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Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 56, No. 41 Oct. 16, 2014 \$1

NYC Send-off



**Solidarity Caravan
to the Mexico
and Texas Borders**

For more information see page 10

OCT. 10-13 CONVERGENCE: STAND WITH FERGUSON

By Monica Moorehead

This writer was part of a delegation that visited Ferguson, Mo., Aug. 21-25.

Thousands of activists from community, political, youth and student, labor and faith-based groups, locally and from around the country, are expected to converge on the St. Louis area, especially on Ferguson, Mo., for marches, direct actions, assemblies and cultural events Oct. 10-13. They will speak in one voice to demand justice for Michael Brown and all victims of state repression. Solidarity actions are expected to take place in many cities the same weekend.

At a march and rally scheduled in St. Louis on Oct. 11, Brown's mother, Leslie McSpadden, is scheduled to speak, along with John Crawford III's mother, Tressa Sherrod. Crawford was fatally shot in a Walmart store outside of Dayton, Ohio, on Aug. 5, just four days before Brown was killed. A grand jury refused to indict the police officer who killed the 22-year-old for holding an unloaded toy BB gun, despite the fact that his killing was caught on the store's surveillance tape. Daily protests are still taking place in Ohio against this outrageous travesty of justice.

On Oct. 13, a Moral Monday civil disobedience action will take place in St. Louis at an undisclosed venue. According to the organizers, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. We're taking our cue from the fearless activists in North Carolina who were inspired to fight back against right-wing attacks there and across the South. They kicked off the Moral Mondays movement for progressive change by engaging in civil disobedience every week, reminding all of us that these actions have been a part of every major movement for change. We'll be hosting a series of actions throughout the Ferguson and St. Louis area." (fergusonoctober.org)

Training sessions for civil disobedience actions will commence on Oct. 9. A countywide coalition throughout the St. Louis area initiated these events.

No justice, no peace!

On Aug. 9, Brown — an 18-year-old African American, just days away from attending college — was senselessly fatally shot at least six times by white police officer Darren Wilson in front of many eyewitnesses in Ferguson. It is a well-known fact that Brown was not armed when he attempted to surrender and was asking Wilson not to shoot him as he held up his hands.

Ferguson is a city of 22,000 people, 70 percent of them Black. Once the community discovered that the local police refused to release Wilson's name to the public as Brown's shooter, a rebellion erupted for the next 10 days, led by the youth. The fact that Wilson has been hidden in a secret place by the police from the time of the shooting, along with no arrest warrant, continues to keep the flames of daily protests and outrage alive in Ferguson and St. Louis. A grand jury is

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EDITORIAL

A salute to immigrants & the Solidarity Caravan!

A grim new project near the Texas-Mexico border sheds light on the horrors of Washington's immigration policy. Students are exhuming remains from mass graves of unknown individuals who have perished over the last decade crossing the border on foot. Most died simply for lack of water. The students hope to eventually be able to notify the families after DNA identification has been made.

We salute the Solidarity Caravan to the Mexico and Texas Borders that is embarking from New York on Oct. 10. The activists will be driving for 12 days to raise funds for the South Texas Human Rights Center, to help it provide water stations for desperate immigrants who are forced to risk their lives crossing the desert on foot because of the exclusionary and heartless U.S. government stance on migration.

The Solidarity Caravan will also be stopping along the way to raise consciousness about the epidemic of poverty and the trampling on nations' sovereignty by the U.S. that is pushing so many to leave their homes and homelands in search of work and security.

It is a global phenomenon that corre-

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'Two down, two to go!'



After two charges were dropped at hearing, union militant Stevan Kirschbaum speaks to crowd of Boston bus drivers and other supporters. Article, page 5.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

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**A Special Invitation to Workers World Party's 2014 National Conference
Developing a Perspective & Strategy for the
Struggle for Revolutionary Socialism**

Oct. 4, 2014

Dear sisters and brothers,

We would like to extend a special invitation to you to attend this year's Workers World Party National Conference on Nov. 15 and 16.

Why is it important to come? We are in the midst of a deepening capitalist global crisis, which has unleashed imperialist war on Iraq, Syria, Gaza, Africa and the world, and militarized racist police terror here at home. It has brought about the widespread impoverishment of the working class and oppressed peoples, many of them migrants and women, on a worldwide basis.

At the same time, we have witnessed the heroic resistance of the people, especially the youth of Ferguson, Mo., Palestine, and Ukraine — and the rising movement of low-wage workers at home and abroad.

What better time for revolutionary socialists to get together and discuss our perspectives and strategies for building a struggle for revolutionary socialism.

In the words of Che Guevara: *"The revolution is not an apple that falls when it is ripe. You have to make it fall."*

This gathering will strengthen you politically. There, you will get a chance to talk to and meet with revolutionary socialists of all ages and nationalities from around the country.

Be prepared to not only listen, learn and discuss, but afterwards to go back to your city, town or region ready to fight for an anti-capitalist, pro-socialist future.

It is important to make plans as soon as possible as conference organizers need to arrange for adequate housing, food, day care and more. The conference will be held in the Auditorium at 45-35 Van Dam St. and Thomson Avenue in Long Island City, Queens, N.Y.

If you cannot attend, please help to sponsor through your donations those who do not have the financial means to travel, especially younger and low-income participants.

We hope to see you on Nov.15 and 16.

In solidarity,

Larry Holmes

Sharon Black

Berta Joubert-Ceci

WWP First Secretary National Committee member Mundo Obrero/WW newspaper Editorial Staff

P.S. Your support is vital! Donations are needed to help with the conference's many expenses: hall rental, sound system, childcare, food, transportation and more. See workers.org/wwp to register, contribute, and get conference schedule and updates.

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we're fighting for

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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In attack on poorest women

Texas judges curtail abortion rights

By Sue Davis

On Oct. 2, with a wave of its judicial wand, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals shut down 14 of the 21 abortion clinics serving women in the state of Texas.

Its long-awaited, but not unexpected, reactionary decision upheld the harsh, medically unnecessary restrictions on abortion services in the Texas bill known as HB2. The court said the bill will not impose an “undue burden” on the reproductive rights of the 5.4 million women of childbearing age who live in the second-largest U.S. state by area. It’s estimated that 1 million women will have to travel a minimum of 300 miles roundtrip to access services in the seven remain-

ing clinics in Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston and San Antonio.

Women’s organizations, reproductive rights, and progressive civil and human rights groups in the U.S. united to protest this outrageous decision. Calling it a “health care crisis” for women, they denounced how it will disproportionately affect the poor — women of color, low-wage women workers, immigrants, youth, the disabled and those living in rural areas.

The Center for Reproductive Rights, the lead plaintiff in the case, plans to appeal the decision to the Supreme Court. Nancy Northrup, CRR president and CEO, told Salon on Oct. 3 that “it will be a showdown we haven’t seen in two de-

cadecades on whether the promise of *Roe v. Wade* will have meaning for women in the U.S.” In an Oct. 2 CRR press release she noted: “All Texas women have been relegated today to a second class of citizens” with poor women “particularly hard hit by this devastating blow.”

HB2 passed in 2013, despite the heroic defense of women’s constitutional right to legal abortion led by state Sen. Wendy Davis, several women-of-color legislators and hundreds of women activists. It contains four regulations. Taken together, they impose the most severe restrictions on access to abortion in the U.S.

Three of them went into effect on Oct. 29, 2013. Now doctors performing abortions must have admitting privileges at a

hospital within 30 miles of the abortion clinic; abortions after 20 weeks post-fertilization are banned except to avoid the woman’s death or serious risk to health; and new rules for medical abortions require four doctor visits.

The fourth and most stringent regulation — which is blatantly “burdensome” — is that all clinics had to be ambulatory surgical centers (ASC) as of Sept. 1, 2014. The Congress of Obstetrics and Gynecology strongly opposed this regulation on July 2, 2013: “[It is] plainly intended to restrict the reproductive rights of women in Texas through a series of requirements that improperly regulate medical prac-

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Detroiters confront federal housing chief

By David Sole
Detroit

Mel Watt, head of the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA), was confronted by protesters as he convened a “town hall” meeting in Detroit on Oct. 2. Recently appointed by President Barack Obama, Watt oversees the federally controlled Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac mortgage giants. He was in Detroit to promote federal mortgage relief programs that have been dismal failures.

Called together by Detroit Eviction Defense, housing activists gathered outside the main Detroit Public Library. The picket line was bolstered by large delegations from United Auto Workers locals 600 and 140, as well as the International UAW staff. Signs, banners and chanting called for a moratorium on foreclosures

and evictions and raised the demand, “Bail out people, not banks!”

Laying down their signs, over 100 demonstrators then streamed into the public meeting. Homeowners and anti-foreclosure activists challenged Watt on why Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac side with the banks when these rich institutions are challenged for having refused to abide by federal guidelines mandating loan modifications. They also demanded to know from a Treasury Department representative who was on the panel why “Helping Hardest Hit Homeowner” funds are being utilized to tear down homes in Detroit, rather than to help keep families in their homes — as the money was originally intended.

Detroit Eviction Defense delivered a letter from Americans for Financial Reform and a list of nearly 300 Detroit



These housing activists went inside to tell Mel Watt: ‘Bail out people, not banks!’

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

organizations that support “principal reduction” — which would reduce borrowers’ costs. A list of 17 cases in which

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are illegally pursuing eviction of Detroit homeowners was presented to Watt. □

Ebola in Texas

For-profit health care system exposed

By Chris Fry

On the evening of Sept. 25, Thomas Duncan walked into the emergency room of Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. He told the nurse that he felt ill with strong stomach cramps. He was found to have a fever. He also told the nurse that a few days earlier he had arrived in Dallas from his home country of Liberia, which is suffering from an epidemic of Ebola.

Instead of following federally issued guidelines that a patient with a fever from an Ebola-ravaged country must be admitted and placed in isolation, Texas Health Hospital gave Duncan a prescription for antibiotics and sent him out the door.

Frantic relatives called Texas and U.S. health officials, including the Centers for Disease Control, as Duncan’s condition worsened. They did nothing. On Sept. 28, a full three days later, as Duncan became violently ill, an ambulance crew with three emergency workers was summoned and took him back to Texas Health Hospital. The workers were not warned that their patient might be suffering from Ebola.

Thomas Duncan was admitted to the hospital and placed in isolation. Two days later, the Ebola diagnosis was confirmed. Only then were the people whom Thomas Duncan was visiting notified that they were in quarantine. The same happened to the three ambulance workers and oth-

er hospital workers. Five children whom Duncan had had contact with subsequently spent a day at school, and another went to school for two days.

Duncan’s soiled linens remained locked in quarantine with the families for a number of days before they were removed. The delay, it was announced, was due to “a paperwork snafu.” Duncan died on the morning of Oct. 8.

Why did Texas Health Hospital fail to properly treat Thomas Duncan when he first appeared there?

Millions lack health coverage

Hospital management at first said that the emergency room nurse failed to report to the doctors that Duncan had recently been in Liberia. Then they changed their story to blame a computer software glitch that prevented other staff from being fully informed. Finally, they said that all the information was indeed relayed to the staff, offering no explanation for their failure to treat it seriously.

Could it be that Thomas Duncan was not admitted to the hospital for more careful diagnosis because he has no health insurance? Is it a coincidence that this happened in Texas, where the right-wing governor and legislature have prevented Medicaid insurance coverage for millions of people? Texas has one of the highest rates of uninsured people in the country.

This Medicaid denial has swamped emergency rooms like the one at Texas Health with people who cannot afford to go to a doctor or an urgent care clinic. The results are particularly alarming at Texas Health.

“The hospital scored significantly worse than the state and national averages in five of six emergency care indicators, with emergency room wait times twice as long as the averages, according to data from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services.” (“Before Ebola failure, Dallas hospital saw long emergency waits,” dallasnews.com, Oct. 2)

Some 13.8 percent of workers and their families in the U.S. — 43.3 million people — still do not have health insurance, even with the startup of the Affordable Care Act. Millions more would be charged such high copayments that they simply cannot afford to sign up for medical insurance.

