

Youth under attack EDITORIAL 10

Fed's decision shows No letup in capitalist crisis

By Deirdre Griswold

Despite all the soothing talk about the economy picking up, there can be no doubt that the gurus of Wall Street and their colleagues in government expect a rocky road ahead.

That was the message conveyed when the Federal Reserve Bank announced on Sept. 17 that it had decided not to raise the interest rate, which has been at a historic low, barely above 0 percent. This means that it will continue to be super easy for corporations and banks to borrow money from the government. That in turn is supposed to stimulate the economy and create jobs. Or so they say.

However, much of the money being borrowed today by the wealthy is not to increase production in any way that might “trickle down” into more jobs for the working class. They spend it in the billions on speculative items — art, real estate, luxury goods — all of which have risen in price to spectacular heights.

A painting by Paul Gauguin was recently resold for \$300 million. A penthouse in Monaco is currently on the market for \$400 million. Such astronomical amounts being spent by the super-wealthy on their personal possessions are becoming the new norm.

But even after spending such enormous sums, the super-rich are still awash in money. So why don't they invest it in production?

Capitalism at a dead end

Here is where the total irrationality of the capitalist system comes in. In this high-tech age especially — when

it is actually possible for all humankind to quickly leave behind the drudgery of the past and have machines do most of the work, with everyone enjoying a comfortable existence — the capitalist profit motive instead leads to shutdowns, mass layoffs and spreading poverty.

Without saying “he told you so,” it is more relevant than ever to understand the workings of this particular economic system, which was unraveled 150 years ago by Karl Marx in his landmark book on capital.

It was Marx who proved that the exploitation of human labor is what creates all the wealth enjoyed by the ruling class. Machines themselves can be made to do much of the work in place of people, but they do not add new “value.” Only human labor produces more value than it costs.

However, machines do provide their owners with a competitive edge — until the new machines become widely used in a particular industry. Then the race is on to find even newer technology that can do the job with even fewer workers.

Since the crash of 2008, the capitalist system world-

wide has been in a quandary, and unemployment has remained high, even as new technology — particularly digital — has transformed work and communications. There is no going back to the old days.

In recent years, some new plants have been opened in the U.S. with much fanfare. They have cost hundreds of millions, even billions of dollars, yet they rarely employ more than a few hundred workers. (See Fred Goldstein's book, “Capitalism at a Dead End.”) Tens of millions remain jobless, many not counted because they have given up looking for nonexistent jobs.

The situation is even worse in most other developed capitalist countries, and is disastrous in much of the developing world.

But in the long run, fewer workers actually working means less profits for the bosses. The whole system becomes a house of cards, propped up by countless shady deals, mergers and the narcotic of military production (paid for by the workers' taxes).

Even in the U.S., capitalism has become increasingly

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Let's refocus on the NEED for **SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!**



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Workers World Party conference Nov. 7-8

Refocus on the need for socialist revolution

By **Monica Moorehead**

As workers and oppressed peoples are constantly being inundated with the likes of Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Bernie Sanders and others running for president, Workers World Party will be countering all the early election hoopla with its annual national conference Nov. 7-8 in New York City. The main theme will be “Let’s refocus on the NEED for SOCIALIST REVOLUTION.”

This theme is intended to offer a real alternative for any worker, oppressed person or activist on what is needed to combat the institutionalized racism, poverty and war that is plaguing the globe.

The bourgeois candidates, be they Democrat or Republican, will say or do anything — most often something reactionary — to get the dollars they need to win upcoming primaries. That means they won’t utter one word about capitalism being the root cause of all the oppression and inequality in the U.S. and throughout the world.

Only an independent, anti-capitalist, multinational working-class party like Workers World Party has always spoken class truth since its 1959 founding to this very day.

From the end of World War II to 2007, the capitalist class of ruthless billionaire bankers and corporate bosses could count on the boom part of the business cycle to rescue their system from the bust crisis of overproduction. Those days are over. Ever since a tidal wave of housing foreclosures sparked the 2007-08 crisis, the capitalist system has been in a permanent state of doom and gloom. Even the bank bailouts of more than a trillion dollars couldn’t reverse it. The recent tumbling of global stock markets is one stark indicator. The enormous expansion of the productive forces has trapped capitalism in a dead end with no escape. The capitalists are seeking to solve the crisis

of their system on the backs of the workers, the oppressed and the poor.

Whether it’s the alarming epidemic of police brutality, including murders of Black and Brown youth, women and trans people on a daily basis; or the unimaginable migrant crisis, where U.S.-NATO military aggression has forced millions of people — think Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya — to leave their homeland; or low-wage workers fighting for \$15 an hour and a union; or working and poor women of color struggling for reproductive justice; or tens of millions of people fighting gentrification, mass incarceration, deportations, occupation, global warming and general austerity — in all cases the criminal is the genocidal capitalist system.

None of these crises can be reformed under capitalism. Even if it appears a distant goal, only socialism can resolve the crisis, and only through a revolution can the workers and oppressed win socialism. The experiences in Cuba, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, the former Soviet Union, the 1949 Chinese Revolution and others have shown that socialism as an economic system can only be realized by the full mobilization of the masses that uproots an oppressive system which inhumanely exploits their labor and their resources for profits.

Only socialism can liberate the workers from this exploitation and start the process of allowing them to use their labor to produce for their own needs as a class. Building a revolution for socialism in the most industrialized country — the U.S. — will be a giant leap forward to the downfall of capitalism worldwide.

The first step in this leap is to discuss these ideas in the framework of a political party. These are some of the fundamental issues that will be taken up at the 2016 Workers World Party conference. Be a part of this critical and timely dialogue. Go to workers.org/wwp for more information. □

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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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A study in solidarity

The Boston school bus drivers union

By Martha Grevatt

For more than two years, the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751, has been in a fierce battle against union-busting, environment-polluting, privatizing corporate giant Veolia/Transdev.

The city of Boston hired Veolia in 2013 to manage school transportation. Transdev is the company created when the 150-year-old French company spun off its transit division.

The drivers are fed up with “Veolia/Transdevil” and the bosses’ unwillingness to negotiate a decent contract. They are fuming mad that four elected union leaders were falsely accused of leading a wildcat strike in October 2013, an event that never happened. Transdev refused to reinstate the four illegally fired union stalwarts.

Though fired, President Andre François, Vice President Steve Kirschbaum, Financial Secretary Steve Gillis and Grievance Chair Garry Murchison are working hard through Team Solidarity at organizing the rank and file to resist Transdev’s egregious concession demands.

When they aren’t in grueling, seemingly endless grievance sessions, this social justice union is out in the streets, fighting shoulder to shoulder with Boston communities. In fact, “civil rights unionism,” a phrase used to describe the anti-racist, left-led CIO unions of a previous era, is what defines the history of Local 8751.

Local 8751 fights for justice

In the 1974 desegregation struggle in Boston, when racist and fascist groups under the codeword of “fighting forced busing” instigated lynch mob attacks on children riding on school buses, the drivers got the children safely to school. Local 8751 has been involved in every struggle for justice in Boston: for affordable housing, decent-paying jobs, equal access to city services, in support of the disability rights community and special needs students, in defense of embattled community leaders, and against racism and sexism.

The union local was a key part of the Coalition to Save Grove Hall Post Office, supporting all four postal worker unions in a successful fight that saved the post office in the heart of Boston’s African-American community.

Local 8751 has stood shoulder to shoulder with the lesbian, gay, bisexual,

Workers are in struggle to make Veolia rehire their elected leaders — from left: Grievance Chair Garry Murchison, Vice President Steve Kirschbaum, President Andre François and Financial Secretary Steve Gillis.



transgender and queer community long before it was a popular position. President François spoke recently at a Black Lives Matter Trans Liberation Day rally and, along with members of the union’s executive board, pledged support for trans rights.

The school bus drivers have extended their solidarity to workers all over the world, most recently to Colombian unionists facing paramilitary terror. Even in the midst of its own struggle, Local 8751 participated in the United National Antiwar Coalition’s “Stop the Wars at Home and Abroad” conference in May, which drew more than 400 delegates from the U.S. and Canada.

Precisely because of the union’s political legacy — and the multiplicity of Veolia/Transdev’s venomous attacks on the workers and oppressed worldwide — the efforts to rehire the fired union leaders have been linked to the Black Lives Matter movement; the Palestinians’ Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign; the water rights movement; striking and locked-out steelworkers; Mumia Abu-Jamal’s struggle; LGBTQ rights; and the global anti-austerity fight.

For all they do, the four unionists have won the support of diverse forces, such as the Bolivarian Circles, the Palestinian community, Fanmi Lavalas, Pride at Work and Black community leaders such as Councillor Charles Yancey, former Councillor Chuck Turner, veteran leader Mel King and radio/TV host Charles Clemons. Recently, a new and historic relationship between Boston’s Black leadership and the city’s predominantly white labor leadership has emerged to support Local 8751, which is 98 percent people of color.

All of these forces are prepared to support a bus drivers’ strike, if necessary. Solidarity can beat Transdev.

Black Lives Matter to the class struggle

The attack by Veolia/Transdev has united the multinational membership of Haitian, African-American, Cape Verdean,

Latino/a, Native and anti-racist white bus drivers. The majority Haitian drivers will tell their own history — how enslaved Haitians of African descent liberated themselves and their own country by driving out the French colonialists. They have confidence they can vanquish this racist, union-busting French company.

The outcome of this struggle will have far-reaching repercussions. Now, more than ever before, there is a convergence of the class struggle and the struggle against racism. National oppression is the biggest tool used to divide our class — but at the same time it is capitalism’s Achilles heel. This is where the horrors of capitalism are most sharply laid bare, from Gaza to U.S. cities, with the epidemic of genocidal police killings.

Capitalism is in an intractable crisis. The ruling class is threatened by this revolutionary model of social justice and civil rights unionism: the Boston School Bus Drivers Union.

However, from a working-class standpoint, this example needs to be

replicated. Even now a clear position of solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement is lacking in the U.S. labor movement. For example, United Auto Workers International President Dennis Williams has yet to utter the words “Black Lives Matter.” This is the union that brags of having been one of only two unions to endorse the 1963 March on Washington, where Martin Luther King gave his “I have a dream” speech.

In the 1940s, there were “hate strikes” by racist white autoworkers — often egged on by management — who wanted to keep Black workers segregated on the worst jobs. The UAW refused to defend the racists when they faced discipline. Civil rights unionism must be revived.

When unions take the moral high ground and stand up to racism and bigotry, as Local 8751 has done for four decades, that is how they build strong working-class solidarity.

As early as 1848, Karl Marx said that the most important accomplishment of the trade unions was not a raise in pay or a reduction of hours, but the “ever-expanding union of the workers.” The building of labor-community solidarity, which expands the unity of workers and oppressed, will be the enduring achievement of the struggle to rehire the fired leaders.

Martha Grevatt is a 28-year UAW Chrysler worker.

Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this article.

Baltimore Workers World Party and FIST hold Harper’s Ferry Retreat



WWP and FIST set up camp for retreat.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

By Sharon Black

Close to 20 activists took off the weekend of Sept. 19-20 to study the book “A Voice from Harper’s Ferry” and enjoy a camping retreat, organized by the Baltimore Chapter of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and Workers World Party.

First they went to Greenbrier State Park in Maryland and then to the historic site of the armory at Harper’s Ferry, W.Va., where John Brown’s raid took place October 17-18, 1859.

