

IN VERMONT! Union vs. KKK 3

MISSOURI

Students strike blow to racism

By Kris Hamel

Nov. 9 — Students, organized under the leadership of the most oppressed, not only can make demands and fight for them, but can win. A victory against racism was won today when University of Missouri president Tim Wolfe resigned after weeks of students' demands that he step down.

Student protests since late September, a hunger strike, the Mizzou football team announcing a boycott of the rest of the season, and an impending faculty walkout all demanded Wolfe's ouster for woefully failing to combat a spate of racist acts on and near the Columbia, Mo., campus, some 125 miles northwest of St. Louis.

Wolfe made the announcement at a morning meeting of the Board of Curators, the university's governing body. "I take full responsibility for this frustration [by students] and I take full responsibility for the inaction that has occurred," he stated.

The undergraduate student government leadership, representing 27,000 students, publicly issued a letter this morning before the resignation announcement, demanding that Wolfe step down. Only 8 percent of the Mizzou student body is African American, yet the students strongly supported the struggle against racism and other forms of oppression.

The letter read in part: "In August 2014, the University of Missouri met the shooting of Michael Brown with silence. In the following months, our students were left stranded, forced to face an increase in tension and inequality with no systemic support. Over the last 16 months, the quality of life for our students has only worsened. ...

"[Wolfe's] leadership has undeniably failed us and the students that we represent. He has not only enabled a culture of racism since the start of his tenure in 2012, but blatantly ignored and disrespected the concerns of students. ... While we recognize that the burden of systemic oppression does not fall entirely on his shoulders, as the leader of this system it is his sole prerogative to listen and respond to students. He has failed in this completely. Students from different races, genders, sexualities, abilities, and other nationalities have not had their identities represented."

A first, important victory

Jonathan Butler, a 25-year-old African-American graduate student, had

been on a one-week hunger strike when news came that Wolfe had resigned. As he announced the end of his hunger strike, Butler tweeted, "This is only the first step! More change is to come!! #TheStruggle-Continues #ConcernedStudent1950." The latter hashtag, used by the group of student anti-racist activists, refers to the year Black students were first admitted to the University of Missouri.

Michael Sam, the first openly gay professional football player and a former linebacker on the Mizzou team, expressed his

Continued on page 7



Mizzou Tigers had threatened a boycott.

A salute to Black students!

The following is a greeting of congratulations from the presidential campaign of Workers World Party candidates Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lilly to the Black students at the University of Missouri and their supporters.

A little over 100 miles west of Ferguson, Mo., the Black athletes of University of Missouri's football team, with support from their white teammates, have sent shockwaves across the U.S. as they have shown the power of united action against racism. Inspired by the strength of a movement that developed rapidly on campus led by Black students, the athletes struck a powerful blow. This blow defeated a university administration that failed to act to

stop white supremacist violence against students of color, athletes of color, students and staff.

Missouri's students, following the lead of graduate student Jonathan Butler and other students of color, have shown that if Black Lives don't matter to universities, then there will be no classes or football. They have forced the resignation of the college president

Continued on page 7



MONICA MOOREHEAD FOR PRESIDENT

LAMONT LILLY FOR V.P.

WW PHOTOS: BRENDA RYAN



WORKERS WORLD PARTY CONFERENCE

4-6

- Socialist revolution back on table
- WWP election campaign
- Solidarity with Black Lives Matter
- Struggle, unity, solidarity
- What revolutions have achieved

SANDERS VS. FIDEL
What socialism looks like

7

WORKERS FIGHT BACK
Against austerity, racism

2-3

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Victory! B&H workers join union

WORKERS WORLD this week

The following article combines Nov. 4 news releases from the Laundry Workers Center and the United Steelworkers with reports from Workers World Party members at warehouse worker rallies.

Nov. 4 — Workers at the two Brooklyn, N.Y., warehouses of B&H, the largest non-chain photo/video equipment store in the U.S., voted overwhelmingly today for union representation with the United Steelworkers in a National Labor Relations Board election. The vote comes on the heels of a weeks-long anti-union campaign waged by B&H management, with workers alleging daily threats, harassment and intimidation in the workplace.

Lawyers for the union have filed multiple charges with the NLRB, alleging B&H engaged in unlawful anti-union activity during the course of the campaign.

Workers remained strong in the face of management tactics, confident in the widespread support for unionization in their workplace. “We knew we would win our vote today by a large margin, which of course the company did not expect,” said Jorge Lora, B&H warehouse worker of five years. “Today we won because the workers voted with their conscience.”

