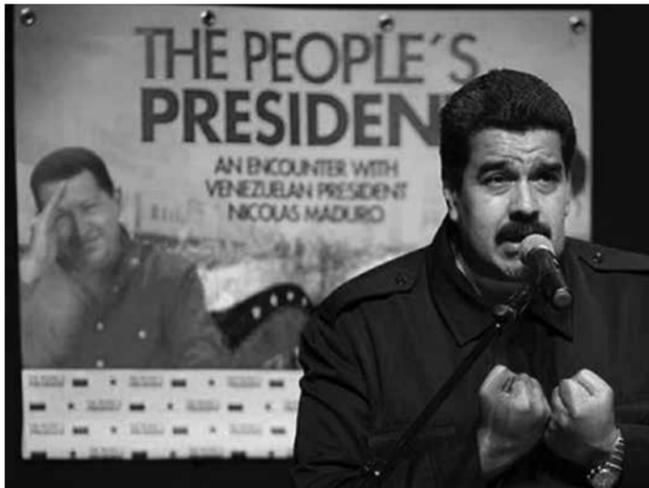
It was indeed very important that the solidarity movement hear directly from the president of Venezuela.

U.S. imperialism has ratcheted up its war against the Bolivarian Revolution with constant defamation and slander. With the unfortunate and untimely death of President Chávez, Venezuela's enemies expected the revolution to founder.

The bourgeois media have been constant in unfavorably comparing President Maduro to Chávez, with the word "uncharismatic" becoming almost synonymous with Maduro.

But President Maduro clearly blew that theory off the charts with his presentation Sept. 24, which received numerous standing ovations.

As President Maduro defended the gains of the Bolivarian Revolution and the progress of the countries in ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance, he addressed the



Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro speaks during a Bronx, N.Y., meeting, Sept. 24.

media's defamation campaign. He pointed out that due to the demands of running the country, he had almost decided not to travel to attend the U.N. General Assembly events.

But the Sunday, Sept. 21 editorials in both the New York Times and the Washington Post were so scurrilous and vitriolic against him, he decided that he "had to come."

President Maduro told the crowd that in the Washington Post editorial, he was referred to as an "economically illiterate former bus driver."

When he said, "I am proud to have been a worker of the Caracas metro, to have been a day-laborer and now be president; I'll let everyone at the Washington Post know," the entire crowd immediately rose

to its feet in thundering applause and cheers.

"How many [false] things are said daily of Venezuela among mass Western media?" he continued. "How many lies are fabricated in relation to the lives of the noble people of Venezuela, whose only sin was to aspire and dream of a new society, by constructing new socioeconomic and political models which surpass capitalism?"

"To the Department of State, the Pentagon, the National Communication Association, to the White House, I ask you now to rectify the erratic political abuse of Venezuela and our revolution, because our revolution will not fall. On the contrary, it is rooted in popular, democratic constitutionality ... and we have the reason and the right to continue it."

Other highlights of President Maduro's speech were when he called for Puerto Rico to join ALBA and for the U.S. government to free political prisoner Oscar Lopez Rivera. The crowd went wild then, especially the countless Puerto Ricans in the audience who had brought banners with Oscar's face on them.

President Maduro also expressed solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and called for the freedom of the remaining Cuban Five prisoners.

In the audience was a delegation of Boston school bus drivers from Steelworkers Union Local 8751, who had traveled the long distance to welcome and greet President Maduro. Andre Francois, Steve Kirschbaum and Steve Gillis made the trip to express their solidarity not only with the Bolivarian Revolution but with a former bus driver.

Andre Francois was selected to sit in the VIP section and meet President Maduro when the Venezuelans in charge of the event were told that representatives of a bus drivers' union would be present.

Francois told Workers World that he wished he had been able to say a few words to the event. Organizers who secured tickets for the bus drivers promised that next time they would definitely work to make that happen. □



Venezuelan President Maduro, a former bus driver, was welcomed by leaders of the Boston School Bus Union fighting for reinstatement against the union-busting company Veolia. Pictured above is Andre Francois, second from the left, and Steve Gillis, fourth from left.

## Venezuelans defend Bolivarian Revolution

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Venezuela is in the midst of the difficult task of constructing the path to socialism. Like any living process, it does not go forward in a straight line. It instead has advances and setbacks, mistakes and corrections. The important thing is the continuous effort of the people in propelling the construction of a fair system to once and for all supplant the violent capitalism still prevalent in Venezuela.

Since the tragic death of President Hugo Chávez in March 2013, Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution has been immersed in a battle against a constant, immense destabilizing campaign that the right-wing opposition has initiated, exploiting the profound grief of the people after the death of their beloved leader. This opposition, which the U.S. has always aided and promoted, has organized street blockades called "guarimbas," murders, street violence, media

campaigns hostile to the government, smuggling, speculation and shortages of necessities, and attempts to assassinate leaders, including President Nicolás Maduro, who has inherited the difficult task of succeeding an immensely popular and charismatic world leader.

