

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

• Capitalismo maltrata jóvenes de color
• Solidaridad clasista en Boston 12

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite! workers.org Vol. 57, No. 40 Oct. 8, 2015 \$1



LGBTQ Southern Pride 3

WW PHOTO: NGOC LOAN TRAN

U.N. summit fails world's poor

By Sara Flounders

Imagine an international gathering at the United Nations reporting after 15 years of meetings that it had achieved none of its goals — especially its number one goal of ending extreme poverty and hunger by this year. This happened at the Sept. 25-27 U.N. Sustainable Development Summit, which followed up on the U.N. Millennium Summit held in 2000.

Fifteen years ago, the assembly of 149 heads of state, U.N. agencies and international financial institutions set a series of objectives — the Millennium Development Goals. The eight goals sought to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, combat life-threatening diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and build a “global partnership for development.”

This year's summit did not even acknowledge the failure to reach the goals projected in 2000. The U.N. instead set yet another 15-year target to end extreme poverty and hunger, as well as 16 other goals, by 2030 in a project called Sustainable Development Goals.

It is important to evaluate this new project's chances of success. The fate of millions of desperate people worldwide hangs in the balance. The gap between the richest 1% and the very poor is greater than ever. Poverty and hunger have vastly increased. Climate and environmental destruction have worsened. Imperialist-led wars have forced an enormous migration crisis.

The goals of reducing poverty, hunger, increasing literacy and solving the climate crisis have inspired individuals and organizations worldwide. Who could argue with such laudable aims?

However, the truth about these U.N. summits is that while promising global transformation, they are part of the capitalists' war on the world's people. The accumulation of wealth and power has accelerated through these global initiatives because the largest corporations dominate the plans. The biggest banks, transnational companies and financial institutions, like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, structure these projects. Their objectives are to ex-

pand capitalist markets, maximize profits and restructure the developing countries more tightly into their economic web — not to redistribute the world's wealth.

International convocations and U.N.-sponsored gatherings, such as the 2005 Millennium +5 Summit, the 2008 Doha Conference for Development, the Millennium Development Review Summit and

the 2012 Rio +20 Sustainable Development Conference, have reinforced and legitimized capitalist growth policies as the only way forward.

Changing the hunger count

The Millennium Development Goals were declared an overwhelming success in solving the problem of world hunger

by statistically changing how underfed people were counted. The U.N. and non-governmental organizations declared it “the most successful anti-poverty movement in history,” which cut global poverty in half. (Guardian, July 17) But was it really reduced?

Continued on page 9

Climate change & wildfires 2

Detained immigrants resist 4

Behind the media's Pope hype 6

Root cause of migrant crisis 8

AUTO WORKERS: 'YES' to Union 'NO' to bosses 7 10

FARC & Colombia accord 11

Elections in Greece 11

CUBAN PRESIDENT VISITS U.S. 9



Supporters gather Sept. 27 outside the Cuban Mission in New York City to welcome Cuba's President Raul Castro Ruz.

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Wildfires spawned by capitalism

By Chris Fry

Sept. 20 — Five people have been killed by ferocious wildfires sweeping through California, including a woman with disabilities who burned to death when she could not escape her home on Sept. 12. More than 1,000 homes have been destroyed as of Sept. 20, with thousands more still threatened. More than 23,000 people have fled their homes. Other western states, including Washington, Oregon, Idaho and particularly Alaska, have seen a huge spike in wildfires this year.

As of July, some 5 million acres of Alaska's forests, more than the size of the state of Connecticut, burned in hundreds of wildfires. Scientists warn that these fires could melt huge areas of permafrost, which covers 80 percent of the state. In turn, this could release millions and millions of tons of carbon emissions from methane into the atmosphere, greatly accelerating global warming. ("Alaska's terrifying wildfire season and what it says about climate change," washingtonpost.com, July 26)

Ironically, the current worldwide glut of oil caused by capitalist overproduction has resulted in a decline in fuel prices. Alaska's government, which depends on tax revenue from the same big oil companies that have caused global warming, now has less money to spend fighting these fires.

More than 4,000 prisoners, nearly half the 10,000 firefighters involved, are fighting the blazes in California. The work is incredibly hard and dangerous. Prisoners cut fire lines in steep areas that bulldozers can't reach, stripping away brush and trees to expose soil that won't burn. For doing this work next to flames that shoot 100 feet into the air, they are paid a paltry \$1 an hour. While being trained, they get about \$2 a day. (thinkprogress.org, Aug. 13)

Courts have ruled that California must greatly reduce the number of inmates in its prisons. The harsh conditions of these overcrowded and segregated jails have forced many prisoners to "volunteer" for fire duty. But since California saves so much money from this slave labor — up to \$1 billion per year — its lawyers actually filed documents late last year saying that state parole programs for released prisoners would "severely impact fire camp participation — a dangerous outcome while

California is in the middle of a difficult fire season and severe drought."

Drive for Wall Street profits

Wildfires have always burned in the western part of the country. But scientists have noted a huge increase in their number and strength. "Wildfires in the western United States have been increasing in frequency and duration since the mid-1980s, occurring nearly four times more often, burning more than six times the land area and lasting almost five times as long (comparisons are between 1970-1986 and 1986-2003)," says the Union of Concerned Scientists.

The group adds that "wildfire seasons (seasons with higher wildfire potential) in the United States are projected to lengthen, with the southwest's season of fire potential lengthening from seven months to all year long. Additionally, wildfires themselves are likely to be more severe.

"The risk to property owners at the 'wildland-urban interface' in California (more than 5 million homes in southern coastal California, the Bay Area, and north of Sacramento) is projected to increase with the increase in wildfires near these areas.

"The environmental and health costs of wildfires are also considerable; not only do wildfires threaten lives directly, but they have the potential to increase local air pollution — exacerbating lung diseases and causing breathing difficulties even in healthy individuals."

Yes, each wildfire is a "natural" disaster. But, clearly, the huge increase in the number and intensity of these fires can be traced right back to Big Oil, to Big Coal, to hydraulic fracturing and, of course, to Wall Street's insatiable drive for profits. They are the root cause of each catastrophic effect of global warming.

The only way to reduce the "human" cause of global warming is to create the technologies that allow us to leave the coal, oil and natural gas in the ground. What stands in the way of doing that are the giant corporations and banks, the billionaires from Warren Buffet to, yes, Donald Trump, who stand to lose trillions of dollars in profits from such a shift.

To end the obsolete burning of fossil fuels for energy, the workers and oppressed must join together to end the obsolete capitalist economic system once and for all. □

WORKERS WORLD this week

★ In the U.S.

- U.N. summit fails world's poor 1
- Wildfires spawned by capitalism..... 2
- Black Lives Matter at Pride: 'Liberation for all of us' 3
- Durham, N.C. WWP hosts Pride event 3
- Deception at Volkswagen 3
- Georgia detention center immigrants resist brutality 4
- Remembering Chairman Fred Hampton 4
- Milwaukee transit workers fight cutbacks 5
- Seattle teachers reach agreement, suspend strike 5
- New York City report on Mumia's health crisis 5
- Behind the media praise for Pope Francis 6
- Justice for Natasha McKenna! 6
- Alabama auto workers vote union 7
- Boston forum on Syria crisis 7
- Ayotzinapa one year later 7
- NYC solidarity with migrants 8
- Vigil hits U.S. role in Philippines 8
- Activists demand 'Free Moldovan protesters' 8
- Auto workers are saying 'No' 10

★ Around the world

- Imperialist wars cause migrant crisis 8
- In a first, Raul Castro speaks to U.N. 9
- FARC, Bogotá sign historic accord 11
- Syriza re-elected in Greece as EU runs economy 11

★ Editorial

- Shinzo Abe, public enemy 10

★ Noticias en Español

- EDITORIAL: Jóvenes de color abusados bajo el capitalismo 12
- SOLIDARIDAD: Sindicato de Conductores de Autobuses Escolares en Boston 12

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Vol. 57, No. 40 • Oct. 8, 2015
Closing date: Sept. 29, 2015

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Phone: 212.627.2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$30; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from NA Publishing, Inc, P.O. Box 998, Ann Arbor, MI 48106-0998. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

Workers World, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011.

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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Black Lives Matter at Pride: 'Liberation for all of us'

By Minnie Bruce Pratt
Durham, N.C.

A dynamic Black Lives Matter contingent of queer and trans* people of color, advancing behind the banner “No Pride for some of us without liberation for all of us,” disrupted the North Carolina Pride parade on Sept. 26. The action, carried out in Durham, was organized by groups from here and Greensboro. (Trans* indicates the spectrum of all the different genders of people who do not conform to the either/or of male/female.)

As the contingent marched, members chanted the searing lyrics of R&B singer Janelle Monae’s protest song against racist police terror, “Hell You Talmbout.” Participants drummed and shouted out the names of murdered Black queer and trans* women. This year, as of September, at least 17 trans* women of color have been killed in the U.S., an historically high rate.

On reaching the corner at Main and Broad where participating groups were announced, the contingent asked for and received the microphone to read a state-

ment in solidarity with the murdered women. However, they were told by a Pride official, “Don’t say anything offensive.”

In Facebook posts, BLM Youth Assembly organizer Ngoc Loan Tran described the events after the group began to read: “The MC intervened and brought security and cops to confront us, put hands on queer Black people speaking, and stopped us from reading our statement, apparently deciding that the fight for Black lives is offensive. ... Murdering queer and trans Black people without remorse is offensive; trying to separate struggle from celebration is offensive. Be loud, don’t be quiet! The first Pride was a riot!”

Stonewall and transgender women of color

Stonewall was the lesbian-gay-bi-trans*-queer six-day uprising against police repression in New York in June 1969. That fightback resistance was led by transgender women of color, like Marsha P. Johnson of African descent and Latina Sylvia Rivera, as well as by butch lesbians, teenage street hustlers, drag queens



PHOTO: ZAINA ALSOUS

BLM queer and trans* people of color contingent, Sept. 26.

and homeless gay men. Stonewall is popularly designated as the modern-day start of the U.S. LGBTQ movement.

In a statement, “Why we disrupt Pride,” issued after the march, BLM organizers declared: “Our Pride was birthed by our Queer and Transgender ancestors ... Black and Brown people [who] chased the police off of our turf. Your Pride has a police escort. Our Pride took the streets by storm to protect gender nonconforming people.”

The statement pointed to the deep contradiction between the original Stonewall militancy and the current NC Pride celebration: “Your Pride is sponsored by banks and corporations that cage, murder and enslave Black and Brown Queer and Trans folk,” including “kindred locked back in the Durham County Jail, denied urgent medical care, reading material, clean drinking water, and even a fundamental right to sunlight.”

A major corporate sponsor of NC Pride is super-bank Wells Fargo, which has made millions in loans to the for-profit Corrections Corporation of America. Other corporate sponsors include Bud Light and PepsiCo, environmental polluter Allied Chemical and pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline.

Jessica Jude, a BLM Youth Assembly organizer, said of the protest: “I have marched down the streets chanting in many cities for lots of reasons. This was the first time I realized how important it was that this group of people be there at this moment, asking the spectators to take a side. We were bringing together points of solidarity with the oppressed, from Ferguson to Palestine to the roots of Pride, and exposing corporate sponsorship and police violence against Black Power. We were challenging the comfortable in an important way.”

Building solidarity and LGBTQ movement

White NC Pride leaders committed a terrible, shameful failure of solidarity and an act of racism when they interrupted the Black Lives Matter contingent, threatened its members physically and called in the police.