“A Voice from Harper’s Ferry” (World View Forum, 2000) is an account of the famous anti-slavery military action by 22 Black and white Abolitionists that preceded the Civil War. It was written by Osborne Anderson, a Black revolutionary who took part in the raid. The book also contains important essays by

Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead on “What Is a Nation” and Vince Copeland, WWP founding member, who revived Anderson’s important account and authored the essay, “The Unfinished Revolution.” The group read these chapters aloud to each other by fire and flashlight and discussed their meaning.

This didn’t stop everyone from engaging in an adventurous weekend, including swimming in Greenbrier Lake, hiking up the mountain cliff overlooking Harper’s Ferry and building a campfire. The participants, who have been in the streets this year protesting police murders of Black people, also toured many historic sites. This was the first camping trip for many, who returned to Baltimore tired but excited.

Copies of the book can be purchased from online booksellers. □

Fed’s decision shows

No letup in capitalist crisis

Continued from page 1

unpopular. Various politicians seeking to reform the system are popping up here and in many other countries. They are attracting support and promise to make things better. But a little bandaid on a gaping wound is not the answer to a system in deep crisis.

Capitalism has to be replaced by an economic system based on social ownership of the means of production. That’s what socialism means: abolishing private ownership of the economy (not your personal property) and developing a plan for production to satisfy human needs — which in these days very much means a

plan to restore the earth to health while making sure everyone shares equitably in what is produced.

It also means affirmative action to erase the vast injustices of colonialism, racism, sexism and the cruelties inflicted on people because of their sexual orientation.

Whether interest rates go up or down, whether the system falls into another catastrophic crash of the financial markets or just continues to grind down the workers into ever deeper poverty, the movements for social justice must inevitably grow together into a revolutionary movement to end capitalism. □

UAW-Chrysler contract

Jobs threatened, two-tier pay stays

By Martha Grevatt

Just 19 hours after the old contract between Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and the United Auto Workers expired on Sept. 14, the company and the union announced that a tentative agreement on a new four-year contract had been reached. Workers began reading the contract online on Sept. 19. The voting process is expected to take about 10 days.

Touting the new agreement, UAW President Dennis Williams told FCA members that “your bargaining committee has taken a thoughtful and strategic approach to addressing this inequity over time in a way that allows the company to continue to invest in our plants, develop new product and keep our jobs secure.” (uaw.org, contract summary)

“This inequity” refers to the hugely unpopular two-tier pay scale. Workers hired after October 2007 are paid substantially less than those hired before that date, have different benefits and do not get a defined benefit pension or health insurance when they retire. The two-tier system not only lowers wages; it keeps workers divided and undermines solidarity.

Two-tier pay in perpetuity

A cursory read of the contract summary exposes the falseness of Williams’ boastful claims. This is the third UAW-Chrysler contract to perpetuate two-tier. While second-tier workers will see their pay go up, first-tier workers — who haven’t had a raise in nine years — also get a pay increase. By the end of the contract, there will still be a \$5-to-\$8-per-hour pay gap

between the highest paid and the lowest paid workers, most of whom will not even reach the top of their pay scale.

There is an even lower hourly rate for parts workers and axle plant workers, as well as the often-abused temporary part-time workers for whom most of the contract, including the grievance procedure, does not apply. In fact, there are more pay tiers than before. The unequal benefit structure is basically intact. A promise under the old contract to move a percentage of workers up to first-tier pay is broken in the new contract.

Far from “addressing” this gross inequality, the contract institutionalizes it “over time” — until first-tier pay and benefits disappear as older workers retire or die. Until then, FCA’s plan is to maintain two-tier pay in perpetuity. This scheme has precedence. After breaking a long strike in 1998, Caterpillar became the first UAW employer to introduce two-tier wages. Now there is only one low tier.

There are other drawbacks to the contract — no raises in pensions, no restoration of the cost-of-living allowance, a rotten attendance policy, further consolidation of skilled trades classifications and the continuation of the hated Alternative Work Schedule.

Expect job losses

While workers are disappointed and angry about the continuation of two-tier, they are even more concerned about layoffs under a major \$5.3 billion “investment” plan — read restructuring. Right after the tentative agreement was announced, the news broke that FCA would be moving all car production to Mexico. UAW plants in the U.S. will now only produce trucks and SUVs, with the production spread around FCA’s five assembly plants.

The original justification for two-tier, introduced in the 2007 contract, was that it was necessary to help Chrysler, Ford and General Motors overcome financial difficulties. Later, when they be-

gan making record profits, workers were told that lower labor costs would bring small car production back to the U.S. Now it is clear that this was a capitalist ploy to drive wages down in order to jack up profits.

Ford is moving Focus production out of the country. GM’s small car plant in Lake Orion, Mich., has hundreds of workers on indefinite layoff. Now FCA is moving car production — where the profit margin is lowest — back to a country where workers earn about one-fifth the wages of U.S. autoworkers. Trucks and SUVs, which are the most profitable, will be built in the U.S. where wages are higher, but now substantially reduced. Many plants will see their workloads reduced.

This is how FCA CEO Sergio Marchionne gets his reputation as a “turn-around kid.” As CEO of Fiat — before Fiat took over Chrysler and merged the two companies — he would bully Italian autoworkers into taking concessions under the threat of plant closings. Taking advantage of the restoration of capitalism, Fiat built plants in Eastern Europe, where workers make far less than their Italian counterparts. As the Mexican FCA plant makes space to manufacture the Dart and 200, production of the Fiat 500 is moving to Poland.

The massive retooling involved in moving all the manufacture of these vehicles to different plants will cost billions of dollars that could be used to eliminate unequal wage tiers worldwide. This restructuring will bring in the latest, greatest, leanest and meanest of labor-saving, job-cutting robotics. This hardly sounds like a plan to keep jobs secure — not in the U.S., Mexico or Poland.

The only thing that will keep jobs secure is to follow the example of GM, Ford, Volkswagen and Mercedes workers in Brazil, who went on strike and stopped permanent mass layoffs from happening this summer.

Grevatt is a 28-year UAW Chrysler worker.

On the picket line

By Matty Starrdust and Sue Davis

\$15 minimum wage proposed for N.Y. state workers

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced Sept. 10 that the Wage Board has recommended the state minimum wage be increased to \$15 an hour for all workers. The raise from the current \$8.75 minimum wage would be phased in first for 200,000 fast food workers by 2018 and then for all workers by 2021. Thus far, this wage hike, demanded by low-wage fast food workers since 2012, has been adopted in four California cities — Los Angeles, Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco — and in Seattle. (cnbc.com, Sept. 11) However, this proposal must be passed by the N.Y. state Legislature, which is dominated by conservatives opposed to major wage hikes. And Cuomo, who is rumored to want to run for president in 2020, may have taken this stance to brighten his otherwise dismal record on labor. Stay tuned.

Verizon hasn’t budged on contract terms

It’s been eight weeks since the contract expired on Aug. 1 for nearly 40,000 Verizon workers, represented by the Communication Workers and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, from Maine to Virginia, and “Verigreedy” hasn’t blinked. The union-busting telecommunications company, whose monthly profits are \$1 billion, wants to gut job and retirement security and sever all lines of communication between the two unions. During a town hall phone conference on Sept. 15, Vice President Ed Mooney of CWA District 2-13 reported that when the unions presented a study showing the company could achieve \$100 million in annual savings in its current health care plan without raising what workers pay, the company dismissed it.

But Mooney also reported that the company is closely monitoring the workers’ defiant fightback actions both on the job and in the streets. For instance, workers are wearing red on Thursday, with some also donning camouflage on Mondays. Locals are also conducting weekly pickets and rallies, like the one demanding that Bianca Cunningham — who helped organize Verizon Wireless workers at six Brooklyn stores to join CWA Local 1109 in 2014 — be rehired after a retaliatory firing in early September (sign a petition to reinstate her at tinyurl.com/psmt59j). Verizon CEO Lowell McAdam was confronted by pickets in front of a New York hotel before addressing a Goldman Sachs conference on Sept. 17. (cwa-union.org, Sept. 17) La lucha continúa.

Support for unions increases

Support for labor unions is on the rise, according to an Aug. 17 Gallup poll. The nationwide survey found a 5 percent increase in approval of labor unions between 2014 and 2015. After dipping to an all-time-low 48 percent approval rating in 2009, union support began a slow climb, reaching 53 percent in 2014, with a leap to 58 percent in 2015.

The survey found higher union approval ratings among women, at 63 percent, versus men, at 52 percent. In the East and Midwest, the two areas of the country with the highest number of union members, at least two-thirds had favorable opinions of unions. In the South, where only 6 percent of workers have a union, support was the lowest at 45 percent. Respondents aged 18 to 34 were the most likely to approve of unions at 66 percent. (Gallup.com, Aug. 17) As the largely youth-led movement for a \$15 minimum wage and union representation — with high participation of women and people of color — continues to gain momentum and win results, the upward trend is likely to continue.

Appeal to unions for Mumia Abu-Jamal

An organizing meeting was called in New York City on Sept. 11 by the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) to mobilize pressure on the state of Pennsylvania to provide immediate lifesaving treatment to cure Abu-Jamal’s active hepatitis C. A resolution demanding such treatment -- passed unanimously on Aug. 9 by the Delegate Assembly of the National Writers Union, United Auto Workers Local 1981 -- was raised as an example of what should be done. (WW, Aug. 20) After NWU member Sue Davis raised that at a Workers World Party meeting, it was decided that a campaign for unions and other progressive organizations to pass similar resolutions should be initiated. For more information about this campaign, see Millions for Mumia at iacenter.org. □



High Tech, Low Pay

A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class

By Sam Marcy with an updated introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of *Low Wage Capitalism*.

Low-Wage Capitalism describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class in the United States of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx’s law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval.

El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

Fred Goldstein utiliza las leyes de la acumulación capitalista de Marx, y la tasa decreciente de ganancia, para demostrar por qué el capitalismo global ha llegado finalmente a un punto de inflexión.



Capitalism at a Dead End

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

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

Available at all major online booksellers.

'Marriage is a civil right'

Interview with Kentucky lesbian activists

Shannon and Carmen Wampler-Collins, a lesbian couple for 20 committed years, with two children, fought to exercise their right to same-sex marriage on Sept. 14 in Morehead, Ky. That day, Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis returned to work after being jailed for defying the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage. Davis had refused licenses to same-sex couples, including the Wampler-Collinses. Minnie Bruce Pratt of Workers World interviewed Shannon about the couple's struggle and resistance.

WW: You and Carmen met in 1989 and had a commitment ceremony in 1995. Tell us a little about yourselves and how you met.

Shannon: Nowadays, I'm a chef. I went to culinary school in 2010, and I'm cooking in a restaurant — usually a man's world and work! Carmen works with nonprofits as a grant writer and consultant.

We met while we were both working the counter at Bart's Ice Cream in Northampton, Massachusetts. She was a "Smithie" going to Smith College, and I was a "townie," where growing up we felt overpowered by Smith: "Those rich kids coming here." But Carmen was not. She comes from a poor background.

We had the same sense of humor. We just hit it off and the connection just bloomed. We got together as a couple on my grandmother's birthday. We were in love then, and we still are now.

WW: When's the ceremony for Kentucky scheduled?

Shannon: There's still contention over the license we received. The ACLU is investigating. Kim Davis crossed off her name as county clerk and wrote in "pursuant to federal order" and changed Rowan County to the name of the town — Morehead. We definitely feel we got the license as second-class citizens. Carmen was born and raised in Rowan County!