Workers publicly announced their intent to organize with the United Steelworkers on Oct. 11, after receiving training and support from the grass-roots, worker-led community organization, Laundry Workers Center. Since the campaign launch, a groundswell of support has grown among community, faith and labor groups, as well as thousands of photo/video professionals and B&H customers.

On the eve of the union vote, the Photo/Video Alliance for Fair Labor released an open letter to B&H management with over 1,000 signers in journalism, fine art and commercial photography, film, television and academia, calling on B&H “to end the hazardous working conditions and discrimination workers report at B&H’s Brooklyn warehouses.”

Supporters used the campaign slogan #BHEXPOSED to

increase awareness of the workers’ campaign, garnering extensive coverage in the New York Times, Al Jazeera America, The Nation, WNYC and numerous photo/video websites and blogs of the horrific working conditions in B&H’s warehouses.

News of the landslide victory was welcomed by dozens of supporters who waited outside both Brooklyn warehouses to congratulate workers coming off their shift. “We want to share this moment with other workers so they also know that they no longer have to feel exploited,” said Alberto Sánchez, B&H employee for seven years. “We were taught our rights, and now we have to pass that on to other workers so they can fight back against the exploitation and discrimination they face.”

Rosanna Aran, co-director of the Laundry Workers Center, said, “After a year of hard work organizing, today the workers are victorious. This is a huge step for the workers’ movement, and for the Laundry Workers Center, as it continues to develop worker power and leadership in New York City and beyond.”

In a United Steelworkers release the same day, USW District 4 Director John Shinn said, “We welcome the workers at B&H to the USW and look forward to addressing their concerns with the company at the bargaining table.”

The USW represents 850,000 workers in North America employed in many industries, including metals, rubber, chemicals, paper, oil refining, and service and public sectors. □



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

MUNDO OBRERO WORKERS WORLD

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. □

Contact a Workers World Party branch near you:

workers.org/wwp

National Office
147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl.
New York, NY 10011
212.627.2994
wwp@workers.org

Bay Area
1305 Franklin St. #411
Oakland, CA 94612
510.600.5800
bayarea@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
216.738.0320
cleveland@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 3454
Houston, TX 77253-3454
713.503.2633
houston@workers.org

Pittsburgh
pittsburgh@workers.org
Rochester, N.Y.
585.436.6458
rochester@workers.org

Atlanta
PO Box 18123
Atlanta, GA 30316
404.627.0185
atlanta@workers.org

Boston
284 Amory St.
Boston, MA 02130
617.286.6574
boston@workers.org

Denver
denver@workers.org
Detroit
5920 Second Ave.
Detroit, MI 48202
313.459.0777
detroit@workers.org

Lexington, KY
lexington@workers.org
Los Angeles
5278 W Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
323.306.6240

Rockford, IL
rockford@workers.org
San Diego
P.O. Box 33447
San Diego, CA 92163
sandiego@workers.org

Baltimore
c/o Solidarity Center
2011 N. Charles St.
Baltimore, MD 21218
443.221.3775
baltimore@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
712 Main St #113B
Buffalo, NY 14202
716.883.2534
buffalo@workers.org
Chicago
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
Chicago, IL 60606
312.229.0161
chicago@workers.org

Durham, N.C.
804 Old Fayetteville St.
Durham, NC 27701
919.322.9970
durham@workers.org
Huntington, W. Va.
huntingtonww@workers.org

Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org
Philadelphia
P.O. Box 34249
Philadelphia, PA 19101
610.931.2615
phila@workers.org

Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org
Virginia
virginia@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300
Washington, D.C. 20037
dc@workers.org

★ In the U.S.

- Students strike a blow to racism 1
- B&H workers join union 2
- New York university workers arrested at sit-in 3
- Union confronts KKK in Vermont 3
- Bernie Sanders and Cuban socialism 7

★ WW National Conference 2015

- Socialist revolution back on the table 4
- WWP election campaign: ‘Change is made in the streets’ .. 4
- Struggle, unity, solidarity 4
- Black Lives Matter upsurge needs broad solidarity 5
- ‘Capitalism can’t be reformed’ 5
- Socialist revolution: Not a new idea 6

★ Around the world

- London youth protest austerity 3

★ Statement

- A salute to Black students 1

★ Noticias en Español

- Crisis de Puerto Rico – creada en EUA 8
- Dejen vivir a Siria / No tropas de EUA 8

Due to the WWP national conference, this week’s issue is eight pages.

