



Martyred Emmett Till and his mother, Mamie Till Mobley. Read page 10 editorial.

Charleston, South Carolina

Unions step forward to battle racism

By Workers World Bureau
 Charleston, S.C.

A large demonstration and strategy conference that is being called the “Days of Grace” is expected to take place in Charleston, S.C., on Sept. 5 and 6.

The gathering will honor the nine parishioners from the Mother Emanuel AME Church who were murdered by a white supremacist last June 17, as well as Walter Scott, a Black man who was killed by police in North Charleston on April 4.

The march will also support an action program, including an end to police brutality, a \$15-an-hour minimum wage and collective bargaining rights for all workers, expanded voting rights, Medicaid expansion and quality education. The program is largely based around the issues that were advocated for by the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, the church minister and state senator who was one of those killed at Emanuel.

In just over a month since the call to action was issued by the International Longshoremen’s Association Local 1422, the list of endorsing organizations from across the

South and the U.S. has grown to more than 90 — including unions, Black Lives Matter chapters, churches, civil rights groups and social organizations. Organizers report that a large turnout is expected from across South Carolina, and delegations are being planned from states throughout the region.

ILA locals from all over the East Coast and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union on the West Coast are mobilizing their members to participate in the weekend’s activities. The work to build the demonstra-

Continued on page 6

Michigan in struggle 3

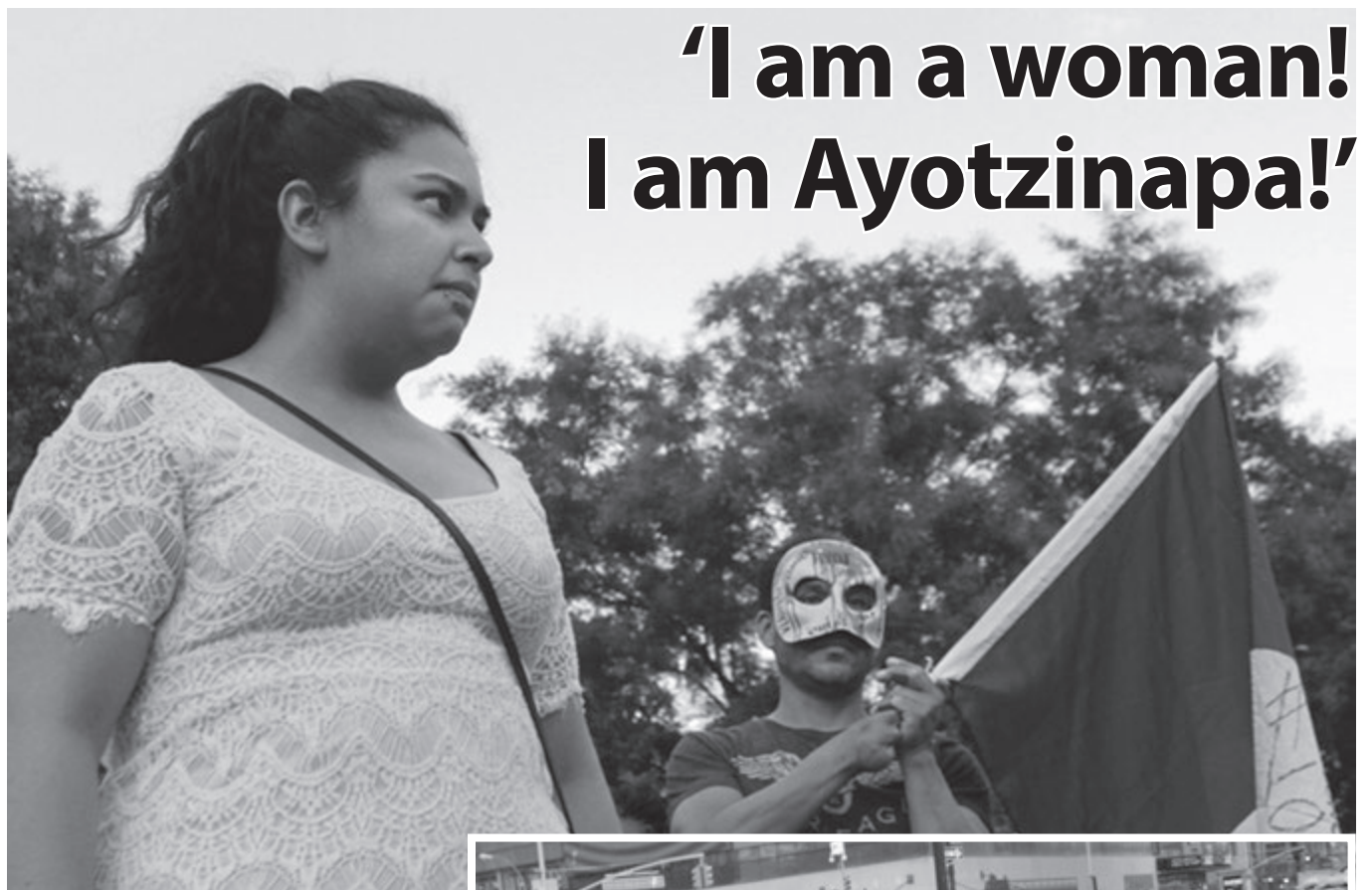
- People’s Assembly
- Release Rev. Pinkney
- Let there be light

Behind NLRB franchise rule 4

BLACK LIVES MATTER

- Pride at Work solidarity 5
- Samuel Harrell 5
- Transwomen 6

#KATRINA10 bigotry cut deep 6



**‘I am a woman!
 I am Ayotzinapa!’**

PHOTO: CLAUDIA PALACIOS
 Angelica Lara from the Ayotzinapa Student Front was one of many women fighters who spoke at an Aug. 26 Women’s Equality Day rally in Union Square Park in New York City in front of hundreds of onlookers. Lara spoke on the missing 43 students repressed in Ayotzinapa, Mexico. Page 7.

WW PHOTO (RIGHT): BRENDA RYAN



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Behind Guatemala crisis	8
FARC on Venezuela-Colombia	9
End blockade of Cuba	9
Iran nuclear treaty	11

A letter:

On the Colombia-Venezuela border conflict

There have been reports in the U.S. corporate media about the conflict on the border area between Colombia and Venezuela that distort the events there and omit the history of this conflict as well as the disruptive and subversive role of U.S. imperialism in the region. The following is a letter to Workers World from someone who lived in Colombia for many years that clarifies much of this.

Aug. 26 - The Colombian-Venezuelan border is a special place with its own characteristics: the meeting of two countries, one with a leftwing Bolivarian government and the other with a neoliberal right-wing government. Colombia has had years of war, massacres, over 5 million displaced people, political repression, military and paramilitary attacks on the communities and of course, immense poverty ... probably over 60 percent of the population [are poor].

On the other hand, Venezuela with Chávez proclaimed a socialist Bolivarian revolution and has been trying to replace what had been a disaster for the people for many years by building universities, schools, subsidized markets, control of the natural resources and rejecting U.S. military and political intervention.

Unfortunately, Colombia has welcomed all that the U.S. offers: seven military bases, one becoming the new School of the Americas, others preparing for the invasion of other Latin American and Caribbean countries, and still others devoted to massive information collection. The elites' pockets get fatter and fatter. The free trade agreements signed in 2012 reinforced U.S. companies' dominance in mining, oil, coal, flowers, bananas, etc.

What does all this have to do with the border? Throughout the times of Chávez in Venezuela, Colombia had created a fleeing population with its war on the people and many fled right into Venezuela. Thousands of Colombians crossed the border illegally, setting up makeshift houses on the other side from the Guajira to Arauca. Most people were honest folks running for their lives. They were welcomed in Venezuela, legalized, given land, health care, schools, etc.

As this was happening, Álvaro Uribe Vélez, the Colombian president for eight years (2002-2010), blasted continuous threats of invasion of Venezuela. The strong Colombian press and the international press supported him. Of course, the U.S. was using Colombia as a pawn to move on and try to destroy the Bolivarian Revolution of Venezuela. But Venezuela stood firm and faced the in-

ternational war against them ... and they remained anti-imperialist, which was their sin in the capitalist world.

Colombia ran drugs through Venezuela but the Venezuelans resisted — [Colombia] positioned paramilitary forces (actually the same as military) and [Venezuela] still resisted. But the time had come to clean the border up. That does not mean deporting all the Colombians on the border as the international press is saying.

The Colombians living in Venezuela want [the Venezuelan government] to get rid of the mess from Colombia. People on the Venezuelan side have no food because of the contraband. The shops won't sell goods and food to the people in Venezuela because they can sell it to [Colombian smugglers] who take it across the border and sell it for a lot more.

[Colombian smugglers] crossed the border and bought the gasoline to take back to Colombia — there was none left for the people in Venezuela. [Colombian] paramilitaries intimidated the communities charging people taxes just to breathe, taking their businesses and houses, taking their daughters, prostituting those who could not escape and running drugs and contraband and at the same time plotting for the overthrow of the Bolivarian Revolution.

When Venezuelan soldiers were shot by Colombian paramilitaries in early August, Maduro said, "No more!" Venezuela doesn't need the Colombian problems of violence and war across their borders.

I am just surprised it didn't happen sooner. Today on the news I saw people smiling and their hands full of groceries because they could go and now buy food at government controlled prices. Who knows if they were Venezuelans or Colombians?

The people of Latin America are awakening and resisting. Just because Colombia has a U.S. backed, right-wing government doesn't mean that the people are happy. There are many Colombians who are Bolivarians, many peasant, student and popular movements. There has to be because there are around 9,000 political prisoners in the jails of Colombia. The repression and killings continue to target these movements.

The Colombian people are lucky to have Ecuador and its Citizens Revolution and Venezuela and its Bolivarian Revolution on each side. They will always be a support to the Colombian people.

— Alice Loaiza

WORKERS WORLD

this week

★ **In the U.S.**

- Unions step forward to battle racism 1
- People's Assembly links rising racism to economic crisis . 3
- Protest demands release of Rev. Pinkney..... 3
- Months of protest bring light to a Detroit neighborhood ... 3
- Rising struggle lifts pay, rights..... 4
- Victory for Houston activist at immigration hearing..... 4
- Workers demand safety at 7-Eleven 4
- Pride at Work supports Black Lives Matter..... 5
- Black prisoners lives matter — Justice for Samuel Harrell!. 5
- Katrina+10: Natural disaster or forced removals?..... 6
- Cleveland activists say Black Trans Lives matter..... 6
- Women's Equality Day speak-out on today's struggles... 7
- Days of Action against the Blockade of Cuba 9
- End the siege of Gaza!..... 10
- Boston demonstrators demand peace for Syria..... 11

★ **Around the world**

- A letter on the Colombia-Venezuela border conflict 2
- 'Mass movement must depose President Pérez Molina' .. 8
- Colombia and Venezuela — Two brotherly peoples..... 9
- Brazilian autoworkers strike back against layoffs 9
- Imperialism behind mass migration deaths..... 10
- Why U.S. ruling class wants an Iran deal..... 11

★ **Editorial**

- Why Emmett Till's life still matters 10

★ **Noticias en Español**

- ¡¡Pérez Molina no quiere renunciar — tenemos que sacarlo con un paro nacional!!..... 12

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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 56 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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People's Assembly links rising racism to economic crisis

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

A People's Assembly and Speakout were held on Aug. 29 in downtown Detroit at Grand Circus Park. The event was called by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition and endorsed by other community organizations.

While the event lasted over three hours, so many people requested to speak that some were not able to state their views. Organizers apologized due to the constraints of time.

Speakers at the assembly included Rebekah Larson, who co-chaired the gathering. Larson is a housing activist in Detroit and has demonstrated against the pending property tax foreclosures in Wayne County.