We are waiting to hear more to have the ceremony, hopefully within the 30-day time limit on the license. We'd planned something small — justice of the peace, lunch out. But the boys protested we'd had one wedding without them and are demanding something big. So we said,



Shannon and Carmen Wampler-Collins with the Rowan County Rights Coalition, outside the County Courthouse in Morehead, Ky., Sept. 14.

"If you want a wedding, you can plan the wedding!" They're 16 and 11. They are activist children.

WW: You've said you two were married by your own ceremony long before the Supreme Court decision, but you want "legal protection" for your family.

Shannon: In Massachusetts, there's co-parent adoption, but not in Kentucky. I adopted our younger son as a single mother. My sister carried him — and Carmen carried our older son.

We've raised both boys together as a family. But in Kentucky, I have no legal relation to our older son — who is my child too — if something happens. And Carmen wouldn't have any to our younger son, who is also her child.

Carmen had a serious medical condition a couple of years ago, so the possibility is real and so scary.

WW: Would you describe getting into the County Clerk's office on Monday?

Shannon: We live in Lexington now, an hour's drive from Morehead. When we got to the courthouse, it was surreal. Bigots had come from wherever they got them from, and were lined up in trucks along the street, using loudspeakers to shout ugly things.

Our people were right there, the Rowan County Rights Coalition. They gathered around us in a circle. They got us through the haters on the outskirts who lined the route and were actually inside the courthouse.

Then we went up to the counter, and Brian [Mason] was hilarious. He said,

"I've been waiting for you two!" [Mason is the deputy clerk openly in favor of issuing same-sex marriage licenses—WW.]

As we were going out, one woman got in my face shouting, "Sex between two women is wrong!" I just want to fight with these people. I get so angry. So I said, "You must not

be doing it right!"

WW: The people who got you safely into the courthouse — who were they?

Shannon: That's the Rowan County Rights Coalition. One of the forefront leaders was best friends with Carmen's aunt and mom, part of the family when Carmen was growing up. That woman is an activist extreme. She's been involved in protest since the 60s and has worked with union organizers.

The coalition is outraged people, straight couples, gay couples, people who are trans* and bi, people from Morehead State, new people who've moved to the county and some who have grown up there. ["Trans*" is a word currently used, with the asterisk, to indicate the spectrum of all the different genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of male/female.—WW]

We have a trans* couple Kim Davis actually signed a license for. One member of the couple identifies as male, but his birth certificate still lists female. Kim Davis looked at the two of them, saw male and female, and just assumed. People make all kinds of assumptions.

The coalition has rallied in front of the courthouse throughout. We had one side of the courthouse lawn. The opposition had the other. First, we were flashing peace signs and blowing kisses, and then we started chanting: "Gay or straight! Black or white! Marriage is a civil right!"

WW: Right-wing, gun-toting "Oath Keepers" threatened to show up to "defend" Kim Davis. What's the sentiment of

the local community?

Shannon: Protest here is a lot more personal. Families are facing off against each other on both sides of the issue.

Rowan County is a small, quiet, tight-knit, keep-to-yourself place. Things go on as they have gone. While there are progressive people, it's not a place where people rock the boat. People have conflicts, but they don't like to talk about them.

This struggle opened up what has been bubbling underneath. There are gay and lesbian people living here. Until this, they kept it to themselves, lived in the closet, or maybe they were out but not loud about it. The progressives have not had a unified voice until now. This is making a difference. This isn't just a small, isolated town. There are progressives here as well as fundamentalists.

WW: There's a 30 percent poverty rate in Rowan County. On Facebook one of your local supporters said she saw a right-wing "Sodomy Is a National Sin" sign and wanted to replace it with "Poverty is a National Sin."

Shannon: Poverty is a huge issue here. This used to be a big tobacco area. Lumber mills are a big industry. The hospital and Morehead State University are big employers.

For those with less education, Guardian Auto Glass, that's considered a big, high-paying job starting around ten dollars an hour. Otherwise, it's Walmart, Kroger, lower-paying, service jobs, no insurance. Some people drive half an hour to Mount Sterling, where there're more factory jobs. But they're living in poverty, paying for gas to commute.

Morehead is not quite 7,000 people. Rowan County not much more than 20,000.

It's not a huge place, but it's bigger than a lot of towns in the area. It's an important regional center in the surrounding rural Appalachian area.

We are trying to bring the good to it. Now, we've met these people. There's promise. There's good here that I haven't seen before.

We have a niece, 19 years old. She lives in Morehead and may live there forever. We want to make a better place for her. □

Milwaukee

People's 'walk-in' defends public education

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

Educators, staff members, students and community members "walked-in" at 105 Milwaukee Public Schools on Sept. 18. This action was organized by the Milwaukee Teachers Education Association and Schools and Communities United, with support from dozens of labor-community organizations.

Participants held rallies, informational picket lines and other events before the start of the school day and before they "walked-in" to their respective schools. Thousands across the city demanded an end to Wall Street attacks on public education.

In a powerful solidarity action, similar groups organized simultaneous walk-ins at 14 public schools in LaCrosse, Wis., near the Minnesota state line.

Over the past few years the right-wing-controlled Wisconsin Legislature has rammed through the greatest auster-

ty cutbacks in the history of the state in public education — both K-12 and higher education. Milwaukee, the largest city in the state with a majority Black and Brown population, has for decades been the target of Wall Street forces. In particular, the banks, with the implementation of failing charter schools, have taken hundreds of millions of dollars from public education.

In the latest 2015-17 state budget passed by these reactionary legislators and signed into law in July by their crony, Gov. Scott Walker, even more draconian Wall Street austerity is planned. This includes the possible mass expansion of charter schools in K-12 education, as well as the reduction of shared governance and elimination of tenure for the University of Wisconsin system by state statute.

Stop the 'Milwaukee Plan'

A provision in this budget is widely known as the "Milwaukee plan," which is modeled on previous plans in Detroit,

Philadelphia and New Orleans. The privatizers' goal is to take over so-called "failing" schools in the Milwaukee Public School system and hand them over to private corporations to operate.

Current state law says that an "Opportunity Schools Partnership Program" commissioner is to be appointed by Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele, a Democrat and major venture capitalist and realtor. The commissioner would have parallel authority with the elected Milwaukee Public School Board and would be accountable only to the county executive.

The 55 schools listed as potential targets have predominantly Black or Latino/a student populations and are in areas of the city devastated by decades of de-industrialization and lack of social safety net programs.

All Milwaukee Public School workers employed at the "targeted" schools would be fired and forced to reapply for their jobs. They would have to waive their

right to union representation in order to be considered for rehire.

Wall Street forces aim to begin the process with three schools this fall and then five schools every year thereafter.

Led by the MTEA, resistance has been in motion for months to shut down the Milwaukee plan. The fightback is ongoing, with the Sept. 18 actions the high point thus far.

This organization stated in a press release on Sept. 18: "The walk-ins were a step forward in building a network of school defense committees to protect and strengthen every public school in the city of Milwaukee. Parents, educators, community members and students will work together in the coming months to solidify their school defense committees and prepare for an all-city summit of school defense committees on December 5, 2015."

For information on the resistance, see #noMPStakeover, mtea.weac.org, and schoolsandcommunities.org. □

Defend Black Lives Matter! Fight racist attacks!

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

U.S. intelligence agencies and law enforcement departments recently announced that the Black Lives Matter movement was under surveillance for possible “terrorist” activity coinciding with the 14th anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

A Sept. 14 BBC article noted, “Conservative American politicians and television pundits have increased their attacks on the Black Lives Matter movement. In the aftermath of the killing of police officers, [it] has been mentioned as a contributing factor.”

However, the BLM movement is not a centralized organization. There is an “official website,” but many groups and demonstrators utilize the name. Many white activists have joined BLM demonstrations, although some actions are restricted to African Americans.

The state is attempting to criminalize the youth-directed efforts aiming at seeking justice for African-American victims of racist police and vigilante violence. The BLM movement is a legitimate and rational response to seemingly intensifying state terror. The history of African Americans and other oppressed nations in North America and worldwide confirms the strategies aimed at gaining national liberation. These movements uphold the right to self-determination and use tactics including civil disobedience and mass rebellion.

Since Trayvon Martin’s 2012 killing by vigilante George Zimmerman, the anti-racist movement has grown. Increasing intolerance of police violence against African Americans has swept throughout the U.S. Right after Zimmerman’s acquittal in July 2013, demonstrations sprang up from New York to California.

The BLM movement, beginning as a hashtag and slogan then, gained even more credence when police killed 18-year-old Michael Brown in Ferguson, Mo., on Aug. 9, 2014. The people of Ferguson responded swiftly to Brown’s killing by white police officer Darren Wilson.

A rebellion erupted, along with continual mass demonstrations demanding Wilson’s arrest and prosecution.

In solidarity with Ferguson protesters, actions were held around the U.S. and Canada, supported by solidarity protests in Britain. Brown’s killing and the countrywide mass protests further exposed the U.S. as a racist state.

Despite the election of an African-American president, the governmental structures of racist capitalism impeded the realization of justice. Even though the Department of Justice investigated Brown’s killing and the activities of St. Louis County police departments and courts — prompting a scathing attack on their actions — no federal civil rights charges were filed against Wilson or key players in the law enforcement, municipal governance and judicial systems.

There is no connection between the burgeoning struggle against racism and police brutality and the targeted groups allegedly responsible for the Sept. 11 attack. This is also true of other domestic and international activities, conveniently labeled “Islamic extremist.”

These false allegations occur while some corporate media accuse the BLM of fueling unrest and prompting the killing of police officers. Reactionary Bill O’Reilly of Fox News threatens to put BLM out of business for these reasons.

Anti-racist and progressive organizations nationwide reject these allegations. These spurious claims are designed to create an atmosphere where anti-racist activists can be criminalized and politically attacked.

Even the Sept. 3 New York Times editorial defended BLM from such egregious accusations: “They are not asserting that black lives are more precious than white lives. They are underlining an indisputable fact — that the lives of black citizens in this country historically have not mattered, and have been discounted and devalued.”

History of struggle and repression

The United States was born in violence — by forcefully removing Indigenous peo-

ples from the land and by the “legalized” enslavement and exploitation of Africans brutally taken from their continent to work in the sugar, tobacco and cotton fields of slave masters from 1619 to 1865.

Even after the Civil War and the ostensible abolition of slavery, Reconstruction’s failure portended the future status of African people. Lynching, Jim Crow racism, forced penal labor, disenfranchisement and social segregation were entrenched into the 1960s.

It took mass demonstrations, urban rebellions and court challenges to overturn U.S. apartheid, now recurring through increased killings by police and the legal system’s failure to hold police officers and racist vigilantes accountable.

During the 1960s, some African-American organizations arose which advocated taking up arms to defend their communities against the capitalist state’s racist violence.

The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Black Panther Party sent shockwaves through the ruling class. The FBI under J. Edgar Hoover spent millions of dollars to disrupt and neutralize African-American liberation organizations and fighters.

A similar scenario is developing today, but under somewhat different circumstances. From the 1950s through the 1970s, when Cointelpro carried out operations against the African-American movement, there was a broad mass movement among youth, workers and farmers. It encompassed elements from educational, religious, industrial, agricultural and prison sectors of the population.