At a celebration of Stonewall, the historic LGBTQ fightback battle that was led by trans* women of color, white NC Pride organizers sought to repress, with their own physical coercion and using state power, a people-of-color queer and trans* contingent that embodied the spirit of that Stonewall resistance, fighting back against racism, homophobia, transphobia and woman hating.

The Black Lives Matter group was advancing a powerful possibility for solidarity, connection and resistance. They were offering the potential for convergence of the Black Lives Matter movement and the LGBTQ movement for liberation. They were offering a connection to international solidarity against state and police terror by chanting, “From Ferguson to Palestine, occupation is a crime.” They were offering a chance to reject big-business manipulation of the LGBTQ freedom struggle.

They were offering a chance for the LGBTQ movement to widen and strengthen itself in the larger struggle for justice.

The Black Lives Matter protesters made very clear the opposing positions of repression and liberation as they stood at the intersection of Main and Broad. They quite succinctly posed the question: Which side are you on? This is the question that each person — and each movement — must answer in order to stay correctly on the road to solidarity and liberation. □

WWP hosts Pride event

Durham, N.C.



Community members and activists gathered Sept. 27, the day after the local Pride march, for a community forum hosted by the Durham, N.C., branch of Workers World Party. Lesbian author and Workers World contributing editor Minnie Bruce Pratt, and activists Jess Jude and Ngoc Loan Tran began by sharing their personal history and experiences connecting lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans-

gender and queer struggles with other movements.

The audience responded by sharing their own experiences and discussing how to take the next steps in building solidarity across struggles, and the value of joining a revolutionary party to help achieve that goal.

Later that night, there was a community screening of the film “Pride,” which tells the true story of a communist-led group of gays and lesbians who raised funds to help support striking Welsh miners in 1984. Afterwards, the discussion of building solidarity continued, focusing on how to build bridges between the LGBTQ and Black Lives Matter movements.

— Workers World Durham, N.C., Bureau

Deception at Volkswagen

By G. Dunkel

When the news broke Sept. 18 that Volkswagen was cheating on its diesel emission controls, the economic reaction was fairly swift. VW stock fell by about a third in a few days of trading; the Environmental Protection Agency threatened to remove half a million VW diesels from the road and to fine the company \$17 billion.

Shares in other European car makers also fell, with Peugeot down 7 percent, BMW down 5 percent and Daimler, the owner of Mercedes-Benz, also down 5 percent. Around half the cars sold in Europe use diesel.

The big papers in the U.S., including the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times, were filled with speculation about how the company would, or could, compensate the owners of its diesel cars.

Volkswagen was, for a brief period before this scandal broke, the largest car manufacturer in the world, directly em-

ploying 300,000 workers in Germany alone and indirectly providing jobs for tens of thousands of workers employed by its suppliers. Worldwide, VW sold one out of every 10 cars.

Pressure is mounting. The German transport ministry just announced Sept. 27 that Volkswagen had until Oct. 7 to come up with a schedule for fixing this problem — making sure all 3 million VW diesels meet environmental standards. Otherwise, it would remove authorization for VW diesels to use German roads. (Libération, Sept. 27)

Some of the descriptions of Volkswagen’s test-beating technology compare it to “defeat devices,” which were the old style way of getting around pollution controls. In this case the company used software built into the cars’ computer that sets 40 to 60 parameters controlling such things as engine speed, exhaust paths and so on. Using software tools developed by Bosch in 2007 for testing purposes, it modified its small- and medium-sized diesel cars to pass emissions

tests, but to remove these controls on the open road for vastly better performance and economy.

Clean air saves lives; VW chooses death

According to the Sept. 22 Guardian, “The rigging of emissions tests may have added nearly a million tons of air pollution by VW cars annually — roughly the same as the UK’s combined emissions for all power stations, vehicles, industry and agriculture.” Scaling the amount of nitrogen dioxide emitted by 500,000 Volkswagen diesels in the U.S. to the worldwide figure of 11 million, VW diesels were responsible for spewing 948,691 tons of nitrous oxide (NOx) emissions into the atmosphere.

According to the EPA, NOx reduces the ability of people and animals to resist lung infections like the flu and colds, produces acid rain and has severe environmental impact.

What is driving the reaction against Volkswagen is the importance of clean air, not just for people’s health, but to

their economies. According to reports put together by Michael Greenstone in the Sept. 25 New York Times, “[H]undreds of millions of life-years [are] saved from improved air quality in our country” due to the Clean Air Act, which was the result of tremendous, militant activism over decades.

Volkswagen workers also have to breathe the air that VW pollutes. They want their jobs, but they also want their health and the health of their families. What their corporate employer has done is threaten both, and this threat flows from the capitalist system Volkswagen operates in.

Volkswagen — and the other car manufacturers with their own versions of VW’s defeat devices — don’t consider the lives extended and improved by clean air. In the ruthless drive for profits and expansion, they will lie and cheat, using high technology, threats, collusions and copyright laws to keep the software code running their cars from being inspected, in order to preserve their profits. □

Georgia

Detention center immigrants resist brutality

By Kevin Caron
Lumpkin, Ga.

On Sept. 3 at about 10:30 p.m., Corrections Corporation of America management deployed their Special Operations Response Team to brutally suppress hunger strikes, work stoppages and other forms of resistance organized by undocumented people who are currently detained at Stewart Detention Center in Lumpkin, Ga.

From face-to-face interviews with detained individuals and second-hand accounts from their attorneys and family members, supporters learned that Stewart staff entered several units wearing riot gear and attacked immigrants with rubber bullets and pepper spray. At least one individual required serious medical attention due to the harsh response and excessive use of force.

Staff then placed the entire facility, one of the largest immigrant detention centers in the country with over 1,800 beds, on lockdown. They denied those detained all visits, phone calls, outdoor recreation and television for almost three full days.

Reports confirmed that throughout the duration of the lockdown, which took place over Labor Day weekend, individuals were required to stay in their pods and on their beds, except when they were allowed to use the restroom or were taken by guards, one at a time, to the showers.

In addition, meal schedules and other services were altered, requiring many to go long periods without food. Others were forced to endure painful medical

conditions without proper treatment.

Families had hoped to take advantage of the long weekend to visit their loved ones at Stewart, some even driving as far as 900 miles. All were turned away with little or no explanation until Sunday, Sept. 6, when staff ended the lockdown.

Built as a speculative project in the early 2000s, the medium-security facility that would later become Stewart sat empty for several years. Meanwhile, CCA scrambled to obtain a contract with the state of Georgia. Despite pouring tens of thousands of dollars into Georgia state officials' election campaigns, CCA failed to make a deal.

The corporation was losing money until, in 2006, CCA secured a contract with the federal government and Stewart County to warehouse undocumented immigrants awaiting deportation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Oppression breeds resistance

Almost immediately upon opening, the horrid conditions at Stewart were met with resistance. In 2007, Honduran immigrants at the facility organized a large hunger strike that garnered the attention of local activists and advocates, such as Anton Flores-Maisonet. Inspired by those resisting Stewart from the inside, Flores-Maisonet and others built a grassroots movement to shut down the facility by organizing regular demonstrations and setting up El Refugio, a hospitality house that offers assistance to the families of those who are detained.

In 2012, Detention Watch Network named Stewart Detention Center one of the 10 worst immigration detention



March to detention center in Lumpkin, Ga., November 2014.

centers in the United States. Recent reports from Georgia Detention Watch and DWN detail human rights violations at Stewart. These violations include rotten, undercooked food that has been served with maggots as well as indefinite detention with multiple complaints, including a slow and nontransparent deportation process. They also include severe medical neglect, which, in March 2009, proved fatal when Roberto Medina-Martinez died of a treatable heart infection.

These clear and consistent violations of basic human rights have left those detained at Stewart with no option but to mount resistance. The most recent uprising comes on the heels of a large hunger strike that took place in Stewart throughout the summer of 2014.

Today, CCA is the largest private, for-profit corrections company in the

United States. In 2012, CCA's revenue, which comes entirely from taxpayer funds, exceeded \$1.7 billion. Earning \$60.50 per day per individual detained at Stewart, the longer CCA can keep someone in detention, the more they profit.

While the U.S. corporate media has focused on the immigration and refugee crisis in Europe throughout recent weeks, refugees fleeing U.S.-backed military repression and economic exploitation in Latin America have been left out of the discussion. The Stewart Uprising of 2015 should serve as a reminder that the root causes of the immigration crisis in the U.S. and elsewhere are policies that exploit the labor and resources of some parts of the world to benefit the wealthy in others.

Kevin Caron is an activist with Georgia Detention Watch and the movement to #ShutDownStewart. He lives in Atlanta.



Chicago

Remembering Chairman Fred Hampton

of Chairman Fred Jr., gave a talk about her experiences surviving the early morning cop assault of Dec. 4, 1969. Also in attendance was Kanahus Manuel, a representative of the Secwepemc Nation from Canada.

Those who missed the event yesterday, I'm still charged up off it. Like Chairman Fred used to say, I'm too proletarian revolutionary intoxicated to be astronomically intimidated. In plain language, I'm too high off the people to be shook up. It's a strategic reason why the state don't want you to know about these type of dynamics, these forces that fought our interests. There's a strategic reason why they give us these watered-down, sanitized individuals and say, well, you did gain these types of concessions because of this person. They don't want you. You can't make those connections off of people that look like us and talk like us and come from like conditions and resistance that's happening. ...



Fred Hampton Jr.

It's the system that gives us the impression that we got to go get a certain amount of degrees, through a certain amount of process before we're able to fight, and then get approved on them on

how to fight. We can't get caught up on no conventional type of tactics and means. Let me be clear that this is the system where chattel slavery was legal. So we can't get caught up in that whole dynamic where we frame it in terms of what's legal. We must be out with the politic that is able to put it in the context of who we talking about. ...

Sun Tzu said, the cardinal principle of warfare is to know thyself and to know thy enemy. If you come in with some abstract, elementary (it's no disrespect to anybody) ideology, if you come to some abstract, simple dynamics that think it's as simple and plain as Black and white — abstract nationalism — you missed the Negropeans like William O'Neil that done came in here, you bringing a knife to a gunfight.

At this stage in the game, we got to be on with a politic that expose and deal with not only Uncle Sam, but Sambo. The gringo and the negro. The stakes are too high. It's not as simple as Black and white. We're gonna start working in to the people and draw the line of demarcation in the community we work in. And we look at the world, how the state functions. A lot of people look at certain dynamics: this is where I live at, and this person's this type of side of town, or this person's this type of astrological sign or whatever. These kind of dynamics are cool in certain arenas.

But the bottom line, a personal contradiction. When you get through some-

thing so powerful, it penetrates something; crack, racism, penitentiaries — all that type of dynamics. It transcends all these other different barriers. Those are the real deal contradictions.

A lot of cats, they trip on us. Why we so intense? We got this radio show we do weekly, and I'm so intense about what type of music you gonna play on there before you go on. Don't bring no abstract "conscious" artists on there that ain't down. Don't disrespect. The stakes are too high. We got cats who doing rap like this cat Dom P., my little nephew who locked up. But the stakes are too high for this kind of abstract, feel-good type of thing. ...

[Introducing Pam Africa] Policeman beat her down, and they told her just let go of the tie. The harder they beat her, the harder she trick on they tie, real talk. This is ghetto folk, not folklore, but real-deal stories. This ain't no abstract speakers that's coming out here that's talking to you. Just wanted to get that off my chest. Please seize the time. Please seize the time y'all. Don't tell me about no 'back in the days, I'd a been involved in the struggle ...' This day and age, with all the information you can type on your phone or whatever. Use context clues, all the news that's not put on the TV all the time. There's forces struggling right here and now, today. Seize the time.