JoAnn Watson, former City Council member, lent her moral support to the ongoing struggle in Detroit. Attorney Vanessa Fluker, a people's lawyer working on housing rights, urged people to fight the banks at the root of the foreclosure crisis.

Errol Jennings, leader of the Russell Woods Neighborhood Association, called for citywide organization to end the forced removals underway against African Americans and other working-class people in the city. Jennings had spearheaded a campaign to get resolutions from community organizations for a moratorium on tax foreclosures. This helped prompt the City Council to pass its own language requesting the moratorium. The tax foreclosure deadline was postponed for two-and-a-half months, allowing thousands to make arrangements with the Wayne County Treasurer's Office to save their homes.

Other speakers included Cicely McClellan and Tijuana Morris of the Detroit Active and Retirees Association; retired steelworker Pat Driscoll and attorney Matt Clark of the Detroit Eviction Defense; Jack Watkins speaking for youth on the rising tide of racism in this majority African-American city; Debra Simmons of the Detroit chapter of the National Action Network and the ACLU National Police Reform Campaign; Jerry Goldberg and Michael Shane of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition; Diane Bukowski, editor of Voice of Detroit; Valerie Jean, a water and environmental rights community activist; Martha Grevatt of the United Auto Workers; Cynthia Johnson, AM 1440 radio host and leader of the Community Light Walk; Maureen Taylor, co-chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization; Meeko Williams of the Detroit Water Brigade; Stephen Boyle, a videographer and environmental activist; Helen Moore of Keep the Vote, No Takeover; and Erik Shelly of Michigan United and Black Lives Matter.

atorium NOW! Coalition; Diane Bukowski, editor of Voice of Detroit; Valerie Jean, a water and environmental rights community activist; Martha Grevatt of the United Auto Workers; Cynthia Johnson, AM 1440 radio host and leader of the Community Light Walk; Maureen Taylor, co-chair of the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization; Meeko Williams of the Detroit Water Brigade; Stephen Boyle, a videographer and environmental activist; Helen Moore of Keep the Vote, No Takeover; and Erik Shelly of Michigan United and Black Lives Matter.

Action proposals adopted

The Wayne County treasurer has announced that the remaining foreclosed properties, even those that are owner-occupied, will begin to be auctioned off on Sept. 11. The People's Assembly agreed on an action proposal to hold a demonstration outside the treasurer's office at 400 Monroe at noon on Sept. 15.

The action proposal circulated at the assembly stressed: "This disaster is entirely avoidable! The state of Michigan is sitting on \$200 million in federal Helping Hardest Hit Funds that can be used to pay delinquent property tax bills for occupied homes. But instead of using these funds for their stated purpose, to keep families in their homes, the state and federal governments are using these funds to tear down homes and turning them over to the 'blight task force' led by billionaire Dan Gilbert."

Other action proposals included an outreach initiative for the annual Labor Day parade on Sept. 7. Two items will be circulated to the tens of thousands of union members: a statement to the labor movement from Michigan political prisoner Rev. Edward Pinkney and leaflets calling for the demonstration at the Wayne County treasurer's office on Sept. 15.

A strong emphasis was placed on the need for jobs; the restoration of full pension and health care benefits promised to municipal retirees; support for a Title VI racial discrimination complaint to the federal government charging extreme bias in the destruction of the Detroit Public Schools system; the need to seek

justice for victims and families of police violence; and the defense of residents facing eviction by the banks and Fannie Mae.

Moratorium NOW! Coalition organizers encouraged people to attend their 7 p.m. Monday night meetings at 5920 Second Ave. in Midtown.

This People's Assembly once again

tested the hard-won right of community organizations to hold political meetings and demonstrations on the streets in downtown Detroit. In 2014, the bankers and corporate heads tried to ban such activities, prompting a legal and political struggle to guarantee free speech and assembly in the financial district and its environs. □

Protest demands release of Rev. Pinkney

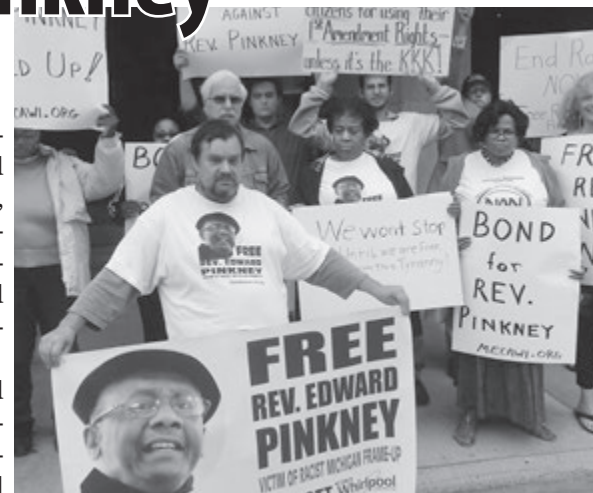
By **Abayomi Azikiwe**

"It's not one thing, it is everything," says the Rev. Edward Pinkney of Berrien County, Mich., who is currently incarcerated for unjust felony forgery charges at the Lakeland Correctional Facility in Coldwater, Mich.

Supporters of Pinkney held a demonstration in Grand Rapids, Mich., outside the state appeals court, calling for the civil rights leader to be released on bond pending the outcome of his challenge to a conviction for attempting to recall the Benton Harbor, Mich., mayor. Pinkney, the leader of the Black Autonomy Network Community Organization (BANCO) based in Berrien County, was sentenced to 30 to 120 months in prison after a trial that was observed and followed by thousands throughout the United States and the world.

Pinkney's defense attorney, Tim Holloway, has filed a motion to the Appellate Court to reconsider its two-to-one decision to deny bond. Pinkney poses no threat to the people of Michigan and deserves to be allowed to rejoin his family and friends in Berrien County.

Judge Sterling Schrock sentenced Pinkney after admonishing him for his role in Berrien County politics. The BANCO leader was charged and convicted



WWPHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Supporters of Rev. Edward Pinkney demonstrate on Aug. 26 in Grand Rapids, Mich., demanding his release on bond.

ed of changing five dates on recall petitions.

There were no eyewitnesses to this alleged crime and the charges were politically motivated. Berrien County prosecuting attorney Michael Sepic questioned witnesses on their organizational affiliations and what was said at BANCO meetings. As a result of the conviction and sentencing of Pinkney, a nationwide movement has sprung into existence demanding his release.

The demonstration outside the appellate court in Grand Rapids was covered by Channel 8 and WOOD radio, which reaches hundreds of thousands across western Michigan. Protesters traveled to Grand Rapids from Detroit, Ann Arbor, Berrien County and other areas around the state. □

Months of protest bring light to a neighborhood

Martha Grevatt
Detroit

The ugly face of banker-imposed austerity takes many forms. The world has watched in horror as the residents of Detroit, a city whose population is majority African-American, have been deprived of basic necessities such as housing, water and quality education. Last year, two United Nations rapporteurs concluded from their investigation that the mass water shutoffs constituted a human rights violation.

What is not well-publicized is a public safety crisis, affecting many poor neighborhoods but not touching the downtown and midtown areas targeted for gentrification. The city has miles of broken street lights. Not only on side streets but on major thoroughfares there are wide areas — where people of all generations walk, bicycle, drive, catch buses and maneuver their wheelchairs — that are pitch dark when the sun goes down.

The privately operated Public Lighting



WWPHOTO: MARTHA GREVATT

Walkers win street lights in Detroit. Aug. 27.

Authority originally planned to repair or replace only 10,000 of the 53,000 lights that have been out of service, reducing the total number of street lights from 88,000 to 45,000.

But this crime of racist neglect has not gone unchallenged. Since June 5, the Dexter/Waverly intersection has been the scene of weekly "Light Walks." Every Thursday at 9:00 p.m., people

have turned out with flashlights and signs, chanting "No lights! It ain't right!" Sometimes they hold the illuminated letters of the Detroit Light Brigade, flashing a simple message: "Turn on the lights." Neighborhood children, with and without their parents, come every week. Due to complaints and protests from the people of Detroit, an additional 20,000 lights will be replaced, bringing the total to 65,000.

Protestors were skeptical of the promise made by Mayor Mike Duggan to Light Walk organizer Cynthia Johnson that busy Dexter Avenue would be lit up by the end of August. But in fact on Aug. 27, Light Walkers witnessed the power of protest. When they arrived for another Thursday night action to demand basic

public safety, they were nearly blinded by the brightness of brand new street lights on shiny new metal poles. Workers installing the lights had revealed that they were reassigned from other neighborhoods to Dexter Avenue "because of the Light Walks over there."

Neighbors walked and bicycled over to the protest site to express their elation and gratitude. Now they can get around safely, without fear of being hit by a vehicle or victimized by crimes of survival.

Light Walk organizers will now target another unlit area — and another and another — until the entire city emerges from darkness. □

Capitalism at a Dead End
Job destruction, overproduction and crisis in the high-tech era



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

Available online and other bookstores.

Workers to the NLRB

Rising struggle lifts pay, rights

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

Low-wage workers are winning big victories in their continuing struggle to raise wages and strengthen rights for those in the lowest-paid jobs in the U.S.

After steady pressure from “Fight for \$15,” the City Council of Birmingham, Ala., passed an ordinance on Aug. 17 to raise the city minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour over the next two years. The federal \$7.25 per hour is now the minimum wage in Alabama. “Fight for \$15” is a national organization begun by fast food workers to “fight for fair wages and the right to form a union without retaliation.” (fightfor15.org)

The council vote, under review by the city’s legal department, is thought to be the first such law in the southeast U.S. if it goes into effect. (Al.com)

More historic wage-raising victories in Kentucky and North Carolina echo this Deep South gain, made where ruling-class resistance to labor organizing has traditionally been most vicious.

The low-wage movement has surged dramatically, starting with the first New York City, one-day walkout by 200 workers in 2012. In April 2015, tens of thousands of low-wage workers and supporters protested in 200 cities in the movement’s ninth one-day strike. This mobilization of worker strength is one of the longest continuing U.S. labor campaigns since the 1930s.



PHOTO: AL.COM

Birmingham low-wage workers and community supporters rally to put pressure on City Council to raise minimum wage, July 14.

The rise in low-wage worker organizing has been called an “earthquake,” a “tidal wave” and “an idea whose time has come” by labor analysts. (Guardian, Los Angeles Times)

Led first by fast food workers, the campaign now embraces people in the broadest range of low-wage labor — from car wash, child care, convenience store, fast food, home care and health care workers to adjunct professors and sweatshop big-box warehouse workers.

The low-wage movement and other community struggles are connecting, linking worker rights to students’ right to education, people’s right to water and housing, and the Black Lives Matter demand to freedom from racist state and police terror.

The April 15 action by the Workers Center of Central New York in Syracuse, N.Y., showed the new strength of labor-com-

munity bonds. There, low-wage health aides and fast food workers were joined by local union members from auto, civil service, health care, roofing, plumbing, transit, and teaching — and representatives from local anti-war groups, cultural groups, churches, synagogues and mosques.

The power of the movement & the NLRB ruling

In July, a New York state panel appointed by Gov. Andrew Cuomo endorsed a \$15 minimum wage for the state’s 180,000 fast food workers. Cities including Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles have voted to phase in a \$15 minimum wage.

On Aug. 27, the National Labor Relations Board ruled three-to-two that a company that hires a contractor to staff its business or facilities may be considered a “joint employer” of any workers hired. This ruling would affect workers at franchise businesses like those licensed by McDonald’s, among many others.