Inspired by the African-American struggle, other nationally oppressed groups developed their own organizations, including the Young Lords, built by Puerto Rican activists; the Brown Berets, made up of Chicanos/as; and the American Indian Movement. They fought against oppression and for self-determination. Additionally, lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-queer communities, women, environmentalists, people with disabilities, students and seniors mobilized. These organizations formed

alliances to fight for common objectives: ending discrimination and demanding full equality.

The Peace and Freedom Party formed an alliance with the Black Panther Party in 1968, running its Minister of Information Eldridge Cleaver for president. In July 1969, a National Conference for a United Front against Fascism was convened in Oakland, Calif., where an anti-repression coalition was advanced.

On May Day 1970, militant actions shut down Yale University in New Haven, Conn., protesting murder trials of BPP leaders Bobby Seale and Erika Huggins who faced possible execution. Yale President Kingman Brewster Jr. said a week earlier, “I am skeptical of the ability of black revolutionaries to achieve a fair trial anywhere in the United States.” (New York Times, April 25, 1970)

Later that year, the BPP initiated the Revolutionary People’s Constitutional Convention to build a broad front of progressive and anti-capitalist forces to transform the racist system.

However, forces of the capitalist state targeted the movement, criminalizing and disrupting it. Some activists were killed, railroaded into prison or driven into exile or underground.

It is important today for people involved in anti-racist and anti-war activities and for organizations like labor unions to build strategic and tactical alliances to stop the repressive state from isolating and attacking anti-racist activists. The world capitalist system is more unstable now than it was at any other time in the post-World War II period. Therefore a mass movement seeking fundamental change could shake the system at its foundation.

The recent movements for immigrant rights, Occupy Wall Street and Black Lives Matter reflect the developing response to the failure of global capitalism to provide a stable future for the majority of people in the U.S. and internationally. The capitalist class will do whatever it can to retain its capacity to exploit the masses. A united struggle against the system can push that back. □

S. Baxter Jones launches hunger strike for justice

By **Mike Shane**
Detroit

Sept. 20 — S. Baxter Jones continues to fight to regain his home, which he lost through foreclosure in Jackson, Mich., in 2011.

On July 28, a judge stayed an eviction order sought by Fannie Mae to allow Jones an opportunity to take advantage of a recently announced Federal Housing Finance Administration and Fannie Mae Buyback Program allowing Michigan homeowners to repurchase their foreclosed homes at market value. Fannie Mae defied the judge’s intent, refused to sell the home to Jones and, without notice, sold it to an investor. This is the same Fannie Mae that was taken over and bailed out by taxpayers to the tune of \$116 billion since 2008.

In response, Jones began a hunger strike on Sept. 13 to demand the return of his home at market value.



S. Baxter Jones at front in wheelchair at protest on eighth day of hunger strike.

Jones, a Detroit public school teacher for 22 years and a former track coach, suffered traumatic brain injury in 2005 as a result of an automobile accident and now has severe disabilities. He was forced to return to work prematurely with an undiagnosed traumatic brain and spinal cord injury. In 2010, the injury was finally diagnosed, and that April Jones received a family medical leave approved by

Detroit Public Schools. Then during summer break he was unjustly fired by DPS, which was then under the control of unelected Emergency Financial Manager Robert Bobb, because Jones could no longer fulfill his work-related education and recertification requirements!

In violation of federal regulations, Wells Fargo, the loan servicer for Fannie Mae, refused to grant a forbearance or a loan modification for Jones while he was obtaining disability benefits. Instead, Wells Fargo sold his home at a sheriff’s sale in June 2011 and transferred ownership to Fannie Mae in August 2011. In 2013, Jones’ offer to purchase his home at market value was turned down by Fannie Mae.

In a press release announcing commencement of the hunger strike, Jones stated, “I feel disenfranchised, constantly jumping through hoops of fire and being burned. I paid all that money and I have nothing to show for it. Federal housing authorities have stonewalled me at every turn. I can no longer accept this injustice.

I do not want this to happen to another person, so despite my health issues, as a Godly man, I have decided to engage in a hunger strike for justice.”

In an interview this week, Jones stated, “I am not on a hunger strike just to regain my home. I want to highlight the injustices facing thousands of struggling individuals and families today, suffering inhumane water shutoffs, continuing tax and bank foreclosures, declining schools, high unemployment, low pay, and vicious assaults by the police.”

Support for Jones is growing. A number of activists have announced that they will begin fasting in solidarity. For updates, visit the Facebook page “HUNGER STRIKE — Help Baxter get his Home Back.”

You can support Jones by calling Katrina Jones (no relation) of Fannie Mae at 215-575-1400 or email katrina_jones@fanniemaecom.com. Demand that Fannie allow S. Baxter Jones to reclaim his home under the FHFA Buyback Program. The home address is 8789 Rexford Rd., Jackson, MI 49201. Please refer to FHFA file #H-15-1408. □

For Mumia & other prisoners

Lawsuits challenge denial of hep C treatment

By **Betsey Piette**

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal is one of an estimated 10,000 prisoners in Pennsylvania suffering the ravages of untreated hepatitis C virus (HCV). Prisoners across the U.S. are being denied access to the direct-acting, antiviral oral treatment developed in 2014 that has proven to be highly successful in curing HCV.

Earlier in September, lawyers for Abu-Jamal filed an injunction on his behalf seeking immediate relief through the administration of the antiviral drug. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has used the excuse that a dose of this medication costs upwards of \$1,000. Yet even if given to all Pennsylvania prisoners estimated to suffer from the virus, the total cost would be less than 1 percent of the PA DOC's annual budget. Usually one or two doses will cure the disease.

Recently pharmaceutical corporations, faced with impending generic versions of the drug, dropped the cost to around \$400 to \$500 per treatment. While still expensive, it would cost less to provide this lifesaving medication than to treat the diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or liver disease that commonly result from long-term, untreated hep C — conditions that won't go away without proper treatment of the underlying disease.

In June 2015, the U.S. Bureau of Prisons amended its guidelines regarding HCV infection to include use of the new medications and to prioritize treatment for HCV cases as having the most urgent need.

Abu-Jamal's symptoms first manifested over a year ago when he began suffer-

ing from severe skin rashes, lesions and swelling in his legs. His condition worsened early in 2015 when prison doctors failed to properly diagnose his illness. They also prescribed steroids and topical medications that only exacerbated the HCV.

In March 2015 Abu-Jamal, close to death, was rushed to a hospital after prison infirmary physicians allowed him to nearly fall into diabetic shock. Since then, family members and supporters worldwide have been demanding that the PA DOC cease in their efforts to murder Mumia through purposeful medical neglect.

In addition to the current legal remedy sought by Abu-Jamal's attorneys, class action lawsuits have previously been filed on behalf of all prisoners incarcerated in Pennsylvania and other states. These lawsuits center on violations of the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that prohibits infliction of "cruel and unusual punishment."

Attempted murder by neglect

After his lawsuit was filed the end of August, prison officials retaliated against Abu-Jamal during the first week of September by entering his prison cell while he was in the infirmary and boxing up all his belongings without his being present — a violation of their own protocol. There was considerable concern that he might be transferred to another prison, further delaying his receipt of necessary treatment.

Abu-Jamal's legal complaint details his near death and hospitalization with renal failure and a near diabetic coma on March 30. His lawsuit states, "Extensive

diagnostic tests have indicated organ failure (skin) and organ damage (liver) plus open wounds, hemoglobin deficiency, extensive fevers, weight loss and continued weakness."

On Sept. 18, U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Middle District of Pennsylvania Karoline Mehalchick issued a proposed order denying Mumia Abu-Jamal's motion for preliminary injunction and his complaint seeking immediate treatment for active hepatitis C. This was done before Abu-Jamal's attorneys even had a chance to respond to the PA DOC's opposition, as allowed by court rules.

Mehalchick states that Abu-Jamal will not be irreparably harmed if he receives no care, even while acknowledging that hepatitis C is a "sufficiently serious" condition under the Eighth Amendment. While arguing that "it often takes significant time for hepatitis C to progress," she ignored the fact that Abu-Jamal has had the virus for over 30 years, most likely contacted through a blood transfusion after he was shot by Philadelphia police and hospitalized in 1981.

Mehalchick also suggests that the PA DOC should be allowed to implement their own protocols for prisoners with hepatitis C. However, the current PA DOC "treatment protocol" is to deny testing and to deliver no treatment.

Abu-Jamal's attorneys Bret Grote and Bob Boyle are expected to file with the 3rd Circuit Federal District Court to oppose Mehalchick's proposed order on procedural and substantive grounds. That this judge ruled in an arbitrary way where Abu-Jamal is involved is nothing new. If Mumia Abu-Jamal should win his case, it would strengthen the cases of all other prisoners.

Called a "silent epidemic," hepatitis C has a disproportionate impact on impoverished communities and people of color. A 1997 study estimated that 29 to 43 percent of all people infected with HCV passed through a correctional facility. With the prison population skyrocketing over the last 20 years, these numbers would be substantially higher today.

Dr. Joseph Harris, an expert on HIV and HCV who has examined Abu-Jamal's medical records, stated, "It is not rocket science to understand that Pennsylvania prisons represent a very important place for treatment of these diseases to start as part of public health policy."

Left untreated in the prison population, hepatitis C will inevitably become a public health crisis as more prisoners are eventually released. That the state of Pennsylvania chooses to ignore the extent of this crisis in their ongoing effort to murder Mumia Abu-Jamal speaks volumes. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Politicians serve the wealthy

By **Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal**
posted on September 9, 2015

Sept. 15 — It is impossible to look at the current crop of political presidential aspirants and not be struck by their level of subservience to the wants and needs of the owner class.

Like puppies panting in the presence of their masters, the politicians, emboldened by the unconscionable Citizens United decision, are at the feet of the billionaires for scraps to better serve their betters.

Now, one billionaire can field a half-dozen pols, and by so doing, can determine not just who runs, but who wins — and what laws will be passed.

Why not? They own them, don't they?

But still, that is not enough. For witness the emergence of New York real estate executive Donald Trump.

Trump brags, at every opportunity, of his enormous wealth. By so doing, he intimidates his potential rivals, who are used to bending their knees to such men. But he also represents the distrust of his class, for rather than hiring politicians, he runs himself, to lock in his class dominance.

Nor is this solely a Republican affair, for Democrats, who run on emotional appeals to labor unions and working people, once in power lead to the interests of Wall Street — the source of the lion's share of

their donations.

Their strategy, of talking labor while pleasing capital, was seen in the destructive NAFTA pact [the North American Free Trade Agreement], which decimated manufacturing jobs in the U.S. by the millions.

Bill Clinton hustled NAFTA like a street dealer selling crack, selling dreams that turned to dust.

Now, the Clintons return, posing as the saviors of the working class, when their treasured NAFTA ripped away tens of thousands of jobs annually, undermined unions and transferred vast wealth to Wall Street.

When Texas businessman and 1992 and 1996 presidential candidate, H. Ross Perot, predicted NAFTA would produce "a giant sucking sound" of lost jobs, the media pundits laughed at him, making him sound like a fool.

History proves his words were true.

Politicians: servants of capital; promoters of progress; but bringers of disaster. □



'Let's take back our city!'



PHOTOS: JERI HILDERLEY

A full day of marches, rallies and events were held in New York City on Sept. 17, the fourth anniversary of Occupy Wall Street, to demand an end to racism, gentrification and police brutality. Called by the Brooklyn Anti-Gentrification Network, the day's events involved early morning rush-hour visibility and information actions and a midday protest in front of the New York City Housing Authority's management office in Farragut Houses complex in Brooklyn, called by Families United for Racial and Economic Equality. It also included an action at the New York City Department of City

Planning to "fight the rezoning of our communities," a march across the Brooklyn Bridge and, finally, a speakout and sleepout at City Hall Park in Manhattan, called by Voices of Community Activists & Leaders.