When the news media in the United States reported the violence last February that left 43 people dead, they used disinformation to blame young chavistas while promoting the "right to peaceful demonstration" for youthful opponents of the Bolivarian government. Now even the Colombian government has exposed this big lie, when on Sept. 4 it deported two young Venezuelans. The two were in Bogotá, Colombia's capital, obtaining weapons and ammunition and receiving training from Colombian paramilitaries linked to rightist former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, infamous for his criminal links.

"The video reveals plans to hire snip-

ers and explosives experts to carry out terrorist activities in various regions of Venezuela, in addition to executing a series of assassinations and setting off explosives in public and private spaces." (Telesur, Sept. 26)

With this evidence of videos and photos, the Venezuelan government has once again succeeded in breaking up this latest violent attack from the rightist opposition.

The Colombian government's cooperation is important because it sets back U.S. plans to use Colombia in its intervention to destroy the Bolivarian Revolution. Remember that during the administration of Álvaro Uribe, who was a close U.S. ally, 100 paramilitaries went to Caracas in order to kill then-President Hugo Chávez.

Under the Juan Manuel Santos administration in Colombia, however — who we should not forget is also a rightist, and was the defense minister under Uribe who ordered the bombing of the Colombian revolutionary FARC-EP (Revolution-

ary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army) camp on the border of Ecuador — there has nevertheless been more cooperation with the Venezuelan government.

Until recently, many of the staples used in Venezuela and significant amounts of gasoline were smuggled across the border from Colombia. This illegal smuggling increased the food shortages that the Venezuelan rightists fomented in order to sow unrest and dissatisfaction among the Bolivarian people. The rightists hoped to stir rebellion against the Maduro government. Now joint action by both governments at the border has helped to reduce the smuggling.

### Destabilizing acts aren't stopping

But the destabilizing activities have not stopped. If anything, they are expected to increase. The U.S.-backed media campaign includes the rumor that

*Continued on page 11*

# WORKERS WORLD

## editorial

### Free Sundiata Acoli!

Political prisoner Sundiata Acoli, aka Clark Edward Squire, is scheduled to be released on parole after spending more than 40 years in a New Jersey maximum security prison. A New Jersey state appeals court explained in a 28-page ruling on Sept. 29 that the state parole board had dismissed evidence favorable to Acoli and given undue consideration to past events, including a prior probation “violation.” The court also cited positive psychological test results.

The state attorney general’s office announced plans to seek a stay of the ruling on behalf of the state police. If a stay is granted, Acoli’s release will once again be postponed, as it was in 1993 and 2004. The parole board said they had denied him parole due to his political activism and affiliations. He is currently incarcerated in an Otisville, N.Y., prison.

Acoli is a former member of the Black Liberation Army. Along with comrades Assata Shakur, aka Joanne Chesimard, and Zayd Shakur, Acoli was illegally stopped on the New Jersey Turnpike by the state police in May 1973. A shootout occurred, resulting in the fatalities of Zayd Shakur and a police officer. Both Assata Shakur and Acoli, who were wounded, were convicted of the police officer’s murder and given life sentences in 1974. Shakur was able to escape to Cuba and has lived there since 1984.

The New Jersey police and government subsequently placed a \$2 million bounty on Shakur’s head for her forced return.

Acoli is one of hundreds of U.S. po-

litical prisoners who have been unjustly incarcerated for decades. Their main “crime” has been advocating for the freedom of nationally oppressed peoples from the yoke of institutionalized racism and repression at home and imperialism abroad. Acoli became a target of the terrorist FBI counterintelligence program, or COINTELPRO, which committed acts of infiltration and genocide against national liberation movements like the Black Panther Party, the BLA and the American Indian Movement beginning in the 1960s. Acoli was also a member of the New York Panther 21, who were acquitted on May 13, 1971, when a jury saw through the government’s frame-up after only deliberating for 45 minutes.

While the news of Acoli’s impending release is cause for joy for activists and revolutionaries, the struggle to win his freedom is not over. We know that the state attorney general and police agencies will do everything they can to overturn the appeals court ruling.

Therefore, the movement must remain vigilant to keep the pressure on from below to ensure that Sundiata Acoli is finally able to walk through the prison gates to be reunited with his family, friends and the movement. The truth is that he should never have spent one day in prison — similar to other political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, the MOVE 9, Imam Jamil Al-Amin (aka H. Rap Brown) and the Cuban 5 — much less having 40 precious years stolen from his life.

Sundiata Acoli is now 77 years old. □

### Hate crime reform: snake oil cure for LGBTQ oppression

*Continued from page 3*

and prevent us from rising up united in struggle against our common enemies: the capitalist class and their police lapdogs.