— Transcribed by WW Chicago Bureau

The following is a transcription of a talk given by Chairman Fred Hampton Jr. of the Prisoners of Conscience Committee/Black Panther Party Cubs at the 2015 Streetz Party. The event is an annual celebration of the Aug. 30 birthday of his father, Chairman Fred Hampton of the Black Panther Party, who was assassinated by the Chicago police on Dec. 4, 1969.

The Streetz Party kicks off every year with a memorial in front of what they call "our Ground Zero, where the pigs took out our twin towers, Chairman Fred Hampton and Defense Captain Mark Clark," at 2337 W. Chairman Fred Way (aka Monroe Street). Those gathered march to The Wall, a giant mural of Chairman Fred Sr. at Madison and California on Chicago's West Side, painted by the Rebel Diaz Arts Collective from the Bronx, N.Y.

This year, Pam Africa, Minister of Confrontation for the MOVE organization, spoke about the cop assaults on MOVE headquarters in Philadelphia in 1978 and the police bombing of their home and the surrounding neighborhood in 1985. Comrade Mother Akua Njeri, Black Panther Party former member and mother

Milwaukee transit workers fight cutbacks

By Workers World Milwaukee Bureau

Members of Amalgamated Transit Union Local 998 and their labor-community supporters rallied at the Milwaukee County Courthouse on Sept. 24 in opposition to a concessionary contract being pushed by County Executive Chris Abele.

The ATU protest was part of a series of months-long fightback actions, which included a three-day work stoppage in July. This long-time militant union, with a significant Black membership, was led in the 1970s by well-known civil rights activist, the late Father James Groppi.

Local 998 resumed negotiations with the Milwaukee County Transit System on Sept. 25, with the assistance of a federal mediator.

James Macon, president of Local 998, says MCTS offered the union a two-year proposal with “language on part-timers that was significantly worse than their previous proposal. MCTS insists on increasing the number of lower wage, part-time transit workers, but does not want to limit the number of hours they work. We see this as an attempt to exploit Milwaukee workers by allowing them to work full-time hours without any bene-

fits.” (cbs58, Sept. 25)

Other issues include pensions, health care cost increases and the need for adequate bathroom breaks.

The membership’s vote on the proposed contract will take place on Oct. 5. It has been postponed from Sept. 30 to give union members adequate time to make an informed decision on the proposal. The bargaining committee is urging members to vote “no.” For more information on how to support the transit workers’ struggle, see Facebook.com/ATU-Local-998. □



PHOTO: MIKE ERDMANN

Seattle

Teachers reach agreement, suspend strike

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Seattle teachers and staff suspended their seven-day strike against the Seattle School District on Sept. 15. The strike, with an amazing amount of activity, greatly increased the bonds of solidarity between the teachers and the community, especially with parents and students.

After a tentative agreement was reached between the Seattle Education Association and the Seattle School District on Sept. 15, SEA’s Representative Assembly voted to suspend the strike. Teachers and staff returned to work on Sept. 16, and schools opened the next day. The SEA membership approved a three-year contract, with a big ratification turnout from the union’s 5,000 members on Sept. 20.

Parents and supporters sang at a rally outside the hall where the vote took place. They were giving support to the educators whichever way they voted.

Given all the cutbacks and attacks on public education that had taken place, the teachers were demanding better conditions for the students, while insisting

on fairness for themselves. The teachers were fed up with overwork and being disrespected by administrators, politicians and anti-public-education “philanthropists.”

A very inclusive 40-member bargaining team negotiated throughout the summer. The SEA called for a pay increase for educators, since their tiny salary increases had been eaten up by higher medical costs in the last contract. They also wanted more help for support staff. Teachers opposed the short 15-minute recesses for students and a longer school day. They wanted “race and equity teams” in the schools to combat systemic racism.

Community, labor support key

Picketing teachers were highly visible throughout the strike, with dozens demonstrating and chanting at each of the city’s 97 public schools. They were supported by parents’ groups, such as Soup for Teachers, which brought food and support to the picket lines. While educators wearing red shirts were all around the city, it appeared that school district and school board representatives were in “bunker mode.”

On Sept. 14, hundreds of teachers held a mass picket line at Franklin High School. About 100 teachers marched five-and-a-half miles from Chief Sealth International High School to school district headquarters. There were other convergence actions across the city.

Also that day, the Seattle City Council, feeling the pressure, voted unanimously to support the strike. Labor unions from across the country sent support messages to the strikers. It was then that the school district moved to settle with the SEA, making some concessions.

Some 800 parents and young students marched on John Stanford District Headquarters on Sept. 15 to support the teachers’ demands. After many parents made “mic check” teacher-support statements, the tentative agreement was announced.

While there were many gains in teacher and community solidarity, here are some of the settlement’s concrete results: The SEA won a guaranteed 30-minute recess for students; a 4.8 percent cost-of-living increase in the first two years, a 5 percent pay increase over two years, with a 4.5 percent increase in the third year. The school day will be lengthened by 20

minutes. The SEA website says the teachers will be compensated for additional time and that more staff will be added to help the educators and students.

The SEA forced the district to uncouple student test scores from teacher evaluations. “Race and equity” teams will be set up to deal with racial disparities in education in 30 schools; this is a gain, but it is not sufficient.

The teachers’ struggle can be built on. Seattle Educators Association President Jonathan Knapp said they followed the lessons of the 2012 Chicago teachers’ strike in unifying with the community. One advance was an alliance with at least three new parent groups. Black Lives Matter and NAACP activists strongly supported the strike.

This strike also grew out of a wave of dozens of one-day strikes by teachers across Washington state during the spring. These walkouts opposed the state Legislature, which has refused to allocate necessary funding for basic education for all students. The struggle for a decent education will continue because youth are too precious to be sent to prison or in other ways abused by the capitalist class. □

New York City

Report on Mumia’s health crisis

By Dolores Cox
New York

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, in New York City the two main towers of the World Trade Financial Center were destroyed by planes deliberately crashing into them. Of course, 911 is also the number to call for a crisis or an emergency.

In New York City, on Sept. 11, 2015, at All Souls Unitarian Church in Manhattan, an “Urgent: 911 Report to the Movement on Mumia” meeting was held due to the fact that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal’s physical condition has reached crisis proportions. He is in need of urgent medical care. Currently, Mumia’s life is in the most danger since the 1990s. His health is failing due to medical neglect by the prison system.

Panel speakers included Johanna Fernandez, Educators for Mumia; Bob Boyle, movement attorney and member of Mumia’s legal team; Pam Africa, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia; Suzanne Ross, NYC Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition; Sofi-

ya Elijah, New York State Department of Corrections prisoner advocate; and Esperanza Martell, Puerto Rican political prisoner advocate.

Legal, medical and political updates were given, stressing that the goal of the movement is to save Mumia’s life and to free him. The prison system has demonstrated that Black lives do not matter. Withholding medical treatment is murder. Forces in the state of Pennsylvania and other enemies want Mumia permanently silenced by killing him with medical neglect.

In August 2014, Mumia experienced a recurrent, painfully itchy skin rash over his entire body. In January 2015, his glucose level rose. In March, he went into life-threatening diabetic shock. His blood sugar level was 779; an 800 level produces a diabetic coma. Blood work at the hospital also revealed anemia and hepatitis-C antibodies. There have been rehospitalizations of Mumia where cancer has been ruled out.

The inmate who alerted officials to Mumia’s dire condition was placed in

solitary confinement and transferred in retaliation for speaking out.

Mumia’s current hepatic symptoms can lead to increasingly more serious disease risks. Dr. Joseph Harris of New York City and a “Doctors Without Borders” physician, obtained by the movement, visited and examined Mumia. He has diagnosed Mumia as having active hepatitis-C, a serious, but treatable and curable disease. It is no longer necessary to perform invasive liver biopsies for the diagnosis; blood tests have proven sufficient.

Dr. Harris has done research in Egypt on the prevalence of skin diseases and hepatitis in Black men. To date, the Pennsylvania DOC has not responded to Dr. Harris’ diagnosis, nor have they offered their own diagnosis, despite Mumia’s deteriorating health and their knowing about the hep-C infection since 2012. The medical profession states that everyone with hep-C should be treated.

Eyewitness account of Mumia’s crisis

On Sept. 5, Johanna Fernandez visited Mumia. She described his body as

being disfigured, weak and with excessive weight loss. He reported to her of being unable to sleep due to the painful itching and said he feels like he’s “been through hell.” Further, Mumia has cut his locks because his hair has been falling out. Only in the past couple of weeks, he said, has he been able to read, fully comprehend and write down ideas. Brain swelling occurs following diabetic shock. It sometimes takes nearly a year for the brain to fully heal, stated Fernandez.

It was mentioned that the typical diet of prisoners consists of high carbs, sugar, salt and even spoiled meat. After imprisonment, approximately 80,000 inmates have become diabetic, 40 percent become asthmatic and develop heart disease, hypertension and cancer. Additionally, correctional facilities have hired unscrupulous medical providers.

On Sept. 6, Mumia’s personal belongings were removed from his cell while he was in the infirmary. The movement has launched a campaign to prevent a retaliatory transfer of Mumia due to his fil-

Continued on page 10

Behind the media praise for Pope Francis

By Deirdre Griswold

At a time when the U.S. capitalist political establishment is in crisis, how comforting it must have been for virtually all the warring camps to come together in effusive praise for Pope Francis and his talk to the U.N. conference on Millennium Development Goals.

The pontiff's visit was received with a level of media coverage that a rock star could only wish for. No presidents, generals, corporate heads or groundbreaking scientists could ever achieve one-tenth of the coverage accorded the pope.

While the domestic news had been dominated by protests over police killings of unarmed Black people, corruption on Wall Street, the widening gap between rich and poor, the drought and raging wildfires in the West, the vicious Republican debates and the gridlock in Congress, the international news had been even more painful, with unending wars in the Middle East and the resulting mass exodus of hundreds of thousands of desperate people to Europe.

But with the visit of Pope Francis, the capitalist media now had the opportunity to offer people who suffer themselves, or identify with the suffering masses, some hope, which was of course expressed only in generalities.

Francis' speeches were full of eloquent concern about the fate of the Earth, the suffering of migrants and the growth of poverty amid obscene wealth. This is what people want to hear more about, and his words went beyond the messages of his predecessors at the pinnacle of the Catholic Church. Undoubtedly, there are many who hope it will propel forward their struggles for reform in these areas.

Given the church's reactionary positions on divorce, contraception, abortion and lesbian-gay-bi-trans*-queer rights, nothing that Francis said challenged the Vatican's age-old role as a world pillar of male domination and the consigning to hell of all who dare break its strictures.

It should be obvious that the U.S. big-business media, from the lofty, globally conscious New York Times and Washington Post to the frenetically right-wing Fox media conglomerate, all speak for various elements of the U.S. capitalist ruling class. Even the most liberal never go beyond criticism and editorial positions intended to patch up and prettify this increasingly monstrous system. Far be it for any of them to ever side with those who advocate a revolutionary solution to the gangrenous decay of outmoded capitalism.

Their enthusiasm for the pope's pronouncements, therefore, must be seen in the context of present-day struggles. Here in the United States, these struggles are becoming more acute as the exploitation of the working class and the even fiercer oppression of its most marginalized sections — particularly people of color and immigrants — have aroused a significant section of the population. The young especially are showing outright defiance of the state and its repressive functions, especially in relation to police violence and mass incarceration.

Role of Catholic Church in history

While the Catholic Church is a powerful worldwide institution with a long history, which has amassed extreme wealth over the centuries, its influence today should not be exaggerated. The church

has been in decline for many years, especially in Europe where it has roots.