“This reality,” says one newspaper, “is compounded by a weakened public health infrastructure: 52 health agencies, including 48 states, three territories and Washington, D.C., have reported budget cuts since 2008.” (“The uninsured in U.S. raise Ebola risk,” chicagotribune.com, Oct. 2)

Ebola is a terrible disease. It has killed more than 3,000 people in western Africa and threatens millions more. It flourishes in countries ravaged by the exploitation and greed of decades of co-

lonial rule, by conflicts between communities sparked by divisions created by those same imperialists, and by the denial of any meaningful development of health, education, transportation or other necessary services.

In short, U.S. and European imperialism created the perfect incubator for diseases like Ebola and denied the people of those countries the tools to fight it. And although the first cases of the disease were reported nearly four decades ago, the giant drug companies have not expected enough “monetary incentive” (profit!) to develop a vaccine.

Now that this disease has arrived in the U.S. with the case of Thomas Duncan, the fundamental failure of the U.S. health care system is being exposed. Its ability to protect the people from diseases like Ebola is compromised because it is designed to make profits for health insurance companies, hospitals and drug companies. Those who cannot afford to pay, very often get the runaround, which, as in Duncan’s case, can expose many others to dangerous diseases.

Profit-driven decisions regarding health care endanger all workers and communities everywhere, here and abroad. Only when health care is provided as a basic human right for all will we be able to effectively combat the threat of this awful affliction and others like it. □

As billion\$ go to imperialist wars

NYC faces crisis over tunnel repairs

By G. Dunkel
New York

Superstorm Sandy has not finished disrupting life in this city, even though it blew out to sea two years ago. Its storm surge — along with a high tide made higher because of a full moon and a general rise in sea levels indisputably due to global warming — flooded four Amtrak tunnels.

Two of the flooded tunnels run from Penn Station on Manhattan's West Side to Queens, under the East River, and two run from Penn Station under the Hudson River to New Jersey.

About 400,000 riders each weekday — almost all workers — use the tunnels under the Hudson, according to Amtrak. The tunnels to Queens are used by the Long Island Rail Road, the nation's busiest commuter line, and by New Jersey Transit to park some of its trains.

While the flood water was pumped out of the tunnels within days, the chlorides and sulfates in the salt water not only corroded and degraded the electrical components in the tunnels — signals, fans for ventilation, lights and so on — but also severely affected the concrete tubes lining the tunnels and the rail beds the trains run on.

Early this summer some concrete fell down from the tunnel ceiling onto tracks in the Hudson tubes, causing extensive

delays and emergency repairs.

The HNTB consulting firm on Oct. 2 released a report commissioned by Amtrak detailing all the damage Sandy did to the tunnels' structure and urging that this damage be repaired as fast as possible. Engineers estimate that Amtrak has only 7 to 15 years before the tubes decay so much that they are unusable.

The report estimates that working around the clock for a full year on each tunnel should allow Amtrak and its contractors to fix them. (The report is available from wnyc.org/story/amtrak-tunnels.)

The total direct cost, according to HNTB's estimate, will be \$675 million.

But the overall cost, which is causing all kinds of stress, is much higher because making these repairs means taking the tunnels, built over 100 years ago, out of service.

Only two of the four East Side tunnels were damaged. This leaves enough redundancy that closing one tunnel at a time will cause a 25 percent reduction in capacity, which is considered surmountable.

But the tunnels under the Hudson are configured differently. One is used for inbound traffic and the other for outbound. This means that taking one tube out of service would cause a 75 percent reduction in capacity, according to Stephen Gardner, Amtrak's vice president for

Northeast Corridor Infrastructure and Investment Development.

Hundreds of thousands of people would have grave difficulty getting to work. The Northeast would suffer a major economic catastrophe.

The need to add a third tube under the Hudson has been clear for a hundred years. Four years ago, shortly after he took office, New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie canceled a project designed to produce a third tunnel under the Hudson by 2018. Although New Jersey Transit had arranged to receive \$3 billion from the federal government, and construction was already underway, Christie claimed that New Jersey didn't have enough money to pay its share.

Christie is slick enough that he doesn't deny global warming and the climate changes it produces, but is responsive to his ruling-class base in that he avoids increasing taxes or selling bonds to protect New Jersey against the effects of global warming. Christie is not alone in his policy of acknowledging climate change but not doing anything to combat it.

Christie and his allies and supporters claim they want to increase employment, but the only method they are willing to consider is cutting corporate taxes. Investment in infrastructure and protecting jobs doesn't fit their scheme.

The federal government spends billions of dollars a week on warfare in Iraq,

Afghanistan, Syria, Somalia, Yemen and many other countries in the Middle East. But it won't put up even one-third the cost of a major infrastructure project designed to promote long-term employment growth, as well as supplying a few thousand construction jobs.

The HNTB report is filled with descriptions of what salt water does to concrete structures like tunnels and how to repair them after they've been inundated. But what it doesn't have, and the news articles on the repair project also don't raise, is any mention of how to keep these inundations from happening again. And they will happen, given the increased sea levels due to global warming.

It was just a temporary, ad hoc, plywood dam backed up by sandbags, put up in Central Harlem by Metropolitan Transit Authority carpenters, that kept the New York City subway system from flooding so completely during Sandy that it would have been months, rather than days, before it started running again. The MTA has replaced its plywood with more durable plastic, and put higher lips around station entrances and ventilation tubes. (New York Times, Oct. 23, 2013)

But, just like Amtrak, the MTA has not taken any major steps to block the calamitous flooding that will come, sooner or later. □

Defending disability rights

By Edward Yudelovich
Boston

Activists with disabilities and allies from New York, Rhode Island and Massachusetts gathered at an 1199 Service Employees union hall in Dorchester, Mass., in August to commemorate people with disabilities whose collective struggle led to the Americans with Disabilities Act being signed into law on July 26, 1990.

Organized by the People with Disabilities caucuses of the International Action Center, Peoples Power Assembly and Workers World Party, the gathering recognized the disability liberation movement as being inspired by the Civil Rights and liberation movements of people of color, women and lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer people. Solidarity permeated the meeting and discussion as participants strategized about the challenges that lay ahead to protect and enhance disability rights in the age of austerity.

The meeting featured Communication Access Realtime Translation services, the instant translation of the spoken word into English text using a stenotype machine, notebook computer and realtime software that produced text projected on a large screen. This provided access to the program for participants with hearing impairment and other disabilities. The meeting also featured an artwork display supporting disability rights by Nan Genger, people's artist and member of the Workers World Party People with Disabilities Caucus.

Workers' solidarity

Andre Francois, recording secretary of Local 8751, United Steelworkers, updated everyone on the struggle to overturn union-busting Veolia corporation's firing



PHOTO: ALBERTO CARDONA

Activists with disabilities build solidarity with labor and community struggles.

of four union leaders, including Francois and Grievance Chair Steve Kirschbaum. Francois announced his union's call for an end to the U.S. government's discrimination against people with disabilities by excluding many disabled workers from the legal right to a minimum wage.

John Kelly, of Second Thoughts Massachusetts and Not Dead Yet, spoke against the legalization of assisted suicide, which is targeting children and adults with disabilities. Kelly explained how this was practiced by Adolph Hitler's Nazi regime, and how ending the lives of people with disabilities by identifying their conditions as "terminal" or "hopeless" saves money for big health insurers.

Brian Shea recounted his decades of struggle in the Disabled Peoples Liberation Front, including chaining himself and his wheelchair to movie theaters and buses whose owners refused to make their services accessible to people with disabilities.

Bill Bateman, coordinator of the Rhode Island Peoples Power Assembly, explained how austerity cuts devalue people with dis-

abilities and seniors as if we were put on a barge to nowhere. Howie Rotman, of 1199 SEIU, explained how the June 30 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Harris v. Quinn* jeopardizes the union membership of more than 40 percent of the home health aides who care for people with disabilities and whom his union represented.

Global disability rights

Milagros Cancel, of the 33-year-old Comite Timon de Madres de Educacion Especial, spoke about the closing of 80 schools in Puerto Rico in violation of the rights of children with disabilities. She related how \$286 million had been cut from programs in Puerto Rico for children with special needs, forcing a new migration of Puerto Rican families to the U.S. in search of better services. She explained the work of Parents to Improve School Transportation to fight similar cutbacks here. Cancel vowed: "Capitalism will not prevent us from fighting back!"

A written statement from disabled Vietnam veteran René Imperato said:

"On behalf of disabled veterans of imperialist wars, the problem with the Veterans Administration is not the VA itself, but endless wars and underfunding."

Joyce Chediak, a writer for Workers World newspaper, editor and contributing writer of "Gaza: Symbol of Resistance," and a disabled activist from New York, spoke of the ravaging effects of war on people with disabilities in Gaza, where 15 percent of the population is disabled, according to the World Health Organization. She explained how this year's bombings by Israel, using weapons paid for by U.S. tax dollars, raised the total number of homeless children in Gaza to 100,000, killed one child per hour, reduced electricity services to two hours a day, and destroyed many facilities for people with disabilities, including hospitals and rehabilitation centers.

This reporter, a person with emotional and hearing loss disabilities, echoed previous speakers who urged all participants to endorse the petition of the National Federation of the Blind (see nfb.org/fair-wages) to establish minimum-wage rights for people with disabilities, and to protest the practices of Goodwill Industries and other companies of paying workers with disabilities as little as 22 cents a day. Expanding the \$15-an-hour national minimum wage campaign to include and embrace people with disabilities, immigrants and prisoners was called for.

The forum, "Disability Rights in the Age of Austerity," was videotaped and can be viewed on Youtube. Yudelovich was a Jewish endorser of the Labor for Palestine statement in which hundreds of unionists called for "Stop the War on Gaza, No arms for Apartheid Israel, Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions." □

Solidarity Day 6

Hundreds demand 'Drop the charges' in anti-union frame-up

Special to Workers World
Dorchester, Mass.

It was the second pre-trial hearing for Stevan Kirschbaum, a founder of Steelworkers Union Local 8751 of Boston's school bus drivers and chair of the union's Grievance Committee.

As with the first court hearing in this saga of company repression versus union militancy, his fellow drivers, other unionists and supporters from the community once again packed the courtroom here on Oct. 6. Some 300 turned out to show they completely reject the bonus charges filed against their brother by the multi-billion-dollar transnational Veolia Corp., which holds the contract to run Boston's school buses and has been trying to undermine their union.

Team Solidarity, the voice of the militant umbrella group called United School Bus Union Workers, which has brought together bus workers from several cities in the greater Boston area, had called for packing the court on this Solidarity Day 6 to demand that the anti-union, frame-up charges against Kirschbaum be dropped.

The call for solidarity was heeded. The overflow crowd, mainly school bus drivers who came originally from Haiti and Cape Verde, packed the courtroom, including sitting on the floor, and also held a picketline outside the courthouse in Dorchester, Mass.

Kirschbaum had been hit by Boston police with four bogus felony charges in



From left to right: Georgia Scott, Monica Moorehead and Lela Roseboro. Team Solidarity leaders Scott and Roseboro and WW managing editor Moorehead spoke at the Oct. 6 Dorchester rally.

early July. The charges were issued after a June 30 rally and march in the school bus yards demanding that Kirschbaum, along with three other union leaders — Andre Francois, Garry Murchison and Steve Gillis — be reinstated to their jobs as drivers following their illegal firing by the France-based Veolia conglomerate last November. Veolia is notorious for union-busting and privatizing tactics, here and worldwide.

Inside the courtroom, the Veolia/Boston police frame-up began to unravel.

The court dismissed two of the felonies: breaking and entering and malicious destruction of property. People's lawyers Barry Wilson and John Pavlos provided a militant and defiant defense, pounding away at the lies by the state and Veolia, revealing them to be fabrications and an outrageous frame-up.