The disproportionately large number of unemployed LGBTQ people helps pad the capitalists’ reserve army of labor, which enables bosses to keep wages low for workers whom they employ. After all, why should a boss give you the raise you’ve been asking for when he or she can simply fire you and replace you with any of millions of unemployed workers at minimum wage?

And the steady stream of LGBTQ people, especially those of color, being locked in prisons means big business for

the increasingly privatized prison-industrial complex.

Our oppression at the hands of cops, racists and bigots helps the rich get richer. No amount of enhanced policing, extended prison sentences or legislative reform can change this. Not as long as the rich continue calling the shots.

As we in the Philadelphia LGBTQ community continue to cope in the aftermath of this latest violent attack, we must not be fooled into thinking that cops and politicians are here to help us.

Only by organizing ourselves and uniting with our allies can we mount an effective struggle against our common oppressors. There can be no salvation for us as long as the rich remain in power. □

### Lessons of the Air France strike

*Continued from page 8*

New York Times and Wall Street Journal joined the attack on the workers, emphasizing how the French “like to strike,” especially those French workers with higher wages, like pilots. The press in the Netherlands — Air France has a Dutch division — also ran articles along similar lines. (Le Point, Sept. 24)

#### Attempt to split working class

But beyond the normal attacks on a union from the corporate media and capitalist politicians, there was a direct attempt to provoke a split among Air

France’s workers.

According to the CGT (General Confederation of Labor) section that represents a number of the non-flight Air France personnel — mechanics, baggage handlers, gate workers, cleaners — some of the unions who had Air France workers as members, issued statements after the first week of the strike saying that they couldn’t support the strike because the pilots made too much money.

During the second week of the strike, unsigned leaflets began to circulate among Air France workers, thousands of stickers appeared, banners (unsigned)

## U.S. bombs Syria

*Continued from page 1*

fighters from the so-called Free Syrian Army. This seems ludicrous, and would be laughable, unless we remember what Washington does when faced with an unsolvable problem: It makes a bigger problem. In this case, it leads to sending in U.S. troops and its biggest guns.

#### Stop the U.S. war drive!

It would be a serious error if anyone from the U.S. anti-war movement believed that the U.S. might be doing something progressive by confronting ISIS in that region. All Obama’s claims of rescuing religious minorities, of making a “humanitarian” intervention, of stopping ISIS’s atrocities have already been exposed as pretexts for protecting and expanding U.S. oil interests in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan and for placing U.S. troops and bases back in Iraq.

Obama’s grand “anti-ISIS” alliance is made up of Europe’s former colonial powers, on the one hand, and Arab tyrannies that murder and jail their own dissidents, on the other. Even if you hate ISIS, you have to admit that these states, and especially the U.S. itself, have over the last 23 years slaughtered millions of noncombatants across the region. ISIS has a long way to go to catch up with the U.S. massacres by bombs and sanctions.

One of the most respected revolutionary leaders in the region, Hassan Nas-

rallah of Hezbollah in Lebanon, argued against Lebanon’s joining the U.S.-led coalition although Hezbollah fights ISIS. Speaking on Sept. 25, Nasrallah noted that the U.S. “is the source of terrorism in the world ... is the ultimate supporter of terrorist Zionist entity ... fabricated or played a role in fabricating these terrorist Takfiri movements ... [is] the side that struck Japan with nuclear bombs, committed atrocities in the Vietnam War, has stood next to Netanyahu in the 50-day-war against Gaza and is not morally eligible to present itself as a fighter of terrorism or as a leader of an international coalition to target terrorism.”

From Damascus on Sept. 24, the Syrian Communist Party issued a statement calling the U.S. bombing a “flagrant violation of international law that violates the national sovereignty of an independent state ... under a pretext of fighting terrorist organizations. The same organisations were created in the laboratories of imperialist intelligence circles, [e]specially the British and U.S. intelligence agencies, with active contribution of Zionist circles, to create a pretext for global imperialist intervention and aggression against countries of the region.”

Anti-imperialists in the U.S. should be as resolute as their comrades abroad who, while fighting ISIS on the ground, recognize the reactionary role of the U.S. imperialist coalition and its criminal assault inside Syria. □

## OCT 8 PROTEST WORLD BUSINESS FORUM

*Send A Message to the 1%:*

### RAISE OUR WAGES! \$15 and a UNION NOW!

#### Stop the War on Workers and the Poor!

The Assembly Against Poverty will coincide with the World Business Forum’s keynote speech by former head of the Federal Reserve Bank, Ben Bernanke. Remember him? He’s the guy who decided it was more important to bail out Wall Street, than working and poor people.

#### Attend the Assembly Against Poverty

The Assembly will feature low-wage workers; homeless people; unemployed young workers; women who make up the majority of low wage workers; retirees who are having their pensions drastically cut or destroyed; people with disabilities; immigrants who are forced to live in the shadows; LGBTQ workers & all whose lives have been made unbearable by the 1%.