It was long ago superseded in Europe and the U.S. by various Protestant religions, whose struggle with the Catholic Church had its origins in the rise of the bourgeoisie versus the feudal lords. The Enlightenment period rejected Catholic dogma and opened the way for the development of science and industry, pillars of early capitalism.

With the development of capitalism into its imperialist stage, however, commercial and industrial capital began taking a back seat to increasingly powerful banks and other financial institutions. The growing world economy was dominated mainly by "WASPs" — white, Anglo-Saxon Protestants from Europe and North America — who ruled through such institutions as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

The past century saw many challenges to imperialist rule. Most notable were the revolutions in Russia, China, Korea, Vietnam and Cuba that overturned capitalist property relations and aimed at building socialism. Facing problems of extreme underdevelopment and unremitting hostility from the imperialists, these revolutions were secular and summoned the efforts of the masses of people to improve conditions, rather than seek the help of a supposed higher power.

In Eastern Europe, where the upending of the old social order came through the military defeat of Nazi Germany and its collaborators by the Soviet Red Army, rather than by popular revolutions, the Catholic Church became a conduit for counterrevolution. Pope John Paul II, a Pole, played a notable part in the return of East European countries to the fold of global capitalism. But while this earned him and the church great praise from non-Catholics in the bourgeoisie, especially in the U.S., that has not reversed the historically declining fortunes of the Vatican.

The rise of the women's movement and the concomitant struggle for reproductive choice, as well as revelations of child sexual abuse by a supposedly celibate Catholic clergy, plus an influx of people from other nationalities and religions, have led to a decline in the influence and finances of the church, especially in Western Europe.

Today, there are more practicing Muslims in France than there are practicing Catholics. And in Italy, home of the Vatican, those who attended Mass every Sunday in 2010 made up less than 5 percent of the population; the figure was even lower for youth. (Center for the Study of New Religions)

The Church and Liberation Theology

In Latin America, however, the situation is more complex. Beginning in the 1960s, the struggle of the masses against brutal dictatorships, which were propped up by the U.S. with arms and money, shook the Catholic hierarchy and attracted many priests and nuns who were closest to the poor.

A new brand of Catholicism, Liberation Theology, put emphasis on raising up the most oppressed and was sympathetic to revolutionary forces in the hemisphere, including the Cuban Revolution. Some of its advocates participated in armed struggles against the repressive regimes. Priests and nuns in this movement became targets of the dictators, most notably in Central America, Argentina and

Brazil, and the movement itself was denounced by the Vatican.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the present Pope Francis, is from Argentina. He was not part of this progressive, even revolutionary, movement that reached into the clergy.

The military in Argentina launched a coup in 1976, supported by Washington, and then carried out a vicious war against the left in which thousands were "disappeared." The military eventually had to accede to a return of civilian government.

It was Pope John Paul II who anointed Bergoglio a cardinal in 2001. When Bergoglio became pope two years ago, information surfaced about the complicity of the Argentine church with the crimes of the generals. Bergoglio was accused of not having used his position — he had been a bishop at the time of the "dirty war" — to save priests and others imprisoned by the junta. He denied the charge. (Time, "The New Pope and Argentina's 'Disappeared' of the Dirty War," March 13, 2013)

Bergoglio's ascension in the church to the position of pope reflects the new reality since that time. Throughout Latin America, there is little sympathy for the reactionary forces that were lined up with U.S. imperialism in the period of multiple military coups and vicious dictatorships, from Venezuela and Chile to Guatemala and Paraguay. Even the corrupt and mur-

derous political establishment in Colombia has had to sit down in Havana with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and negotiate an end to the war there.

The new pope is able to articulate the sentiments of the masses of oppressed people with great passion and seeming humility. Yet the institution he represents, except for a small and valiant grouping in it which he has distanced himself from, has been opposed to the struggles of the people to take control over their lives in the now, not the hereafter.

By praising the pope to the skies, we can assume that the capitalist establishment in the U.S. is eager to cloak itself in his present popularity and promote the church as a force for change.

That is a far cry from being committed to any meaningful struggles that could make a dent in imperialist wars abroad or the economic aggression known as "free trade" — both of which result in devastation that is driving millions to leave their homes. Nor will it reverse the amassing of fabulous fortunes at one end of the class divide and abject poverty at the other.

To do this — and to respond seriously to the hair-raising predictions about the future of this planet — requires a massive showdown with the class of super-rich who at present control most of the world. □

Justice for Natasha McKenna



Sept. 21 — As Philadelphia is gradually being militarized by Homeland Security and the Secret Service in advance of the visit of Pope Francis on Sept. 26 and 27, members and supporters of the Racial, Economic and Legal Justice (REAL Justice) Coalition defied the lockdown, taking to the streets of Center City to protest the violent murder and torture of Natasha McKenna by Fairfax County, Va., police in early February 2015.

McKenna, a 37-year-old, African-American woman diagnosed with schizophrenia as a child, was arrested and placed in police custody after allegedly threatening a police officer. A 48-minute video released earlier in September shows several male officers in hazmat [hazardous material] uniforms manhandling McKenna, who is naked, repeatedly telling her to "stop struggling" even though

she obviously is not, and eventually shooting her multiple times with a taser gun. McKenna died as a result of this abuse. Her last words, heard on the video, were, "You promised you wouldn't kill me."

Demonstrators included several spokespeople from the disabled community, a community that accounts for nearly 50 percent of victims of police brutality. Following the short rally, over 100 demonstrators marched to Love Park. There, a day earlier, members of the REAL Justice Coalition had joined homeless people to protest the city's lack of plans to house and feed people who will be displaced by the shutdown leading up to the pope's visit. Demonstrators took over the stage just outside the Visitors Center, welcoming women of color present to join them on the platform.

Demonstrators then marched up Ben-

Alabama auto workers vote union

By Dianne Mathiowetz

On Sept. 23, workers who produce seats for commercial trucks and vehicles at the Commercial Vehicle Group plant in Piedmont, Ala., voted overwhelmingly to join the United Auto Workers union, 89 to 45.

CVG bought the plant in 2011, and according to the workers, their pay, insurance costs and working conditions have steadily worsened.

Top pay was capped at \$15.80 an hour, insurance costs tripled, and the heat inside the plant was dangerously high during the long Alabama summers. Workers made jokes about management giving them popsicles so they could “cool off” when they demanded the ventilation system be fixed.

A main issue was CVG’s use of temp workers who could stay in that status for years, getting paid \$9.70 an hour with no benefits. With 141 full-time workers and as many as 60 temps, the fight for living wages and permanent status for all was a prime motivating factor in the union’s success.

The Piedmont auto parts plant is just one of many that are now located in Alabama.

Workers at the Selma plant, owned by the Lear Corporation which produces car



seats for Hyundai, have likewise raised issues of dangerous working conditions with toxic chemicals and inadequate ventilation. Their pay is \$12 per hour, a poverty wage in a city which is the symbol of the successful fight against Jim Crow segregation and the bloody struggle for voting rights. Lear has engaged in a vicious pushback against the workers’ union drive, firing activist Kimberly King and then suing her for defamation for her statements about health issues stemming from her job.

The UAW has organizing drives elsewhere in Alabama, including the formation of a local at the Mercedes assembly plant in Tuscaloosa with 2,200 full-time workers and 1,000 temps. While the union local does not have formal bargaining status as the result of a National Labor Relations Board election, it is in the process of building a majority membership with the power to negotiate with Mercedes.

The decisive win at the CVG plant is a reflection of the growing consciousness of workers in the face of unrelenting capitalist profiteering.

Tiffany Moore, a 34-year-old mother of two employed at CVG for six years, explained the victory: “We’re worth more than what we’re being paid now.” (annistonstar.com, Sept. 28)

And her co-worker, Joe Etherton, spoke about the significance of the win, “I hope the working people of Alabama see this and stand up and speak for themselves.”

Mathiowetz is a retired, 30-year General Motors assembly line worker and the producer and co-host of a weekly radio program, The Labor Forum, on WRFG 89.3 FM in Atlanta.

Ayotzinapa one year later

On Sept. 26, the first anniversary of the forced disappearance of 43 students from Ayotzinapa, thousands marched in the streets in Mexico City to demand answers and justice. The students are seen to represent the more than 100,000 people who have been killed and 25,000 “disappeared” since 2006, under the narco-friendly Peña Nieto government. As usual, the U.S. government not only supports but also funds these neoliberal assassins throughout Latin America.

In San Francisco in the U.S., people also went into the streets, holding a rally and a march in the Mission District in solidarity with the parents and supporters of the missing students. The disappearance of the Mexican students is only the tip of the iceberg



of injustices, assassinations and repression throughout Latin America. Part of the Ayotzinapa struggle is building unity in the U.S. with Latin America.

— Report and photo by Alice Loaiza

Boston



Participants at Sept. 19 forum on Syria.

WWW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

Forum on Syria crisis

By Workers World Boston Bureau

The Boston International Action Center held a forum on Sept. 19 in response to Syria’s refugee crisis. It was attended by members of Team Solidarity: Voices of the United School Bus Union Workers of Local 8751, the Syrian American Forum and Mass Action Against Police Brutality. Workers World Party and the revolutionary youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together sponsored the event.

Two presentations highlighted imperialism’s critical role in the massive migrations from Syria to Europe’s imperialist countries. Danny Haiphong of WWP and FIST focused on the relationship between imperialism’s war on Syria and the crisis of capitalism. A critical aspect of this relationship is the antagonism between Syria’s unrelenting, heroic struggle for self-determination and imperialism’s incessant need to destabilize nations that resist its dictates. He stressed that imperialism’s policy of destabilization is evidence of the system’s broader political and economic decline. He ended by discussing the war on Black America in the U.S. and its ties to the escalating conflict in Syria.

Eyam Solloum explained the SAF’s position on the refugee crisis. According to Solloum, the Syrian Arab Army would not be embattled with the chaos imposed by the Islamic State (ISIS, ISIL and Daesh) if it were not for their foreign sponsorship. He said that the U.S. media intentionally fail to cover this reality in Syria.

Solloum said SAF is dedicated to educating the U.S. public on the true nature of a war that threatens the sovereignty and stability of its members’ homeland. Russia’s recent moves to increase military aid to Syria, he explained, will help the Syrian people’s cause of eliminating terrorism in their country so that Syria can begin the process of peace.

Solidarity is key

In the discussion, Local 8751 leaders extended solidarity to the Syrian people’s struggle and invited SAF to speak at the bus yards. The SAF also expressed its eagerness to aid Local 8751’s struggle against Veolia/Transdev.

Nino, a MAPP organizer, presented a video of transit police brutality against a young Black woman in Dorchester, Mass., and explained that the genocidal war on Black people in the U.S. stems from the same system terrorizing Syria.

Others in the discussion linked the war on Syria to the capitalist crisis. Comments stressed the importance of keeping migrant women’s struggles at the forefront of the anti-war and anti-repression movements, and mentioned the attacks on women and Planned Parenthood in the U.S.

The bus drivers and the Syrian people share a common enemy: the capitalist class. Veolia’s union-busting attempts and imperialism’s efforts to destabilize Syria present evidence of capitalism’s endless crises. □

Kenna!



WWW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

jamin Franklin Parkway toward the Homeland Security lockdown area. But suddenly, in what organizers described as a “remix,” they did a quick reversal and turned back into Center City. They marched against traffic on several streets, did sudden turns and totally confused the unwanted police escort that struggled to keep up. Marchers took over both lanes of traffic on Broad Street and Market Street, getting broad support from people waiting for buses. A popular chant was “Wake up, wake up! We want our freedom, freedom! Tell these racist-ass cops, we don’t need ‘em, need ‘em!”