Not a shred of credible evidence was provided by the prosecution. Veolia supplied fraudulent and falsified documents. Veolia and the state once again tried — but failed — to get a court order barring Kirschbaum from the bus yards. It was an obvious effort to deny the membership their representation rights, since Kirschbaum hears and acts on many grievances by the workers.

Attorneys Wilson and Pavlos argued expertly for the dismissal of all the charges. The judge refused their request, however, and scheduled the trial on the two remaining charges, felony assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and trespassing, for Nov. 24. The demonstrators then marched from the courtroom and held a fiery occupation, picket and rally in front of the court.

As the hated union-buster and general manager of Veolia, Alex Roman, and his assistant manager left the court, they got a taste of justified anger as the workers and their supporters booed Roman and chanted "Union!"

The workers vowed to continue the struggle until all the charges are dropped, the four illegally fired union leaders are reinstated, and a just contract is won.

Pack the courtroom Nov. 24! □

Texas judges curtail abortion rights

Continued from page 3

tice and interfere with the patient-physician relationship."

Amy Hagstrom-Miller, who ran five Whole Women's Health clinics, had to shutter four of them in the Rio Grande Valley in 2013. Fortunately, the clinic she bought in San Antonio was already an ASC. She says she does not have \$12 million to turn the four into ASCs at \$3 million apiece. (Think Progress, Oct. 3)

Hagstrom-Miller says her clinic in McAllen averaged 20 to 50 abortions a week, but since Oct. 29, 2013, she has been able to assist only 20 to 25 women seeking abortions upstate. "There is the idea that abortion clinics exist. But it's not a reality for the thousands of women who have been left behind." (Salon, Oct. 3)

RH Reality Check estimates it will now cost a hypothetical minimum-wage-earning, single mother living in the Rio Grande Valley between \$1,101 and \$1,599 for an abortion that would have cost about \$500 in McAllen, whose clinic was closed in 2013. Not only will she need childcare for one or two days for her 3-year-old, but she will lose wages for those days, on top of paying for food, hotel and gas. ("No Undue Burden? What Texas' HB2 Means for Maria," Oct. 3)

Right-wing agenda
behind harsh restrictions

What's wildly ironic is that these kinds of harsh restrictions are being done in the name of promoting women's and children's health. But "Evaluating Priorities," a new study issued Oct. 1 by CRR and Ibis Reproductive Health, exposes that the

states with the most stringent abortion restrictions have failed to pass laws that actually promote the health and well-being of women and children.

More than 250 bills restricting abortion were introduced in 40 states in 2014. According to the Think Progress article, 8.6 million women of reproductive age live in 12 states, mostly in the South, that combined have only 12 clinics.

What anti-social, deeply misogynistic forces are behind these viciously anti-poor laws? No surprise. It's the same right-wing forces that were behind the Citizens United case, when the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in 2010 that corporations have the same rights as individuals — the Koch brothers, who should be crowned "kings of the U.S. oligarchs."

Though they claim to be solely against regulation of industry and for "free enterprise," these two, who run the second-largest privately owned U.S. company with 2013 revenues of \$115 billion, were outed on Oct. 3 as anti-choice. ("American" [U.S.] Prospect) The list of socially useful measures they oppose includes universal health care, anti-fossil-fuel climate change initiatives, public schools and Social Security. They are institutionalizing their father's anti-communist mission; Fred Koch was a founding member of the racist, neofascist, anti-working class John Birch Society.

Reproductive justice groups, as well as those promoting human and civil rights, are determined to mount a united fight-back campaign. For more information and to help Texas women get needed health care, visit fundtexaschoice.org. □

Anti-drone protest: 'Stop U.S. wars!'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Syracuse, N.Y.

In continued resistance to escalating U.S. wars, 75 people marched and rallied at the gates of Hancock Air Force Base here on Oct. 5. The marchers came from across the region, including Buffalo, Rochester, Utica, Albany, Ithaca, Binghamton and Syracuse itself.

Speakers, signs and fliers at the rally called for an end to U.S. drone attacks and war drives against Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. Rights groups estimate U.S. drones have killed thousands of people in those countries since 2002.

Hancock is the ground-control station for pilotless Reaper drones that are guided to their targets by members of the 174th Attack Wing, New York National Guard, and can launch "Hellfire" missiles.

One protester read a "People's Order of Protection" previously delivered against the commanders of the base, demanding an end to the Reaper attacks.

Another speaker turned and directly addressed the soldiers on guard lining the base's fence. He told them that war crimes were being committed at Hancock Air Base and that, under the Nuremberg Principles, their responsibility was to refuse to obey those orders. The Nuremberg Principles were codified after World War II during the trials of Nazis for war crimes.

Protesters linked war abroad to conditions inside the U.S. One person stated that the domestic cost of escalating aggression was a war on poor people in the U.S. Another held a sign calling for an



end to "killing children from Ferguson to Afghanistan."

The event was organized by the Syracuse Peace Council as part of a Global Action Day against the use of drones for surveillance and killing, called by "Know Drones." □

Salute to immigrants & the Solidarity Caravan!

Continued from page 1

sponds to the widening global gap between rich and poor — with the wealth derived from natural resources and human labor being transferred from the vast majority to a handful of super-wealthy families.

Projects like the Solidarity Caravan help build the friendship and trust between peoples of different nationalities and backgrounds that is needed to turn this situation around and transfer political power to the majority — to the working class, rather than the corporations, the banks and their political agents. □

Mumia speaks to Goddard commencement

By Kathy Durkin

Nestled in the bucolic setting of Plainfield, Vt., is Goddard College, which suddenly became the focus of a vicious campaign by right-wing forces. They wanted to stop world-renowned political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal from speaking at the school's commencement ceremony on Oct. 5.

The forces of progress won this battle. Mumia addressed the event as planned, through a prerecording made by Prison Radio Director Nicole Hanrahan. His speech is accessible at prisonradio.org.

Mumia spoke of major world challenges, such as the wars in Gaza and Iraq, and the growing dangers to the planet. He discussed events in Ferguson, Mo., and told the students of the importance of fighting

for working people's interests. "The voice of the voiceless" called on those graduating to work for social change. "Your job is to make a difference," he emphasized. "Apply your knowledge in the real world and help be the change you are seeking to make."

Graduating students had invited the award-winning journalist, anti-racist fighter and social activist to address their commencement. Although Mumia attended Goddard decades ago, he completed his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1996 from Pennsylvania's death row.

When news of Mumia's planned address became public, reactionary forces pressured the school administration to cancel the speech. The Fraternal Order of Police, the Vermont Police Chiefs Association and the Vermont Troopers Association all denounced the school's administration and students. They were joined by Pennsylvania Sen. Pat Toomey, Gov. Thomas Corbett and the head of the state's Department of Corrections. Conservative media chimed in, and so did much of the pro-corporate media, including the Washington Post, which jumped on the bandwagon, too.

However, no matter how venomous were the attacks, school officials stood strong and backed the students' decision. Goddard Interim President Robert Kenny stressed in a Sept. 29 press statement that "choosing Mumia as their commencement speaker, to me, shows how this newest group of Goddard graduates expressed their freedom to engage and think radically and critically in a world that often sets up barriers to do just that."

Actions in support of Mumia are not new to Vermont. Some 15 protesters were arrested for trespassing at the Sheraton Hotel in South Burlington during the July 1995 National Governors Association meeting. They were trying to speak to the then governor of Pennsylvania about the injustices committed in Mumia's trials and the unfairness of his incarceration.

Mumia has been imprisoned for 33 years in Pennsylvania, 29 of those years on death row, for allegedly killing a police officer. His trials, conviction and incarceration have taken place within an unfair and racist criminal "justice" system. However, a strong and determined mass movement successfully pressured Pennsylvania officials to vacate the death penalty in 2011. Mumia is currently serving a life sentence at Mahanoy State Correctional Institute in Frackville, Pa.

Drs. Johanna Fernandez and Mark Lewis Taylor, co-coordinators of Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal, stressed the importance of Mumia's speech at Goddard in an article entitled "To Police and Politicians: Hands off Goddard College!" published in Counterpunch on Oct. 3: "Abu-Jamal and many other U.S. political prisoners should be honored, and Abu-Jamal especially for his fortitude, and for his role in galvanizing movements of conscience the world over. We need his voice more than ever, as we face today's violence of brutal policing and entrenched mass incarceration."

Kathy Durkin attended Goddard College and transmitted a solidarity message to the school.

Ferguson & the failure of Black politics

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

Transcript of Sept. 29 Prison Radio broadcast.

The stark and moving images arising from the violence, repression and resistance of Ferguson, Mo., continue to percolate throughout national and global consciousness.

If, as the old saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words," the thousands of images radiating from Ferguson must be worth millions of words.

And those words are damning; "state terror" turns its fearful face toward Black alleged citizens who dare protest against state violence. One looks at these images and sees in an instant that there is a war against Black people.

What are Black politicians saying? More importantly, what are they doing?

The kindest answer is that they have not been distinguished in their actions and responses. Many, perhaps most, have been silent.

For young folks in Ferguson and beyond, they know what they know, because they've experienced what they've experienced; and the bright and shiny promises taught to them since childhood — of civil rights — are about as relevant and realistic as Santa Claus — or the Easter Bunny.

Their lives may be measured by humiliation and exploitation; by police repression, nonfunctional schools and meager job opportunities. Courts are cold, impersonal jail factories — and the prison cell is all but inevitable.



How did this happen?

Because politics has never been the driver of public activism; it has been driven by episodes of activism.

Furthermore, Black politicians in predominantly white institutions of power exercise presence — not power.

Finally, politicians are disciplined by a white corporate press which narrows the range of their political activity. For Black politicians, like white politicians, want to be liked and to be seen as likable.

"Why rock the boat?" they wonder.

So, Ferguson explodes, with searing images of rage and resistance — and silence.

For them, the system doesn't work.

A new, militant, responsive politics must arise, built by the young, who are clear-eyed and committed. □

Requiem for Mike Brown 1996 - 2014



Protesters unfurl banner at performance of St. Louis Symphony and Chorus.

STAND WITH FERGUSON

Continued from page 1

not expected to determine whether or not Wilson will be indicted for murder until early January.

The arrest of Darren Wilson for murder is a main demand of the October protests.

A march will take place on Oct. 10 in Clayton, Mo., at the office of Robert McCullough, the pro-cop prosecuting attorney, to demand that he be removed from office. There are many who feel, and justifiably so, that McCullough is putting off the grand jury findings for several months because of fear of another uprising, especially if Wilson is not indicted.

Since so many indicators show that an indictment is not likely to happen, daily protests continue in Ferguson, two months and counting since Brown's body was left in the streets for hours after he was killed. These protests have included the blocking of a major interstate that links Ferguson and St. Louis, resulting in

35 arrests last month.

During intermission at an Oct. 4 performance of the St. Louis Symphony and Chorus, protesters unfurled banners from the balcony — one read, "Requiem for Mike Brown 1996-2014" — and chanted and sang about "Justice for Mike Brown." ("Ferguson remains on edge as 4-day protest looms," USA Today, Oct. 6)

Daily protests have taken place in front of the Ferguson police station demanding that Police Chief Thomas Jackson be fired.

Significance of Ferguson struggle

The Oct. 10-13 national convergence is being called a weekend of resistance to demand justice for all. Why is this? Because Ferguson has become synonymous with resistance in the U.S. and worldwide in the struggle against terrorist occupation by the police — a fact of life throughout much of the racist United States. The heroic resistance by Black and Brown

youth exposed before the world the horror of police militarization with the use of rubber and live bullets, tear gas, drone surveillance and tanks.

The brutality being carried out against the people of Ferguson offered an up-close and personal glimpse into the military occupations taking place in Afghanistan, occupied Palestine and regions in Africa.