**WED ▶ OCT 8 @ 4 pm**

**In front of the World Business Forum**

Radio City Music Hall 50th St. & 6th Ave, NYC

peoplespowerassemblies.org

Initiating groups: Peoples Power Assembly • Occu-Evolve • Int’l Working Women’s Coalition. • NY Coalition of Black Trade Unionists • May 1st Coalition for Worker & Immigrant Rights • Laundry Workers Center • Chris Silvera, Sec. Tres. Local 808 Teamsters 808 • Colia Clark • American Islamic Committee for Women & Children • Parents to Improve School Transportation-PIST • Community Labor United for Postal Jobs & Services-CLUPJS • Peoples Organization for Progress • Rob Robinson • Community Labor United for Postal Jobs & Services • East Harlem /EL Barrio Community Action-EHECA • Fight Imperialism, Stand Together-FIST • Egyptian Americans for Democracy & Human Rights • United National Antiwar Coalition - UNAC • Int’l Action Center

were hung on walls, all attacking the “privileged” workers who were threatening the jobs of the lower paid workers. On Sept. 25, hundreds of workers joined a walkout, lasting about an hour, at a major Air France work site. Technically, this walkout violated French labor law, which requires 48 hours’ notice to strike.

French television and some of the right-wing press called this walkout “a strike against the strike” and some blogs claimed that the CGT and Force Ouvrière, another union, organized it.

CGT Air France contradicted this claim with a series of statements on its

website supporting the right of all workers to strike and pointing out the facts that prove Air France management organized the walkout. The CGT raised its own position that it would have preferred that the SNPL raise more political demands and join a broader coalition of unions whose members are affected by this austerity move to lower costs by lowering wages and cutting workers protections.

But the CGT still strongly supported the SNPL’s struggle and strongly opposed the management’s attempt to divide the workers. □

# Ebola crisis requires global response

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

Sept. 29 — A special session at the 69th U.N. General Assembly discussed the spread of the Ebola virus in several West African states on Sept. 25. African Union Commission Chair Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma and World Health Organization Director-General Margaret Chan spoke on the worsening crisis and the need for assistance from the international community to effectively address the burgeoning impact of the disease, which has killed more than 3,100 people since March.

A U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response was initiated. The agency will establish an office in Accra, Ghana, on Sept. 29, which will coordinate relief and assistance programs aimed at the three most-affected states: Sierra Leone, Guinea-Conakry and Liberia.

Ebola cases have been reported in Senegal and Nigeria as well, with both governments saying the outbreak is under control. Ebola is reported to have infected some people in the northern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), although it was claimed that the outbreak there is unrelated to the virus strain that has spread so rapidly in West Africa.

## Epidemic could impact millions

The U.S.-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sounded the alarm, saying if the outbreak was not seriously addressed, there could be up to 1.4 million cases by early 2015. Despite reports on this Ebola epidemic, the Western industrialized states have not responded rapidly or robustly.

On Sept. 29 the Associated Press wrote: "The needs of the outbreak have continually outstripped projections: WHO says

around 1,500 treatment beds have been built or are in the works, but that still leaves a gap of more than 2,100 beds. Between 1,000 and 2,000 international health care workers are needed, and they and local doctors and nurses will require millions of disposable protective suits to stay safe. Thousands of home hygiene kits are also being flown in to help families protect themselves at home."

Dlamini-Zuma reported on efforts already underway to provide health care professionals and logistical support, recognizing such humanitarian organizations as Doctors Without Borders and the International Committee of the Red Cross. She noted that an AU Ebola Outbreak in West Africa (AUEOWA) group had been established.

Much more needs to be done to prevent the spread of the virus and to effectively treat the infected thousands. Because of the high mortality rate, support services will be needed for affected families and many children will be orphaned.

## Relate medical aid to development

What is obvious about Ebola's spread is the lack of medical personnel and infrastructure in the impacted states. Liberia and Sierra Leone have undergone civil wars over the last two decades, displacing millions and leaving tremendous social problems, which subsequent governments could not effectively stem.

After breaking with French imperialism between 1958 and 1984 under the Democratic Party led by President Ahmed Sekou Toure, Guinea fell victim to neocolonialism after its founder's death; then a military coup placed the country back under Paris and Washington's domination. Unrest and military coups have hampered the mineral-rich nation from providing resources to build its internal

infrastructure.

Dlamini-Zuma told the U.N. that more medical personnel from AUEOWA would be deployed to the three most severely struck states. "This includes medical specialists from countries such as Uganda and the DRC that have dealt with Ebola before. We shall be sending further teams to Sierra Leone and Guinea, but ... we need hundreds more volunteers." (AU Statement on Ebola Crisis, Sept. 25)

Moreover, Dlamini-Zuma stressed that the immediate crisis must be approached with the objectives of developing African health care systems and research institutions. Treatment methods and identifying trends of disease transmissions are essential in the fight to eradicate the outbreak.