In an email announcing the event, BAN states, "The corporations, banks, real estate developers and de Blasio administration are hell-bent on destroying the cultural, economic and social diversity of New York City. We must disrupt business as usual and take back our communities."

"Whose city? Our city!"

— Report by LeiLani Dowell

U.S.-backed ground war intensifies in Yemen

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

Sept. 7 — An escalating ground war is taking place for control of Yemen, the most underdeveloped state in the Middle East. Reports claim that United Arab Emirates Special Forces have been on the ground in the country fighting against the Shiite-led Ansurrallah Movement, also called Houthis.

Some 45 UAE troops were killed on Sept. 4 in battles with the Ansurrallah. Meanwhile, bombing is continuing by the U.S.-backed coalition led by the Saudi monarchy and the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Saudi troops have also reportedly been killed. The Ansurrallah forces have attacked inside Saudi territory in response to ongoing provocations against the resistance forces.

The Saudi- and GCC-led alliance, encompassing numerous states throughout the Middle East and North Africa, has made a concerted effort to drive out the Ansurrallah from Yemen's southern region for nearly six months. As many as 4,500 people have been killed in the fighting, which intensified last March 26 with a Pentagon- and CIA-supported

bombing campaign in various regions of the country.

For several weeks the Saudi-GCC coalition has also built an alliance of political forces in the south of the country that waged an offensive against Ansurrallah positions in Aden. This strategic port city has been bombed extensively in an effort to create a haven for U.S.-backed elements to dominate the Persian Gulf and the entire region, including the Arabian Peninsula, the Horn of Africa and North Africa.

Resistance to imperialist war

Despite the consistent bombing of Yemen for nearly six months, the people still resist imperialist domination. The failure of the air campaign to dislodge the Ansurrallah forces has prompted an escalation of the ground war.

Nonetheless, the forces led by the Ansurrallah, in alliance with the military and political forces remaining loyal to previous President Abdullah Ali Saleh, are punishing the U.S.-backed forces. The increase in the deaths of military personnel from the UAE and Saudi Arabia demon-



Yemeni women protest Saudi forces in Sana'a, Aug. 11.

strates the intense opposition to the Pentagon/NATO-supported coalition.

In a Sept. 7 interview on Press TV, Middle East expert Jalal Fairouz based in London said of the aggressive forces bombing and launching ground offensives in southern and central Yemen, "They are supplied by the United States. They are being backed by the United States. The United States agreed on this aggression in the United Nations. Actually they have tried with the Russians and the Chinese not to have a veto against this aggression when there was a resolution in the United Nations. The Americans have actually agreed with the Saudis. The Saudis have told the Americans five months and so ago that they are going to start this war against the Yemeni people and that was the case; the Americans have agreed."

This analyst goes on to emphasize that "some of the airplanes which are bombing Yemen are being captained — they are being run — by the Americans themselves. These ships of the United States in the Arabian Sea are guiding the airplanes where to bomb in Yemen."

The situation is becoming critical for the imperialist-coordinated military units. Other states allied with the Pentagon and the CIA are now deploying their militaries.

On Sept. 7 the Qatari government announced that it was sending troops into Yemen to shore up the forces of the Saudi-GCC alliance. Whether this development will turn the tide of the war remains to be seen.

Reuters press agency reported Sept. 7, "Qatar has sent 1,000 ground troops to Yemen, Doha-based Al Jazeera television

said, escalating Gulf Arab intervention in Yemen's war ahead of a planned offensive against Iranian-backed Houthis holding the capital Sanaa."

War with Iran resumes despite nuclear deal

The nuclear agreement with Iran is expected to become official with the upcoming Senate vote. However, the war against Iran and its allies in the region continues in Yemen, Syria, Iraq

and Lebanon.

Since March 26 and the new phase of the U.S. war against Yemen, the administration of President Barack Obama has provided diplomatic cover for the efforts to destroy the Ansurrallah resistance forces allied with Tehran. The Obama government continues to bomb neighboring Syria under the guise of fighting the so-called Islamic State after creating the conditions for the weakening of President Bashar al-Assad.

At the same time, Iraq, which the U.S. invaded in both 1991 and 2003 and occupied for eight years, is also being bombed under the same pretext. The burgeoning migrant crisis impacting tens of millions is a direct result of these war policies of successive U.S. administrations.

The anti-war movement in the U.S. and Western Europe must take up the challenge of opposing imperialist intervention by explaining that it is their own governments which must accept responsibility for the worst humanitarian refugee crisis in Europe since the conclusion of World War II.

In the U.S. and Western Europe unemployment, poverty and racial tensions are escalating. The militarization of the police from Ferguson and Baltimore to Detroit and New York is the domestic reflection of a policy of total domination of the world.

These factors provide the basis for linking internal struggles for jobs, guaranteed incomes and the end to police terrorism with the movements against war and imperialism. The working class and the oppressed in the imperialist states cannot be fully liberated until the repression, oppression and exploitation of the peoples of the world is halted. □

Houston solidarity with Syrian refugees



Hundreds of people in Houston came out on Sept. 12 to welcome Syrian refugees arriving in the city. The large, spirited and militant demonstration, organized by Arab youth and Latino/a immigrant organizations, drew a huge crowd, including the Free Radicals marching band. From union activists, including steelworkers who recently returned to work after being on strike for months, to the New Black Panther Party to Proyecto Latino Americano, all united in the chant, "From Syria to Mexico, border walls have got to go!"

A leader of the campaign to find the missing Ayotzinapa students in Mexico told Workers World, "No one wants to leave their homes, but war and violence sometimes force us to do just that." The demonstration was at Houston's busiest intersection in the most crowded shopping area and the response from passers-by was positive. Signs and chants were in English, Arabic and Spanish. News coverage was broad on both English- and Spanish-language television.

One man who was interviewed, Israel "Izzy" Torres, had been fighting his own deportation for almost two years. Just a few days after he attended this demonstration and appeared on television, Immigration and Customs Enforcement did deport him to Mexico, where he knows no one. He and his partner have lived in Houston for over 20 years and all their children are U.S. citizens.

The theme of the Sept. 12 action was "Refugees welcome! No human is illegal!" The demands were for the European Union member states to end immediately their dehumanizing and repressive practices and allow free access and movement of refugees and migrants to reach the destination of their choosing, without fear of coast guard patrols, borders, fences or cages. Also, for Washington to do its part in welcoming and resettling refugees in the U.S., and for the Obama administration to pledge to accept at least 65,000 refugees from Syria for resettlement in the U.S. by 2016.

— Photo and article by Gloria Rubac

Haitian elections under U.S. control

By **G. Dunkel**

Haitian President Michelle Martelly liked running the country without a parliament. He could do whatever tickled his fancy. But when his term approached its end — constitutionally, he only gets one — he had to organize parliamentary elections.

Maryse Narcisse, the Fanmi Lavalas candidate for president, in a Facebook post called the Aug. 9 elections an "electoral coup" and an "electoral masquerade." Fanmi Lavalas was originally formed to support former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was deposed by a coup in 2004 and forced into exile by the U.S.

Along with supporters of a number of other parties, Narcisse marched in demonstrations demanding the elections

be canceled. Several polling places were trashed by armed men; under armed threats, ballot officials had to either go into hiding or sign vote totals in the morning. (Haïti Liberté, Sept. 9)

A number of fairly large marches in Port-au-Prince have both protested the conduct of the Aug. 9 elections and supported presidential candidates like Narcisse.

Some 1,621 candidates ran for 129 seats in the Senate and National Assembly. While official vote totals had not been announced as of Sept. 9, the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) has announced a few outright winners and, in some districts, the two candidates who will face each other in a second round.

Without official tallies, it is impossible to challenge results. The overall turnout

Continued on page 9

Pro-Cuba group demands

Free U.S. political prisoners, starting with Mumia

Organizers of the “Days of Action Against the Blockade of Cuba,” which took place this past week in Washington, D.C., issued the following statement in response to Cuban President Raúl Castro’s humanitarian gesture of releasing 3,255 prisoners in anticipation of the visit of Pope Francis. The organizers called on President Barack Obama to begin by releasing U.S. political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is being denied life-saving treatment for hepatitis C.

Obama should follow Cuba’s lead and free people in U.S. prisons

The organizers of “Days of Action for the End of the Blockade of Cuba” (in Washington, D.C., Sept. 16-18) are calling on President Obama to follow Cuban President Raúl Castro’s lead and release some of the more than 2.5 million prisoners currently in jails and prisons in the

United States.

To mark Pope Francis’s upcoming visit to Cuba, the Cuban government has announced the release of 3,522 people in that country’s jails. This humanitarian gesture will include prisoners over 60, younger than 20, those with chronic illnesses, women and those close to their release dates.

“Why can’t Obama follow the Cuban example before Pope Francis continues on his tour to the U.S. on Sept. 22?” asked Alicia Jrapko, a spokesperson for the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples, which is co-sponsoring the Days of Action in Washington this week. The goal is to pressure the U.S. to end its failed blockade against Cuba.

The U.S., Jrapko pointed out, has the dubious distinction of having the largest per capita prison population in the world.

U.S. prisons are overflowing with people who are primarily incarcerated for non-violent offenses, drug charges, or simply for being mentally ill and poor. The vast majority of those incarcerated are people of color.

“As his presidency winds down, Obama could do the right thing by releasing an equal percentage of the prison population as the Cubans did,” agreed Gail Walker of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, another of the groups organizing the Days of Action. “Now that would be a humanitarian gesture that a war-torn world could appreciate and a gesture of justice to the visiting pope. It would amount to freedom for tens of thousands of people.”

Obama could start by releasing political prisoners like:

- Black activist and journalist **Mumia Abu-Jamal**, whose health is in rapid decline from un-

treated hepatitis C

- American Indian Movement leader **Leonard Peltier**, who just spent his 71st birthday in prison, and
- **Oscar López Rivera**, the Puerto Rican Independence activist who has spent 34 years in prison on conspiracy charges.

Jan Susler, the lawyer for Oscar López, and Rafael Cancel Miranda, the legendary fighter for Puerto Rican independence, will be among the speakers at a human rights panel during a conference being held as part of the Days of Action for the End of the Blockade.

Days of Action Against the Blockade is co-sponsored by IFCO/Pastors for Peace; the Institute for Policy Studies; the National Network on Cuba; the Venceremos Brigade; and the International Committee for Peace, Justice and Dignity for the Peoples. □

Phony charges

A tool of repression in Colombia

By **Húbert Ballesteros**

Húbert “Huber” Ballesteros is a peasant leader from Fensuagro (National Unitarian Agricultural Trade Union Federation) and the Patriotic March. He is a member of the executive committee of the CUT (Unitary Workers Federation). He is a political prisoner in La Picota Prison in Bogotá, Colombia. In this article he highlights the Colombian regime’s brutal suppression of any form of dissent.

Sept. 15 — The Colombian government has introduced laws and ratified international conventions of the United Nations, the Organisation of American States and the International Labor Organisation.

The commitments made to these multilateral institutions would make one think that in our country the state defends human rights and guarantees the right of workers to organize in a trade union — but the reality is very different.

That thousands of trade union leaders

have been assassinated and thousands exiled and imprisoned exposes the systematic repression that the state metes out to any organisation that dares to oppose its policies.