That means a union representing those workers could legally bargain with the parent company, not just the contractor, on their behalf, as well as challenge labor violations for the workers. (New York Times, Aug. 27)

The NLRB is the federal “agency of last resort” for U.S. worker/labor conflicts, charged with “conducting elections for

labor union representation and with investigating and remedying unfair labor practices.” (nlrb.gov)

The NLRB ruling could potentially affect millions of U.S. workers. According to the National Employment Law Project, there are about 3.4 million temporary or “staffing-agency” subcontracted jobs alone in the U.S. That’s 2.25 percent of total U.S. employment. The project notes the numbers are doubtless much higher because the U.S. doesn’t track subcontracted workers. (Guardian)

Bourgeois economists, pursuing their own political and economic agendas, have recently backed minimum wage increases; for example, economist Paul Krugman’s op-ed, “Liberals & Wages,” in the July 17 New York Times.

But in an editorial damning the NLRB ruling, the conservative National Review magazine compared workers to bank robbers. Then, in the same article, the National Review admitted business owners regularly subcontracted to evade worker-friendly labor laws. (Aug. 29)

The Wall Street Journal was aghast at the “radical rewriting of U.S. labor law” by this NLRB decision. (Aug. 28)

In the face of bitter ruling-class resistance, the recent low-wage worker wins would never have been realized without the fierce struggle of the workers themselves, out in the streets with their communities, “Fighting for \$15!” □



PHOTO: AL.COM

Birmingham low-wage workers rally near St. Vincent’s Hospital, June 22.

Victory for Houston activist at immigration hearing

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

The Intensive Supervision Appearance Program was pressured into halting, at least for now, the deportation of Houston activist, artist and father Izzy Torres on Aug. 26.

Torres was accompanied by dozens of supporters, known informally as “Team Izzy,” as he reported for deportation. They were told not to enter the office building but did anyhow. The security officer for the office building said we would disrupt business, but things were quiet and the hallways empty except for Team Izzy.

Cheers went up about 30 minutes later as Torres emerged from the ISAP offices with a broad smile on his face. “I’m not going anywhere,” he said.

Although his stay of deportation was



PHOTO: BLANCA ALANIS

Israel Torres’ supporters demonstrate outside GEO offices in Houston, Aug. 26.

not approved, he was given more time to prove his case and this was a victory. The group gathered on the front sidewalk and cheered and hugged Torres, and the media did their interviews. “This was a victory for the family and supporters of Izzy whose mantra is, ‘Not One More Depor-

tation!’” declared Hope Sanford, one of the leaders of the group aiming to stop today’s deportation.

In 2013, Israel “Izzy” Méndez Torres applied for a special work permit required for his job as a bartender at a local club. Since he was an undocumented worker, he applied using a false Social Security card. Unfortunately, he was caught and detained for months by Immigration

and Customs Enforcement agents and since then has been fighting his deportation.

Torres is a father of three teenagers who are U.S. citizens and a stepdad to two daughters. He has lived in the U.S. for more than 23 years. While he was de-

tained, his family suffered great losses, including having their bills pile up without his income.

Torres was granted a stay of removal last year after the community turned out in large numbers to support him. This year the local ICE field office denied his stay and told him he had to leave his family.

“Many Houston community leaders believe Israel [Torres] is being punished for his activism. Israel has lost thousands of dollars fighting his case and then was told to buy his own ticket and ‘self-deport’ for having made a choice many immigrant workers have to make every day: to work with a fake Social Security number,” said Sanford.

“We thank all the organizations who have come out to support Izzy: the Fe y Justicia Workers Center, FIEL (Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha), La Tuya, Ivan Sanchez in the office of Congresswoman Shelia Jackson Lee and others.

“Izzy has been fighting for his freedom for two years — the freedom to permanently be with his family, the freedom to live disconnected from any ankle monitor, the freedom to work and live without knowing that at any moment, the Migra can grab and deport him,” Sanford concluded.

The agency that Torres reported to, ISAP, is part of the GEO Group Inc. According to its corporate website, GEO is the world’s leading firm providing correctional, detention and community re-entry services with 98 facilities, approximately 78,500 beds and 18,000 employees around the world. They squeeze profits from immigration detention prisons throughout the United States, the world’s leader in imprisoning people. □

Workers demand safety at 7-Eleven



WW PHOTO: GARRETT DICEMBRE

7-Eleven workers in Buffalo, N.Y., led a march and speakout on Aug. 30 demanding an end to unsafe working conditions.

For many hours each day, workers are required to work a store alone, keeping

the owners’ costs down, while the threats that the workers face rise. Every day, the workers are confronted with harassment and threats of violence. Last winter, a 7-Eleven clerk was raped, beaten and robbed while working alone in the store at 5 a.m.

7-Eleven’s regional management has refused to accept the workers’ petition for safety measures, or the community’s concern. These demands include putting guards on the overnight shifts and hiring more overnight staff. Management reacted to the initial pro-

tests and petition by either firing or cutting the hours of workers who spoke up.

Chanting “When workers’ lives are under attack, what do we do? Stand up! Fight back!” and “Workplace violence has got to go!” the protesters marched through the busy Buffalo Art Festival, ending outside a 7-Eleven store to hold a rally.

The rally connected the demand for an end to workplace violence and the national struggle of low-wage workers with talks addressing a livable wage and placards that read “Black Lives Matter at Work!” and “7-Eleven: Value Workers Over Property! Protect People Not Products!”

— Ellie Dorritie and Garrett Dicembre

Pride at Work supports Black Lives Matter

By Gerry Scoppettuolo
Orlando, Fla.

A lot of pride and fightback energy was on display at the “Triennial Convention of Pride at Work, AFL-CIO,” in Orlando, Fla., on Aug. 26-28. Pride at Work is the official lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer constituency group of the AFL-CIO, created in 1994 as part of a grassroots activist upsurge of the LGBTQ working class.

Some 175 delegates charted a course for the coming year to fight for the needs of LGBTQ workers, their unions and all working people.

The influence of the Black Lives Matter movement was very evident at the convention and a strong BLM resolution was passed. The first-ever all African-American women and trans-inclusive panel addressed the plenary meeting on the subject of “Race and the Queer Community.” Panelists included Elle Hearn, a trans woman leader of GetEQUAL; Carmen Barkley and Sheva Diagne of the AFL-CIO’s Civil, Human and Women’s Rights

Department; and Charlene Carruthers of Black Youth Project 100.

Hearn was a national organizer of the Aug. 25 “Trans Liberation Tuesday,” observed in many cities across the country. Hearn spoke passionately about the dozens of murders of African-American trans persons over the past year, with five murders just in the previous week.

This writer had attended a Boston Black Lives Matter Trans Liberation Day rally in Roxbury, where Andre Francois, the president of the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, Steelworkers Local 8751, and members of the union’s executive board had pledged union support for trans rights.

The Florida convention unanimously passed a Black Lives Matter resolution on race relations, resolving that “public services that systematically underserve or mistreat communities because of their racial prejudice must be challenged and changed.” Similar language had been used in May at the 44th annual convention of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Another resolution directly challenged the group known as the Human Rights Campaign for catering to “big money donors” and for having “misguided priorities [that] have disproportionately affected the transgender community, People of Color and workers.”

The Human Rights Campaign is known to have a “fist-in-glove” relationship with the Democratic Party. The resolution’s particular ire was reserved for HRC’s 90 percent corporate approval rating for Walmart, despite that company’s anti-gay and anti-worker record. The “Our Walmart” campaign of the United Food and Commercial Workers has been fighting for \$15 and a union for Walmart workers for the past two years. Rank-and-file members of UFCW’s OUTreach Caucus, known as “Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Labor and Our Allies,” gave strong support to this resolution.

The most withering attack on corporate America and its paid-for politicians was delivered by Pride at Work Co-President Shane Larson. Addressing the plenary, Larson excoriated Hillary Clinton,

John Kerry and the Obama administration in the strongest language imaginable for trying to force the Trans Pacific Partnership agreement through Congress. The TPP is a gift bag to global capitalism that would undermine labor rights in many participating countries and make it impossible to manufacture cheap generic versions of drugs, including life-saving HIV anti-retrovirals.

Pride at Work union members at the convention are involved in organizing for the “Days of Grace” union rally against racism on Sept. 5 in Charleston, S.C., site of the recent terrorist massacre of nine church members at Charleston’s Mother Emanuel AME Church. One of those killed was the pastor, the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, a state senator who was a known ally of the LGBTQ community.

A number of LGBTQ groups will be participating in the march, which is being organized by the International Longshoremen’s Association, Local 1422, and endorsed by many unions and community groups, including the Southern Workers Assembly. □

Black prisoners lives matter — Justice for Samuel Harrell!

By Kathy Durkin

A “Beat Up Squad” of up to 20 prison guards killed Samuel Harrell on April 21 at Fishkill Correctional Facility in Beacon, N.Y., charge his family and community supporters. They are seeking justice for this 30-year-old African-American prisoner.

No charges have yet been filed against any officers involved in this atrocity. No guard has even been suspended or put on leave. The “Beat Up Squad” members are still on the job.

Members of Hudson Valley Black Lives Matter, along with other area residents, marched with Harrell’s relatives to the office of Dutchess County District Attorney William Grady in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., on Aug. 27 to demand the arrest, indictment and conviction of those responsible for Harrell’s death.

Demonstrators held a banner saying “#Justice for Samuel Harrell” and blocked traffic. Some held signs naming DA Grady and guards implicated in the assault. A rally was held across from Grady’s office. Some protesters circled the building while others blocked the entrance.

Diane Harrell, the slain prisoner’s spouse, said: “Sam was murdered by a group of men who used their positions of power in the prison to act out their rage. I cannot bear the thought of my husband’s last few minutes of life. I know he felt excruciating pain. I can promise that we will not rest until there is justice for Sam.”

And Margaret Kwateng of the Hudson Valley BLM, which organized the demonstration, stressed, “What is left to investigate? ... If Bill Grady doesn’t press homicide charges, he will not only be condoning the continued terrorizing of current inmates at the hands of a known gang of violent cor-



Samuel Harrell

rections officers, but condoning racist violence in prisons in general.” (Huffington Post, Aug. 27)

Natajah Roberts of Citizen Action of New York said: “Many inmates who saw [Harrell’s killing] have been threatened ... put in solitary and ... told not to say anything about what they saw. We are here to demand justice and specifically to demand that the DA file homicide charges.” (Radio station WAMC, Aug. 28)

After the demonstration, Grady announced that his office will investigate Harrell’s death together with the U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York.

Death ruled a ‘homicide’

Harrell’s relatives say that his bipolar mental illness contributed to his confusion on April 21, when he mistakenly expected his family to pick him up to take him home. As he got ready to leave, guards attacked him. They claimed he had smoked synthetic marijuana and was behaving erratically.

However, the Orange County medical examiner found cuts and bruises on Harrell’s body — and no illegal drugs in his system. His death was ruled a “homicide.” State prison officials have released little information about the fatal assault.

The New York Times extensively investigated the massive attack on Harrell, reporting on Aug. 18 that he “was thrown to the floor and was handcuffed. As many as 20 officers — including members of a group known around the prison as the “Beat Up Squad” — repeatedly kicked and punched Mr. Harrell ... with some of them shouting racial slurs, according to more

than a dozen inmate witnesses.”

Edwin Pearson said, “Like he was a trampoline, they were jumping on him.” Inmates saw Harrell “thrown or dragged down a staircase.” One prisoner saw him lying on the landing, “bent in an impossible position.”

Attorneys for Harrell’s family have received 19 affidavits and letters from inmate eyewitnesses. None state that Harrell fought back or even talked to his assailants. They name nine officers who participated in the attack and the ranking officer on duty at the time — Sgt. Joseph Guarino — who has often been sued for brutality.

Inmates who saw the horrific beating have been put into solitary confinement and threatened with violence after speaking to Harrell’s lawyers, relatives or journalists.

‘Pervasive culture of abuse’

The blog of the Correctional Association of New York, a prisoner-advocacy group, cites its 2013 report documenting “harassment and provocation” in the building in which Harrell was killed. On Aug. 18, the website condemned “the pervasive culture of violence and abuse perpetrated by Department of Correction and Community Supervision and the attempted cover-up — this time at Fishkill. The homicide of 30-year-old Samuel Harrell on April 21 by Fishkill prison guards is a reminder that the entire prison system is out of control and irreparably broken.”