The Ferguson struggle, along with the vigilante murder of Trayvon Martin in 2011, is an important reminder of the relentless war against Black, Brown and Indigenous youth. Police killings alone resulted in over 200 youth of color having their lives stolen in 2014; other forms of harassment include stop-and-frisk and "driving and walking while Black."

Struggle produces important concessions

In a Sept. 4 incident, Black motorist Levar Jones was shot in the hip by a white

cop, Sean Groubert, in Richland County, S.C., as Jones was trying to show his driver's license. In an unusual move, Groubert was fired on Sept. 19 and charged with assault and battery of a high and aggravated nature. The shooting had been captured on Groubert's dashboard tape.

A South Carolina Department of Public Safety official, Leroy Smith, claims the shooting was an "isolated" incident. Nothing could be further from the truth. What happened to Jones is commonplace in this bigoted society. The real isolated incident is when any cop, much less a white one, is fired and charged with any crime against a person of color.

A very important concession has been won through the mass resistance in Ferguson. Some 220,000 people who had been ticketed by the police for no other reason than how they looked have been granted amnesty throughout St. Louis County. This important victory came

Finally, a racist killer is convicted

By Kathy Durkin

Justice was finally served on Oct. 1 when a Florida jury convicted Michael Dunn of the first-degree murder of Jordan Davis, 17. The unarmed African-American youth was fatally shot by Dunn in November 2012.

Dunn, a white computer software developer, now faces a life term in prison with no possibility of parole.

This was Dunn's second trial on the murder charge. The jury in the first trial last February was deadlocked on the first-degree murder charge. However, jurors agreed that he was trying to kill Davis' friends and convicted him of attempted murder of Davis' three surviving companions: Tevin Thompson, Leland Brunson and Tommie Stornes.

On Nov. 23, 2012, Davis and his friends had been listening to rap music while sitting in an SUV in a store's parking lot in Jacksonville, Fla. Dunn got angry at their music, which he referred to in vile, racist language. He took his loaded automatic weapon out of his car's glove compartment, crouched and fired off 10 shots, killing Davis and continuing to fire at the vehicle as it sped from the scene. Dunn then fled, went to a motel and the next day drove 200 miles to his home.

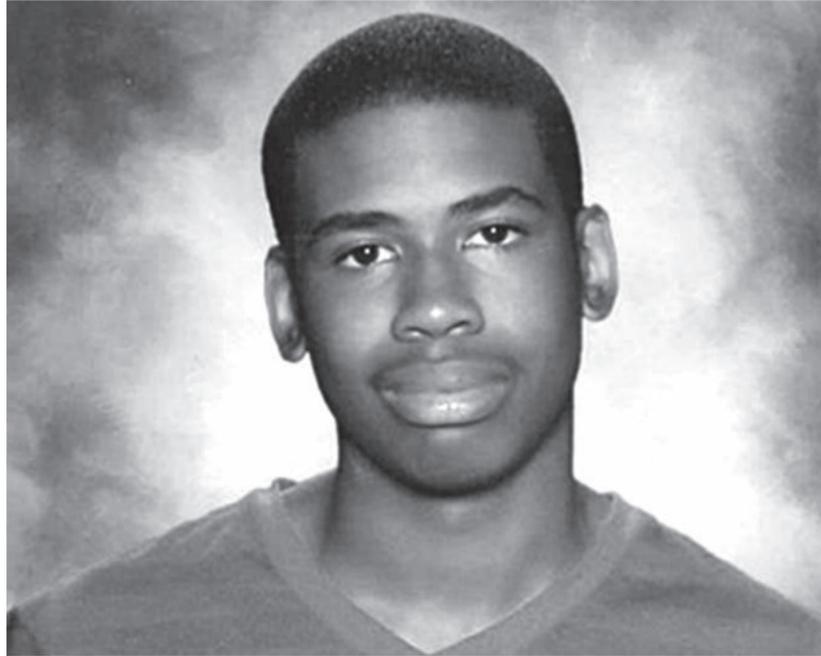
Claiming the youth had a gun, so he feared for his own life, Dunn used the "Stand Your Ground" law as his defense in the first trial. This was a fabrication. Witnesses, including Dunn's then-fiancée, Rhonda Rouer, validated that the youth had no gun, contradicting Dunn's self-defense claims. However, the jury voted 9-3 against convicting Dunn for the murder of Davis.

At the second trial, which began on Sept. 22, the jury, made up of 10 whites and two African Americans, found that Dunn's violent actions were motivated by rage, not fear, and were premeditated.

Although prosecutors did not say this, Dunn was also motivated by racism, as further demonstrated by the vile, bigoted tirades he has written from prison to relatives, friends and others. In them, he called on whites to kill Black people, according to a report in *Color Lines* on Feb. 17.

Remember Trayvon Martin

The state's decision to retry Dunn on the murder charge must be seen in the context of other monumental events in Florida. State officials a year earlier had seen the tremendous, militant, mass struggle that spread throughout the United States, and even internationally, after a jury in Sanford, Fla., acquitted racist vigilante George Zimmerman of murdering another unarmed African-American



Justice for Jordan Davis

youth, Trayvon Martin.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters demanded "Justice for Trayvon Martin!" Three days after Zimmerman's acquittal, dozens of youth, primarily from oppressed communities, began a month-long sit-in at Florida's Capitol in Tallahassee, demanding repeal of the Stand Your Ground law and an end to racial profiling and other injustices.

Nonstop criticism of Florida's half-hearted prosecution of Zimmerman made it into the media, especially its more progressive sector; much of it reached a global audience. Lawyers, legal organizations, and civil and human rights' groups criticized the state's attorneys and their legal tactics. Leading African Americans and their allies exposed the prosecution's refusal to cite Zimmerman's racism or his racial profiling of Martin.

So when Dunn's trial in February did not result in a conviction for first-degree murder, criticisms and protests began of the state's weak case against him. Ron Davis and Lucia McBath, the young victim's parents, frequently appeared on television appealing for a retrial and justice for their son. They were joined by supporters in Florida and throughout the country. The movement that had mushroomed after Zimmerman's acquittal began to re-emerge.

Quickly, Florida state attorneys announced in February that Dunn would be retried for murder.

Remember Michael Brown

Then, on Aug. 9, Michael Brown, another unarmed African-American youth, was shot by police officer Darren Wil-

son in Ferguson, Mo. A militant struggle erupted there, with strong protests night after night led primarily by youth of color. Supporters came from the surrounding area and even far-away cities and towns to show solidarity and demand justice for the slain young man. This struggle continues.

Dunn's retrial in Florida began in September, weeks after the struggle in Ferguson had taken off. The strength and determination shown in Missouri undeniably reached participants in Dunn's trial, including members of the jury. On Oct. 1, they unanimously found Dunn guilty of first-degree murder.

McBath, Davis' mother, said, "We're very grateful that justice has been served, not only for Jordan, but justice for Trayvon and justice for all the nameless faces and children and people who will never

about as a result of an ongoing federal government investigation of the Ferguson and St. Louis police departments and their long history of racist, systemic abuse of people of color. The struggle forced the federal government to carry out this investigation.

The Ferguson uprising and the real possibility of it spreading to other parts of the country are causing such anxieties with local and national governments that the U.S. Conference of Mayors is hosting a forum Oct. 8-9 for 40 mayors and 30 police chiefs from across the country to discuss race relations and community policing. The two-day forum is being held in Little Rock, Ark., with former President Bill Clinton and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder addressing the group.

The uprising that happened in Ferguson following Michael Brown's death is a political game changer. It is not about one event, but is an exemplary example that sustained struggle against police repression can shake the very foundations of the capitalist system, rooted in institutionalized racism and inequality. Ferguson has reinforced the notion that capitalism, especially in these times of great crisis, is incapable of providing what all youth, especially the most oppressed, want and need: a bright future with good-paying jobs, education and recreation centers, not police brutality and mass incarceration.

This is what the youth are fighting for in the streets of Ferguson today. And it will spread like wildfire, sooner than later, throughout all the streets of the U.S. with the solidarity of the workers. This will be the ultimate nightmare for the 1%.

It is within this framework that the entire movement should do everything it can to show the utmost solidarity with what will happen in Missouri this weekend. □

have a voice," reported the Oct. 1 *New York Times*.

The many people of color who have been gunned down by racist vigilantes or police officers are entitled to and must obtain justice. Moreover, the laws must be overturned that enable bigoted assailants to justify murdering people of color and that allow racists to "bear arms and shoot unarmed Black children with impunity," in the words of *The Root* of Feb. 16.

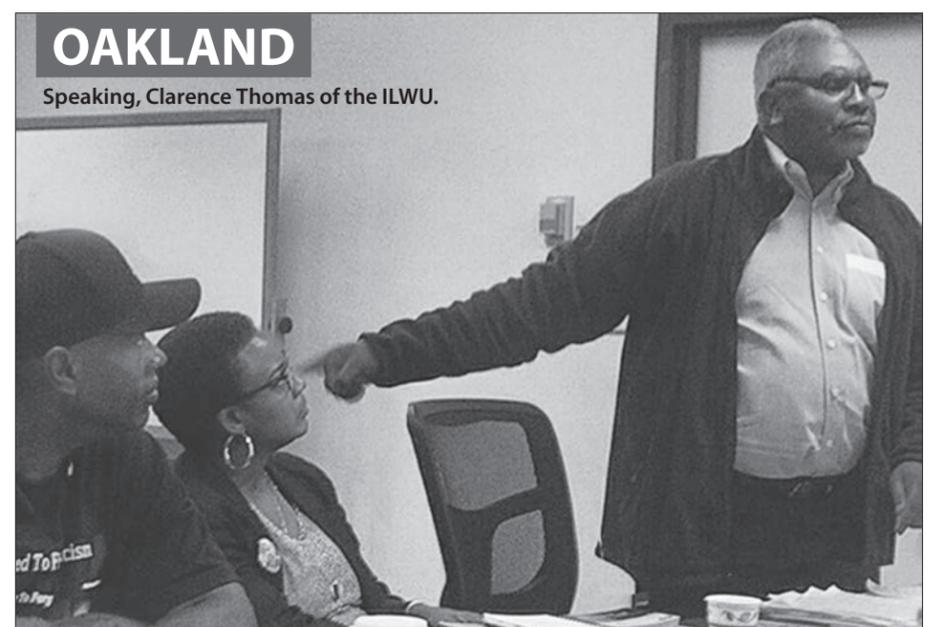
The struggle for justice for Trayvon Martin is not over. Zimmerman is still out in the community, a danger to society. In September, while armed, he was involved in a "road rage" incident where he reportedly threatened to kill driver Matthew Apperson in Lake Mary, Fla.

Yet the Department of Justice, which has been investigating Zimmerman for two years, is not likely to bring federal civil rights charges against him, say three law enforcement officials. Benjamin Crump, attorney for Trayvon Martin's family, responded that his clients have not yet been notified of the DOJ's decision. (*Washington Post*, Oct. 1)

When the federal government and the courts cannot be relied on to dispense justice, people's movements as in Ferguson become ever more important. They can put people's pressure on the state as they galvanize countrywide solidarity and even global support. All progressives and all workers from every sector must support these struggles. It is crucial.

Moreover, there must be fundamental changes in this society so that racist aggressors are held accountable and punished for their anti-human crimes, whether vigilantes or police officers. Ultimately, until every member of an oppressed community, every African-American, Latino/a, Asian or Native person can live free of harassment and assaults, there will be no real justice. □

WW forum links Ferguson, Palestine



OAKLAND

Speaking, Clarence Thomas of the ILWU.

PHOTO: MOLLIE COSTELLO

"What's happening in Ferguson isn't rioting, it's rebellion. And this isn't the first time in our history we've rebelled," declared Clarence Thomas, a rank-and-file member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union and co-chair of the Million Worker March. Thomas was speaking at a Workers World Forum held at Laney College in Oakland, Calif., on Sept. 29, and co-sponsored by the Laney Black Student Union.