It is in this scenario of repression of the trade union movement that I was arrested on Aug. 25, 2013, on the day I was in Bogotá approaching the government to negotiate the list of demands presented by agricultural organizations, which at the time had been on a national strike since Aug. 19 of that year.

At that point, several comrades active in the strike in regions all over the country had already been assassinated or imprisoned.

From that moment to date, almost 100 members of the Patriotic March have been assassinated and around 300 have been imprisoned.

This is a situation completely incompatible with the Colombian people’s demands for peace and with what has up until now been preliminarily agreed upon between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP insurgency at the negotiating table in Havana, Cuba.

Preliminary agreements have been reached on the land issue, political participation and on finding a solution to the problem of illegal drugs.

How can one understand and explain to the international community that, while in Havana solutions to the problems faced by peasant farmers are discussed and provisional agreements are being reached, in Colombia those same peasant farmers are being assassinated and imprisoned for demanding solutions to the same problems?

How does the Colombian government intend to implement the agreements from Havana on political participation if it continues to persecute and assassinate trade union leaders and activists from the political opposition?

Something which worries us is that the Colombian regime refuses to implement the economic and political changes needed to achieve a sustainable peace.

It is not surprising that the so-called “justice” used in times of war appears to be maintained, even though there is a

move towards peace.

This is an inquisition style of justice used as an instrument of repression at the service of the interests of the powerful.

This doesn’t mean to say we are not optimistic about the peace process. On the contrary, we are encouraged by its progress — but we are aware of the dangers it faces.

In my personal case, the prosecution accuses me of the crimes of “rebellion” and “financing terrorism.” This case is based on the paid testimonies of people working for them and uses as “evidence” documents planted by the military intelligence services and police on computers supposedly captured from guerrilla leaders during military operations.

The entire legal process, including the supposed investigation into the charges brought by the prosecution before the judge, has been plagued by irregularities.

Everything has been clearly planned and directed by the executive branch of the government, and the judicial system has been the tool used to punish my trade union activity and public involvement in the political opposition.

We fear that the judge will not take into account all the evidence, which shows that all of this is a vulgar legal set-up whose aim was to stop the protest and resistance of peasant communities.

We are facing a legal system that is politicized and that works to impose the state policy of criminalization of social protest.

As a political prisoner, my hope for justice for myself and others and that our legal processes adhere to national and international standards can only be achieved with the support and solidarity of the trade union and social movement at a national and international level.

We also hope that an agreement reached on the issue of justice at the negotiating table in Havana will recognise that social leaders and trade unionists are not insurgents, that social struggle and critical thought are not crimes in a state which presents itself to the world as a democracy.

La Picota Men’s Prison, Bogotá, September 2015
tinyurl.com/pzcrjgk



Continued from page 8

in the Aug. 9 vote was 18 percent, according to the CEP, and only 8 percent in the Department of the West.

Some 50 or so candidates are running for president. The first round of presidential voting will take place Oct. 25, which is also the second round of voting in the parliamentary elections. The CEP has been whittling away at the candidates, declaring one a Canadian citizen who is thus ineligible under the Haitian constitution. Another candidate, Jacky Lumarque, who poses a strong challenge to Martelly’s candidate, was kicked off the ballot because he didn’t submit a form he didn’t have a right to get. (Haïti Liberté, Aug. 29)

During meetings marking the departure of U.S. Ambassador Pamela White, it came out that the United States had

donated \$30 million to the Haitian elections to “ensure the results were predictable.” Ambassador White dismissed the problems with the Aug. 9 votes as minor glitches that didn’t affect the outcomes. She also pledged \$5 million for the second round and the presidential contest.

The first presidential debate in the Haitian election took place not in Haiti, but on the campus of George Washington University in Washington, D.C., on Sept. 15.

With Haiti currently under military occupation by the U.N.’s Minustah operation, it is unlikely an election would pose the kind of challenge to imperialism that happened in the vote for Aristide in 1990. But Washington wants to ensure that political struggles around the current elections don’t go further. □

WORKERS WORLD

editorial

Youth of color abused under capitalism

Ahmed Mohamed is a ninth-grader of Sudanese descent who attended MacArthur High School in Irving, Texas. When he brought a digital clock he had made to his classroom on Sept. 14, police interrogated him, arrested him, took him away in handcuffs and fingerprinted him. The school administration suspended him for three days.

Why did this traumatic event happen to a young man considered by many to be a brilliant inventor? From initial reports, school officials, including Mohamed's English teacher, said the clock looked like a "bomb." Telling teachers it was not a bomb did not prevent the young student's arrest. However, the truth began to come out within days — this 14-year-old was targeted due to his nationality and his Muslim faith.

Mohamed Elhassan Mohamed, the youth's father, stated that his son was a victim of Islamophobia. "He just wants to invent good things for mankind. But because his name is Mohamed and because of September 11, I think my son got mistreated." (Washington Post, Sept. 16)

The Irving police, who continually asked him about his name during their interrogation, stated that Ahmed will be not charged with any crime. However, they have not offered a public apology; neither have school officials.

In a statement justifying Mohamed's arrest, Lesley Weaver, Irving Independent School District spokesperson, wrote, "We always ask our students and staff to immediately report if they observe any suspicious items and/or suspicious behavior. If something is out of the ordinary, the information should be reported immediately to a school administrator and/or the police so it can be addressed right away. We will always take necessary precautions to protect our students and keep our school community as safe as possible." (WaPo)

It's outrageous that a student bringing an invention to school was deemed a "threat."

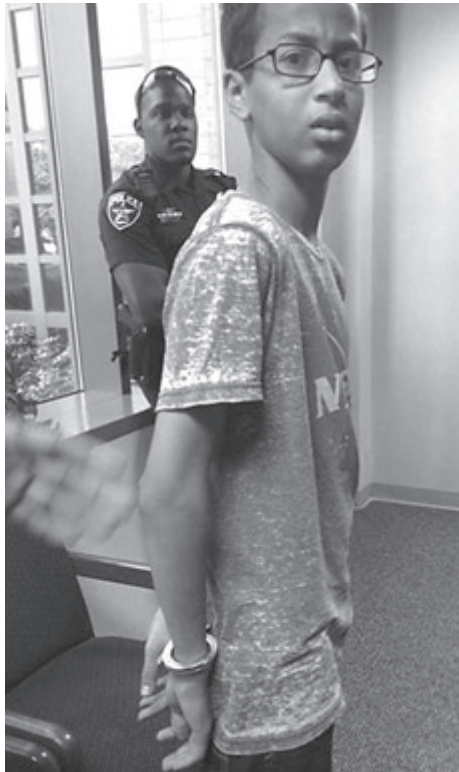
However, there has been a lot of support and solidarity on Twitter at the hashtag #IstandwithAhmed, including from President Barack Hussein Obama, who has faced racism due to his name.

Indigenous youth targeted

Ahmed Mohamed is not the only youth of color who has been demonized by racism recently. Jakobe Sanden, a 7-year-old Indigenous youth, was sent to the principal's office at his school in Santa Clara, Utah, during the week of Sept. 14 for having a traditional Mohawk haircut worn by his people, the Seneca Nation. Rex Wilkey, the assistant superintendent for primary education, wrote that Sanden's haircut was "possibly in violation of the school district student grooming policy." (WaPo, Sept. 19)

Ironically, the name of Sanden's school is "Arrowhead," another example of racist stereotypical names and images of Native people used notably by professional sports teams in Washington, D.C., and Cleveland.

What happened to Jakobe is a current reminder of what happened to so many Native children starting in the late 19th century, who were forced to attend racist, Westernized schools in an attempt to rob



Ahmed Mohamed

them of their culture and heritage. These schools were an extension of U.S. genocidal policy based on the theft of Indigenous lands to expand capitalism in the West.

Seneca Nation Tribal Councilor William Canella wrote a letter to the school district's superintendent that reads, in part, "It is common for Seneca boys to wear a Mohawk because after years of discrimination and oppression, they are proud to share who they are. It's disappointing that your school does not view diversity in a positive manner, and it is our hope that Jakobe does not suffer from any discrimination by the school administration or faculty as a result of his hair cut." (WaPo, Sept. 19)

Such abuse suffered by Jakobe and Ahmed at their young ages can cause long-term psychological damage as adults.

Jakobe should be defended and supported for exhibiting his right to express pride in his Indigenous roots, as should Ahmed for his right to be Muslim without fear of reprisal.

The racist war against children, no matter their nationality, religion, status or age, can take many forms. Take the example of Tamir Rice, the 12-year-old African-American youth who was ruthlessly, fatally shot in Cleveland last November by white police officers. His crime? Having a fake BB gun. Tamir has become a poster child for the Black Lives Matter movement.

What ties millions of youth like Ahmed, Jakobe and Tamir together is that this capitalist system offers no viable future for them. For this reason alone, it cannot be reformed. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Domestic Workers Demand Passage of a Bill of Rights Imani Henry

Black & Brown Unity: Struggle for Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

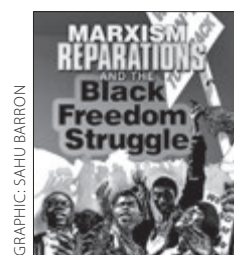
Racism & Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping & Segregation Consuela Lee

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



GRAPHIC: SAHU BARRON

Confederate symbols condemned at int'l bike race



PHOTO: PHIL WILAYTO

Sept. 19 media conference denounces the promotion of Confederate symbols during the UCI Road Worlds Championships cycling race.

By Phil Wilayto
Richmond, Va.

Sept. 20 — When organizers of an international cycling race in Richmond, Va., the former capital of the Confederacy, were planning the event's route, one of the things they said they considered was "showcasing the best the Richmond region has to offer."

They failed.

The UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) Road World Championships, one of the cycling world's most prestigious events, had only been held once before in the United States. A series of races, the nine-day event opened Sept. 19. More than 1,000 cyclists are expected to compete before 450,000 spectators and a worldwide television audience of 300 million.

"Richmond 2015," the local organizing committee for the race, chose the more than 70-foot tall, city-owned monument honoring Jefferson Davis as the race's halfway turning point. Davis was president of the Confederate States of America. That means the committee chose a political entity formed to defend the right of slave owners to be slave owners to "showcase" Richmond.

The Davis monument is the largest of five that honor Confederate leaders on Richmond's Monument Avenue, a broad residential boulevard listed on the National Register of Historical Places. Erected 25 years and more after the Civil War, the statues were meant to signal the return to power of the same white-supremacist Southern ruling class that was in charge until 1865.

Besides Davis, the race route includes statues of Confederate generals Robert E. Lee, J.E.B. Stuart and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson. All of these generals owned enslaved people. The route avoids the avenue's one statue dedicated to an African American: Arthur Ashe, a tennis world champion. Ashe was a Richmonder also known for his AIDS education work and active opposition to South African apartheid.

Far from a fringe group, Richmond 2015 is composed of Virginia's corporate elite. Its four chairs are Gov. Terry McAuliffe, U.S. Sen. Mark Warner, Richmond Mayor Dwight Jones — all Northern-born Democrats — and Thomas F. Farrell II,

CEO of Dominion Resources, the state's most politically powerful corporation.

Ana Edwards, who chairs the Sacred Ground Historical Reclamation Project of the Richmond-based Defenders for Freedom, Justice & Equality, said her organization had asked the committee chairs to move the race from Monument Avenue to save the city from an international embarrassment.