Other revelations about brutality in New York state prisons have recently come to light. In June, when two prisoners escaped from the Clinton Correctional Facility in Dannemora, N.Y., other inmates were put into solitary confinement and tortured by prison guards trying to extract information.

These horrific incidents once again expose the intrinsically racist, oppressive and brutal system of mass incarceration. In demanding justice for Samuel Harrell and all victims of racist police violence, it is essential to call for the uprooting of the entire prison system. It is a cornerstone of the capitalist state, whose mission is to use force and violence to maintain exploitation of the multinational working class. □

‘Labor Day’ unmasked Build Workers World!

Did you know that the federal holiday “Labor Day,” celebrated the first Monday in September, was founded in 1887? The reason it’s in September and not May 1, which is celebrated today in 80 countries as International Workers Day, has nothing to do with honoring the role of labor in building this country. It has everything to do with the capitalist government refusing recognition to the role of socialists and other radical organizers in the labor movement.

The American Federation of Labor, ever fearful of alienating the ruling class, was enlisted to suggest in 1887 that the holiday be in September to take attention away from May Day — and the fight of working people in Chicago for the 8-hour day, which had led to a police riot on May 4, 1886, known as the Haymarket Massacre.

Police were trying to disperse protesters when a bomb was thrown, the cops responded by killing four workers plus seven of their own. That led to a round-up of leading labor organizers, most of

whom were well-known socialists or anarchists who had not even been at the scene. Four of them were executed by the state in 1887.

So there is nothing honorable, worthy or celebratory behind “Labor Day.” In fact, its roots are deeply imbedded in the most vile kind of capitalist lies, police terror and fear of working people’s rights — most of all the workers’ righteous demands for a socialist revolution, which were clearly expressed at Haymarket.

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Katrina+10: Natural disaster or forced removals?

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

It has been a decade since the people of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast were dislocated due to the federal government's failure to protect their communities and rebuild them after Hurricane Katrina.

Approximately 1,800 people died in New Orleans alone during the hurricane — which struck during the last week of August 2005 — and in its aftermath. Many others suffered severe injuries, while the area's municipal and health care systems were overwhelmed.

The storm and flooding damaged thousands of homes, causing people to take refuge on roofs of buildings and in New Orleans' streets. Mass evacuations took place, sending people to convention centers and stadiums, as well as to other towns, cities and states. Later, people were transported out of the Gulf Coast region in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama.

Families, neighborhoods, churches, organizations, schools, social clubs and a centuries-long culture were eradicated in a matter of days. Although then President George W. Bush told the media that the federal government was working to provide assistance to the impacted cities, towns and rural areas, these falsehoods were soon exposed.

Armed militias of white racists prevented African Americans from fleeing into their neighborhoods, amid reports of racially motivated murders. Police brutality was rampant. On Sept. 4, 2005, New Orleans police opened fire on unarmed people on the Danziger Bridge, killing two African Americans. Five officers were convicted, but an appeals court just granted them a new trial.

U.S. wars abroad, racist neglect at home

The Katrina disaster's aftermath exposed the Bush administration for its domestic and international failures. Much of the resources of the federal government were employed in the U.S. war of aggression against Iraq.

The U.S.-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan resulted in the deaths of thousands of U.S. and NATO troops and hundreds of thousands of civilians in these coun-

tries. Nonetheless, the Bush administration and Congress were determined to continue these occupations, which were based on fabricated allegations of destroying "weapons of mass destruction" and fighting a "war on terrorism."

The Federal Emergency Management Agency demonstrated its racist character and administrative incompetence. The images of hundreds of thousands of dislocated African Americans in public areas and on buses and warships awaiting removal illustrated the national oppression and class inequality in the world's richest capitalist country.

When Cuba and Venezuela offered material assistance to the people of the region, the Bush administration declined, saying that the U.S. could take care of its own people. More than 1,000 Cuban physicians were prepared to deploy to the Gulf. Venezuela was willing to send ships with fuel in a gesture of solidarity with African Americans and others in the region.

Therefore, by not providing assistance to the people and preventing other countries from doing so, the government was actually intensifying a war against the oppressed. Over the next few years, the U.S. economic crisis mounted as soaring jobless rates and home foreclosures and evictions hit many people in oppressed communities hard.

Federal policy a failure

More than 1 million people were forced to relocate, as untold numbers perished and suffered from even deeper levels of poverty and social neglect after the hurricane. African-American communities along the Gulf Coast in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama were disproportionately impacted.

The damage done to New Orleans' Eighth and Ninth Wards provided a rationale for mass removals of their inhabitants. Public housing complexes were shuttered, while neighborhood residents were not given any assistance to relocate and rebuild.

Thousands of people were placed in makeshift government housing where they suffered further injury and isolation. In cities as far away as Detroit, dislocated African Americans and others

were warehoused in hotels for months until the government stopped housing them. After 10 years, most dislocated African Americans are still living outside Louisiana and the Gulf region with no prospects of returning home.

Whole neighborhoods remain in ruins with damaged homes, churches, schools and businesses that cannot reopen. The New Orleans public schools were turned over to a charter system, leaving teachers and other educational workers unemployed.

The Aug. 30 German newspaper Deutsche Welle told of Meghan Sullivan, an ultrasound technician now living in Houston, whose family could not afford to return to New Orleans. "We had to evacuate quite suddenly and leave everything behind that didn't fit in the car. We didn't realize it was going to be this bad, but we lost everything in the storm."

Sullivan continued: "A year later, we decided to move to Houston. We were pretty much priced out of buying a new home in New Orleans at that point already. There simply weren't enough properties around. And now, people who have never lived in New Orleans before are spending insane amounts of money to buy tiny condos and miserable plots of land, while no one knows how long it will take until the next natural disaster hits the city."

Rebuilding without the Black masses

Corporate news media report that "a rebirth of New Orleans" is taking place — but that's with white domination of the political structures and the further oppression of African Americans.

Whereas assistance was made available through grants and insurance company payouts for those impacted by the hurricane in white neighborhoods, that was not true in African-American communities. Many in the Ninth Ward were falsely told that if they lived near the levee they did not need insurance, and that the federal government would cover their expenses if a disaster occurred.

Meanwhile, thousands of African Americans in the Ninth Ward were refused flood insurance or could not afford the premiums. So, they were left without resources to relocate or reconstruct dam-

aged and destroyed homes and communities.

In the Aug. 28 Deutsche Welle, Richard Walker interviewed Cashauna Hill, executive director of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center. Hill explained, "Our counselors began to notice that white homeowners in white neighborhoods were slated to receive larger grants than those for Black homeowners in African-American neighborhoods — even when their homes were of similar age and similar square footage."

Hill noted, "Because of this country's history of government-sanctioned and sponsored racial segregation and discrimination, African-Americans' homes in African-American neighborhoods are valued lower than the homes of white people in white neighborhoods."

Allocation of grants was not based on reconstruction costs, but on the residence's market value before Katrina hit. However, this formula must always take into account the racist history of how housing values are determined for insurance and real estate assessment purposes.

Rents have soared in the last decade and low-income African Americans have been largely priced out of the market. Landlords often discriminate against people who are allocated housing vouchers as opposed to those who pay cash.

These developments in New Orleans and along the Gulf Coast have been replicated throughout the U.S. The late 2000s' "subprime" mortgage crisis had the same impact in Detroit, Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, Baltimore, Atlanta, Boston and elsewhere.

Despite the fines paid to the federal government by the banks which engineered the housing crisis, most monies have not reached people adversely impacted by the dislocations that were not directly caused by a natural disaster. Until housing is a guaranteed human right in the U.S., this problem will only worsen in the future. □

Charleston, South Carolina

Unions step forward against racism

Continued from page 1

tion and conference has been anchored by a broad coalition of labor, civil rights, faith based and community organizations that have been making preparations and sending teams to canvass neighborhoods throughout the city.

The Southern Workers Assembly has been engaged in outreach to unions and other worker organizations throughout the region. They are building for a Southern workers contingent in the march on Saturday morning and will be holding a meeting immediately following the march at 12:30 p.m. at the ILA hall at 1402 Morrison Drive.

Working-class movement asked to fight racism

Among other things, the meeting will take up the need to engage the working-class movement more deeply in the fight against racist terror and confront the special conditions facing workers, particular Black workers, in the South. In a statement, the SWA said, "Young Black and people of conscience across the country are rebelling against this economic and politically driven racist climate that has declared War on Black America in

Cleveland activists say Black Trans Lives matter

By **Susan Schnur**
Cleveland

People gathered Aug. 25 in Cleveland's Luke Easter Park, a main green space in the African-American community. They were part of a national call by the Black Lives Matter movement in response to the epidemic of murders of Black transwomen. Under the hashtag of #BlackTransLivesMatter, 20 cities held gatherings and actions to fight back against the violent hate crimes being committed against this segment of the African-American community.

There have been at least 17 transwomen killed in 2015. Fifteen of the 17 were Black or Brown. (MSNBC, Aug. 15). This



WWWPHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

number is most likely low do to frequent misreporting of gender by the mainstream media.

While holding signs, the participants gathered in a circle. Each person made a commitment to at least one action that

will help to push back against the bloody toll that racism and bigotry have taken on our sisters.

There was also a saying of the names of murdered Black transwomen (an important part of recognizing the humanity of the individual) and discussion of how the larger community can help to create safe space for much needed healing and support for loved ones of murdered transwomen and transmen.

The circle was then broken and balloons were released into the late afternoon sky, each one representing a murdered Black transwoman. This is the price too often paid for living authentic lives in a racist and transphobic society.

However, the fightback against hate is growing stronger every day. #SayHerName, #TransLiberation, #BlackTransLivesMatter □



Laborers Local 79 Women's Committee



City Councilwoman, Inez Barron



IWWD Coalition Co-chair Candice Sering; Bernadette Ellorin, BAYAN-USA; Shagaysia Diamond, Audre Lorde Project/TransJustice



Joyce Kanowitz, Workers World Party People with Disabilities Caucus



Nerdeen Kiswani, Students for Justice in Palestine



Janviere Williams, Panamanian activist



Darlene Bryant



Lourdes Garcia, Call to Action for Puerto Rico

PHOTO: PEOPLE'S VIDEO NETWORK



KaLisa Moore

Elma Relian



Sister Dequi, Malcolm X Commemoration Committee

Alicia Boyd, Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network



Supporter of Kyam Livingston, who was killed by NYPD.



Women's Equality Day speak-out on today's struggles

By Monica Moorehead
New York City

August 26 was the 95th anniversary of U.S. women's hard-won right to vote, fought for by a fierce national suffragist movement and won in 1920. To mark this historic occasion and the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and to also discuss contemporary struggles impacting poor women, working women and women of color in the U.S. and worldwide, the International Working Women's Day Coalition held a speakout at Union Square Park in New York City. There was a major focus in words and signs on the current Black Lives Matter upsurge against rampant racism, including police terror.

The speakout was co-chaired by Coalition member KaLisa Moore from the People's Power Assembly and Co-chair Candice Sering from Gabriela USA. Hundreds of people heard speeches and cultural performers on the growing movements to end all forms of attacks on women's human rights, including violence, and about their political and economic exploitation rooted in capitalism and imperialism.

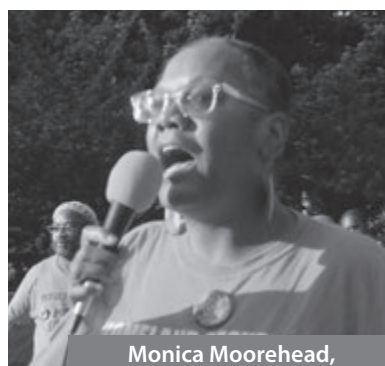
The speakout got off to a rousing start with longtime activist and actor, Vinie Burrows, re-enacting a famous speech,

"Ain't I a Woman?" made at the first National Women's Rights Conference in 1850 by Sojourner Truth, a former slave who became an activist against slavery and for women's rights.