The forum's theme, "Occupation Is a Crime from Ferguson to Palestine," linked these struggles with talks by Na-

dia Gaber from the Block the Boat Coalition and family members of young Black men killed by the police: Jeralynn Blueford, mother of Alan Blueford, who was slain by Oakland police, and Cephus "Uncle Bobby" Johnson, uncle of Oscar Grant, slain by the BART transit police. They talked about the connections between militarization and police repression, from Oakland to Ferguson, Mo., to Palestine. Thomas declared at one point: "I'm not afraid of ISIS. I'm afraid of the police!"

— Terri Kay

Venezuela

Behind murder of revolutionary deputy

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

On the morning of Oct. 2, the Bolivarian people of Venezuela awoke to the terrible news of a murder during the previous night of a young revolutionary couple. Robert Serra, 27, the youngest deputy to the National Assembly elected from the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV), and his life partner Maria Herrera were stabbed to death at their home in the parish of La Pastora, a working-class neighborhood of Caracas.

The young representative was loved for his work representing the poorest communities and the youth. He was a lawyer and had founded the Advanced Revolutionary Movement to unite the most pro-revolutionary youth in the construction of the socialist country that Hugo Chávez had pointed to as the goal. Many people identified Serra as the future leader of Venezuela.

Serra was known for his outspoken denunciation of the fascist right-wing opposition, linked to Colombian paramilitaries and to former Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, which made the people think immediately that this was a political crime.

Venezuelan Minister of Internal Relations, Justice and Peace Miguel Rodríguez Torres confirmed this belief. In a press conference, Rodríguez Torres said that according to "key elements in the investigation of his and his partner's death," they could initially conclude that it was "not a random act committed by

common criminals. We have witnessed a murder, planned and executed with great precision." (AVN, Oct. 2)

Ernesto Samper, Colombia's president from 1994 to 1998 and current UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) secretary general, said of Serra's death: "It is a worrying sign of infiltration by Colombian paramilitaries."

International and criminal counterrevolution

Since its inception, the Bolivarian Revolution has been the subject of countless attacks, from the coup of 2002 and the subsequent petroleum company sabotage to assassination attempts against late President Hugo Chávez and recently against President Nicolás Maduro. Not to mention the street blockades called guarimbas, dirty media campaigns, hoarding by rightist merchants of items necessary for the people, etc., and also threats and assassinations of leaders and key figures in the Revolution.

Among others, we note the vile murder in 2004 of prosecutor Danilo Anderson, who was investigating the 2002 coup and the oil sabotage. And more recently, the death last April of Bolivarian leader Eliezer Otaiza, president of the municipal council of the Libertador section of Caracas. Two years ago, the bodyguard of Serra himself, Detective Alexis Barreto, was killed.

Serra had blamed the paramilitaries and Uribe, an infamous collaborator with U.S. imperialism, when two young Vene-

zuelan rightists were detained in Bogotá for plotting violent acts against the Revolution; they were then deported to Venezuela. Serra had requested a thorough investigation of these people for treason against Venezuela. Serra said, "For these crooks, murderers, fascists, our lives as revolutionaries have no value, nor even does life among their own supporters, because they carry out acts against their own people, which means they are ready to blow up the nightclubs where their own youths go if it will increase social unrest." (rebellion.org, Oct. 6)

Everything points to the deaths of Serra and Herrera being part of the plans of one of the young deported counterrevolutionaries, Lorent Saleh. In documents captured by the Venezuelan authorities, they found as targets for assassination "lists of persons closely linked to chavista social and political movements, those who thrive on political activity in the neighborhoods and are the main drivers of the defense of the revolutionary process." (rebellion.org, Oct. 3)

But it is not only Uribe's movement and the Colombian paramilitaries who are involved. International connections extend to Spain. Carlos Fazio, a Uruguayan professor and journalist on the editorial staff of the Mexican daily La Jornada, wrote on Oct. 2: "The novelty now is the outsourcing of chaos, with the National Intelligence Center (CNI) of Spain getting the task of assigning covert destabilization actions for the U.S. CIA and the Foundation for Anal-

ysis and Social Studies (FAES), and former Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar's Popular Party acting to put together an international network of neo-conservative think tanks and NGOs that promote regime change in Venezuela." (AVN.info.ve)

Fazio mentioned that a series of conferences took place in Spain this June and July called Campus FAES 2014. Participating were Mariano Rajoy, head of the Spanish government; members of the right-wing Venezuelan Primero Justicia party; pro-coup deputy Julio Borges and the mayor of Chacao, Ramón Muchacho, organizer of the recent guarimbas; and Maria Corina Machado, founder of Súmate, an agency financed by the U.S. Agency for International Development.

Fazio continues: "The CNI would have guaranteed the training and funding needed to implement the new subversive plans in Venezuela, which are being carried out in secret and closely coordinated with the Obama administration and the CIA. ... In short, during secret talks at Campus FAES 2014, the logistics were put in place for a new phase of subversive destabilization, dirty war and media terrorism by the United States and its European allies against the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela."

The people, however, remain on alert together with the forces of the Bolivarian government. During the funeral of Serra and Herrera on Oct. 3, one of the slogans shouted was: "We want justice! The revolution won't be stopped." □



'Defend President Aristide!'

An emergency demonstration was held in San Francisco on Sept. 30 in defense of former Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. About 50 people rallied at Montgomery and Market streets because of threats to President Aristide's safety. Speakers described how on Sept. 27, masked Haitian police had surrounded Aristide's house as Haitian radio stations broadcast news that he would be immediately arrested. They said hundreds of people had rallied in front of the house, vowing to stay there to prevent his arrest.

Speakers said this was the current Haitian government's response to the Lavalas Movement's call for demonstrations marking the anniversary of the Sept. 30, 1991, coup against President Aristide. It is part of a pattern of intimidation that

harkens back to the days of the Duvalier dictatorship. The U.S. government, in collaboration with the right wing in Haiti, had covertly organized the coup and forced Aristide into exile, flying him to the Central African Republic, where he was held as a virtual prisoner.

This Sept. 12, the Haitian government removed the security detail that had been guarding the former president and his family since his return to Haiti in 2011. This came a day after a judge ordered President Aristide, Haiti's first democratically elected president, to be placed under "house arrest." Under current Haitian law, "house arrest" does not exist, but it was used frequently as a form of repression by the Duvalier regime.

— Terri Kay

Solidarity activists honored in Cuba

By Deirdre Griswold

The Friendship Medal of the Republic of Cuba has been awarded to two hard-working solidarity activists from the United States, according to the newspaper Granma of Oct. 3.

Alicia Jrapko, U.S. coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Five, and photographer Bill Hackwell were honored for their unwavering efforts to gain the release of five Cubans who were jailed in Florida in 1998 after they penetrated Cuban exile organizations with a history of terrorist acts against Cuba.

It was after some of their findings on these dangerous groups were presented to the U.S. government that the authorities here turned around and arrested the five heroes.

Kenia Serrano, president of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, said during the award ceremony that "16 years of imprisonment have passed during which our friends have expressed their maximum commitment to Cuba, and put their professional and family life second to this constant struggle. Alicia and Bill form part of this selfless friendship."

Three of the five anti-terrorists are still incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Calling the two solidarity activists their "brother and sister," relatives of Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino and Gerardo Hernández read messages sent from their jail cells to mark the occasion.

"Hernández wrote that it was not easy in such a brief note to summarize the work of two lives completely dedicated to this most noble cause, or to express with

mere words what being able to count on brothers and sisters such as these has meant to the Five," reported Granma.

It continued: "Alicia Jrapko stated that this long struggle has only been able to maintain itself for so long because it is supported by a government and a people who are respected and admired by people of goodwill across the world."

Jrapko explained, "Cuba is solidarity instead of selfishness, love in place of hate. That's why wherever we are we defend the cause of the Five, the result of this wonderful work. We will continue to host all the conferences and to knock on all the necessary doors."

Bill Hackwell declared that the medal, more than an honor, demonstrates that the wave of solidarity, which has marked his way of life, will be victorious.



René González and Fernando González, two of the Cuban Five who have returned home after serving out their sentences and are now Decorated Heroes of the Republic of Cuba, attended the ceremony. Also present were Ana Teresita González Fraga, vice minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Josefina Vidal, director of the United States department at the foreign ministry; Graciela Ramírez, coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five; and relatives of the five heroes. □

Hong Kong protests

Why imperialists support 'democracy' movement

By Sara Flounders

Demonstrations in Hong Kong, China, raising demands on the procedures to be followed in city elections in 2017 have become an international issue and a source of political confusion.

The protests, called Occupy Central, have received enormous and very favorable U.S. media coverage. Every news report describes with great enthusiasm the occupation of central business parts of Hong Kong as "pro-democracy" protests. The demonstrations, which began on Sept. 22, gained momentum after Hong Kong police used tear gas to open roads and government buildings.

In evaluating an emerging movement it is important to look at what political forces are supporting the movement. What are the demands raised by the movement, who are they appealing to and what is the social composition of those in motion?

The U.S. and British governments have issued statements of support for the demonstrations. Secretary of State John Kerry urged Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi to heed the demands of the protesters. Wang responded by calling for respect for China's sovereignty. Britain, which stole Hong Kong from China in 1842 and held it as a colony for 155 years under a government appointed by London, is supporting the call for "democracy" in Hong Kong. Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg summoned the Chinese ambassador in order to convey the British government's alarm.

At the present time these imperialists may not expect to overturn the central role of the Chinese Communist Party in governing China. But Occupy Central in Hong Kong is a battering ram, aimed at weakening the role of the state in the Chinese economy.

The imperialists hope to embolden the bourgeois elements and encourage the increasingly strong capitalist class within China to become more aggressive and demand the overturn of socialist norms established after the 1949 socialist revolution, including the leading role of the Communist Party in a strong, sovereign state.

Police repression: Mexico, Italy, Philippines

In Mexico, tens of thousands of students have been protesting curriculum changes and new fees. More than 50,000 demonstrated in Mexico City for the third time. In Western Mexico 57 students from a teaching college went missing after gunslings fired on a demonstration they were attending, killing three students and wounding three others. A Guerrero official says witnesses identified the shooters as local police officers. Mass graves have now been uncovered in an area terrorized by police and gangs.

On Oct. 2, in Naples, Italy, national police attacked demonstrators protesting against austerity and a meeting of the European Central Bank. Cops fired tear gas and water cannons at thousands of protesters.

Thousands of courageous demonstrators in Manila opposed the signing of an agreement with the U.S. for an escalating rotation of U.S. troops, ships and planes into the Philippines during President Obama's visit last April. They faced water cannons, tear gas and mass arrests.

Did any White House officials meet with Mexican officials to express concern for the killed or missing students? Did any British officials summon Italian officials to convey alarm at the tear gas and water cannons? Was there world me-

dia attention to the attacks on Philippine youth? Where was the media frenzy?

Why is it so dramatically different regarding Occupy Central in Hong Kong?

The use of tear gas by Hong Kong police is denounced by the same officials who have been silent as militarized police in U.S. cities routinely use not only tear gas but tanks, armored personnel carriers, live ammunition, electric tasers, rubber bullets, stun guns, dogs and drones in routine police sweeps.

To hear U.S. officials denouncing restrictions on candidates in Hong Kong is especially offensive to anyone familiar with the election procedures in the U.S. today. Millions of dollars are required to run a campaign here. Candidates go through multiple layers of vetting by corporate powers and by the two pro-imperialist political party apparatuses. Restrictive ballot measures are in place in every state and city election.

'Color revolutions'

Officials and publications in China characterize the actions of Occupy Central as a U.S.-funded "color revolution" and compare it to the upheavals that swept Ukraine and former Soviet republics.

Several commentaries have described in some detail the extensive role of the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy and the Democratic National Institute, along with corporate foundations' funding of leaders and the protest movement in Hong Kong.

Thousands of nongovernmental organizations with large staffs are based in Hong Kong. Their stated goal is to build democracy. Their real purpose is to undermine the central role of the Chinese Communist Party in the organization of Chinese society. Hong Kong, unlike the rest of China, has allowed these U.S.-funded NGOs and political associations almost unlimited access for decades.