The protest ended back on Market Street with the unfurling of a 150-foot scroll with the names of over 75 women of color and transgender individuals murdered by police.

— Betsey Piette



AYOTZINAPA

Imperialist wars cause migrant crisis

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

Sept. 21 — Tens of thousands of migrants are living under precarious conditions in Hungary and Croatia as well as other states in the European Union.

Police have used water cannon and teargas to beat down migrants in Hungary. Thousands have been forced into detention centers where they are treated in a manner which has sent shockwaves throughout Europe and the international community.

The British Broadcasting Corporation reported on Sept. 21 that Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said the migration of people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia threatens the borders of Europe. He called for concerted efforts to block any imposition of quotas for the intake of migrants. He is instead taking militarized and criminal justice approaches to the crisis, for which the European and North American imperialist states are largely responsible.

The BBC report continued: “Viktor Orban said migrants were ‘breaking the doors’ and that a united stance was required. Ministers from Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia met to discuss an EU proposal for quotas, which they oppose.”

The article noted most importantly, “Some EU countries want migrants shared out more evenly across the EU. Germany and France are among those [that] back plans to share the burden of relocating 120,000 migrants from Greece, Italy and Hungary.”

Illustrating the hostility of the Hun-

garian government, Budapest placed ads in media outlets of countries from which many migrants originate. One that appeared in Lebanon’s newspaper An Nahar on Sept. 21 warned people not to go to Hungary.

The full-page ad read, “Hungarians are hospitable, but the strongest possible action is taken against those who attempt to enter Hungary illegally. The illegal crossing of the country’s border is a crime punishable by imprisonment. Do not listen to the people-smugglers. Hungary will not allow illegal immigrants to cross its territory.”

A Hungarian legislative measure against migrants was passed recently with the support of the Jobbik party, which appears to be even further to the right than Orban’s center-right Fidesz party. The new measure passed by 151 to 12, with 27 abstentions.

Orban’s government also announced it would send the military to the borders and authorized the use of rubber bullets, pyrotechnical devices, teargas grenades and net guns. These weapons are being added to an already deadly arsenal that the police have not hesitated to use against migrants, including batons, teargas and water hoses.

In Croatia a similar situation is developing. Migrants have been trapped inside the country, unable to travel freely into Hungary or other neighboring states.

More than 17,000 people crossed over into Croatia between Sept. 16 and Sept. 21, after being forced out of Serbia and unable to move into Slovenia. Croatian Interior Minister Ranko Ostojic said, “The situation is impossible for us.” (NBC

News, Sept. 21)

Ostojic talked with the international press while standing at a camp for migrants in Opatovac on the border with Serbia. He said that Croatia is “the victim of Europe’s failed response to the crisis.”

In addition, Ostojic was scheduled to participate in a series of talks set to convene on the crisis during the week of Sept. 21. He called upon European heads of state to “come here and see the situation for themselves.”

Wars of regime change

Wars of regime change and the world capitalist economic crisis have created a mass migration from the Middle East, Africa and Asia — the largest dislocation since the conclusion of World War II. But the European and North American imperialist powers act as if they have nothing to do with the current situation involving the scattering of millions from Syria, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, South Asia and other regions.

Nonetheless, EU leaders like Angela Merkel of Germany and Francois Hollande of France speak as if they are concerned with the plight of those flooding into Southern and Eastern Europe. The U.S. administration of President Barack Obama announced it would allow 10,000 immigrants from Syria — over the next year.

These empty proclamations are not improving the migrants’ present conditions or providing reassurances to the EU governments being impacted by the policies of the Pentagon and NATO.

Reports of political talks between the State Department and the Russian

Foreign Ministry on reaching a political settlement in Syria may be aimed at stemming the tide of migration. The continuation of this crisis will undoubtedly place greater strains on relations among the NATO member-states in Europe and North America.

Global context of migration crisis

These pronouncements from EU and U.S. leaders come in the context of the continued bombing and destabilization of states throughout the region which the migrants are fleeing.

Since the conclusion of World War II, the U.S. has fought to maintain its position as the dominant imperialist nation. Wars in Korea, Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa have brought massive deaths, injuries, economic hardships and dislocation.

Rather than allow the peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America to determine their own destiny, Washington, Wall Street and their European allies have sought to prevent the genuine national independence and sovereignty of the former colonial and semicolonial territories. Periodic global economic crises have also added to the shaky viability of the post-colonial states.

Despite the ostensibly more humane and liberal statements coming from Germany and some other governments, the Europeans appear to be totally incapable of receiving and integrating up to several million people from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. In even the most advanced states in Europe, such as France, Britain and Germany, unemployment remains high and poverty is rising. □

NYC solidarity with migrants



As the United Nations General Assembly met in New York on Sept. 26, elsewhere in the city people gathered for a rally and march to demand an end to

the forced migration and displacement of tens of millions of people caused by capitalism and U.S.-funded wars. Protesters connected the struggles of migrant workers with the refugees of the Middle East and North Africa. They noted that the bombing in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Afghanistan has destroyed the structures and economies of these countries and created this refugee crisis. Protesters marched from Washington Square Park to St. Francis of Assisi Church, where there was an event marking the one-year anniversary of the disappearance of the 43 Ayotzinapa students in Mexico. Those students were protesting against the neo-liberal economic policies being imposed in their country.

— Report and photo by **Brenda Ryan**



Vigil hits U.S. role in Philippines

The New York Committee for Human Rights in the Philippines held a vigil in New York’s Union Square on Sept. 21 to honor three people executed by paramilitaries in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines.

Emerito Samarca, founder of the Alternative Learning Center for Agricultural and Livelihood Development, was found hogtied and murdered on school grounds Sept. 1, along with two leaders of the local Lumad community, Dionel Campose and Bello Sinzo.

“Lumad” refers to 18 ethnolinguistic Indigenous tribes from Mindanao. Oplan

Bayanihan, the name for President Benigno Aquino’s U.S.-funded “counterinsurgency plan,” has targeted the Lumad, together with Mindanao’s large Muslim population. Mindanao is the agricultural center of the Philippines and is rich in mineral wealth.

The Philippine military has denied involvement in the massacre. But activists pointed out that it fits the pattern of systematic killings under Aquino’s rule. They called on people in the U.S. to demand the closing of Pentagon bases and an end to Washington’s funding of repression in the Philippines.

— Report and photo by **Greg Butterfield**

New York City

Activists demand ‘Free Moldovan protesters’



WW PHOTO: MICHAEL KRAMER

Protesters demanding freedom for Grigory Petrenko and imprisoned Red Bloc activists picketed outside the Republic of Moldova’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York on Sept. 21.

The protest had two aims: to show solidarity with the seven anti-oligarchy activists who were jailed for 30 days following a peaceful protest in Chisinau on Sept. 6, and

to begin informing working-class people in the United States about the situation in Moldova.

As activists chanted, held signs and handed out informational leaflets to passersby, they saw staff members of the Moldovan Mission peering nervously through drawn curtains.

Chants included “Stop repression in Moldova! Free Petrenko now!” “U.S. and EU out of Moldova!” and “[Prime Minister] Strelet — free Petrenko! Obama — free Mumia!” connecting the case of the Moldovan anti-fascists with the internationally known journalist and U.S. political prisoner, Mumia Abu-Jamal.

As the picket ended, a protester hung a copy of the petition to free the Petrenko Group on the door of the mission. So far, the online petition has been signed by hundreds of people from the U.S., Moldova and other countries. (<https://goo.gl/tNrBg1>)

Protesters said they would continue to raise the issue of the Moldovan political prisoners at other protests during the United Nations General Assembly from Sept. 25 to Oct. 3.

The action was called by the Solidarity with Ukraine Anti-fascists Committee of the International Action Center.

— **Workers World New York Bureau**

In a first, Raul Castro speaks to U.N.

By Cheryl LaBash
New York

On his first visit to the United States, Cuban President Raúl Castro's full schedule at the United Nations General Assembly included speeches in forums on "Development Goals After 2015," as well as "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." Castro was also present at a joyous reception at Cuba's New York Mission to the U.N. on Sept. 27, where for hours he warmly greeted Cuba's many friends.

On Sept. 26 in the U.N. discussion on development goals, President Castro said:

"The re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the United States of America, the opening of embassies and the policy changes announced by President Barack Obama with regard to our country constitute major progress, which has elicited the broadest support of the international community.

"However, the economic, commercial and financial blockade against Cuba persists, bringing damages and hardships on the Cuban people, and standing as the main obstacle to our country's economic development, while affecting other nations due to its extraterritorial scope, and hurting the interests of American citizens and companies. Such policy is rejected by 188 United Nations member states that demand its removal.

"Nevertheless, Cuba fulfilled the millennium development goals and offered



Above, Cuban President Raul Castro Ruz greets crush of friends at Sept. 27 reception.

Right, Monica Moorehead, WWP secretariat member, joins support mobilization at Cuban Mission, Sept. 28.



its modest cooperation to other developing nations in various areas, something we shall continue to do to the extent of our limited capabilities.

"We shall never renounce honor, human solidarity and social justice, for these convictions are deeply rooted in our socialist society."

Castro pointed out that 15 years after the millennium goals were adopted, progress was "insufficient and unevenly distributed." The goals included cutting in half extreme poverty rates, halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education. Castro said: "Unacceptable levels of poverty and social inequality persist and worsen, even in the industrialized countries themselves. The gap between North and South and the polarization of wealth increase.

"Amid the existing economic and financial crisis, wealthy individuals and transnational companies are growing richer while the number of poor, unemployed and homeless people increases dramatically as a result of the harsh so-called 'austerity' policies, and waves of desperate immigrants arrive in Europe escaping misery and conflicts that others have unleashed. ...

"The lack of resources cannot be used as a pretext when annual military expenses amount to 1.7 trillion dollars; absent a reduction of such expenses, neither development nor a stable and lasting peace will be possible."

A 'more equitable and just' global system needed

Speaking again the next day, President Castro said, "Seventy years after

the establishment of the United Nations Organization, one of whose foundational objectives was the struggle on inequality, discrimination against women stands as an embarrassing reality."

After citing the excellent participation and leadership of women in Cuban society, Castro closed saying: "We admit that some achievements have been scored in the past decades but they are fragile and insufficient. In order to advance toward the full realization of gender equality and the empowerment of women, it is necessary above all to have a more equitable and just international order that eradicates poverty and hunger, puts an end to conflicts, favors human beings above capital and preserves the environment. But, political will is much needed to avoid turning the results obtained so far into our goals, instead of making them a starting point and a pledge to achieve true equality for women."

The U.N. General Assembly will vote on a resolution against the U.S. blockade in late October or early November. Kenia Serrano, the president of Cuba's Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, and North American Department representative Leima Martínez will visit New York, Washington, D.C., and northern California from Nov. 3 to Nov. 17.

Look for these opportunities to amplify the demand to end the U.S. blockade of Cuba and to stop the U.S. destabilization campaigns in Venezuela, Ecuador, and throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. □

U.N. summit fails world's poor

Continued from page 1

Studies have exposed how this alleged feat was accomplished by moving the goalposts back to 1990 and changing the methodology for estimating the number of hungry people. They included China's and Vietnam's progress — which accounted for 91 percent of the reduction of underfed people since 1990 — even though these countries had nothing to do with the Millennium campaign.