City Councilwoman Inez Barron spoke on a current bill up for debate, aimed at ending all secretive grand juries for cases involving police. These grand juries have overwhelmingly sided with the police whenever a person of color is killed, giving the police impunity.

Some of the other speakers represented the struggles in Puerto Rico against the debt crisis; for the ongoing efforts to free all U.S. political prisoners; in Palestine against the U.S.-backed Zionist occupation; in Mexico and the Philippines to stop repression; for transgender rights; against domestic violence, gentrification and homelessness; for \$15 now! and a union; and to demand reparations for Indigenous and people of African descent.

See video highlights at: youtu.be/kRVbAMolPeY



Monica Moorehead, IWWD Coalition co-chair



Supporter of Kyam Livingston, who was killed by NYPD.

the form of economic, political and social violence."

It continued, "To challenge and defeat this racist system, the power of the people, especially the Black and general working class must be organized and mobilized against the economic and political forces and system that place profits over human needs and rights. ... Organized labor must become a force not only for economic justice, but also for social justice and fundamental change that benefits

the majority of the people without special privileges. Labor must prepare itself to shut the economy down to stop the War on Black America and the working class!"

The demonstration will begin Saturday, Sept. 5, at 9 a.m. in Wragg Square (342 Meeting St.) and conclude at Marion Square, near the Emanuel AME Church. The conference will begin shortly thereafter at 2 p.m. at the ILA hall and continue on Sunday, Sept. 6, from 10 a.m. until 3 p.m. that afternoon. □

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Guatemala national strike

'Mass movement must depose President Pérez Molina'

From WW editors: A general strike and mass demonstration in Guatemala City demanded on Aug. 27 that President Otto Pérez Molina resign. A New York Times editorial the same day praised the Guatemalan system for being in a position to push Pérez Molina's corrupt regime aside. What the Times omits is Washington's responsibility for backing the Guatemalan president's regime in the first place, including Pérez Molina's past role heading death squads under Washington's sponsorship during the genocidal regime of Ríos Montt. But it does make clear the facts behind the arguments expressed by Central American Marxists on Aug. 21 on the *elsoca.org* website. They explain that U.S. imperialism and the Guatemalan oligarchy are trying to use upcoming elections to replace Pérez Molina — who so far refuses to resign — in order to forestall a mass uprising. The Central American workers' parties call instead for a mass struggle to oust Pérez Molina and restructure the government before the "low-intensity coup" succeeds. See the following:

GUATEMALA — PRES. Pérez Molina REFUSES TO RESIGN ... WE HAVE TO THROW HIM OUT WITH A NATIONAL STRIKE!!

DOWN WITH PÉREZ MOLINA AND HIS DECADENT GOVERNMENT!
FOR A GOVERNMENT OF POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS!

FOR A POPULAR AND PLURINATIONAL CONSTITUENT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY!

In a new, spectacular blow on Friday, Aug. 21, the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) and the Public Ministry (MP), reported that as a result of investigations into the case of customs fraud, in which the power structure known as "The Line" ("La Línea") is involved, concluded that the top leaders of this group were former Vice President Roxana Baldetti and President Otto Pérez Molina.

Based on the investigation on charges of conspiracy, with the special case of customs fraud and passive bribery, an arrest warrant against Baldetti was requested before High Court B (Juzgado de Mayor Riesgo B). The former vice president was taken prisoner in the private hospital where she had been admitted only days earlier and transferred to the military prison at Matamoros Headquarters.

As for the president, the MP filed a request for impeachment against him before the judiciary to prosecute him for the same crimes of which they accused Baldetti. Amid persistent rumors of the imminent resignation of the president, Pérez Molina said on national television on the evening of Aug. 23 that he will not resign and rejected the charge that he was connected with The Line; he apologized for the corruption in his government, accused the business community of benefiting from customs fraud, invoked the support of the rural area in his favor, called on citizens to vote and put himself at the disposition of the legal processes that apply in order to prove his innocence.

The president gets isolated

The powerful sector of the bourgeoisie represented by the Coordinating Com-



Left: National strike in Guatemala. Right: Sign condemns the current president, who once ran a death squad while using the name Tito Arias.

mittee of Agricultural, Commercial, Industrial and Financial Associations (CACIF), finally abandoned the president to his fate, demanding his "immediate resignation" at a news conference on Friday evening, Aug. 21.

As a corollary, four ministers and five government officials who are linked to the oligarchy submitted their resignations. They are Economics Minister Sergio de la Torre, Minister of Education Cynthia Eagle, Health Minister Luis Enrique Monterroso, Agricultural Minister Sebastián Marcucci, Presidential Commissioner for Competitiveness and Investment Juan Carlos Paiz and other economics and finance officials Claudia del Águila, Sigfrido Lee, María Luisa Flores, Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte and Marco Antonio Gutiérrez. On Aug. 23, Metropolitan Archbishop Óscar Vian, representing the Catholic Church, also called for the president's resignation.

In this way, the pincers are closing in on the Otto Pérez Molina government and the Patriotic Party, starting with the first charges and arrests of April 16, driven by the CICIG and the MP. At the beginning of the crisis, the major parties in Congress, the Renewed Democratic Liberty Party (LIDER) and the ruling Patriotic Party (PP), opposed the request for impeachment against Pérez Molina that Deputy Amilcar Pop had requested. Since then, many social sectors have gradually withdrawn their support from President Pérez Molina, entrenching it instead in a sector of the armed forces and the de facto alliance between the LIDER and the PP in Congress.

A low intensity coup?

As we have explained in other statements, U.S. imperialism, given its need to promote the Partnership Plan for Prosperity (PAP), which aims to halt the growing migration of Central American workers toward the United States and the drug trafficking that plagues the region, has decided to promote changes in political regimes of the Northern Triangle [Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador]. These changes aim to improve the functioning of bourgeois democracy, sweeping aside the corruption that has characterized governments and political parties there for decades.

In Guatemala, fearing the outbreak of a social revolution, a section of the bourgeoisie and the army, especially the intelligence agencies and security, are using the CICIG and the MP to force the government of Pérez Molina to make changes that are necessary to prevent a mass movement from arising that can impose changes from below. But time and patience are running out quickly. In this struggle, the contradictions have led the government of Pérez Molina to the verge

of collapse. For the moment, Pérez Molina is reluctant to relinquish power, but is holding on under conditions of greater weakness and social isolation.

The bourgeois sector that is pressuring Pérez Molina wants the current vice president, Alejandro Maldonado, to assume the reins of power in a transitional government that will remain a puppet of the oligarchy and U.S. imperialism. The goal is to speed up democratic reforms in order to contain any mobilization of the masses.

Pérez Molina must be overthrown!

If anything is clear it is that President Pérez Molina will not resign. The pressure from the CACIF oligarchs and imperialism has failed to impose a Maldonado regime. The mass marches have not had enough force to depose Pérez Molina and impose democratic reforms. Under these conditions it is necessary to increase the people's pressure. This means that the left, the workers, the unions and Indigenous and peasant organizations, need to convene a great national strike to demand the overthrow of Pérez Molina and his government.

Faced with the imminent collapse of the government of Pérez Molina, we of the left, the Social and Popular Assembly (ASP), trade unions and labor, Indigenous and popular peasant organizations must establish an alternative government of working people.

If we succeed in imposing this revolutionary solution, it would dramatically change the situation in Guatemala. If this does not happen in the days ahead, we will face a distinct disadvantage in the electoral challenge mounted by the current political regime, because so far it is unlikely the elections will be postponed.

The panorama of the undemocratic elections

Two weeks before the general election [on Sept. 6], the situation is becoming very complex. Because of the tenacious opposition of the decadent major parties in Congress, the timid proposal to reform the Electoral and Political Parties Law promoted by the University of San Carlos (USAC) and the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE), ran aground. In urban areas, the middle strata and popular sectors have adopted a just attitude of rejecting the traditional parties and corrupt politicians; they demand the postponement or suspension of the elections, as the electoral system has been designed to perpetuate the control of the parties that dominate the Congress.

Due to the undemocratic existing electoral system, it would be ideal if the elections were suspended or postponed. Before elections are held, profoundly democratic changes should be made

to the electoral law. These changes are needed to eliminate corruption in the political party system and facilitate conditions for the approval of independent candidates who reflect the interests of workers and of peasant and Indigenous communities, with the perspective of establishing a National Constituent Assembly to transform the country on behalf of the oppressed and exploited.

But one thing is the ideal situation, which we all want but does not yet exist, and another is the stark political reality that we face. There are only a few days before the election, and the forces of reaction are reluctant to change the electoral calendar. The left and the Indigenous and popular movements are facing a great dilemma. The reactionary parties have imposed the electoral struggle on us.

Our strategic goal should be to topple the Pérez Molina government and impose the National Constituent Assembly from below, so we must combine the methods of struggle. We must prioritize the mobilization to summon and carry out the great national strike, with the central slogan: Down with the corrupt government of Pérez Molina! At the same time, we cannot leave the field open to the reactionary forces of the current regime, which are organizing a changeover exit by holding elections on Sept. 6.

The short time remaining until the elections prevents us from presenting joint candidates on the left. Despite the sectarianism that undermines the creation of an alternative government, we reiterate our call to not waste the vote, to make it an instrument of protest. We should vote critically for candidates who are Indigenous, peasant and popular representatives submitted by the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG-WINAQ) and the Council of the Maya People (CPO-CONVERGENCIA) parties.

The more votes that the left parties obtain, the less the reactionaries will be able to impose the changeover of the government. A massive election of deputies and mayors from these left forces would form a powerful left bloc, which must continue the struggle after the elections against the current capitalist system and which on the congressional and municipal government levels can push the immediate task of building the National Constituent Assembly.

Popular organizations must lead the struggle in the streets

The electoral front is just one of the many fronts of struggle. The struggle in the streets is more important. Regarding this issue we have insisted on the urgent need for peasant, Indigenous, trade union, popular, youth and women's or-

Continued on page 9

Colombia and Venezuela — Two brotherly peoples

The following is a statement of the Peace Delegation of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) from Havana, Cuba, site of the peace talks, dated Aug. 28, discussing the crisis between Colombia and Venezuela:

It is essential for Colombia to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries if we want to build a stable and lasting peace that radiates brotherhood to the continent.

Venezuela is and will remain essential for peace in Colombia. We have to extinguish this chauvinist fire, in order to promote unity and integration of two nations with a common history, daughters of the same father, the Liberator Simón Bolívar.

It is best to seek, through constructive and sincere dialogue, the normal-

ization of the situation on the border, hopefully with the creation of a binational zone of integration and development in which fraternity, coexistence and the construction of one great nation will be encouraged.

The sovereignty of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela must be respected; the perfidy of moving paramilitarism, that has caused so many victimizations in Colombia, to another place, should be ceased.

As sister nations we need to be united for peace to prevail. Therefore, we should close spaces to the tension of warmongering spirits and make the rights of peoples prevail above all those who want to destabilize the legitimate government of President Nicolás Maduro through economic war and all kinds of conspiracies, and overturn the un-

deniable solidarity and social support — since Comandante Hugo Chávez was in power — received by those who had to leave for exile because in this country there was no inclusion and respect, something we are still demanding.

We understand clearly that the confrontation in Colombia, as well as the serious humanitarian crisis that goes beyond our borders today, are rooted in the unjust social order we experience, and for which the successive governments that have passed through the Casa de Nariño [official home of the Colombian president] should be held accountable. We cannot close our eyes to that, and we believe that serenity and common sense should emerge, in order to not give way to certain irresponsible politicians who only want to sow hatred towards Venezuela, fish in troubled wa-

ters and favor their personal interests.