Hong Kong's special status

Hong Kong's importance is not due to its size. Its population of 7.5 million people is half of 1 percent of the population of China. But Hong Kong is a leading center of finance capital. According to the 2011 World Economic Forum, Hong Kong had already overtaken London, New York and Singapore in financial access, business environment, banking and financial services, institutional environment, nonbanking financial services and financial markets.

Hong Kong acts as the financial gateway to China. It has a guaranteed, banking-friendly, special administrative status. It is known for its financial services with insurance, law, accounting and many hundreds of well-established professional service firms. Capitalists based in Hong Kong are today the largest foreign investors in China.

The city of Hong Kong also has the greatest extremes of wealth and poverty in the world. The city is famous for glittering skyscrapers and luxury malls and is home to some of the world's richest people. But half live in overcrowded and crumbling public housing. One-fifth live below the poverty line.

More than 170,000 "working poor" live in cage-like, subdivided flats. The stacked wire "dog crates" are 6 feet long by 3 feet high and wide, with 30 crates to a room. The city has no minimum wage.

Occupy?

Although using the name, street tactics and appeal of the Occupy Wall Street movement, Occupy Central has not made one demand on the banks in Hong Kong.

In contrast, Occupy Wall Street was a movement that focused the outrage of tens of thousands of youth on the criminal role of the Wall Street banks, particularly in extracting from the U.S. government a trillion-dollar bailout that saved the largest banks while leaving millions of homes of working people in foreclosure, along with millions unemployed.

In Hong Kong the role of the banks is enshrined in law for the next 50 years. How can this be overlooked? Understanding the special status of the former British colony of Hong Kong within China is a key part of understanding who Occupy Central represents.

Colonial status

Hong Kong, as a British colony from 1842 to 1997, had no elections nor any form of democracy. For 155 years its governors were appointed by Britain.

Hong Kong came into existence as a colony based on a series of unequal treaties imposed by British imperialism. Rather than pay in silver, Britain imposed the sale of opium into China in exchange for tea, spices, silk and porcelain, valuable trade items coveted in the West. The growing sale of opium was resisted by the Qing Dynasty, which confiscated more than 2 million pounds of opium in 1838.

British armored and steam-powered gunboats, in the name of "free trade," opened fire on Chinese cities on the Pearl and Yangtze rivers, where bamboo, wood and thatch were common building materials. Cities and warehouses burst into flames. British forces seized the island of Hong Kong with its many natural harbors at the mouth of the vital Pearl River as a naval base and military staging point for future wars in China.

The 1842 Treaty of Nanking demanded China pay heavy indemnities and gave Britain and other foreign nationals a privileged position of extraterritoriality in China, along with ceding open treaty ports and turning over the Island of Hong Kong. Racist segregation of Chinese people was the practice in Hong Kong and all the "foreign concessions."

Morocco

Public workers strike

By G. Dunkel

Moroccan workers in the public sector are under attack by the state, which has decided not to talk to their unions, just to impose pension cuts and other changes that will make the workers much poorer.

Four of the five major public sector unions walked off the job on Sept. 23. The only one that didn't was a small union, closely tied to the party running the government.

The unions on strike estimated that between 70 and 85 percent of the workers in the public sector, which in Morocco includes mines and cultural workers, walked out. The union representing workers in higher education said that participation was 100 percent in the universities of Oujda, Rabat, Casablanca, Fès, Agadir and Meknès.

In the Second Opium War 15 years later, British, French, U.S., Japanese and imperial Russian merchants made further demands, involving gunboats and thousands of troops. China was forced under duress to lease additional territory and open more cities. The demands continued. A 99-year lease for the islands surrounding Hong Kong, called the "new Territories," was signed in 1898. China lapsed into a period of devastating famines, civil wars and contending warlords, with underdevelopment and great poverty for the great majority.

Revolution of 1949

The Chinese Revolution that culminated in 1949, under the revolutionary leadership of Mao Tse-tung and the Chinese Communist Party, ended the unequal treaties and the racist treatment of Chinese people in their own country and began the reorganization of the Chinese economy on a socialist basis.

But Hong Kong remained in British imperialist hands; Macau continued in the hands of old Portuguese colonialists; and on the island of Taiwan the defeated, reactionary Kuomintang regime led by dictator Chiang Kai-shek survived as a U.S. protectorate. The imperialist countries in the West and Japan denied technological and industrial development to the impoverished and underdeveloped People's China.

In the 1980s socialist China began opening to Western capitalist investment on a steadily expanding basis. The capitalist market in China and the influence of capitalist property relations have seriously eroded socialist ownership. But the centrality of the Communist Party in politics and the economy has not been broken.

Just as the imperialists 100 and 200 years ago sabotaged any restraint on their economic domination, today Wall Street continues scheming to regain unimpeded access to all of China's markets.

Next: Hong Kong as a "special administrative region" of China

(To see this article online in its entirety, go to workers.org.)



The main issues in the strike — other than the government not discussing with the unions what it was going to do — were changes in retirement: raising the age from 60 to 65, increasing workers' contributions from 20 percent to 28 percent and basing pensions on the last eight years of work. The unions calculated these changes would reduce pensions by 25 percent to 30 percent. (PCF-Solidarité International)

Both King Mohammed II and the Islamic movement in Morocco claimed that the strike was an attack on the world of work. (Libération-Maroc, Oct. 23) □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

Biden tells truth, apologizes

It is rare that a U.S. politician reveals any important fact. It is especially rare to reveal one that exposes U.S. propaganda when it is being used to justify a new war of aggression.

Vice President Joe Biden opened his mouth last week, let out some facts, and almost immediately had to apologize. In a speech at Harvard, Biden called out Turkey, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates for supplying unconditional aid and logistical support to Washington's current Enemy No. 1: the organization now calling itself the Islamic State, also called ISIS or ISIL, as part of their attempt to overturn Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

His apology was to Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who Biden quoted as having admitted that too many fighters were crossing Turkey's border. Thus Erdoğan lied and got Biden to swear to it. They re-established the normal role of imperialist diplomacy: never deviate from the Big Lie used as a pretext for war.

Biden got off easy, at least so far. In June 2010 German President Horst Köhler admitted publicly that German troops were in Afghanistan because that was the price of sitting at the table with the other imperialists and getting a piece of the world's plunder. For telling the truth, Köhler was forced to resign.

What Biden omitted from his otherwise frank revelation was the role of Washington's West European allies, like French and British imperialism, and that of the U.S.'s own support for anyone attacking Assad.

U.S. imperialism has for decades had an ambivalent position toward al-Qaida, the al-Nusra Front and other organizations like ISIS that hold a rigid, fundamentalist and pre-capitalist ideology that is also sectarian. The CIA armed and funded these groups against a progressive Afghan government and its Soviet allies in the 1980s, calling them "freedom fighters."

The Pentagon also gave air support to similar groups in Libya in 2011 against President Moammar Gadhafi,

and until recently it allowed their growth in Syria against Assad. Meanwhile, in Somalia, Yemen, Pakistan and Nigeria, U.S. propagandists denounced the same political current as "genocidal terrorists" and used their presence as a pretext for the Pentagon's military intervention there.

But by taking over the opposition in Syria and threatening the oil-rich Kurdish region in Iraq, ISIS became more of a problem than a solution for U.S. imperialism and its clients. The response was President Barack Obama's new war and coalition. What effect this has on ISIS is still to be seen. But this new war also threatens the Syrian government and people as well as the Iraqis — whom the U.S. has already massacred over the last 24 years.

Erdoğan must have been especially angry at Biden because the Turkish Parliament has just given him a green light to join Obama's "War on ISIS." Like U.S. imperialism, the Turkish state faces many contradictions with this war. The main defenders of the Kurdish regions of Syria and Iraq have been the Kurdistan Workers Party or PKK — an organization fighting for self-determination of Turkish Kurdistan — and a similar Kurdish guerrilla group inside Syria known as the YPG — the People's Protection Units. Turkey considers these groups major enemies, and the U.S. also defines both as "terrorist." These are also the groups now defending Kurdish and other civilians in the town of Kobani in Syria near the Turkish border, under heavy attack from ISIS.

The only others fighting ISIS on the ground in Syria are Syrian government troops — whom the U.S. has demonized for three years — and the guerrillas of Hezbollah, a liberation organization based in Lebanon, which the U.S. also calls "terrorist."

The lesson from Biden is that the only way we can learn important truths from imperialist spokespeople is when they have to immediately apologize for opening their mouths. □

► NYC Sendoff for Caravan FRI., OCT. 10 @ 7 pm The Riverside Church, 91 Claremont Ave., Manhattan

Immigrant rights, labor union, faith-based communities and many progressive and social justice activists are organizing a caravan to South Texas in support of migrant refugees October 10-22.

The caravan is fundraising to help the South Texas Human Rights Center create and install 'water stations' in areas where migrants are likely to trek across the desert and get lost while trying to cross the U.S./Mexico borders. This water is a life-saving, concrete way to help the incoming migrants. We will carry out a National Educational Campaign that will make stops in several cities along the East Coast.

CARAVAN SCHEDULE:

SAT., OCT. 11: NYC, Phila., 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: So. Texas including McAllen, San Juan & others

Solidarity Caravan to the Mexico and Texas Borders



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 U.S./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.

Donate: Make tax-deductible checks payable to: IFCO/Solidarity Caravan 2014. Send to: IFCO, 418 W. 145 St., NY, NY 10031

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

Southeastern Ukraine

Mass graves uncovered where neo-Nazis attacked

By Greg Butterfield

Sept. 30 — Four mass graves have been discovered around Nyzhnia Krynka village, near the town of Makeeva in the Donetsk People's Republic. The latest one came to light Sept. 28.

The graves were uncovered by the Donetsk people's militias based on tips from local residents. Nyzhnia Krynka was recently liberated from the Azov Battalion of the National Guard, a unit serving the Ukrainian junta of neoliberal politicians, oligarchs and neo-Nazis.

"Another grave was discovered," Donetsk First Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Purgin told the ITAR-TASS news agency on Sept. 28. "How many victims and how they died will be established during the exhumation."

Earlier, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, co-sponsor with Russia of a cease-fire agreement between Kiev and the independent Donbass republics, confirmed the existence of three mass graves, including two in an abandoned mine and one in the village.

International experts from France and Russia are examining these sites, first uncovered on Sept. 23, two days after Kiev's forces withdrew.

RT reporter Maria Fimoshima visited two of them. At one, chief medical examiner Konstantin Gerasimenko told her, "All four victims — they are all male — have multiple gunshot wounds to head and body. Their hands were taped behind their backs. Some of them were only in their underwear."

One of the victims was Nikita Kolo-miytsev, a 21-year-old local resident. His mother, Galina, told RT: "The Ukrainian army took him away. ... My husband went there and told them, 'Take me instead of my son.' But they said they had taken him for a further prisoner swap."

Russia has called on the United Nations and other international bodies to open an investigation of these war crimes.

Junta sabotages prisoner exchange

A key provision of the controversial cease-fire pact is the 1-for-1 exchange of prisoners of war between the U.S.-backed regime in Kiev and the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics.

However, the people's republics say the Ukrainian authorities are deliberately trying to sabotage the prisoner exchange. While the Donbass republics have exchanged actual POWs, and agreed to accept political prisoners detained by the junta in exchange, many of those sent by Kiev are civilians with no direct connection to the war, swept up in dragnets to fill out the list.

On Sept. 24, the New York Times published a rare article critical of the junta, "Ukraine picks motley group to exchange for prisoners." While repeating the standard U.S. lies about Russian military intervention and mislabeling all opponents of the Kiev junta as "pro-Russian separatists," the article also quotes several civilians who were falsely used in the prisoner exchange.