"The Global Coalition to be launched today must look at all these immediate and urgent issues," Dlamini-Zuma noted. Moreover, "effective disease control is about having strong public health systems in place, with access to health care for all and institutions at national, regional and continental levels to share information on diseases."

Granma International reported on Sept. 26 that Cuban Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla told the U.N. session on Ebola: "The General Assembly's unanimous approval of Resolution A/RES/69/1 on September 19 is a clear demonstration of a universal awareness of the need to provide an immediate response to this disaster using all necessary resources."

Rodriguez explained, This is "to prevent it from becoming a humanitarian crisis with unpredictable consequences for a continent which has been historically ignored and ... which presents serious social problems and underdevelopment which have allowed for the emergence and spread of the disease. Human, material and financial resources are required to tackle Ebola, but also to ensure the development of Africa."

## Stop 'medical apartheid'

In a Sept. 28 Washington Post blog, Karen Attiah said that no African physicians infected with Ebola have been evacuated for treatment to the United States. However, several white medical personnel were immediately sent back to the U.S. for treatment and all have recovered. Attiah stressed that the West African states are already suffering from medical personnel shortages. The deaths and sickness of some leading physicians in Sierra Leone and Liberia are worsening the overall crisis.

"Very recently, Dr. Olivet Buck, a Sierra Leonean doctor, died after the World Health Organization denied a request that she be transported to Germany for treatment," wrote Attiah. "In July, Dr. Sheik Humaar Khan, an eminent physician who headed up Sierra Leone's Ebola response, died after negotiations for his evacuation."

Complaints have already been leveled against Western institutional responses to the crisis. Attiah noted, "The U.S. Agency for International Development came under fire briefly after it was reported that the field hospital it was set-

ting up in Monrovia [Liberia] was intended to treat only foreign workers. The agency now says that the facility will treat health workers of all nationalities."

Attiah pointed out, "On Sunday [Sept. 28], health officials reported that Liberia's chief medical officer, Dr. Bernice T. Dahn, has been placed under quarantine after her assistant died from Ebola on Thursday. Sierra Leone officials have criticized the WHO for its sluggishness on decisions to evacuate their country's infected doctors."

Attiah called for the rejection of travel bans and other forms of isolation regarding impacted West African states. She noted, "Health workers must be provided with adequate protective gear. We cannot allow 'medical apartheid' to characterize the international treatment of the African medical personnel and health workers from Europe or the United States."

The writer then rightly pointed out, "After all, the African doctors will be the ones to be on the front lines to help their countries against malaria, child mortality, malnutrition and other diseases that threaten African nations but not foreign workers. The African doctors fighting Ebola are heroes, just as much as any foreign volunteers. We cannot leave them behind to die."

Even the Wall Street Journal reported that the U.S. military response to the outbreak has not yet proven to be effective. A Sept. 29 article reveals, "The American military effort against history's deadliest Ebola outbreak is taking shape in West Africa, but concerns are mounting that the pace isn't fast enough to check a virus that is spreading at a terrifying clip."

The same article states that initial teams are working on airport runways and not supplying medical treatment. They have been cutting down grass for the construction of a field facility. "While this team levels the earth, superiors hash out the still uncertain details of the American intervention here."

## International mobilization required

The problem of the Ebola virus outbreak must be brought to the top of U.S. and other countries' agendas. Unless organizations concerned about the liberation and sovereignty of the oppressed former colonial states come to the fore with a program of action to address the crisis, the outcome will cause many more deaths.

As with the HIV epidemic of the 1980s and 1990s, transnational corporations will attempt to profit from the medical disasters that primarily impact the working class, oppressed and poor people of the world. Supplying protective gear and patents for medications and vaccines will provide pharmaceutical firms with opportunities to reap billions of dollars in sales.

The Ebola crisis must be approached from the perspective that the most impacted countries are those in West Africa, which have been the victims of centuries of slavery, colonialism and neocolonialism. The genuine liberation of Africa is essential for eradication of infectious disease and the construction of adequate health care infrastructures in the immediate future. □

# Venezuelans defend Bolivarian Revolution

*Continued from page 9*

Venezuela will default on its foreign debt in early October. On Sept. 5, Ricardo Hausmann, an economics professor who directs the Center for International Development at Harvard and was former reactionary planning minister for Venezuela and chief economist at the Bank for Inter-American Development, raised this in an opinion column in Project Syndicate. Using half-truths and conjecture, under the title "Should Venezuela Default?" Hausmann sowed doubt that Venezuela is able to pay its international obligations.