The cancer of paramilitarism cannot destroy the bonds of harmony that historically, since the struggle for independence, have made Colombia and Venezuela one family with a common destiny: a dream of dignity and freedom, enrolled in the sublime cause of Our America.

“We are children of the country left by the Liberator and we will defend it with love, his legacy calls upon us.” May the Catatumbo lightning [a unique atmospheric phenomenon in Venezuela] enlighten us. We are optimistic: like in Ali Primera's song, “The Orinoco and Magdalena [principal rivers of Venezuela and Colombia] embrace each other with songs of the jungle, and your children and my children will smile at peace.” May our friendship last forever. □

September 16 - 18 in Washington, D.C. Days of Action against the blockade of Cuba

By Paul Teitelbaum

The success of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 struck fear into the cold heart of U.S. imperialism, which responded by immediately planning ways to undermine the Revolution and return Cuba to its former status. Of all the tactics employed by the U.S. against Cuba, the blockade of the socialist island is the harshest and most inhumane.

The U.S.'s unilateral blockade of Cuba began in October 1960 and was greatly expanded in 1962. It has been strengthened by additional executive actions and legislation, including the Helms–Burton Act of 1996, which codified the blockade into law.

Washington's intention has been to increase the hardships of the Cuban people, as the blockade affects everything from basic goods essential for everyday life to the provision of health care and education for the people.

The Cuban people have heroically resisted the blockade, an act of belligerence which is estimated to have cost the Cuban economy in excess of \$117 billion, according to the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, as reported by Telesur TV on Aug. 5.

Every year since 1992, the United Nations General Assembly has passed a resolution condemning the blockade and declaring it to be in violation of the U.N. Charter and international law. In September 2014, Cuban Deputy Foreign Minister Abelardo Moreno told the United

Nations, “There is not, and there has not been in the world, such a terrorizing and vile violation of human rights of an entire people than the blockade that the U.S. government has been leading against Cuba for 55 years.” (RT Business, Sept. 10, 2014)

Days of Action = Solidarity

A series of activities, entitled “Days of Action against the Blockade,” will take place from Sept. 16 to Sept. 18 in Washington, D.C. These events will not only demand the lifting of the blockade, but will also call for the U.S. to respect Cuba's self-determination and sovereignty and end its goal of regime change.

The three days of activities will include visits with Congress members, an “Ecumenical Service and Evening of Culture,” the opening of the photographic exhibit entitled, “The Cuban 5 Return: An Entire Country Celebrates,” and a one-day conference.

The all-day conference will be on “The U.S. Blockade against Cuba: Why It's Wrong and What We Need to Do to End It.” It will feature workshops and speakers, including Rafael Cancel Miranda, Puerto Rican independence fighter and former political prisoner; Jan Susler, attorney for Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera; authors; filmmakers; and others.

The event is being organized by the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples; IFCO/Pastors for Peace; the Venceremos Brigade; the Na-

tional Network on Cuba; and the Institute for Policy Studies. It has been endorsed by more than 50 U.S. and international organizations.

Get on the Bus!

Pastors for Peace is organizing a bus to travel from New York City to Washington, D.C., for those who want to participate in the one-day conference on Sept. 18. The bus will depart from NYC on Thursday, Sept. 17, and return to NYC on Saturday, Sept. 19. Bus tickets are \$20. To reserve

a seat, contact IFCO/Pastors for Peace at DaysOfAction@ifconews.org.

Detailed information on the “Days of Action Against the Blockade” is available at theinternationalcommittee.org and ifconews.org, at facebook.com/DaysOfAction4Cuba, on [Instagram @CeseElBloqueo](https://Instagram/CeseElBloqueo), and on [Twitter @thecuban5](https://Twitter/thecuban5) and at [#DaysOfAction4Cuba](https://DaysOfAction4Cuba). Event organizers can be contacted by emailing info@theInternationalCommittee.org and DaysOfAction@ifconews.org.



Brazilian autoworkers strike back against layoffs

By Martha Grevatt

On Aug. 8, General Motors do Brasil, which has four plants in the country, announced there would be 798 workers permanently laid off at its São José dos Campos plant. There was no advance notice; the layoffs began immediately for the first 300 workers. In less than 24 hours, the Metalworkers Union of São José dos Campos launched a strike to save the workers' jobs.

“GM has high profits and does not justify these layoffs,” union Vice President Herbert Claros stated in an email to international supporters. “Workers who have been laid off and their families understand that these dismissals are unfair and therefore are getting strong on the picket line.” GM tried to justify the layoffs by claiming there is a sales crisis. In fact, car sales in the U.S. are above pre-recession levels and profits continue to reach levels unseen in

GM's hundred-plus year history.

During the course of the 12-day strike, the union held mass assemblies of workers and staged a half-hour highway blockade. This was the second strike at the plant this year, the first being a stay-in “standstill” in January that forced GM to cancel planned layoffs.

On Aug. 22, GM and the union reached a settlement. The permanent layoffs would all be converted to five-month temporary layoffs. On Aug. 24, at a mass assembly of 4,000 workers, union members voted to accept the settlement.

Now Brazilian Volkswagen workers are on strike in the city of Taubaté. Like nearby São José dos Campos, this small industrial city lies about 60 miles northeast of São Paulo on the road to Rio de Janeiro. The strike, called by the Taubaté Metalworkers Union, began Aug. 17, the same day VW announced 100 permanent layoffs. As of Aug. 29, the strike is continuing. □

Continued from page 8

organizations and other oppressed social sectors to place themselves at the head of the demonstrations against corruption and impose their class demands, complementing the democratic demands with the heartfelt social demands of the oppressed and exploited in Guatemala.

Historical experience teaches us that democratic revolutions always start as conflicts between factions of the bourgeoisie, and the socialist and popular revolutions begin as democratic revolutions, which the oppressed and exploited can use to press forward their

own demands and impose the power of their organizations and parties. Because of this we have emphasized that the Social and Popular Assembly (ASP), in partnership with other effective organizations such as the National Coordination of Peasant Organizations (CNOC) and the Committee of Peasant Development (CODECA), boldly place themselves at the forefront of the protests.

The struggle to change Guatemala is just beginning

We wholeheartedly support the protests announced for next week begin-

ning Tuesday (Aug. 25) by the ASP, the Teachers in Resistance and the USAC. We must demand the resignation and departure of President Otto Pérez Molina; the reform of the Electoral and Political Parties Law with deeper and more democratic proposals than those made by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal; the establishment of a peasant, Indigenous, trade union and popular government without the participation of representatives of groups or parties of the bourgeoisie; and the convening of a Popular and Plurinational National Constituent Assembly that can transform Guatemala on behalf of the dispossessed.

Central America, Aug. 24, 2015

Executive Central American Secretariat (SECA)
Central American Socialist Party (PSOCA)

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WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Why Emmett Till's life still matters

During the height of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement in the South, activists like Jimmy Lee Jackson, Medgar Evers, Viola Liuzzo, James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner, the Rev. James Reeb and others lost their lives to KKK violence. But the reaction to one earlier lynching, along with the Montgomery Bus Boycott in Alabama, helped to spark this movement. It was the brutal lynching of 14-year-old African American Emmett Till, who 60 years ago on Aug. 28 lost his precious life in Money, Miss.

Emmett Till was born on July 25, 1941, and raised in Chicago. His parents had migrated to the North, as did millions of Black people, to escape the oppressive South. In late August 1955, he traveled to the heart of the Mississippi Delta to visit an uncle.

His mother, Mamie Till Mobley, warned him that the attitudes of whites in Money toward Black people were “different” from those of whites in Chicago, even though both cities were marked by segregation.

Roy Bryant, a rabid segregationist, owned a store in Money frequented by Black sharecroppers. As Till was leaving his store, Bryant's spouse alleged that the teenager, who suffered from a speech impediment, whistled at her.

Several days later, in the middle of the night, Bryant, J.W. Milam and another white racist kidnapped the teenager at gunpoint from his uncle's house.

Willie Reed, a Black sharecropper who worked for Milam, stated in the 2003 documentary, “The Murder of Emmett Till,” that he heard Till being beaten by the three men in a tool shed. He heard the teenager screaming in agony. A blood-soaked Till was then driven to the banks of the Tallahatchie River where he was shot point-blank in the head.

A cotton gin fan was tied around his neck with wire. His body was tossed in the river, where it was found days later. After Reed was forced to wash Till's blood from the back of the truck, he disappeared, fearing for his own life.

The murder of Emmett Till made national and international headlines. Fifty

thousand Black people turned out for his funeral in Chicago.

His mother demanded that his coffin be opened so that the whole world could see her son's unrecognizable, mutilated face due to the savage beating from the butt of a .45-caliber pistol.

Roy Bryant and J.W. Milam were acquitted by an all-white jury after just five days of testimony. Four months later, Bryant and Milam, knowing that legally they could not be retried, admitted in a Look magazine article that they had murdered Till.

Less than five years after this lynching, Black college students launched heroic sit-ins against segregated lunch counters in Woolworth's and other stores.

As Christopher Benson, co-author of the book, “Death of Innocence,” on Till's murder, stated in a 2003 interview: “Before Trayvon Martin, before Michael Brown, before Tamir Rice, there was Emmett Till. This was the first ‘Black Lives Matter’ story. It is no wonder, then, that each time we read about another young unarmed black male being shot down in the street — unjustly — by an authority figure, there is the mention of Emmett's name.” (New York Times, Aug. 31)

And what about the hundreds of faceless Emmett Tills who lost their lives during Hurricane Katrina 10 years ago in what we now know was the planned flooding of the Black Ninth Ward with deteriorating levees and the police killings of Black people attempting to escape from the flooding of New Orleans? Hundreds of thousands of Black people to this day have been permanently displaced after Katrina as New Orleans continues to be gentrified by big real estate interests to bring back rich and affluent whites. There are also the breathing Emmett Tills facing a living hell as they languish under mass incarceration.

The lynching of Emmett Till reminds us all that real justice for Till and the other victims that came before and after him can only come with a revolutionary uprooting of the capitalist system, which perpetuates systemic racism on a daily basis. □

5,000 demonstrate in Dresden, Germany, on Aug. 29 in solidarity with migrants. Sign in center reads: ‘No human being is illegal.’



Imperialism behind mass migration deaths

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Yet another gruesome discovery has been made: 71 dead migrants inside an abandoned truck in Austria, between Budapest and Vienna, where thousands are seeking refuge. These deaths are in addition to approximately 100 others who died recently after their vessel capsized en route to Europe.

The people in the truck had apparently suffocated while being illegally transported from the Mediterranean Sea into Southern and Eastern Europe.

Austrian government officials announced on Aug. 28 that the 71 refugees, including an infant girl, were found dead in what appeared to be an abandoned freezer truck. On the same day, Libyan naval units recovered the bodies of 105 migrants washed ashore, apparently after an overcrowded boat in the Mediterranean Sea capsized on its way to Europe.

These deaths came after an upsurge in migrants running away from war and poverty resulting from U.S. and European Union foreign policies. United Nations officials and other international agencies concerned with migration have reported that the number of internally displaced persons and refugees is higher today than at any period since the end of World War II.

The International Organization for Migration revealed that over 330,000 people have crossed the Mediterranean so far this year. The estimates of those who have died while trying to cross ranges in the thousands, and more such tragedies are expected.

Impact of imperialist wars spans continents

These recent mass deaths are by no means isolated incidents. A pattern of dislocation has been rising steadily since the wars of regime change in Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, Syria, Libya and Nigeria, from 2001 until the present.

Also, growing class divisions and economic difficulties in other Asian and African states are creating tensions that foster migration. Some of the states impacted by this global crisis include Morocco in North Africa, Nigeria in West Africa and Bangladesh in South Asia.