"I am a civilian and I was included just to fill out the numbers," 17-year-old Nikita Podikov told the Times. He was kidnapped by retreating Ukrainian soldiers two weeks earlier. "They arrested me, beat me for two days and then kept me for trading."

"On Sunday," the Times noted, "he wound up in a prisoner swap of 27 men and one woman, only seven of whom were rebel fighters."

So far the uneven prisoner swaps have continued, most recently on Sept. 28. In light of the grisly discoveries in Nyzhnia Krynka, many in Donbass are wondering about the true fate of captured militia fighters.

Neo-Nazis rampage in Kharkov, Odessa

After their ignominious defeat by the Donbass militias, the fleeing battalions of the Ukrainian National Guard — actually fascist gangs in uniform — have flooded cities of southeastern Ukraine in recent days, spreading terror among the primarily Russian-speaking population.

The city of Kharkov, a stronghold of anti-fascist, anti-coup protests earlier this year, is now under siege by Kiev's armed forces.

A peace march called by the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) there was brutally repressed on Sept. 27 by fascists, with the aid of police. Local officials and far-right Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov had banned the march. At least 23 activists were arrested, including Alla Alexander, first secretary of the Kharkov KPU, and communist flags and leaflets were burned. (UkraineAntiFascistSolidarity.wordpress.com)

Then on Sept. 28, the emboldened Nazis — including members of the Azov Battalion, the Svoboda party and the Social-Nationalist Assembly — destroyed Ukraine's largest monument of Soviet communist leader V.I. Lenin, at Kharkov's Freedom Square. Several local residents who attempted to stop the vandalism were beaten bloody by the fascists, including one man who reportedly later died in the hospital.



The next day, hundreds of angry Kharkov residents gathered on the square, bringing flowers to the pedestal where Lenin's statue had stood and starting to remove Nazi graffiti. In the evening, though, the fascists returned, scattering the flowers and beating people on the square.

The independent newspaper Verb reported Sept. 30 that National Guard units "now drive armored cars with machine gunners. They patrol the central streets of Kharkov, terrorizing civilians."

The same day, a man's body was found crucified in a local churchyard. Local activists told Verb they believed it was the work of the Nazi gangs.

In the port city of Odessa, a similar rampage by neo-Nazis led to the deaths of at least 48 anti-fascists on May 2. On Sept. 30, two moderate opposition politicians — Nestor Shufrich and Nikolai Skorik — were attacked and beaten bloody by fascist goons outside the Regional State Administration as they tried to hold a press conference, according to the Odessa newspaper Timer. Shufrich, who participated in an advisory capacity in the cease-fire negotiations, was hospitalized with a concussion and broken nose.

Today the fascists, furious at their military defeat by the people of Donbass, are striking out in anger and desperation. But their time is fast running out. The opposition to Washington's coup regime and its neo-Nazi enforcers has been temporarily forced underground, but will grow stronger as winter sets in and austerity measures demanded by Western banks bite deep into the working class.

The future was seen in the actions of an elderly man who scaled the pedestal of the toppled monument in Kharkov Sept. 30. Under the inscription "Lenin," he painted a single word of hope: "ALIVE." □

Exiled Ukraine union organizer:

'Never forget who your class enemy is'

By Greg Butterfield
Simferopol, Crimea

Svetlana Licht is a trade union activist and leader of the Marxist Union Borotba (Struggle) of Ukraine. Forced to leave Kiev after the U.S.-backed far-right coup, she went first to Kharkov, where she helped to lead the city's anti-fascist protest movement, known as AntiMaidan. In May, a death squad attempted to kidnap Licht's companion and fellow union activist Denis Levin. They fled to her native city of Donetsk, capital of the recently liberated Donetsk People's Republic in the majority Russian-speaking Donbass region, where she lived through the brutal Ukrainian military siege this summer. Licht recently arrived in Simferopol, Crimea, where Workers World spoke with her in September.

Workers World: What was it like growing up in Donetsk after the destruction of the Soviet Union?

Svetlana Licht: Growing up in the Donbass was no different from any other industrial region of the former Soviet Union: widespread poverty, unemployment and collapse of production. I think that in many ways the period is very similar to the beginning of the decline of Detroit. Only there is one difference about the post-Soviet countries: the majority of people, for example, residents of Donbass, remember who built our industry, science and culture in the region. It was built by the Soviet people. They remember how life was in the Soviet Union, when there was work and social protection.

With the decline of industry, there was a decline of culture and education. History textbooks were rewritten several times. Every year, there were more and more myths of Ukrainian nationalism and vilification of the Soviet period. This was serious ideological indoctrination for the destruction of remaining social programs and to promote a full transition to capitalist market relations in all spheres of life. After all, nationalism — Ukrainian or Russian, it does not matter — is the chief defender of the commercialization of all spheres of life. In the first place, it is directed against the Soviet experience of building socialism.

WW: How did you experience the division between western and eastern Ukraine?

Svetlana Licht: I graduated in 2005 from the second Ukrainian language school in Donetsk. Most of the teaching staff came from western Ukraine. In 2004, most of the teachers began to espouse moderate nationalist positions. There were also outspoken nationalists who were not ashamed before anyone, not even children. For example, in the midst of the Orange Revolution [an earlier right-wing uprising] in 2004, my history teacher told us that those who live in the Donbass are only cattle and lumpen and similar social-racist stuff. But there were also those who, on the contrary, strongly emphasized their unwillingness to introduce this political agenda in the learning process. So my generation of Donetsk Ukrainian school graduates are skeptical of such things as nationalism and "revolutions of honor."

In pre-war Ukraine, most people were sensitive to the difference between the views of people from different regions of the country. We have different histories, different economic development. People understood this, even in spite of the propaganda that attempted to divide inhabitants of different regions on territorial

and cultural grounds. If people had more opportunities to travel around the country, they would see that the workers live the same everywhere, that all who sell their labor power share common problems and troubles that they can solve only by uniting as a class.

WW: Tell us about your activity in Kiev before the February coup.

Svetlana Licht: I worked as a union organizer, along with Denis Levin, in rail transport. One of our most successful campaigns was against the privatization of the Ukrainian railways, which managed to unite passengers, railway workers, civic organizations and trade unions.

In 2012, we began to organize actions and social networks on the topic. Together with the trade unions, we demanded that the government stop the looting and privatization of rail transport. And the government was going to negotiate and make concessions.

In 2013, we launched a campaign to establish independent trade unions for Kiev public transport workers. By the beginning of the Maidan movement [pro-imperialist protest movement led by fascist gangs and funded by Washington], we had already won a couple of small victories. After the destruction of the headquarters of Borotba in Kiev, we had to leave the city.

WW: After the February coup, you went east to Kharkov, Ukraine's second-largest city. What was your work in the Anti-Maidan movement? Why were you forced to leave Kharkov?

Svetlana Licht: We mainly engaged in propaganda activities. There were workers who undertook printing leaflets. We formed committees and organized people to campaign in the city, to spread the message. Together with Kharkov civil initiatives, we began to organize anti-war actions in early April, drawing many women anti-fascists. But in late April, the police attempted an illegal search of the Kharkov Borotba headquarters. Before that, there was a wave of arrests of those who took part in the second capture of the Kharkov Regional State Administration building — more than 100 people were arrested. Because of the repression, activities of Kharkovites began to fall sharply.

Then came the May 2 Odessa tragedy [when at least 48 anti-fascists were killed by neo-Nazis at the House of Trade Unions]. Fewer people came out onto the streets. On May 8 — just before Victory Day [anniversary of the Soviet victory over German fascism in World War II] — the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) illegally seized our headquarters, destroyed everything and took all the newspapers, leaflets, flags, sound-amplifying equipment and generator. This was done to prevent us from taking action on Victory Day. But we still participated in a citywide protest which attracted several thousand people.

Although the activity of the people receded, we still made leaflets. Many people in Kharkov had already become activists, and they began to organize help for political prisoners and conduct anti-war actions. By the end of May a more-or-less permanent core of Kharkovites had formed who continued to meet on Freedom Square under the statue of Lenin. The group ranged from 150 to 300 people.

In late May, SBU agents attempted, without charges, to kidnap Denis Levin directly from the square, and then we left the city. A small number of people continued going to the monument of Lenin all summer to protest against the war.



WW PHOTO: GREG BUTTERFIELD

Denis Levin and Svetlana Licht.

WW: How was life different in Donetsk when you were there during the so-called Anti-Terrorist Operation? How did people you know respond?

Svetlana Licht: Hundreds of thousands of people left Donetsk. Workers remained at only a few companies. Public utilities and municipal enterprise [workers] in the city worked hard, trying to provide water and electricity. But it was just a heroic job as attacks occurred every day.

Every day, dozens of people were killed.

Those who remained in the city had real courage. People were angry at the junta, but tried not to lose heart.

Almost every night, there was impenetrable darkness in my area of the city. People did not want to turn on the lights, read or watch the news — every day they could hear with their own ears what was happening in the city. And the lies of the bourgeois media only further inflamed their pain and anger.

Here is one of the most memorable

days: One afternoon we heard loud explosions not far from our house. With terrible despair, our neighbor cried out, "These bastards bombed the hospital!" And from the news, we learned that several shells fell inside the dental clinic 500 meters from our house. The same evening in a house opposite ours, a man was loudly blasting Soviet pop music. He stood on the balcony and smoked. All his neighbors began to ask why he played this comforting music. To which he replied: "They want us to be afraid and stop enjoying life. This is my answer!"

WW: How do you see the civil war between the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk and the Kiev junta?

Svetlana Licht: I believe that the people's republics are a response to the lies, violence and propaganda of the fascists, oligarchs and nationalists.

WW: What future do you see for the workers of Donbass and Ukraine?

Svetlana Licht: I believe that from a historical perspective, victory belongs to the working class and socialism, and I am looking forward to the future.

As long as the war drags on in Ukraine, the crisis will worsen. But those who believed the nationalist propaganda will see through the lies and realize that another world, another way, is possible.

WW: What is your message to the workers and youth of the United States?

Svetlana Licht: Unite everywhere and always. Never forget who your class enemy is. □

WORKERS WORLD
MUNDO OBRERO

Bombardeo EUA en Siria

Continúa de página 12

"terroristas", sin embargo, son los enemigos principales de ISIS.

Hasta ahora, el plan de la administración para poner "botas en el terreno" consiste en que Arabia Saudita entrene a 5.000 combatientes del llamado Ejército Libre de Siria. Esto parece absurdo, y sería ridículo, pero recordemos lo que Washington hace cuando se enfrenta con un problema insoluble: hace un problema más grande. En este caso resulta en mandar tropas estadounidenses y su armamento más grande.

¡Alto a la guerra estadounidense!

Sería un grave error si alguien en el movimiento estadounidense contra la guerra creyera que EUA pudiera estar haciendo algo progresista al enfrentarse con ISIS en esa región. Todas las declaraciones de Obama sobre rescatar a minorías religiosas, hacer una intervención "humanitaria" y detener las atrocidades de ISIS, ya han sido expuestas como pretextos para la protección y expansión de los intereses petroleros en Erbil, en el Kurdistán iraquí y para la reinstalación de tropas y bases estadounidenses en Irak.

La gran alianza "anti-ISIS" de Obama está compuesta por las antiguas potencias coloniales de Europa por un lado, y por el otro, las tiranías árabes que asesinan y encarcelan a sus propios disidentes. Aunque se odie a ISIS, hay que admitir que estos estados, y especialmente EUA, han matado a millones de no combatientes en la región durante los últimos 23 años. ISIS tiene un largo camino por recorrer para igualar las masacres por bombas y sanciones de los Estados Unidos.