"They refused," said Edwards, who counts among her ancestors two women sold from Richmond in the 1840s.

"This is our heritage, this is who we are," explained McAuliffe, a former chair of the Democratic National Committee who was born in Syracuse, N.Y.

The Defenders also wrote to the UCI International Committee in Europe, which did not respond.

Confederate symbols nurture racism

Edwards was the main speaker at a Defender-hosted press conference held Sept. 19 in front of the Davis monument. More than 100 supporters attended.

"So we are here today to tell the world that most Richmonders do not support showcasing these monuments to Confederate military and political leaders during this world-famous sports event," she said, "at a time when cities across the country are removing these symbols of the oppression of Black people precisely because they continue to contribute to the nurturing of racism in today's world."

Others speakers were Rebecca Wooden Keel of Black Lives Matter and Deric Beale of Virginia ("Fight for \$15") Raise Up. The National Trust for Historic Resources and Preservation Virginia presented written statements. These two groups are prominent nonprofits working with the Defenders to reclaim and properly memorialize Shockoe Bottom, a neglected section of downtown Richmond that once was the epicenter of the U.S. domestic slave trade.

The Defenders also produced a special edition of their quarterly newspaper, The Virginia Defender, explaining to visitors the significance of Monument Avenue. (www.DefendersFJE.blogspot.com)

Helping to make the race route a national issue, the United National Antiwar Coalition set up an online petition supporting the position of the Defenders, a founding UNAC member organization.

A pro-Confederacy group, the Virginia Flaggers, short of forces to counterprotest the press conference on the ground, chose instead to hire a plane to fly with a Confederate flag above the site.

The Defenders have played a leading role in an ongoing campaign to prevent the mayor, backed by the governor, from building a baseball stadium in the heart of Shockoe Bottom. The two sides now have competing plans for the area's development. For information, see SacredGroundProject.net. □

Ukraine's Poroshenko: War criminal!

By Greg Butterfield

When Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko arrives in New York for the 70th United Nations General Assembly in late September, activists in solidarity with the Donbass People's Republics and Ukrainian political prisoners plan to expose him for the war criminal he is.

Poroshenko comes bearing proposals aimed at furthering U.S.-NATO demonization of the Russian Federation. Russia President Vladimir Putin will also be present in New York. In his speech Sept. 29, Poroshenko is expected to ask the General Assembly to remove Russia from its permanent slot on the U.N. Security Council, where it has often served as a counterweight to U.S. aggression, as in Syria.

Although Poroshenko's suggestion is unlikely to find much support, he and his U.S. handlers will use this occasion to continue spreading lies about an alleged "Russian invasion" of eastern Ukraine and equally imaginary Russian threat to NATO members in Eastern Europe. Poroshenko is also expected to ask President Barack Obama and other U.S. officials for billions of dollars in additional weapons and other military aid to suppress the anti-fascist rebellion in the Donbass mining region.

Besides demonizing Russia, these tales are meant to discredit the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. People there voted overwhelmingly

to leave Ukraine after the far-right coup of February 2014, whose first act was to ban the Russian language — the language of most residents in the east.

After signing an internationally negotiated ceasefire agreement in Minsk earlier this year, Poroshenko's military has violated its terms in every imaginable way: refusing to implement Special Status for the Donbass and other regions, continuing to shell civilian areas nightly, and even building up a force of 90,000-plus troops and new NATO-supplied armaments on the contact line with Donetsk and Lugansk. These troops are currently poised to carry out a new military offensive.

Poroshenko, a multimillionaire oligarch known as the "Chocolate King" for his control of the Roshen Chocolate empire, was elected in unfree, unfair elections in May 2014. The election was held just weeks after the fascist massacre of 48 youths, workers and pensioners at the House of Trade Unions in Odessa. At the time, Poroshenko was seen as one of the more "moderate" leaders of the Maidan movement that had overthrown the previous government.

Those parties that opposed Maidan were forced off the ballot. People in the country's east boycotted what they called the "election of blood." Neo-Nazi gangs harassed and intimidated residents at polling stations. Under those conditions, voters opted for Poroshenko in hopes he would negotiate an end to the

war against Donbass.

Instead, Poroshenko immediately intensified the war. He also adopted the ideological trappings of the most virulent fascist groups in Kiev and stepped up persecution of political opponents, especially on the left.

Along with his masters in Washington and Brussels, Poroshenko carries the responsibility for at least 7,000 deaths and tens of thousands of wounded in Kiev's so-called Anti-Terrorist Operation against the Donbass republics; more than 1.35 million displaced people, including 900,000 refugees who've fled Ukraine and Donbass since the war's start, most to Russia; and thousands of political prisoners, from local communist activists and internationally known journalists to teenagers posting anti-war sentiments on social media.

Wall Street's and Washington's man in Kiev

Poroshenko is Wall Street's and Washington's man in Kiev. He's sold the country's economic sovereignty to the International Monetary Fund. He also instituted brutal austerity measures that hit the poorest hardest, while vowing to sell off the country's remaining public industries to Western investors. He's appointed U.S. stooges and even U.S. citizens to high government positions. He oversaw a ban on communist ideology and the rehabilitation of World War II Nazi collaborators.

Under Poroshenko, the Pentagon is well on its way to taking full control of Ukraine's military. The Sept. 16 Stars and Stripes just published an announced expansion of U.S. training for active-duty troops there. This follows a successful "pilot program" with the openly neo-Nazi Azov Battalion.

Notoriously racist and brutal U.S. agencies like the Texas Rangers and California Highway Patrol have been called in to set up new police forces in collaboration with local fascists in cities like Odessa and Kharkov. These cities are ruled by the Kiev regime but contain many opponents of Kiev.

Perhaps nothing sums up the Ukrainian president like this statement he made last year about children in the Donbass: "Our children will go to schools and kindergartens, while theirs will be holed up in basements!" (Video posted by Russia Insider, Nov. 14, 2014)

Yet, on Sept. 1, schools opened for a new year of classes in Donetsk and Lugansk, while Kiev was wracked by infighting among fascist factions. The people of Donbass stand defiant. We stand with them and declare: Poroshenko, Obama and John McCain: Guilty of war crimes in Ukraine! Shut down NATO and Kiev's genocidal war machine!

For information on actions during Poroshenko's visit, follow "Solidarity with Ukraine Antifascists Committee" on Facebook or visit No2NATO.org.

Ukraine junta in crisis: Behind the fascist riots in Kiev

By Greg Butterfield

At the end of August, long-simmering tensions within the motley coalition of wealthy oligarchs, pro-Western neoliberal politicians and outright fascists that make up the pro-Western Ukrainian regime based in Kiev boiled over in an unprecedented wave of violence.

In Kiev, Ukraine, thousands of neo-Nazis staged a violent riot outside the Verkhovna Rada, or parliament, on Aug. 31. Two National Guard troops and one police officer were killed. Over 100 people were injured, including Deputy Interior Minister Vasyl Paskal. Thirty people were arrested. (The Telegraph, Aug. 31)

Ihor Humeniuk, himself a National Guard soldier, was arrested for throwing a grenade that killed a fellow National Guardsman. Ukrainian Interior Minister Arsen Avakov claims that Humeniuk confessed "and introduced himself as an [openly pro-fascist] Svoboda party member and a Sich battalion fighter, on leave from Aug. 3 to Sept. 3." (UNIAN News, Aug. 31)

Photos quickly surfaced on social media of the suspect posing with fascist paraphernalia, including the racist Confederate flag of the U.S.

Ironically, Avakov established the National Guard in spring 2014 to incorporate neo-Nazi paramilitary gangs into Ukraine's state apparatus. The alleged goal at that time was to use the fascists as shock troops against the left and against the people in the Russian-speaking regions. But they were supposed to remain under the discipline of the neoliberal regime.

In the days that followed the Aug. 31 riot, ultra-right protests spread to Odessa, Kharkov and other cities. Avakov was allegedly targeted for assassination by the commander of the Svoboda volunteer battalion, Andrey Yangolenko. The Security

Service of Ukraine claims to have foiled the plot. (Fort Russ, Sept. 11)

The trigger was a face-saving move by Ukrainian oligarch and President Petro Poroshenko. Under pressure from his patrons in Washington and the European Union, Poroshenko aimed to preserve the Minsk 2 ceasefire process with Russia by adopting constitutional changes that give the illusion of autonomy to the rebellious Donbass mining region. In exchange for autonomy, the Donbass was to remain within the national framework of Ukraine.

But below the surface, Ukraine's deepening economic crisis, painful austerity measures, and subservience to Western banks and U.S.-NATO military power are fueling the junta's internal contradictions.

As the fascist riot erupted, Kiev, the U.S. and NATO began their provocative "Operation Sea Breeze" war games in the Black Sea, targeting the Russian Federation. "Sea Breeze," incorporating Ukrainian military forces from the Odessa and Nikolayev regions, is being called the largest exercise in NATO history. (Novorossia Today, Aug. 31)

Siege of the Rada

The current Ukrainian regime came to power in the wake of protests dominated by the same fascists, and backed by the U.S. government, which toppled the lawfully elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich in early 2014.

People in the primarily Russian-speaking Donbass region, formerly part of eastern Ukraine, broke away after the coup and established the independent Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Anti-fascist militias there have repeatedly defeated Kiev's military incursions.

Fascist groups and volunteer battalions form the backbone of Kiev's war machine. These ultra-right forces are



New Yorkers protest Kiev ultra-rightists here and plan to condemn Petro Poroshenko at U.N. on Sept. 29.

infuriated by the current diplomatic maneuvering. Instead, they demand an immediate resumption of full-scale genocidal war against the rebellious Donetsk and Lugansk republics — and against Russia too.

The Aug. 31 protest was led by the head of Svoboda, Oleh Tyahnybok, a major figure in the 2013-2014 "Euromaidan" movement that unseated Yanukovich.

In the end, Poroshenko's proposal was adopted by 265 deputies (out of 450). It must be approved twice more before going into effect. (112.international, Sept. 2)

Emphasizing that the measures were for show only, "Parliament speaker Volodymyr Hroysman was adamant that the

[draft constitutional changes] would not mean special status for Donetsk and Lugansk."

And two days before the vote, Poroshenko himself was quoted as saying, "No matter how you look for it there, there is no special status" for Donbass. (Russia Beyond the Headlines, Aug. 29)

Representatives of Donbass harbored no illusions.

"As of today, no point of the Minsk agreements has been fully implemented by Kiev," declared Alexander Zakharchenko, head of the Donetsk People's Republic. "Military hardware has not been withdrawn from the engagement line; moreover, its number has been increased, while the law on amnesty has not been adopted by the Verkhovna Rada."

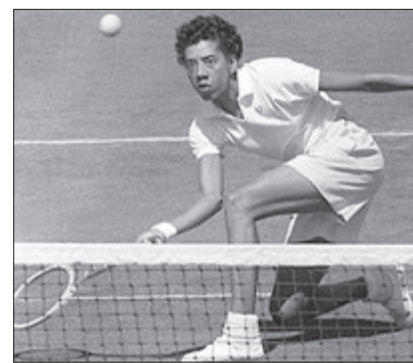
Zakharchenko stressed that according to Minsk 2, Kiev should negotiate with the Donbass republics on changes to the constitution. Instead, "Kiev has made no steps forward and has issued openly provocative statements," he said. Poroshenko has refused any direct discussions. (Novorossia Today, Sept. 2)

Kiev's infighting led to a rare period of relative peace in the Donbass republics in early September. The capital city of Donetsk, for instance, saw several nights without shelling for the first time in months.