When the U.S. and its NATO allies went to war against the Taliban government in Afghanistan in 2001, they claimed their aim was to end “terrorism” and ensure stability in Central Asia.

Some 14 years later, hundreds of thousands of people have lost their lives in both Afghanistan and Pakistan. Now, many more are leaving Afghanistan as a result of ongoing fighting between forces that either support or oppose the Washington-imposed regime in Kabul.

Beginning in 1979, the U.S. waged a covert, CIA-managed war against a socialist-oriented Afghan government that then asked for and got support from the Soviet Union. Washington funded, trained and coordinated Islamic fighters against the secular government, and this led to the formation of al-Qaida and the eventual ascendancy of the Taliban.

In Iraq, since the U.S. military buildup and invasion of 2002-2003, an estimated 1 million people have died. War still rages between the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and the Iraqi government in Baghdad, causing a new wave of emigration.

Both Syria and Libya were targeted for regime change in 2011 by way of Western-funded opponents and militias. In Libya, this was followed by a massive NATO bombing campaign.

Over 4 million Syrians have left their country; many are now seeking refuge in Europe.

The situation in the Horn of Africa is also largely the result of successive U.S. administrations meddling in the affairs of the region. Somalia has been a major target of Pentagon and CIA interventions since the late 1970s, when the administration of Jimmy Carter encouraged the regime of Mohamed Siad Barre to invade Ethiopia, which at that time was undergoing a socialist revolution supported by the Soviet Union and Cuba.

After the overthrow of the Workers Party state in Ethiopia in 1991, the U.S. the following year invaded and occupied Somalia under the guise of a humanitarian mission.

Somalis rose up against the occupation in 1993, prompting a withdrawal by Pentagon and United Nations forces. Washington continued to seek domination of Somalia through an invasion by the now Western oriented Ethiopian regime in 2006. An African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) 22,000-member military force now operates inside the country.

People from all these war-torn regions are now being lured by human traffickers across borders in Asia, the Middle East and Africa, with the promise of refuge in Europe. However, Europe itself is in

Continued on next page

End the siege of Gaza!



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

assaulted the small Palestinian enclave of Gaza. This Aug. 26 was the first anniversary of the ceasefire that ended the slaughter. It was marked by a march through the streets of midtown Manhattan by 150 people who chanted “Resistance is justified when a people are occupied!”

Led by the organization Jewish Voice for Peace, the demonstrators first gathered in front of the Museum of Natural History and then walked a mile through city streets to get out their message, with cries of “Remember and honor Palestine!” The Green Party,

Workers World Party and others joined this protest as speakers condemned the killing of 2,300 Palestinians in Gaza and the wounding of nearly 11,000 more, one third of whom were children. The Israeli blitz destroyed 12,000 Palestinian homes and ruined much of the infrastructure in the crowded area where nearly 2 million Palestinians have been forced to live.

Holding colorful signs and banners, they insisted that Washington “End U.S. aid to Israel! What happened is a travesty!” As of 2013, Israel had received a total of \$130 billion in aid from the U.S. government, more than half of it direct military aid. (Washington Report on Middle East Affairs) Speakers also pledged their solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. □

By Catherine Zeitz
New York

For seven weeks last summer, Israeli missiles, warplanes and ground troops

Why U.S. ruling class wants an Iran deal

By Deirdre Griswold

Since the 18-month season of bourgeois national elections in the United States has already started, it's not surprising that an agreement negotiated between the Iranian government and the P5+1 — the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany — has become a big political issue.

The Obama administration says the agreement will keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons for at least 15 years. In return, the Western imperialists say they will lift some — not all — of the sanctions that have been imposed on Iran since 2005. By preventing Iran from selling oil on the world market, among other strictures, they have hobbled its economy.

The agreement is being attacked by all the Republican would-be candidates as little short of “treason.”

Congress must vote by Sept. 17 on whether or not to approve the deal. Some Democrats have joined Republicans in saying they'll oppose it. Furious lobbying is going on, including not only direct pressure on representatives and senators but large ads taken in newspapers and on television by both sides.

The latest example was a letter to Obama signed by 214 retired U.S. gen-

erals and admirals that also appeared as a full-page ad in the New York Times on Aug. 30. It called the agreement, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, “dangerous” and said that the deal “makes it likely that the war the Iranian regime has waged against us since 1979 [sic!] will continue, with far higher risks to our national security interests.”

Earlier, on Aug. 11, a group of three dozen retired generals and admirals had sent a letter to Obama arguing just the opposite. They said that “the Iran deal benefits U.S. national security.” The Washington Post pointed out: “Signers of the [pro-deal] military letter include retired general and flag officers from every branch of service. They include four-star Marine Gens. James Cartwright, former vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Joseph P. Hoar, former head of the U.S. Central Command; and Gens. Merrill McPeak and Lloyd W. Newton of the Air Force.”

The Netanyahu government in Israel is violently opposed to the deal. To show that there was Jewish and even Zionist support for the agreement, however, the Post also pointed out that one of the signers, retired Navy Rear Adm. Harold L. Robinson, was a rabbi who describes himself as “a life-long Zionist.”

The Post added: “The letter from the retired military officers followed the release this past weekend of a letter to Obama by 29 of the nation's leading scientists, who called the Iran deal ‘technically sound, stringent and innovative’ and said it would ‘provide the necessary assurance in the coming decade and more that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons.’”

False arguments distort history

There are so many false arguments being bandied about in this debate that a little history is necessary to understand what is really going on.

First of all, the U.S. and the other Western imperialists had no problems with Iran when it was ruled by the autocratic and brutal Shah Reza Pahlevi, who had got his job through a CIA-organized coup in 1953. The U.S. agent coordinating that coup was Kermit Roosevelt Jr., grandson of notorious imperialist Theodore Roos-

velt. KR bragged about riding on a tank into Teheran in his book “Countercoup: The Struggle for the Control of Iran.”

The Iranian oil industry, which had belonged to the Iranian nation, was denationalized in 1955. Three years later, Kermit Roosevelt left the CIA to work for Gulf Oil, soon becoming a vice president of the company.

The Shah on his Peacock Throne was a conduit for Western imperialism to get rich off Iran's major marketable resource, petroleum.

Almost as soon as the Shah was anointed by U.S. and British bankers and oil magnates, he announced in 1953 that Iran would launch a civilian nuclear program as part of U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower's “Atoms for Peace” initiative.

The Western imperialists were all for it — indeed, they facilitated Iran's nuclear program — until 1979, when the masses rose up in a heroic struggle and overthrew the Shah and his torturing secret police, the Savak.

That was when the imperialists began looking for ways to justify an economic war against Iran. By the mid-1990s, the Clinton administration was levying sanctions on Iran, ostensibly over its nuclear program. That was 20 years ago, and U.S. hostility has only grown worse since then.

If the issue driving the sanctions really were the possibility that at some time Iran's peaceful energy program could lead to nuclear weapons, then why hasn't Israel been sanctioned for its widely known but never admitted nuclear arsenal? It has never signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty; Iran has.

Now comes the possibility that, despite all the hullabaloo about “risks to national security,” the P5+1 agreement with Iran may become a reality — although it might be necessary for the president to veto a majority “no” vote in the House and/or Senate to get the agreement approved. Sixty-seven of the 100 senators would have to vote “no” to override Obama's veto.

Instability drives Washington

There is speculation in the corporate media that Obama wants to push it through in order to cement his “legacy.” But reports show that the U.S. govern-

ment — and an important part of the ruling class that relies on profits from abroad — has much bigger worries than that. In fact, they are trying to figure out how to shore up their position, especially in southwest Asia, where horrendous wars of U.S./NATO aggression have created crisis conditions for tens of millions of people — and totally disrupted the economic life on which big business fattens.

The current volatility in international financial markets is just one indication of how unstable the position of all the major capitalist countries has become.

Secretary of State John Kerry defended the agreement at a televised event on Aug. 12. Reuters news service reported: “If the United States walks away from the nuclear deal with Iran and demands that its allies comply with U.S. sanctions, a loss of confidence in U.S. leadership could threaten the dollar's position as the world's reserve currency, the top U.S. diplomat said on Tuesday. ‘If we turn around and nix the deal and then tell them, ‘You're going to have to obey our rules and sanctions anyway,’ that is a recipe, very quickly ... for the American dollar to cease to be the reserve currency of the world,’ U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said at a Reuters Newsmaker event.”

It is highly unusual for a top government official to sound panicky about the U.S. economy, even when motivated by the need to defend some big initiative. But panic, it seems, is in the air, both on Wall Street and in the boardrooms of the major oil companies.

Their strategy to greatly expand U.S. oil production and make billions by fracking for oil and gas — a very expensive way to get energy — has totally boomeranged as world overproduction and stagnant or shrinking economies recently drove the price of crude below \$40 a barrel. Oil from Saudi Arabia and Iran can still be profitable at that price — but not oil from Canada's tar sands or much of the U.S.

This explains why there is support for the Iran deal from a powerful section of the military-industrial-banking complex. The Obama administration's agenda is not more “liberal” than that of many Republicans — it's just more tuned in to Wall Street and less encumbered by far-right rhetoric and ideology. □

a serious economic crisis, particularly in southern states such as Greece.

EU divided over migrant crisis

Deaths of migrants — totaling nearly 3,000 this year — pose a problem for the European Union due to the financial instability inside the imperialist states. Many migrants have entered Greece, where austerity demands by the International Monetary Fund and European banks have led to the most serious economic downturn and put millions in poverty and uncertainty.

Italy has experienced a large wave of migration in recent months. The International Organization for Migration says that over 65 percent of the people seeking entry into Europe this year have crossed over into Greece and Italy. (Reuters, Aug. 28)

The International Business Times reported on Aug. 30 that recent migrants are being trafficked heavily through the Balkans region, “which has now reportedly become the primary route for people-smuggling gangs transporting migrants and refugees from the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia into Western Europe. Between January and July this year, 102,342 people crossed into Austria via the western Balkans.”

In June, the EU sought to handle the burgeoning migration into Europe through military means, by halting, boarding and returning vessels in which migrants were being transported.

An Aug. 31 Washington Post analysis of the crisis acknowledged the EU's failure to develop a sound and rational immigration policy:

“Perhaps nowhere is that more true than in Hungary, the nation the perished migrants were smuggled through. This former Soviet bloc country, now led by right-wing nationalists, is fast emerging as the toughest obstacle for a record number of refugees trying to reach Europe from war-torn Syria, Iraq and other nations. ... Hungary is building a 109-mile-long razor-wire fence on its southern border meant to keep out migrants.” □

Boston demonstrators demand peace for Syria

By Danny Haiphong
Boston

The Syrian American Forum mobilized people to gather in Copley Square in Boston to call on the Obama administration to help end the ongoing war in Syria. A group of Syrians and their supporters demonstrated on Aug. 29 outside of the Boston Public Library to demand peace for Syria.

The Syrian American Forum has been at the forefront of the struggle for peace and self-determination in Syria since the war began in 2011. Forum activists raised Syrian flags and carried signs that condemned U.S. allies such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia for their support for rebel groups in the country.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has estimated the war has caused the death of over 200,000 Syrians. The U.S., Israel, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have provided diplomatic and ma-

terial support for “rebels” inside of Syria in their efforts to overthrow the government of Bashar al-Assad. In the summer of 2013, the Obama administration sought congressional approval for military intervention in Syria to achieve this objective.

At the time, Russia brokered a deal that prevented a potential world war scenario. Ever since, the U.S. and its allies have continued the war under the guise of fighting ISIS. A coalition, led by the U.S. and Turkey, has conducted numerous airstrikes in Syria without the approval of the government in Damascus or even the United Nations. These strikes have killed Syrian civilians, including 52 in May of 2015.