Uno de los líderes revolucionarios más

respetados en la región, Hassan Nasrallah de Hizbolá en el Líbano, argumentó en contra de que el Líbano entrara en la coalición encabezada por EUA aunque Hizbolá lucha contra ISIS. En declaraciones el 25 de septiembre, Nasrallah señaló que EUA "es la fuente del terrorismo en el mundo . . . es el máximo partidario de la entidad sionista terrorista . . . fabricó o jugó un papel en la organización de estos movimientos terroristas Takfiri . . . [es] el lado que atacó a Japón con bombas nucleares, cometió atrocidades en la guerra de Vietnam, ha apoyado a Netanyahu en la guerra de 50 días contra Gaza y no es elegible moralmente a presentarse como combatiente de terrorismo o como líder de una coalición internacional para atacar al terrorismo".

Desde Damasco el 24 de septiembre, el Partido Comunista de Siria emitió una declaración llamando el bombardeo estadounidense una "violación flagrante del derecho internacional que viola la soberanía nacional de un estado independiente . . . bajo el pretexto de luchar contra organizaciones terroristas. Las mismas organizaciones fueron creadas en los laboratorios de los círculos de inteligencia imperialistas, especialmente las agencias de inteligencia británica y estadounidense, con la contribución activa de los círculos sionistas, para crear un pretexto para la intervención y agresión imperialista global contra los países de la región".

Las/os anti-imperialistas en EUA deben ser tan firmes como sus camaradas en el exterior que mientras luchan contra ISIS en el terreno, reconocen el papel reaccionario de la coalición imperialista estadounidense y su asalto criminal dentro de Siria. □



Pueblo venezolano sigue defendiendo su revolución

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Venezuela se encuentra en medio de la difícil tarea de construir la ruta hacia el socialismo. Como todo proceso viviente, no es uno lineal, sino con avances y retrocesos, con errores y rectificaciones, siendo lo principal el continuo esfuerzo del pueblo en propulsar la construcción de un sistema justo que por una vez y por todas suplante el violento capitalismo aún imperante en Venezuela.

Desde la trágica muerte del presidente Hugo Chávez en marzo de 2013, la Revolución Bolivariana se ha visto inmersa en batallar contra una constante e inmensa campaña desestabilizadora que ha desatado la derecha opositora aprovechando el profundo dolor del pueblo por la partida de su tan amado líder. Ésta oposición, ayudada y promovida siempre por los Estados Unidos, ha desarrollado guarimbas, asesinatos, violencia callejera, campañas mediáticas, contrabando, especulación y desabastecimiento de insumos necesarios, intentos de asesinato contra sus dirigentes, incluso contra el presidente Nicolás Maduro quien ha heredado la difícil tarea de suceder a un inmensamente popular y carismático líder mundial.

Cuando los medios noticiosos en Estados Unidos reportaban sobre los eventos de violencia del pasado febrero que dejaron 43 muertes, desinformaban culpando a jóvenes chavistas mientras promovían el “derecho a la manifestación pacífica” de jóvenes opositores. Ahora esta gran mentira se ha visto expuesta por el gobierno colombiano cuando el 4 de septiembre deportó a Venezuela a dos jóvenes venezolanos que se encontra-

ban en Bogotá obteniendo armas y municiones además de entrenamiento por paramilitares colombianos ligados al ex presidente colombiano Álvaro Uribe, famoso por sus nexos criminales.

“El vídeo revela los planes de contratar francotiradores y expertos en explosivos para realizar acciones terroristas en varias regiones de Venezuela, con la ejecución además de una serie de asesinatos, y la detonación de explosivos en espacios públicos y privados”. (Telesur, 26 de sept.)

Con esta evidencia de videos y fotos, el gobierno venezolano ha logrado desarticular una vez más el más reciente ataque violento de la derecha.

La cooperación del gobierno colombiano es sumamente interesante, pues echa abajo los planes injerencistas de EUA que intenta utilizar a Colombia para destruir a la Revolución Bolivariana. Hay que recordar que durante la administración de Álvaro Uribe, gran aliado de EUA, se trasladaron 100 paramilitares a Caracas con el propósito de dar muerte al entonces presidente Hugo Chávez.

Bajo el gobierno de Santos sin embargo, quien no olvidemos que es también de derecha y fue el Ministro de Defensa bajo Uribe, ordenando el bombardeo del campamento de las FARC-EP en la frontera del Ecuador, ha habido más cooperación con el gobierno venezolano. Hasta hace poco, un gran porcentaje de los alimentos básicos de Venezuela y significativas cantidades de gasolina se trasladaban en contrabando a Colombia a través de la frontera. Este contrabando ilegal aumentaba la carestía de alimentos que la derecha ha fomentado para sembrar desasosiego e insatisfacción en el pueblo

bolivariano, con la esperanza de que así se rebelara contra el gobierno de Maduro. La actuación conjunta de ambos gobiernos en la frontera, ha ayudado a la reducción de este contrabando.

Actividades desestabilizadoras no terminan

Pero las actividades desestabilizadoras no terminan. Incluso, se estima que aumenten.

La campaña mediática promovida por EUA incluye el rumor de que Venezuela va a cometer impago en su deuda externa a principios de octubre. El 5 de septiembre, en una columna de opinión en el “Project Syndicate”, Ricardo Hausmann, profesor de economía de Harvard quien dirige el Centro para Desarrollo Internacional de esa universidad y quien fuera ministro de planificación de Venezuela y economista en jefe del Banco de Desarrollo Interamericano. Usando medias verdades y conjeturas, bajo el título de “¿Debería Venezuela Entrar en Default?” Hausmann sembró la duda de que Venezuela sea capaz de pagar sus obligaciones internacionales.

A lo cual el presidente Maduro contestó: “He ordenado a la Procuraduría, y le he hablado a la fiscal para que iniciemos acciones porque usted está metido en una campaña para hacerle daño a nuestra patria [...] Tenemos las pruebas en sus declaraciones y artículos [...] Usted es el asesor principal, Ricardo Hausmann, de todos estos grupos que le quieren hacer daño económico”. (elnuevoherald.com, 12 de septiembre)

Otra campaña ha sido la de sembrar rumores de una epidemia, quizás de ébola, que según los medios opositores

ocurre en el estado de Aragua y que el gobierno oculta a la población, poniéndoles en riesgo de contaminación.

Ambas campañas han quedado desmascaradas por el gobierno bolivariano y el pueblo organizado. No es ningún secreto que hay problemas en la economía en cuanto al uso desmedido de divisas a bajo costo por los oligarcas venezolanos quienes aún son los propietarios de las organizaciones de mercadeo. Este es el gran desafío de la revolución y su pueblo, que se ha dado a la tarea de resolverlo.

Sin embargo, esa Venezuela amenazada por la derecha internacional que tiene su dirigente en Washington y sus medios de comunicación, ha dado una lección de solidaridad internacional con su ayuda al pueblo palestino de Gaza.

Y a nivel nacional, su lucha por arrancar el poder a las transnacionales se vio expresada esta semana cuando las/os trabajadoras, con ayuda del gobierno, tomaron la empresa estadounidense Clorox que cerró sus puertas el lunes 22 de septiembre sin pre notificación alguna a sus trabajadoras/es ni al gobierno. Las/os trabajadoras recibieron del presidente de la compañía el siguiente mensaje de voz “nos vamos de Venezuela, ya les depositamos su liquidación en una cuenta, aunque ustedes no quieran, ya la fábrica no va a trabajar más, eso es todo lo que tengo que decirles...”.

“Los propios trabajadores eligieron la junta administrativa la cual el gobierno acompañará y se realizará un plan de reactivación de la fábrica, a fin de impulsar su productividad y asegurar el derecho al trabajo del capital humano que integraba esta compañía”.

(YVKE Mundial, 26 de septiembre) □

Bombardeo EUA en Siria abre nueva guerra en Medio Oriente

Por John Catalinotto

La máquina militar estadounidense ha abierto una nueva campaña de bombardeos, y ahora dentro de los límites de un estado soberano, Siria, sin invitación del gobierno de Damasco. Cada escalada solidifica la nueva guerra de EUA contra los pueblos de esa región.

Estados Unidos está bombardeando bajo la cubierta de lo que el presidente Barack Obama llama una “guerra contra el ISIL.” ISIL es una de las siglas que se utilizan para la organización que se autodenomina Estado Islámico, también conocido como ISIS. Obama admite que esta guerra puede durar años y hace la dudosa afirmación de que será librada sin tropas de combate estadounidenses.

Aviones de combate y barcos estadounidenses comenzaron los ataques dentro de Siria el 23 de septiembre. Esta agresión no tenía la aprobación del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU ni de la OTAN. El único “apoyo internacional” de Obama es su “coalición” de lacayos de la OTAN y las monarquías árabes, que son tan represivas y reaccionarias como el Estado Islámico.

El 23 de septiembre, el New York Times

informó que las fuerzas estadounidenses desataron “un torrente de misiles crucero y bombas guiadas de precisión desde aire y mar sobre Raqqa, la capital de facto de los militantes [en el norte de Siria] y a lo largo de la porosa frontera de Irak”.

Estas “bombas de precisión” supuestamente volaron edificios que ISIS utilizaba como sede, destruyeron algunos equipos y mataron a algunos combatientes ISIS. Además, mataron al menos ocho civiles. La mayor parte de las armas pesadas que ISIS posee son de fabricación estadounidense, muchas de estas capturadas en Irak.

En días siguientes, los aviones de guerra de EUA, con mínima participación de los aliados, bombardearon refineries de petróleo en Siria que se encontraban en las zonas administradas por ISIS. También informaron que aviones estadounidenses bombardearon posiciones ISIS en una batalla entre ISIS y las fuerzas kurdas que tiene lugar en la región kurda de Siria, cerca de la frontera con Turquía.

El ejército de EUA nombró a cinco estados árabes — Bahréin, Jordania, Qatar, Arabia Saudita y los Emiratos Árabes Unidos — que participaron en los ataques. Informes posteriores aclararon que el Pentágono ejecutó casi todos los

ataques con bombas y cohetes. Los otros estados — monarquías y dictaduras que disparan o incluso decapitan a sus propios disidentes civiles — estuvieron allí como figurines para esta imposición de los intereses estratégicos y económicos de Estados Unidos.

Después el perpetuo socio menor de Washington llegó a bordo. Londres se había unido antes a las agresiones de EUA contra Yugoslavia, Afganistán, Irak y Libia. Hace un año, los británicos tuvieron que abstenerse de unirse al ataque de EUA en Siria cuando el Parlamento británico negó su aprobación.

Esta vez, Londres se unió al llamado de guerra contra ISIS cuando el Parlamento votó “sí” el 26 de septiembre para apoyar a EUA. Pero limitó esta aprobación a los ataques aéreos contra Irak, no en Siria. Australia, Francia, los Países Bajos, Bélgica y Dinamarca también se unieron, pero las potencias europeas dijeron que se quedarán fuera de los bombardeos en Siria y no suministrarán tropas en tierra.

Militarismo EUA enfrenta contradicciones

El surgimiento de ISIS controlando grandes zonas de Irak y Siria desafiando las posiciones de EUA, ha puesto a

Washington en un mar de obvias contradicciones que ahora se debaten en programas televisivos y páginas editoriales de los medios corporativos.

Una de ellas es la ambivalente relación de Washington con ISIS, al-Qaida y otros grupos similares. EUA armó y elogió a estas organizaciones en la década de 1980 en Afganistán y más recientemente en Libia contra Muamar Gadafi y en Siria contra Bashar al-Assad. Arabia Saudita es la sede de la ideología fundamentalista de al-Qaida y sus ricos gobernantes financian a estos grupos.

Otra contradicción aparece cuando se ven las fuerzas de la región que están realmente luchando con “botas en el terreno” en contra de ISIS. Está el ejército sirio de Al-Assad, a quien EUA ha satanizado y tratado como un enemigo.

También la organización Hizbolá en el Líbano, mejor conocida por resistir la agresión israelí. Y están las organizaciones guerrilleras kurdas: el YGP (Unidades de Protección del Pueblo Kurdo) con sede en la región kurda de Siria y el PKK (Partido de los Trabajadores del Kurdistán) basado en el Kurdistán en Turquía. Hasta ahora, EUA ha definido los tres grupos como

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