However, attacks by Ukrainian forces continue against frontline towns and villages. On the night of Sept. 13-14, the villages of Spartak and Avdeevka were attacked, Novorossia Today reports.

And more than 90,000 Ukrainian troops and massive amounts of military hardware supplied by NATO remain poised on the "contact line" with Donetsk and Lugansk, awaiting the signal for a new offensive.

A longer version of this article is at workers.org



Althea Gibson

Racismo y tenistas negras/os editorial

La Estación de Radiodifusión Pública emitió recientemente un documental de “American Masters” sobre Althea Gibson, la primera tenista afroamericana en romper la barrera del color en el mundo del tenis profesional que es casi todo blanco y altamente privilegiado. Ha sido comparada con Jackie Robinson.

Gibson nació en 1927 en Silver-Carolina del Sur, de familia de aparceros. Para escapar de la pobreza extrema, su familia se mudó a Harlem-Nueva York, donde comenzó a competir en el tenis siendo una adolescente, en la predominantemente negra Asociación Americana de Tenis.

La primera vez que puso un pie en los cuidados céspedes de Forest Hills en Queens-Nueva York para jugar tenis en 1950, los espectadores racistas constantemente la insultaban.

Con el tiempo se convirtió en la primera persona negra en ganar el campeonato de Francia (actual Abierto de Francia) en 1956. En 1957, ganó Wimbledon y el Campeonato Nacional de EUA (actual Abierto de EUA). Ganó los mismos campeonatos de 1957 en 1958 – una hazaña notable.

Gibson eventualmente abandonó el tenis para tomar un trabajo más remunerado porque a las mujeres jugadoras de tenis no se les pagaba casi nada en aquellos días. Estaba pensando en el suicidio cuando una tenista cercana recaudó fondos para ella de admiradoras alrededor del mundo.

Pese al racismo, hermanas Williams siguen dominando

Serena y Venus Williams eran muy pequeñas cuando Gibson murió en 1984. Ambas consideran a Gibson como un modelo importante, ya que superó los muchos obstáculos que enfrentó como mujer negra para alcanzar el más alto pináculo de reconocimiento en el racista mundo del tenis, similar a lo que se enfrentan estas increíbles hermanas.

Las hermanas Williams comenzaron a jugar al tenis a una edad muy temprana en Compton-California, gracias a su padre Richard, quien las entrenó. Desde

finales de 1990, han dominado el tenis femenino de la manera más formidable. Venus ha ganado siete títulos individuales de Grand Slam y Serena 21 títulos individuales. Serena estuvo muy cerca de ganar su primer título de Grand Slam en un año en este Abierto de EUA y empatar con Steffi Graf las 22 victorias en la era del tenis moderno.

La madre de Serena, Oracene Price, dijo que su hija sentía mucha presión por convertirse en la cuarta mujer en la historia en ganar el Gran Slam en un año. (ESPN, 11 de septiembre)

Ambas hermanas Williams han enfrentado un horrible racismo hasta hoy en día. Richard Williams pagaba a niños para gritar epítetos racistas a sus hijas en las canchas de entrenamiento en Compton, para prepararlas a lo que se enfrentarían como adultas al jugar tenis profesional frente a multitudes mayormente blancas.

Cuando Serena comenzó a acumular títulos individuales en la gira de la Asociación de Tenis de EUA, se enfrentó a terribles epítetos racistas, sobre todo en 2001, durante un torneo de Indian Wells en California. Ella boicoteó jugar allí hasta principios de este año.

El presidente de la Federación de Tenis de Rusia Shamil Tarpishev, se vio obligado a disculparse públicamente el pasado octubre a las hermanas Williams luego de que se refiriera a ellas como “hermanos” y dijera que daba “miedo” verlas. Él fue suspendido por un año por la Asociación Femenina de Tenis, y multado. Serena caracterizó su discurso como racista y sexista.

Serena puede ser clasificada como la tenista mujer número uno, pero no en términos de “comercialización” en el mundo corporativo. Según Forbes, la tenista rusa María Sharapova es la mujer deportista mejor pagada en términos de endosos. Serena ha vencido a Sharapova 18 de 20 veces. En términos de la lista global de Forbes de hombres y mujeres, Sharapova ocupa el puesto 12 y Williams el 20.

En más de una ocasión Serena ha sido ridiculizada

en términos sexistas en los medios impresos y sociales por la imagen poderosa de su cuerpo — mide 5’9” y pesa 150 libras — pero ella nunca ha estado a la defensiva en cuanto a su cuerpo.

A los 33 y 35 años de edad respectivamente, Serena y Venus Williams dominan ahora tanto como hace 18 años cuando ambas jugaban en el Abierto de EUA como adolescentes. Cuando le preguntaron a cual atleta le gustaría conocer hoy, Serena respondió “Muhammad Ali”, debido a su postura heroica en 1967 cuando se negó a combatir en Vietnam.

James Blake: de pie mientras se es negro

Estrellas negras de tenis como Althea Gibson, las hermanas Williams, Arthur Ashe y otras/os, no solo enfrentan racismo en las canchas de tenis, sino fuera de ellas también. Tomemos por ejemplo el menos conocido James Blake, una vez clasificado como el cuarto mejor tenista del mundo antes de retirarse en 2013. Un video de vigilancia captó a Blake siendo brutalmente atacado por un policía de Nueva York fuera del Hotel Grand Hyatt en un caso del llamado ‘error de identidad’. El comisionado de policía William Bratton dijo que la persona que supuestamente se parecía a Blake podría haber sido su “gemelo”, un recuerdo del cliché racista de que todas/os los negros se parecen — especialmente si son jóvenes negros.

El policía blanco que atacó a Blake, James Frascatore, fue mencionado en cuatro denuncias civiles en un período de siete meses en 2013. Ha sido mencionado en dos demandas federales de derechos civiles por estar entre el grupo de policías acusados de golpear, rociar con gas pimienta y arrestado falsamente a dos hombres de Queens en incidentes separados de ese año.

Blake ha exigido que Frascatore sea despedido de la fuerza policial. Aunque Bratton se vio obligado a pedir disculpas públicamente a Blake, debe ser presionado para que detenga y formule cargos por asalto y agresión basados en el racismo contra Frascatore. □

Régimen turco dispara contra kurdos e izquierdistas

Por John Catalinotto

El gobierno turco, así como elementos abiertamente fascistas, han abierto un amplio ataque contra organizaciones democráticas en todo el oeste de Turquía. Mientras tanto, el ejército turco ha continuado su agresión contra el Partido de los Trabajadores del Kurdistán (PKK), tanto contra guerrilleros como contra civiles en el sureste del país donde los habitantes son mayormente kurdas/os.

Estados Unidos y otros gobiernos de la OTAN apoyan la ofensiva del régimen turco. El régimen de Ankara concedió a la Fuerza Aérea de EUA el derecho a utilizar las bases militares dentro de Turquía para llevar a cabo ataques aéreos contra Siria e Irak. El gobierno de Turquía también ha librado guerra y subversión contra el gobierno sirio.

El presidente turco, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, planeó en las elecciones nacionales de junio pasado, que su gobernante Partido de la Justicia (AKP), aumentara su mayoría al 60 por ciento de los escaños en el Parlamento. Si hubiera logrado esto, Erdogan habría sido capaz de cambiar la Constitución turca y consolidar su presidencia.

En cambio, su AKP perdió 71 escaños, ganando sólo una minoría — 258 — de los 550 escaños. Un nuevo partido de coalición izquierdista, el Partido Demócrata Popular (HDP), con mucho apoyo de la población kurda, sorprendentemente ganó 79 escaños. El AKP, que sigue siendo el partido más grande en el parlamento, se vio obligado a llamar a una nueva elección nacional para noviembre.

Fortalecido por su acuerdo con el Pentágono, el régimen de Erdogan luego abrió una guerra aérea contra el PKK en Irak y contra las fuerzas kurdas en Siria, mientras intensificaba la represión en las regiones kurdas. Las

fuerzas de liberación del PKK, que habían participado en conversaciones de paz con el régimen de Erdogan en los últimos dos años, contraatacaron. El ejército y las fuerzas policiales turcas mataron a combatientes kurdos y a muchos civiles, pero también sufrieron bajas cuando el PKK respondió.

En la última escalada, el AKP y el fascista Partido del Movimiento Nacionalista, también conocidos como los Lobos Grises, atacaron e incendiaron las oficinas del izquierdista HDP y las casas de algunos de sus miembros en Turquía el 8 y 9 de septiembre.

Durante las elecciones de junio, el HDP hizo campaña exigiendo el aumento del salario mínimo, mejorar el acceso a la educación universitaria y lograr la igualdad de género. Se comprometió a crear un ministerio de la mujer y hacer el Día Internacional de la Mujer un día nacional feriado. El HDP tiene un hombre y una mujer respectivamente, como copresidentes: Selahattin Demirtas y Figen Yukseldag.

Atacadas 300 oficinas del HDP

En una conferencia de prensa en la ciudad oriental de Diyarbakir el 9 de septiembre, Demirtas denunció que mientras el ejército y la policía están llevando a cabo terrorismo de estado contra la población civil bajo un toque de queda en las ciudades con mayoría kurda en el este de Turquía, en el oeste del país, Erdogan está fomentando abiertamente el terror en las calles por matones fascistas. En solo dos días, ocurrieron más de 400 asaltos y ataques contra oficinas del partido, oficinas de prensa, tiendas y casas de kurdas/os y tiendas de campaña de trabajadores temporales kurdos en todo el país. Más de 300 ataques se llevaron a cabo contra las oficinas de HDP, algunas quemadas totalmente. (Junge Welt, 11 de

septiembre)

Demirtas pidió a los simpatizantes de su partido organizar escuadrones de autodefensa. Dijo que los ataques no eran reacciones espontáneas de la población en respuesta a los ataques de la guerrilla del PKK, como alega el gobierno, sino un ensayo para una guerra civil. El acusó al AKP y al servicio secreto turco de coordinar los ataques contra su partido.

El 10 de septiembre, el diario alemán Junge Welt publicó una entrevista con Semra Dogan, co-presidenta del HDP en el distrito Kadiköy de Estambul, en la que habló sobre su partido y la nueva situación.

El HDP “es un proyecto conjunto de las/os kurdas, la izquierda y las/os demócratas”, dijo ella. “Estamos luchando por la igualdad, la libertad y la paz. Desde que logramos el 13,2 por ciento de los votos en las elecciones parlamentarias del 7 de junio, el estado ha estado tratando de detenernos. Las operaciones policiales y militares son parte de un plan extensamente preparado para aplastar a las fuerzas democráticas y abrir el camino para el sistema presidencial buscado por Erdogan”.

Y continuó diciendo: “las ciudades kurdas han proclamado su autonomía porque se sienten amenazadas. Sirve a una defensa legítima. El estado quería linchar a los residentes. Las fuerzas de la guerrilla han declarado en repetidas ocasiones que no van a ir a la guerra, y que limitarán su acción a su legítima defensa. Pero las fuerzas armadas bombardean la guerrilla y sus bases de apoyo, tratando de provocarles a una guerra activa.

“Erdogan y su AKP necesitan soldados muertos [para despertar el fervor nacionalista contra los kurdos]. El presidente sabe que fue arrinconado por estas tácticas — y ahora está tratando de movilizar votos nacionalistas para continuar manteniéndose en el poder”. □