Canadian and U.S. scholars and leaders of organizations focusing on sustainable agriculture reported that, by looking at the actual data on global hunger, the real numbers of the underfed had risen from 868 million to 1.33 billion people. (Tufts University, "Framing Hunger: A Response to the State of Food Insecurity in the World 2012," June 2013)

Several questions arise: Why did this Millennium effort fail to meet its goals of ending world poverty and hunger or ensuring environmental sustainability at a time of the unprecedented growth of global productive capacity? Who is making the decisions? What policies are being implemented and in whose interests? Will another 15 years of using the same capitalist

market approach yield better results?

There is clearly a political agenda behind the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals. These goals rely on projections of neoliberal economic planners who espouse a so-called "trickle-down" economic approach. This capitalist view contends that economic growth in production and profits for capitalist investors will "trickle down" to improve the lives of millions. Their measurements are contrived to prove that capitalist policies are successful.

Schemes to privatize human needs

The 2000 and 2015 summits' goals focus on outsourcing development to private sector financing — to corporations and banks. Their projects in developing countries are described as "public-private partnerships." They impose privatization plans in education, health care, water, sanitation, mass transit, ports, infrastructure and other areas. Each privatized service or industry must function first as a source of corporate profit and capital extraction. Maximum deregulation is also a goal. These measures in fact rob countries of their resources and destroy their ability to resist the domina-

tion of transnational capital.

Each privatized service is also a source of increased indebtedness. These debts can only be paid later with austerity programs. Harsh structural adjustment plans result in public school and hospital closings.

Peasants and subsistence farmers are driven off the land because agribusiness is given the major role in food development. Tens of millions of the landless pour into urban centers; many are forced to migrate.

The reality is the global food surplus can meet all human needs. But food is still unaffordable to millions of people because corporate agribusinesses are not interested in developing locally grown and sustainable crops. Their only goal in processing, storing and shipping food is to get it to locations where it can be sold at a profit.

Hand in hand with the 2015 summit's goals go the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Central American Free Trade Agreement, and the TransPacific Partnership; they create an international legal framework of corporate power that preempts all environmental and labor laws. The capitalists' "rights" to reap profits supersede human rights and countries' sovereignty.

Sustainable development should mean planning for current human needs without compromising future generations. This is at odds with capitalism's relentless drive to maximize profits everywhere.

People before profits

Missing from the goals of the past and present U.N. summits is the concept that food, clean water, education and health care are basic rights of every person. The U.N.'s plans omit any mention of more equitable distribution. Past internation-

al conferences on reparations and debt cancellation have been pushed off U.N. agendas.

Since the Millennium Goals were announced in 2000, there has been no mention, other than vague calls to end war, of U.S. wars that have been the greatest source of infrastructure demolition, massive homelessness, destruction of schools and medical services — and the cause of massive migration from the Middle East and North Africa.

It is essential to challenge the corporate culture and decision-making process of U.N. summits on "development," as well as U.N.-sponsored climate summits. These include the Oct. 19-23 U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 21st session of the Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC (COP21) set for Paris in December.

The Campaign for People's Goals for Sustainable Development is building one such effort. Its statement, "Reclaim Our Future — Oppose the Corporate Development Agenda," has more than 155 signers from civil society and people's organizations in more than 45 countries. It warns that the U.N.'s policy agenda will further concentrate power and wealth in the hands of the 1% and deepen dispossession and environmental plunder. The campaign calls for developmental goals that put people before profits.

Ultimately, sustainable development and human rights for all can only be achieved by a socialist revolution and the building of socialism, a system that puts the needs of the world's people and the planet before the profits of the rich. Such a revolution in the United States, the citadel of imperialism and finance capital, will hasten the liberation of peoples around the globe. □



WAR WITHOUT VICTORY

by Sara Flounders

"By revealing the underbelly of the empire, Flounders sheds insight on how to stand up to the imperialist war machine and, in so doing, save ourselves and humanity."

— Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann,
President, U.N. General Assembly, 2008-2009;
Foreign Minister of Nicaragua's Sandinista government.

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WORKERS WORLD editorial

Shinzo Abe, public enemy

Workers World stands in solidarity with the hundreds of thousands of people who have demonstrated in Tokyo since late August to protest plans by current Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to change Japan's Constitution to allow aggressive deployment of the well-trained and technologically advanced Japanese military.

The Japanese ruling class wants to increase its military flexibility for its own imperialist interests. At the present moment, however, U.S. imperialism fully supports and encourages this expansion of the Japanese armed forces. Washington wants Tokyo as a subservient force in Asia aimed especially against socialist North Korea and People's China.

The U.S. imposed the "pacifist" constitution on Japan because of its conquest of the country in 1945. Since then, the Pentagon has used Japan as a base area for its wars against Korea (1950-1953) and Vietnam (1962-1975).

The Japanese workers and masses in general, while chafing under the U.S. occupation, welcome restrictions on Japa-

nese militarism. The massive demonstrations in Japan starting Aug. 30 — which called Abe "Public Enemy" — illustrate this attitude. (Deutsche Welle, Sept. 4)

The peoples of other nations in the Pacific region hate Japanese imperialism just as they hate U.S. imperialism. Korea, north and south, was a Japanese colony from 1910 to 1945. Parts of China were also conquered during that period and the Japanese Imperial Army carried out mass atrocities there and during shorter periods in the Philippines, Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Abe still honors the emperor and refuses to acknowledge forcing young women from Korea and other Asian countries into sexual slavery to the conquering Japanese army.

Workers World stands with the people and workers of Asia and the Pacific, including Japan itself, in opposing Abe's militarist initiatives just as we oppose all threats to the region from Washington and the Pentagon.

Disarm the Japanese "Self-Defense Forces." Disarm the Pentagon! □

Auto workers are saying 'No'

By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Since Sept. 22, United Auto Workers members have been voting on a new, four-year contract with Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA). So far the contract is being rejected roughly by a 2-to-1 margin. Only one plant local passed the contract, and with over half the membership votes counted, some plants are showing a "no" vote as high as 80 percent. Workers at four of five major assembly plants are among those still to vote; the final results should be known by Oct. 1.

The biggest objection members have to the tentative agreement is that it institutionalizes the divisive two-tier pay system, which created a wide gap between the wages of workers hired after October 2007 and those with more seniority.

Two-tier, introduced when Ford, General Motors and Chrysler were having cash flow issues in 2007, has come under increasing fire now that the companies are making billions in profits. CEO Sergio Marchionne — who once said UAW members had to get used to "a culture of poverty" — earned \$72 million in compensation last year.

While the new contract gives second-

tier workers a raise, it takes eight years of service to reach the top pay, and even then there is a \$5-per-hour gap between the highest- and lowest-paid workers. The contract creates new, lower-paid tiers in some facilities as well as for temporary workers.

There is widespread outrage over the company's refusal to implement a 25 percent cap on the number of second-tier workers. When the previous four-year contract was presented in 2011, workers were told that at the end of the four years, a percentage of workers would move up to top pay. Now that the rug has been pulled out from under them, these workers — 22 percent of production workers — are furious.

UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell is justifying this betrayal by claiming that the union had to let FCA eliminate the cap to raise pay for all second-tier workers and give "traditional" workers, whose pay has been frozen for nine years, a raise. In fact the cost of the entire contract package, including the pay raises, comes to about \$300 million a year — a fraction of the company's \$3.8 billion in profit last year.

Organizing opposition to the contract has united first- and second-tier workers. A "Contract Lowlights" leaflet, produced by the rank-and-file group Autoworker Caravan, circulated via social media and made its way into plants where AWC has no contacts. After walking out on an "informational" meeting, members of UAW Local 7 at Jefferson North Assembly Plant drove to the UAW's Detroit headquarters and picketed.

Toledo Jeep workers held a rally outside a contract "roll-out" meeting. One of the signs read, "Vote no to a culture of poverty." At a parts depot in California, where the contract went down 2-to-1, both first- and second-tier workers wore shirts with a unifying slogan, "Solidarity, No More Tiers, Vote No."

Besides attacking the union standard of equal work for equal pay, the contract undermines the eight-hour day. On multiple pages the contract reinforces the despised "Alternative Work Schedule," which has allowed the company to pay straight time for 10-hour days and Saturdays. AWS puts workers on one of three crews, A, B or C, with B and C working every Saturday as a regular workday. In addition, the C crew rotates back and forth from evening shift to days every week.

The company gets 120 hours of production every week on the cheap, but the schedule wreaks havoc on a worker's health and family life. The new contract gives AWS workers time-and-a-quarter on Saturdays, but no reprieve from the schedule.

Job worries add to contract objections

In the contract summary and at meetings, the UAW leadership has boasted of FCA's plans to make a \$5.3 billion investment in U.S. plants. The details involve a massive retooling and relocating of products. Car production — the Dodge Dart and Chrysler 200, currently built in Belvidere, Ill., and Sterling Heights, Mich. — is exiting the U.S., leaving UAW members with a promise that expanded production of trucks and SUVs alone will be enough to secure jobs. This business plan is environmentally irresponsible and, by gambling that gas prices will stay low, puts jobs at risks. Thus job worries are also putting the contract's passage in jeopardy.

During the 2009 bankruptcy in which

Continued on page 11

Family challenges police shooting of Delaware man

By Betsey Piette

On Sept. 23, 28-year-old Jeremy McDole was shot several times by police in Wilmington, Del. McDole was not accused of any crime, nor was he running from police. He was in a wheelchair when he was killed.

Captured by a cell phone video uploaded to YouTube, four police officers, guns drawn, are seen approaching McDole in his wheelchair when a single shot is fired. It is not clear from the video just who fired the shot, but someone in the background can clearly be heard saying: "They shot him in the stomach. He's bleeding."

After the shooting, police continue to advance on McDole, yelling: "Drop the gun! Show me your hands! Hands up!" McDole appears to be grabbing at his stomach, and then trying to lift himself up. Seconds later, police open fire again, shooting at McDole at least 10 times and killing him.

It is unclear from the video if McDole was reaching for a weapon or even had one. He does not appear to be pointing anything at the police. While police claim they recovered a .38 caliber weapon at this scene, his family disputes that McDole even had a gun.

Eugene Smith, McDole's uncle, said he was with him about 15 minutes prior to the shooting. "He had a book bag, but I didn't see no gun," Smith said. (AP, Sept. 24)

While McDole was killed at 3 p.m. on Sept. 23, his mother, Phyllis McDole, was never notified by the police. She had to call them in order to find her son's body in the morgue.

At a police press conference on Sept. 24, Phyllis McDole and other family members took over the microphone to voice their concerns about the shooting. Calling for a federal investigation, Phyl-

lis McDole said: "This was murder. They shot my son like he was road kill."

Richard Smith, head of the Delaware chapter of the NAACP, called for an independent investigation by a special prosecutor, noting that he did not trust the state Justice Department to conduct a fair or impartial investigation. Smith stated, "We cannot continue having all our folks being shot and nobody held accountable." (independent.co.uk, Sept. 25)

In response to the YouTube video, Wilmington police released part of a 911 tape in which a woman can be heard saying that McDole shot himself and asking police to send an ambulance. Since the whole tape was not released, there is no way of knowing if it was doctored by police or even when the call was made.

The police appear to be using this al-

leged 911 call to support their claim that McDole was attempting suicide by shooting himself in order to get police to come and shoot him. One major problem with this scenario is that the first shot heard on the video, fired just seconds before witnesses can be heard saying, "They shot him," was after police arrived, not before.