To this attack, President Maduro answered Hausmann: "I have directed the Attorney General, and I've spoken to the prosecutor to initiate charges against you because you are engaged in a campaign to harm our country. ... We have the evidence in your statements and articles. ... [Y]ou are the advisor, Ricardo Hausmann, of all these groups that want to do economic damage to Venezuela." (elnuevoherald.com)

Another campaign has been to plant rumors of an epidemic, perhaps of Ebola, which, according to the opposition media, has shown up in the state of Aragua and which the government is hiding from the population, putting them at risk of contamination.

The Bolivarian government and the organized population have unmasked both campaigns. It is no secret that there

are problems in the economy. The excessive use of foreign exchange at low cost by Venezuelan oligarchs who are still the owners of marketing organizations is one big one. This is the great challenge for the revolution and its people, which have the task of solving it.

However, that same Venezuela — threatened by the international right, whose leader and its media are headquartered in Washington — has given a lesson in international solidarity with its assistance to the Palestinian people of Gaza.

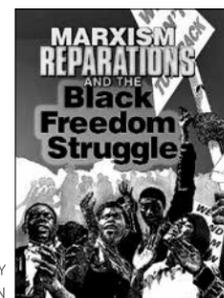
Within Venezuela, the popular struggle to wrest power from the transnational corporations was expressed when workers, with government help, took over the U.S.-based Clorox Company. Clorox had closed its doors on Sept. 22 without prior notice to either the workers or the government. The workers received the following voice message from Clorox's president: "We're leaving Venezuela, and have deposited the liquidation settlement in an account, whether you like it or not, because the factory is not going to function any longer; that's all I have tell you."

In response on Sept. 26, YVKE Mundial reported, "The workers themselves chose the administrative board which the government will assist with a plan to reopen the factory, in order to boost productivity and ensure the right to work for the human capital that is integral to this company." □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper.  
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GRAPHIC BY SAHU BARRON

## El sexismo y el juego de la culpa

**Editorial Workers World-Mundo Obrero  
23 de septiembre de 2014**

Recientes revelaciones sobre atletas y el abuso doméstico implica que estos horribles actos son particulares de la cultura del deporte en Estados Unidos. Esto no es así. Este fenómeno se debe a la opresión de la mujer en la sociedad de clases, que coexiste con el racismo, la explotación de trabajadores y otras formas de desigualdad y discriminación.

Existe abuso doméstico, junto a otras formas de violencia contra la mujer, degradación y trato desigual. ¿De dónde proceden las actitudes sociales que perpetúan esta opresión? Están integradas en el capitalismo. Como dijo Karl Marx hace más de 150 años, “Las ideas de la clase dominante son en cada época las ideas dominantes”.

¿Cómo se promulgan las actitudes sobre el estatus social de las mujeres por los súper-ricos y el gobierno? El Congreso no ha aprobado la Enmienda sobre Derechos Iguales o la Ley de Salarios Justos, consecuentemente las empresas siguen pagando menos a las mujeres que a los hombres y pagan mucho menos a las afroamericanas y latinas. El Congreso tampoco ha aumentado el salario mínimo, que afecta a millones de mujeres trabajadoras, especialmente las de color y las madres solteras. Los estados están socavando los derechos de la mujer, cerrando centros de salud y recortando los fondos destinados a refugios para mujeres maltratadas.

Las agresiones y el acoso sexual son ocurrencias comunes dentro de los departamentos gubernamentales, en los trabajos y en los recintos universitarios; son pocos los agresores que son sancionados.

El ejército de EUA se niega a procesar miles de casos de agresión sexual dentro de sus filas, y ha derrotado los intentos para remediar esta situación, a pesar de los valientes esfuerzos de las defensoras de los

derechos de la mujer.

En su nuevo libro, “Off the Sidelines” [Desde el Margen] la senadora por Nueva York Kirsten Gillibrand cita incidentes de acoso sexual que ella enfrentó de sus colegas en el Congreso.

A. Hope Jahren, profesora de geobiología, escribió el 20 de septiembre en el New York Times que una cuarta parte de las mujeres científicas encuestadas reportaron haber sido agredidas sexualmente mientras trabajaban fuera de los laboratorios. “Los agresores eran predominantemente altos funcionarios dentro del equipo de investigación”.

Cientos de mujeres bomberas en el Servicio Forestal de EUA presentaron una demanda legal en agosto contra el Departamento de Agricultura, alegando discriminación en el trabajo, acoso y abuso sexual por parte de compañeros de trabajo, lo que los funcionarios del organismo no detuvieron, informó la misma edición del Times.

Comentarios degradantes sobre las mujeres, especialmente de bajos ingresos y mujeres oprimidas, inmigrantes y jóvenes por políticos derechistas y presentadores de televisión se repiten sin cesar en televisión e internet.