The Syrian American Forum press release for the demonstration states: “The [U.S.] American and international battle against terrorism continues to be short of achieving its objectives. This is due to ... the refusal of the U.S. and its allies to



acknowledge that an alliance which includes Syria is the only path to a strong alliance to defeat ISIS, Al-Nusra, and other terrorists.”

Syrians at the demonstration made it clear they want Washington to play a role in bringing peace to the war-torn nation. When asked what people in the U.S. can do to help, a Syrian American Forum representative answered, “Stop listening to the American government.”

The war on Syria is part and parcel of the world capitalist system's drive to expand global profits at the expense of workers and oppressed people. Self-determination is a critical principle in the fight against capitalism and for a new socialist world. It is of absolute necessity that people in the U.S. stand with Syrians in their just fight to defend the sovereignty of their nation. Long live Syria! □



Tito Arias es el nombre de guerra del Presidente Otto Pérez Molina de Guatemala.

Guatemala — ¡¡Pérez Molina no quiere renunciar — tenemos que sacarlo con un paro nacional!!

Han publicado este artículo en el periódico El Socialista Centroamericana el 24 de agosto, unos días antes de la huelga nacional en Guatemala (elsoca.org):

**¡ABAJO PÉREZ MOLINA Y SU DECADENTE GOBIERNO!
¡POR UN GOBIERNO DE LAS ORGANIZACIONES POPULARES!
¡POR UNA ASAMBLEA NACIONAL CONSTITUYENTE PLURINACIONAL Y POPULAR!**

En un nuevo golpe espectacular, el viernes 21 de agosto, la Comisión Internacional Contra la Impunidad en Guatemala (CICIG) y el Ministerio Público (MP), denunciaron que, como resultado de las investigaciones del caso de defraudación aduanera en el que está implicada la estructura “La Línea”, llegaron a la conclusión de que los máximos dirigentes de la misma eran la ex vicepresidenta Roxana Baldetti y el presidente Otto Pérez Molina.

En base a la investigación por los delitos de asociación ilícita, caso especial de defraudación aduanera y cohecho pasivo, se solicitó una orden de captura ante el Juzgado de Mayor Riesgo B contra Baldetti. La ex vicepresidenta fue capturada en el hospital privado en el que se había internado días antes y trasladada a la cárcel militar del Cuartel de Matamoros.

En cuanto al presidente, el MP interpuso una solicitud de antejuicio en su contra ante el Organismo Judicial, para poder procesarlo por los mismos delitos de que se acusa a Baldetti. En medio de insistentes rumores de la inminente renuncia del presidente, Pérez Molina declaró en cadena nacional, la noche del 23 de agosto, que no renunciará, rechazó su vinculación con La Línea, pidió disculpas por la corrupción en su gobierno, acusó al empresariado de beneficiarse con la defraudación aduanera, invocó el apoyo del área rural a su favor, llamó a los ciudadanos a votar y se puso a disposición de los procesos legales que correspondan para demostrar su inocencia.

El presidente se queda aislado

El poderoso sector de la burguesía representado por el Comité Coordinador de Asociaciones Agrícolas, Comerciales, Industriales y Financieras (CACIF), abandonó finalmente a su suerte al presidente, exigiendo en conferencia de prensa el viernes 21 por la noche su “renuncia inmediata”.

Como corolario, cuatro ministros y cinco funcionarios del gobierno, que están vinculados a la oligarquía, presentaron su renuncia. Ellos son el ministro de economía Sergio de la Torre, la ministra de educación Cynthia del Águila, el ministro de salud Luis Enrique Monterroso, el de agricultura Sebastián Marcucci, el comisionado presidencial para la Competitividad e Inversión Juan Carlos Paiz y los funcionarios del área de economía y finanzas Claudia del Águila, Sigfrido Lee, María Luisa Flores, Adela Camacho de Torrebiarte y Marco Antonio Gutiérrez. La Iglesia Católica, el 23 de agosto, en la persona del Arzobispo Metropolitano, Óscar Vián, también pidió la renuncia del presidente.

De esta manera se cierran las tenazas alrededor del gobierno de Otto Pérez Molina y el Partido Patriota, acorralamiento iniciado con las primeras denuncias y capturas del 16 de abril, impulsadas por la CICIG y el MP. Al inicio de la crisis, los partidos mayoritarios en el Congreso, Libertad Democrática Renovada (LIDER) y el gobernante Partido Patriota (PP), se opusieron a la solicitud de antejuicio contra el Pérez Molina, solicitada por el diputado de WINAQ, Amílcar Pop. Desde entonces, muchos sectores sociales le han retirado gradualmente su apoyo al presidente Pérez Molina, atrincherándose éste en un sector de las Fuerzas Armadas y en la alianza de facto entre LIDER y el PP dentro del Congreso.

¿Un golpe de Estado de baja intensidad?

Como ya hemos explicado en otras declaraciones, el im-

perialismo estadounidense, ante la necesidad de impulsar el Plan Alianza Para la Prosperidad (PAP), que se propone frenar la creciente migración de trabajadores centroamericanos hacia el norte, y el narcotráfico que azota la región, ha decidido impulsar cambios en los regímenes políticos del Triángulo Norte. Estos cambios apuntan a mejorar el funcionamiento de la democracia burguesa, barriendo con la corruptela que ha caracterizado por décadas a los gobiernos y los partidos políticos.

En Guatemala, ante el temor del estallido de una revolución social, un sector de la burguesía y del ejército, especialmente de los órganos de inteligencia y seguridad, están utilizando a la CICIG y al MP, para forzar al gobierno de Pérez Molina a realizar los cambios necesarios que impidan que el movimiento de masas imponga los cambios desde abajo. Pero el tiempo y la paciencia se agotaron rápidamente. En este forcejeo las contradicciones han llevado al gobierno de Pérez Molina al borde de su caída. Por el momento, Pérez Molina se resiste a abandonar el poder, pero en un contexto de mayor debilidad y aislamiento social.

El sector burgués que presiona a Pérez Molina aspira a que el actual vicepresidente Alejandro Maldonado, asuma las riendas del poder bajo un gobierno transitorio títere de la oligarquía y del imperialismo norteamericano, con el objetivo de acelerar las reformas democráticas para contener la movilización de masas

¡A Pérez Molina hay que tumbarlo!

Si algo está claro es que el presidente Pérez Molina no va a renunciar. Las presiones del CACIF y del imperialismo no han logrado imponer a Maldonado. Las marchas no han tenido la fuerza suficiente para sacar a Pérez Molina e imponer reformas democráticas. Entonces, es necesario elevar la presión popular. Corresponde a la izquierda, los trabajadores, sindicatos y organizaciones indígenas y campesinas, convocar a un gran paro nacional para exigir la salida de Pérez Molina y su gobierno.

La Izquierda, la ASP, los sindicatos y organizaciones obreras, campesinas indígenas y populares, debemos constituir una alternativa de gobierno de los trabajadores, ante el desmoronamiento del gobierno de Pérez Molina.

Si logramos imponer esta salida revolucionaria, cambiaría dramáticamente la situación en Guatemala. Si eso no ocurre en los próximos días, tendremos que afrontar en clara desventaja el desafío electoral montado por el actual régimen político, porque hasta el momento es poco probable la posposición de las elecciones.

El panorama de las elecciones antidemocráticas

A dos semanas de las elecciones generales, el panorama se torna muy complejo. Por la tenaz oposición de los podridos partidos mayoritarios en el Congreso, la tímida propuesta de reforma a la Ley Electoral y de Partidos Políticos (LEEP) impulsada por la Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) y el Tribunal Supremo Electoral (TSE), quedó varada. En el área urbana, las capas medias y sectores populares, en una justa actitud de rechazo a los partidos y políticos tradicionales corruptos, exigen la posposición o la suspensión de las elecciones, pues el sistema electoral ha sido diseñado para perpetuar el control de los partidos que dominan actualmente el Congreso.

Debido al antidemocrático sistema electoral vigente, lo ideal sería que las elecciones se suspendan o se pospongan, y que antes de su realización se aprueben cambios profundamente democráticos a la Ley Electoral, que permitan eliminar la corrupción en el sistema de partidos políticos y faciliten las condiciones para la postulación de candidatos independientes, que reflejen a los trabajadores y comunidades campesinas e indígenas, en la perspectiva de instaurar una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente que transforme el país en beneficio de los oprimidos y explotados.

Pero una cosa es la situación ideal que todavía no existe y que todos deseamos, y otra es la candente realidad política, tal como se nos presenta. Estamos a escasos días de las

elecciones, y las fuerzas de la reacción se resisten a modificar al calendario electoral. La izquierda y el movimiento indígena y popular estamos ante una gran disyuntiva. La lucha en el plano electoral nos ha sido impuesta por los partidos de la reacción.

Nuestro objetivo estratégico debe ser tumbar al gobierno de Pérez Molina e imponer desde abajo la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente, para ello tenemos que combinar los métodos de lucha. Debemos priorizar la movilización para convocar e imponer el gran paro nacional, con la consigna central de: ¡¡Abajo el corrupto gobierno de Pérez Molina!! Pero al mismo tiempo, no podemos dejarle el campo libre a las fuerzas reaccionarias del actual régimen, que están organizando una salida de recambio con la realización de las elecciones el 6 de Septiembre. El escaso tiempo que falta para las elecciones ya no permite la presentación de candidaturas conjuntas de la izquierda. A pesar de que este sectarismo debilita la constitución de una alternativa de gobierno, reiteramos nuestro llamado a no desperdiciar el sufragio, para convertirlo en un instrumento más de protesta, votando críticamente por las candidaturas de dirigentes y representantes campesinos, indígenas y populares presentadas por los partidos URNG-WINAQ y CPO-CONVERGENCIA.

Entre más votos saquen los partidos de izquierda menos probabilidades que la reacción imponga el recambio de gobierno. Una masiva elección de diputados y alcaldes pertenecientes a estas fuerzas permitiría la formación de un poderoso bloque de izquierda que debe continuar la lucha después de las elecciones, contra el actual sistema capitalista, e impulse a nivel del Congreso y municipalidades la inmediata tarea de imponer la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente.

Que las organizaciones populares conduzcan la lucha en las calles

El frente electoral es solo uno de los tantos frentes de lucha. Más importante es la lucha en las calles. En este tema hemos sido insistentes en la imperiosa necesidad de que las organizaciones campesinas, indígenas, sindicales y populares, las organizaciones de mujeres y jóvenes, y demás sectores sociales oprimidos, se pongan a la cabeza de las movilizaciones contra la corrupción e impongan su sello de clase, complementando las demandas democráticas con las sentidas reivindicaciones sociales de los oprimidos y explotados de Guatemala.

La experiencia histórica nos indica que las revoluciones democráticas siempre inician como conflictos entre fracciones de la burguesía, y las revoluciones socialistas y populares inician como revoluciones democráticas, que son aprovechadas por los oprimidos y explotados para colar sus demandas e imponer el poder de sus organizaciones y partidos. Por ellos hemos insistido en que la Asamblea Social y Popular (ASP), en alianza con otras organizaciones consecuentes como CNOC y CODECA, se coloquen audazmente como la vanguardia de las protestas.

La lucha por cambiar Guatemala apenas comienza

Apoyamos incondicionalmente las protestas anunciadas para la próxima semana a partir del martes por la ASP, el Magisterio en Resistencia y la USAC. Debemos demandar la renuncia o salida del presidente Otto Pérez Molina; la reforma de la Ley Electoral y de Partidos Políticos con propuestas más profundas y democratizantes que las del TSE; el establecimiento de un gobierno de las organizaciones campesinas, indígenas, sindicales y populares sin la participación de representantes de grupos o partidos de la burguesía; y la convocatoria a una Asamblea Nacional Constituyente Plurinacional y popular que transforme Guatemala en beneficio de los desposeídos.