In March 2015, the American Civil Liberties Union filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of a mentally ill woman who sued San Francisco police for shooting her five times. The brief argued that hundreds of people with disabilities are killed in police encounters in the U.S. every year. According to the ACLU brief, half of the 375-500 people killed by police each year in the U.S. have physical or mental disabilities. (RT, March 21) □

New York City

Report on Mumia's health crisis

Continued from page 5

ing a lawsuit charging the Pennsylvania DOC with medical neglect. Calls should be made to the secretary of corrections, John Wetzel (717) 728-2573; and to SCI-Mahanoy prison superintendent, John Kerestes (570) 773-2158.

It was expressed during the meeting that the prison system needs to be taken down "by any means necessary"; that we must not compromise, must be persistent and consistent, and must fight back with force and unleash our power. Make the powers that be do what needs to be done and insist that the movement fight the complacency that followed Mumia's transfer off death row in 2010.

Proposals for next steps include informing the public about Hillary Rodham Clinton and Bill Clinton's role in promoting mass incarceration and publicizing the Clintons' recent admission that "mass incarceration is wrong" at Hillary Clinton's Brooklyn office.

Other steps include the posting of YouTube videos; stepping up the distribution of flyers and postcards; increasing visibility in the streets at more events, rallies, marches, etc., not just on the Internet; holding more meetings throughout the country focusing on Mumia's plight and promoting a campaign to pressure pharmaceutical companies to lower exorbitant prices of hep-C antiviral drugs. □

FARC, Bogotá sign historic accord

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

After more than two years of dialogue over ending the armed conflict between the FARC-EP revolutionaries and the Colombian government, an important decision occurred that may lead to ending the fighting while establishing a legal framework for social justice.

On Wednesday, Sept. 23, for the first time, the leader of the FARC-EP insurgency, Cmdr. Timoleón “Timoshenko” Jiménez, and the president of Colombia, Juan Manuel Santos, met in Havana, Cuba, to announce an agreement to create a Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP).

The JEP’s importance is that it provides the legal framework to prosecute those involved either directly or indirectly in the armed conflict, who may have committed crimes, so that they do not go unpunished. Above all, it allows prosecution for the crimes committed by state forces and paramilitaries. Impunity is what has so far allowed state and paramilitary forces to rape and murder the population, especially the Indigenous and African descendants, human rights activists, trade unionists, students and all those who struggle for social justice in Colombia.

An example of impunity could be the Justice and Peace Law established under the former Álvaro Uribe government allegedly to demobilize paramilitary groups. In a recent interview in the Colombian periodical *Anncol*, Enrique Santiago Romero, counsel for the FARC in these peace talks, said that ten years of legal proceedings have produced only 10 convictions involving 150 paramilitaries. This is from a total of over 33,000 “demobilized” paramilitary troops. In addition, “demobilization” has really meant only changing a name. Instead of the paramilitaries operating as the United Self-defense of Colombia (AUC), they resurfaced under the name Black Eagles and others. Threats and killings by paramilitary forces continue.

According to Santiago Romero, there can be no final agreement for peace unless the paramilitaries are eradicated.

This JEP can be seen as a victory for the insurgency. In 2012, the Santos government had unilaterally imposed a Transitional Justice Act, where most prosecutions aimed to punish the revolutionaries. The FARC never accepted this law since it was conceived completely by the Santos government without any intervention of the insurgency, even though it was done during peace dialogues. In addition, the

law ignored the crimes committed by the state and the paramilitaries.

Here it should be noted that a report of the International Criminal Court in Colombia in November 2012 found that the greatest killers in the armed conflict were state agents and paramilitaries.

At a press conference following the signing of the accord on Sept. 23, Cmdr. “Timoshenko” addressed his compatriots and all friends of peace in Colombia. He said: “Today I bring you, in addition to our fraternal embrace, a part of our collective victory. With the invaluable assistance of the legal subcommittee, we managed to remove many of the obstacles that made the path toward our reconciliation more difficult. We have a Special Jurisdiction for Peace, which besides ensuring respect for the rights of victims, will be dynamic factor in the signing of new agreements in this crucial stretch to reach the end of the conflict.”

Joint Communiqué

In a press conference attended by the host of the peace talks, Cuban President Raúl Castro, and representatives of the accompanying countries, the joint communiqué of the FARC and the Colombian government on the agreement was read. In it, both parties reaffirmed their commitment to the preliminary agreements reached so far. These agreements are titled “Towards a New Country Colombia: Integrated Rural Reform,” “Political Participation: Democratic Opening for Building Peace” and “Solution to the Problem of Illegal Drugs.”

The communiqué explains the main points of the JEP that, in short, is looking for “a formula of justice that defends the rights of victims and contributes to building a stable and lasting peace.” For this, a “comprehensive system of truth, justice, reparation and non-repetition” should

be put in motion following the creation of a Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition.

The agreement creates justice chambers for peace and a tribunal for peace composed mainly of Colombian judges, with the goal of “ending impunity, arriving at the truth, contributing to reparations for the victims and prosecuting and imposing punishments on those responsible for serious crimes committed during the armed conflict, particularly the most serious and representative crimes, and ensuring non-repetition.” (Telesurtv.net)

According to International Humanitarian Law regarding armed conflicts, “the Colombian State shall grant the broadest possible amnesty for political and related crimes.” This would imply that the “crimes” of the insurgency, which are classified as political, arising from rebellion, would involve a broad amnesty. Furthermore, the statement added that, “in any event offenses defined in national law corresponding to crimes against humanity, genocide or serious war crimes, among other serious crimes, will not be subject to amnesty or pardon.”

The JEP will have two types of procedures, “one for those who acknowledge truth and their responsibility, and one for those who do not or do so late. ... It will impose a sentence on the former” and “the latter will face an adversarial trial before the Tribunal. ... The sanctions the Tribunal imposes will have as an essential aim satisfying the rights of victims and consolidating peace and should have as their main function repairing damages and applying reparations for the damage caused.”

Those who voluntarily acknowledge their crimes will face lighter penalties leading to compensation for their victims; very serious offenses will incur sentences of five years to a maximum of eight under special conditions. “People who refuse to

acknowledge their responsibility for such crimes and who are found guilty will be sentenced to imprisonment (jail) up to 20 years, in ordinary circumstances.”

The statement concludes: “In the case of the FARC-EP, participation in the comprehensive system shall depend on the surrender of weapons, which should start no later than 60 days after the signing of the Final Agreement (which is expected to be accomplished in six months). And the transformation of the FARC-EP into a legal political movement is a shared goal, which will have the full support of the government under the agreed-upon terms.”

Basis for success

According to Santiago Romero, who is well versed in international law, there has been no comprehensive legal framework in any other peace process. While this is certainly a historic agreement, everything will depend on how it is implemented.

This requires, first of all, adequate financing. It also requires the will of the current government and future administrations. It is also essential to reveal the criminal acts committed by the state. On this point, Santiago Romero recalled the case of the military dictatorship in Chile, where the military high command under Pinochet made a pact of silence not to disclose their crimes. This pact lasted until very recently, which meant they were silent for over 40 years.

In this context, we have to keep in mind the past and present criminal role of former President Uribe and his paramilitary allies, which will be difficult for them to easily admit to openly.

The international solidarity community can assist in exposing the crimes of the Colombian government and the U.S. role in promoting militarization and violence in Colombia to benefit major U.S.-based corporations. □

Syriza re-elected in Greece as EU runs economy

By John Catalinotto

Shortly before the Sept. 20 national elections in Greece, it became clear that a European Union bureaucrat from the Netherlands would be running the country’s economy.

Economist Maarten Verwey, a former civil servant from the Dutch finance ministry, is heading the EU task force on Greece. According to the Greek financial newspaper *Agora*, “The Greek government will be placed under the strict supervision of Brussels to ensure that all agreed reforms will be implemented.” (Sept. 8)

This task force will oversee the deal in which, in return for an additional \$96 billion in loans, the Greek government has to increase taxes and austerity. Most of the loan money it receives will go directly to imperialist banks in Germany and France.

Knowledge that the EU was eliminating what remained of Greek sovereignty likely explains why only 5.57 million eligible voters cast ballots in this elections, compared to 6.3 million in last January’s parliamentary vote. The voter turnout, at 56.6 percent, marks a 40-year low.

In the July 5 referendum, 61.5 percent voted a resounding “No” in defiance of EU proposals. In all, 6.1 million participated in that election.

The Syriza leadership, after calling for and winning the “No” vote in July, quickly reversed themselves and accepted the EU conditions. Despite this reversal, it appears many Greek voters consider the traditional pro-capitalist parties a greater evil and the parties to the left of Syriza as ineffective.

The September election brought little change in parliament. Syriza again came in first with 145 seats in the 300-seat body, only four fewer than they had held since January, with 35.5 percent of the total vote. Once again Syriza formed the government in alliance with the small Anel party. Alex Tsipras remains prime minister.

Syriza: no longer confronting EU demands

In contrast to January, Tsipras and his party no longer claim they will confront EU demands. They say only that they will try to avoid having all the weight of austerity fall on the working class. Unemployment in Greece is still over 25 percent, and workers have suffered severe cuts to all social services, including health care and education.

Those in Syriza who had opposed the EU deal left the party and formed a new one, the Popular Unity party, which continued to call for rejecting the EU deal. This party was able to win only 2.86

percent of the vote, slightly short of the 3 percent minimum, so it won no seats in parliament.

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) won about the same percentage of the vote and the same 15 seats it had in January. The KKE says this shows the party can hold its own under unfavorable conditions. Regarding total votes, however, since participation was much smaller, it meant that the KKE attracted 36,000 fewer voters.

The KKE has a loyal base in the industrial working class who regularly vote for it. While the party criticized Syriza throughout the year, it apparently won few votes from those who became disillusioned with the governing party.

The fascist Golden Dawn Party had a small rise from 6.3 to 7 percent of the vote, gaining one seat, for a total of 18. However, its total votes decreased. This party’s existence remains a threat to Greek workers and all immigrants, not only in parliament but in the streets.

The Syriza-Anel coalition government, the center-right New Democracy and all other parties in parliament — with the exception of the KKE and the fascist Golden Dawn — have accepted the EU conditions. It is likely that the struggle to protect the working class will have to be conducted outside parliament. □

Continued from page 10

six plants were closed, many workers accepted buyout packages, shrinking the Chrysler workforce to 26,000. The sales rebound that followed led to a hiring spurt, bringing many African-American youth into the plants. The union, which brags about its civil rights tradition, should be upholding the basic principle of equal pay for equal work for these new members. The UAW must fight to make sure none of these new workers is laid off because of the latest restructuring. That is the message the “no” vote is sending to the leadership.

When UAW International President Dennis Williams said of the contract, “They will ratify it,” he underestimated the rank and file. If a majority of the 40,000 UAW-represented hourly and salaried workers at FCA reject the contract, it will not only be a first in UAW history — it will be a triumph for union solidarity. □



Jakobe Sanden y Ahmed Mohamed.

SOLIDARIDAD: Sindicato de Conductores de Autobuses Escolares en Boston

Por Martha Grevatt

Durante más de dos años, el Sindicato de Conductores de Autobuses Escolares de Boston, Steelworkers Local-8751, ha estado en una feroz batalla contra el gigante corporativo Veolia/Transdev, privatizador, represor sindical y contaminante del medio ambiente.

La ciudad de Boston contrató a Veolia en 2013 para gestionar el transporte escolar. Transdev es la empresa creada cuando la empresa francesa de 150 años escindió su división de tránsito.

Los conductores están hartos de Veolia/Transdev y la falta de voluntad de los patronos a negociar un contrato digno. Están furiosos que cuatro dirigentes sindicales electos fueran falsamente acusados de liderar una huelga no autorizada en octubre de 2013, un evento que nunca ocurrió. Transdev rehusó reincorporar a los cuatro sindicalistas despedidos ilegalmente.