“Colorlines” informó que los presentadores de “Fox & Friends” se rieron cuando Ray Rice golpeó a su entonces novia, Janay Palmer, como si el abuso doméstico fuera una broma. (8 de septiembre)

La cultura estadounidense promulga constantemente la degradación, cosificación y violencia contra las mujeres en películas, televisión, videojuegos e internet.

### **Una de cada tres mujeres en EUA afectadas por abuso doméstico**

Aunque la degradación de la mujer es parte de la cultura del deporte, su extrema manifestación de abuso físico no es única en el mundo del deporte. Es moneda corri-

ente en la sociedad estadounidense y existe a través de clases, comunidades y regiones. Las/os expertos dicen que un tercio de las mujeres en EUA (42,4 millones) han sido física o sexualmente asaltadas o acechadas por su pareja.

Sin embargo, el público no ve la cobertura por la prensa del abuso que se produce en los hogares de los súper-ricos. Rara vez los abusadores privilegiados son vilipendiados en la prensa. Sin embargo, ya que el racismo está siempre al acecho tras bastidores, los medios se enfocan en el mal comportamiento de figuras del deporte, especialmente contra atletas negros.

¿Dónde están los titulares sobre los ejecutivos, banqueros, jefes militares, funcionarios públicos, políticos, policías, magnates de los medios o los profesionales blancos que golpean a sus esposas o parejas? Su comportamiento abusivo sucede a puertas cerradas, no salpicadas a través de los titulares. ¿Alguno pierde su puesto de trabajo por ello?

El juez federal Mark Fuller de Alabama “supuestamente” golpeó brutalmente a su esposa Kelli Fuller, en agosto. Esta persona nombrada vitaliciamente por el ex presidente George W. Bush, todavía está en la banca a pesar de los pedidos de renuncia.

Las discrepancias en la cobertura de los medios y las desigualdades judiciales se examinan en el informe del Proyecto de Sentencia del 2014, “Raza y Castigo.” Dice que los medios presentan a “afro-americanos y latinos de manera diferente a los blancos” y “sobre-representan a las minorías raciales como sospechosos de crimen”. El informe critica las “políticas delictivas que se dirigen de forma desproporcionada contra las personas de color”, que pueden fomentar “una sensación de inmunidad legal entre los blancos”. Verdad.

Subyacente a los deportes profesionales es la búsqueda de ganancias. Sean o no los propietarios o funcionarios de los equipos

racistas o sexistas, esto es ignorado por años – siempre y cuando las mega-ganancias continúen llegando. El racismo público del ex propietario del equipo Clippers, Donald Sterling trajo tanta presión de los jugadores y aficionados que se vio obligado a vender el equipo. El propietario del equipo Atlanta Hawks, Bruce Levenson y su gerente, Danny Ferry, también se metieron en problemas por sus diatribas racistas y tendrán que irse.

El Comisionado de la Liga Nacional de Fútbol, Roger Goodell, está en la cuerda floja por no actuar sobre los incidentes de violencia doméstica de los jugadores. Presionado por los fanáticos incluyendo muchas mujeres y patrocinadores corporativos que temen perder ganancias, Goodell está agresivamente penalizando a los jugadores. El 15 de septiembre nombró a cuatro mujeres ejecutivas para asesorar a la Liga en el manejo de la violencia doméstica.

La imagen de la NFL se ha deteriorado; ha perdido popularidad entre las mujeres, que son importantes para las ganancias de la liga. La NFL está buscando “nuevos consumidores para su mercancía” con el objetivo de aumentar su ingreso anual de \$10 mil millones. (NYT, 18 de septiembre)

Goodell debió hace años integrar mujeres a la toma de decisiones en la liga NFL sobre el abuso doméstico, afirman muchas mujeres. Nita Chaudhary, co-fundadora de UltraViolet, organización en defensa de la mujer, dice que la NFL tiene un “largo camino por recorrer antes de que demuestre... que toma la violencia doméstica y asalto sexual en serio”. (NBC News, 15 de septiembre) Ese grupo y la Organización Nacional de la Mujer (NOW), entre otras, están exigiendo el despido de Goodell.

La página web del NOW’s dice: “El fútbol como deporte no tiene la culpa de la violencia doméstica y la amplia tolerancia cultural a la violencia contra las mujeres. La institución es un producto de un problema cultural más amplio, pero eso no significa que no pueda jugar un papel muy importante en el cambio de la cultura de la violencia”. (16 de septiembre) □

## Aumenta apoyo sindical para los Cinco Cubanos

**Por Cheryl LaBash**

La sala de reuniones en la planta baja de la sede del Sindicato de Empleados de Servicio (SEIU por sus siglas en inglés) estaba llena el 13 de septiembre para el estreno de la exposición de las nuevas acuarelas de uno de los Cinco Cubanos, Antonio Guerrero, seguido por música, charlas, estreno de un video animado de tres minutos “Descubra a los Cinco”, y un panel de oradores, entre ellos el Jefe de la Sección de Intereses de Cuba en Washington, embajador José Ramón Cabañas.