Aunque despedidos, el presidente André François, vicepresidente Steve Kirschbaum, secretario de finanzas Steve Gillis y presidente de quejas Garry Murchison, están trabajando duro a través del Equipo de Solidaridad organizando las bases para resistir las atroces exigencias de concesiones de Transdev.

Cuando no están en interminables y agotadoras sesiones de reclamos, este sindicato de justicia social está en las calles, luchando hombro a hombro con las comunidades de Boston. De hecho, "sindicalismo de derechos civiles", una frase que se usa para describir los sindicatos antirracistas liderados por izquierdistas de la anterior CIO, es lo que define la historia de la L-8751.

Local 8751 lucha por justicia

En la lucha de desegregación racial de 1974 en Boston, cuando los grupos racistas y fascistas, bajo la farsa de "luchar contra la transportación forzada" instigaron ataques por turbas de linchamiento contra las/os niños que viajaban en los autobuses escolares, los conductores llevaban a las/os niños de manera segura a la escuela. El L-8751 ha participado en todas las luchas por la justicia en Boston: por viviendas asequibles, empleos con salarios justos, igualdad de acceso a servicios de la ciudad, en apoyo a derechos por discapacidad y estudiantes con necesidades especiales, en defensa de líderes comunitarias/os en lucha, y contra el racismo y el sexismo.

El sindicato local fue una parte clave de la Coalición para Salvar el Correo Grove Hall, apoyando a los cuatro sindicatos de trabajadoras/es postales en una lucha exitosa que salvó a la oficina de correos en el corazón de la comunidad afroamericana de Boston.

El L-8751 ha estado en solidaridad con la comunidad LGBT mucho antes de que fuera una posición popular. El presidente François recientemente habló en un evento del Día de Liberación Trans del movimiento Vidas Negras Importan y, junto a los miembros del comité ejecutivo del sindicato, prometió apoyo a los derechos trans.

Las/os conductores de autobuses escolares han extendido su solidaridad a trabajadores de todo el mundo, más recientemente, a sindicalistas colombianos que enfrentan terror paramilitar. Incluso en medio de su propia lucha, el L-8751 participó en mayo en la Conferencia "Alto a las guerras aquí y en el exterior" de la Coalición Nacional Contra la Guerra, que atrajo a más de 400 delegadas/os de EUA y Canadá.

Precisamente por el legado político del sindicato — y la multiplicidad de ataques de Veolia/Transdev contra trabajadoras/es y oprimidas/os del mundo — los esfuerzos de reconstruir a los dirigentes sindicales despedidos han sido relacionados con el movimiento Vidas Negras Importan; la campaña palestina de Boicot, Desinversión y Sanciones; el movimiento de los derechos de agua; la huelga y cierre patronal de trabajadores siderúrgicos; la lucha de Mumia

Abu-Jamal; los derechos de personas LGBTQ; y la lucha global contra la austeridad.

Por todo lo que hacen los cuatro sindicalistas, han ganado el apoyo de diversas fuerzas como los Círculos Bolivarianos, la comunidad palestina, Fanmi Lavalas, Orgullo Gay en el Trabajo, y de líderes de la comunidad negra como el concejal Charles Yancy, el ex concejal Chuck Turner, el líder Mel Rey, y el locutor de radio/TV Charles Clemons. Recientemente, una nueva e histórica relación ha surgido entre el liderazgo negro de Boston y el liderazgo sindical predominantemente blanco de la ciudad para apoyar al L-8751 que es 98 por ciento personas de color.

Todas estas fuerzas están dispuestas a apoyar una huelga de las/os conductores si es necesario. La solidaridad puede vencer a Transdev.

De las Vidas Negras Importan, a la lucha de clases

El ataque de Veolia/Transdev ha unido a la membresía multinacional haitiana, afroamericana, caboverdiana, latina, indígena y a las/os conductores antirracistas blancos. La mayoría de conductoras/es haitianos contarán su propia historia — cómo las/os esclavos haitianos de origen africano se liberaron a sí mismos al expulsar a los colonialistas franceses. Confían en que pueden vencer a esta empresa francesa anti sindical y racista.

El resultado de esta lucha tendrá repercusiones de largo alcance. Ahora más que nunca, hay una convergencia de la lucha de clases y la lucha contra el racismo. La opresión nacional es el instrumento principal utilizado para dividir nuestra clase — pero al mismo tiempo es el talón de Aquiles del capitalismo. Esto es lo que hace que los horrores del capitalismo queden más agudamente expuestos, desde Gaza a ciudades de EUA, con la epidemia genocida de asesinatos policiales.

El capitalismo está en una crisis incurable. La clase dominante se ve amenazada por este modelo revolucionario de sindicalismo de justicia social y derechos civiles: el Sindicato de Conductores de Autobuses Escolares de Boston.

Sin embargo, desde el punto de vista de la clase trabajadora, este ejemplo debe ser replicado. Hasta ahora, el movimiento sindical estadounidense carece de una posición clara de solidaridad con el movimiento Vidas Negras Importan. Por ejemplo, el presidente internacional del sindicato de Trabajadores Automotrices Unidos (UAW) Dennis Williams, todavía no ha pronunciado las palabras "Vidas Negras Importan". Este es el sindicato que se jacta de haber sido uno de los dos sindicatos que endosaron la manifestación de 1963 en Washington donde Martin Luther King pronunció su famoso discurso "Tengo un sueño".

En la década de 1940 hubo "huelgas de odio" por trabajadoras automotrices racistas blancos — a menudo incitados por la dirigencia — que querían mantener a los trabajadores negros segregados en los peores trabajos. El UAW se negó a defender a los racistas cuando enfrentaron disciplina. El sindicalismo de derechos civiles debe ser revivido.

Cuando los sindicatos asuman una autoridad moral y se levantan contra el racismo y la intolerancia como el L-8751 ha hecho durante cuatro décadas, es que se podrá construir una fuerte solidaridad de clase trabajadora.

Ya en 1848 Karl Marx dijo que el logro más importante de los sindicatos no era un aumento de sueldo o una reducción de la jornada, sino la "unión cada vez mayor y más amplia de los trabajadores". La construcción de la solidaridad entre comunidad y sindicato, que amplía la alianza entre trabajadoras/es y oprimidos será el logro perdurable de la lucha para volver a contratar a los dirigentes despedidos.

Martha Grevatt es trabajadora UAW de Chrysler por 28 años.

Minnie Bruce Pratt contribuyó a este artículo.

Jóvenes de color abusados bajo el capitalismo

EDITORIAL 15 de Septiembre

Ahmed Mohamed es un estudiante de noveno grado de ascendencia sudanesa que asistió a la escuela superior MacArthur en la ciudad de Irving-Texas. Cuando el 14 de septiembre él trajo a su salón de clases un reloj digital que había hecho, la policía lo interrogó, lo detuvo y se lo llevaron esposado, tomándole también las huellas digitales. La administración de la escuela lo suspendió por tres días.

¿Por qué este traumático evento ocurrió a un joven considerado por muchos como un brillante inventor? Según los informes iniciales, funcionarios escolares, incluyendo su profesor de inglés, dijeron que el reloj parecía una "bomba". Decirle a los maestros que no era una bomba, no impidió la detención del joven estudiante. Sin embargo, la verdad empezó a salir en cuestión de días — este muchacho de 14 años fue atacado debido a su nacionalidad y su fe musulmana.

Mohamed Elhassan Mohamed, el padre del joven, dijo que su hijo fue víctima de islamofobia. "Él sólo quiere inventar cosas buenas para la humanidad. Pero debido a que su nombre es Mohamed y por los eventos del 11 de septiembre, es que creo que mi hijo ha sido maltratado". (Washington Post, 16 de septiembre).

La policía de Irving, que continuamente le preguntó por su nombre durante el interrogatorio, declaró que Ahmed no sería acusado de delito alguno. Sin embargo, no han ofrecido una disculpa pública; lo que tampoco han hecho los funcionarios de la escuela.

En una declaración justificando la detención de Mohamed, Lesley Weaver, portavoz del Distrito Escolar Independiente de Irving, escribió: "Siempre pedimos a nuestros estudiantes y al personal informar inmediatamente si observan cualquier elemento y/o comportamiento sospechoso. Si algo está fuera de lo común, la información debe ser reportada inmediatamente a un administrador de la escuela y/o a la policía para que pueda ser abordado de inmediato. Siempre vamos a tomar las precauciones necesarias para proteger a nuestros estudiantes y mantener nuestra comunidad escolar lo más segura posible". (Washington Post).

Es vergonzoso que un estudiante que trae un invento a la escuela, se le considere una "amenaza".

Sin embargo, ha habido un gran apoyo y solidaridad en Twitter con el hashtag #IstandwithAhmed, incluso del presidente Barack Hussein Obama quien se ha enfrentado al racismo debido a su nombre.

Jóvenes indígenas en la mira

Ahmed Mohamed no es el único joven de color que ha sido demonizado recientemente por el racismo. Jakobe Sanden, un joven indígena de 7 años de edad, fue enviado a la oficina del director de su escuela en Santa Clara-Utah, durante la semana del 14 de septiembre por tener un Mohawk, corte de pelo tradicional usado por su pueblo, la nación Séneca. Rex Wilkey, el asistente al superintendente de educación primaria, escribió que el corte de pelo de Sanden era "posiblemente una violación de las regulaciones sobre acicalamiento estudiantil del distrito escolar". (Washington Post, 19 de septiembre).

Irónicamente, el nombre de la escuela de Sanden es "Arrowhead" (punta de flecha), otro ejemplo del uso estereotípico racista de nombres e imágenes de personas indígenas utilizadas principalmente por los equipos deportivos profesionales en Washington-DC y Cleveland.

Lo que pasó con Jakobe es un recordatorio de lo que les ha sucedido a tantas/os niños nativos a partir de finales del siglo 19, que fueron obligadas/os a asistir a escuelas racistas, de cultura occidental en un intento por robarles su cultura y patrimonio. Estas escuelas eran una extensión de la política genocida de EUA basada en el robo de tierras indígenas para expandir el capitalismo al oeste.

El Consejero de la nación Séneca William Canella, escribió una carta al superintendente del distrito escolar que dice en parte: "Es común que los chicos Séneca usen el corte Mohawk porque después de años de discriminación y opresión, están orgullosos de exhibir lo que son. Es decepcionante que su escuela no vea la diversidad de una manera positiva, y es nuestra esperanza que Jakobe no sufra ningún tipo de discriminación por la administración o la facultad de la escuela como resultado de su corte de pelo". (Washington Post, 19 de septiembre).

Ese abuso sufrido por Jakobe y Ahmed a sus cortas edades puede causar daño psicológico a largo plazo.

Jakobe debe ser defendido y apoyado por exhibir su derecho a expresar orgullo por sus raíces indígenas, al igual que Ahmed por su derecho a ser musulmán sin temor a represalias.

La guerra racista contra niñas/os, sin importar su nacionalidad, religión, condición o edad, puede tomar muchas formas. Tomemos el ejemplo de Tamir Rice, el joven afroamericano de 12 años que el pasado noviembre fue baleado fatalmente por agentes de policía blancos en Cleveland. ¿Su delito? Tener una pistola de juguete. Tamir se ha convertido en un emblema para el movimiento Vidas Negras Importan.

Lo que une a millones de jóvenes como Ahmed, Jakobe y Tamir es que este sistema capitalista no ofrece ningún futuro viable para ellos. Por esta razón por sí sola, no puede ser reformado. □