Guerrero creó las pinturas para conmemorar el 16º año de injusta encarcelación estadounidense de los Cinco Cubanos. Guerrero, Ramón Labañino y Gerardo Hernández siguen detenidos en cárceles en EUA. Fernando González y René González han regresado a Cuba después de cumplir sus condenas y están totalmente comprometidos con la organización a nivel mundial para liberar a sus camaradas.

Gerardo Hernández — vengativamente condenado a dos cadenas perpetuas más 15 años — escribió desde la prisión en Victorville, California: “No puedo reiterar lo suficiente la importancia de que una vez más ustedes hagan actividades en la capital estadounidense para pedir nuestra liberación. Este es el lugar para seguir

diciendo la verdad sobre los Cinco. Este es el lugar para que las autoridades estadounidenses sepan que ya es la hora de corregir la grave parodia de justicia que nuestro caso representa. . .

“En nombre de los Cinco. . . me gustaría dar las gracias al SEIU por facilitar su auditorio, demostrando una vez más el importante papel que tienen los sindicatos en el movimiento de solidaridad llamando por nuestra liberación”. (TheCuban5.org)

Valarie Long, vice presidenta ejecutiva internacional de la División de Servicios de Propiedad de la SEIU, dio la bienvenida a nombre de las/os 2,2 millones de miembros, la presidenta internacional Mary Kay Henry y los oficiales de la SEIU. “Yo creo que si no miramos a los temas a nivel mundial, vamos a estar perdidos aquí en EUA”, declaró Long. La División de Servicios de Propiedad representa más de 400.000 trabajadoras/es en toda América del Norte.

Long dijo que los Cinco Cubanos eran desconocidos en su círculo de amistades y familiares antes de que les dijera que iba a hablar en este evento. Y cuando se enteraron, su reacción indicó que entendían la injusticia.

Mencionando a Michael Brown y Amadou Diallo y todas las atrocidades que suceden aquí en EUA, Long dijo “No tenemos la decencia de reconocer que las personas de otros países tienen el dere-

cho a tener soberanía. . . No es justo que estos hombres hayan estado en prisión por tantos años. . . Podemos actuar mejor. Estoy segura de que con más solidaridad del movimiento sindical, lo haremos mejor y estos hombres serán liberados... Vamos a asegurarnos de que el presidente [Barack] Obama y todos los poderes existentes escuchen nuestras voces”.

El panel del 13 de septiembre incluía a Stephen Kimber cuyo libro, “Lo que hay al otro lado: la verdadera historia de los Cinco Cubanos” acaba de ganar el Premio Evelyn Richardson 2014 de no-ficción en los Premios de la Costa de Este de Canadá; Yeidckol Polevnsky, ex-vice presidenta del Senado de México; y una declaración de Ann Wright, activista contra la guerra y ex-coronel del ejército de EUA. Piero Gleijeses, profesor de la Universidad Johns Hopkins y autor experto sobre el papel de Cuba en África, señaló que Cuba sacrificó la posibilidad de poner fin al bloqueo estadounidense al adherirse a su principio contra el apartheid.

La reunión pública tuvo lugar al final de jornadas de visitas al Congreso y después de un piquete frente a la Casa Blanca, seguido por una recepción en Impacto Hub DC y una reunión comunitaria organizada por el Comité por la Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos del Takoma Park. El Comité Internacional por la Libertad de los Cinco

Cubanos cumplió el tercer “5 Días por los 5 Cubanos” en Washington solo unos meses antes, en junio.

Los niveles más altos del movimiento sindical en Bretaña e Irlanda, y en muchos otros países reconocen la injusticia cometida contra los Cinco Cubanos y sus familias. Sin poder escuchar directamente de los familiares, ese reconocimiento entre las/os trabajadoras en EUA ha sido lento.

Desde 2008, el movimiento sindical en Bretaña e Irlanda se ha puesto en contacto con sus contrapartes en EUA. Tony Woodley, ex secretario general de “Unir la Unión” visitó a Gerardo Hernández y en 2011 habló en Los Ángeles en la primera reunión auspiciada por sindicatos en EUA para crear conciencia sobre el caso. Ese sindicato británico e irlandés cuenta con 1,4 millones de miembros.

El evento del 13 de septiembre ha sido resultado del acercamiento a líderes sindicales y sus bases a través de mesas de información en la Convención de SEIU 2012 y la distribución de folletos en el sindicato de estibadores, en la Convención de Mujeres de Acero 2013, una reunión organizada por las/os trabajadoras/es postales en Washington, y la Convención 2014 de las/os Trabajadores del Acero.

*Para ver fotos y más información vaya a theCuban5.org.*