Workers World
147 W. 24th St., 2nd Fl.
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: 212.627.2994
E-mail: ww@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 57, No. 46 • Nov. 19, 2015
Closing date: Nov. 8, 2015

Editor: Deirdre Griswold
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead; Web Editor Gary Wilson

Production & Design Editors: Coordinator Lal Roohk; Andy Katz, Cheryl LaBash

Copyediting and Proofreading: Sue Davis, Keith Fine, Bob McCubbin

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, G. Dunkel, K. Durkin, Fred Goldstein, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Terri Kay, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Mundo Obrero: Redactora Berta Joubert-Ceci; Ramiro Fúnez, Teresa Gutierrez, Donna Lazarus, Carlos Vargas

Supporter Program: Coordinator Sue Davis
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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.

New York university workers arrested at sit-in

By G. Dunkel
New York

The 25,000 teachers and support staff represented by the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York, American Federation of Teachers Local 2334, have had enough. They want a raise.

Their last raise was in 2009 and their contract, whose provisions remain in force until a new contract is signed, expired in 2010. For five years New York has refused to make an economic offer to the union.

Some 500,000 students attend CUNY schools. They are predominantly people of color and immigrants — the daughters, sons and members of New York City's working class.

On Nov. 4, the PSC held a sit-in in front of CUNY's midtown administrative offices. Fifty-three members were arrested.

As the sit-in was taking place the CUNY administration was making a contract offer that PSC President Barbara Bowen characterized as unfair. It is backloaded with four years of zero increases from 2009 to 2014, a 1 percent increase for 2014 and 2015 and a 3 percent increase for 2016, with a 1 percent kicker on the last day of the contract.

In a letter to members, Bowen wrote, "If the union were to accept Chancellor Milliken's offer, CUNY faculty and staff would almost certainly have the lowest salary increases over this period of any public employees in the city or state. We would also receive minimal retroactive pay because the salary increases in management's proposal date back only to 2014."

The union is planning a mass membership meeting on Nov. 19, followed by a strike authorization vote, even though by law the PSC is not allowed to strike.

Dunkel is a PSC retiree.



CUNY faculty and staff sit-in, Nov. 4.

WWW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Vermont

Union confronts KKK

By Dante Strobino

More than 200 people marched down Church Street to City Hall in Burlington, Vt., on Nov. 5 to oppose the Ku Klux Klan, which had recently left racist threats on the doors of two Black workers. The march was organized by Local 203 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) and joined a speak-out action organized by Rights & Democracy. Members of UE Locals 255 and 267 also participated, along with other community organizations.

"KKK get out of town, we have come to shut you down," the group chanted. "KKK get off our streets, the union will tear off your sheets."

On Oct. 29, letter-sized fliers were placed on the doors of two different Black workers, one an activist with Black Lives Matter, with the intent to intimidate them. The posters read, "Join The Klan and Save Our Land!!!!" and depict a hooded, cross-wielding Klansman riding a horse in front of a U.S. colonial flag and a Confederate flag.

Speaking in front of the crowd, UE Local 203 member Senowa Mize-Fox stated, "Racism is alive and well everywhere, including Burlington, and we have to address that."

UE members also circulated a statement that began, "The sisters and brothers of our Union ... have zero tolerance

for the Klan. The recent appearance of KKK fliers on the doors or people of color in Burlington is an intolerable threat. We as a community cannot react softly. These fliers are not free speech. They are not a prank, nor a joke. They were designed to spread fear and insecurity, to threaten, and to announce the presence of a larger organization historically drenched in blood." (To read the full statement, go to Labor Against Racist Terror on Facebook.)

Anti-racist activists across the country have been protesting against all forms of institutionalized racism in the aftermath of the June 17 massacre of nine Black church parishioners at the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, S.C., by white racist Dylann Roof. Many in the movement demanded the removal of Confederate flags from government buildings and protested the names of schools and other public buildings for Confederate army generals throughout the U.S.

South Burlington High School was allowed to keep its nickname, "The Rebels," which references the Confederates, in a recent school board ruling.

Over Labor Day weekend, leaders of

the International Longshoremen's Association Local 1422 in Charleston and other unions, including the Southern Workers Assembly and Black community groups, organized a mass march to oppose the murders at the AME church and also the police murder of Walter Scott in North Charleston, S.C.

In response to this movement, racists, white supremacists, fascists and right-wingers of all stripes have been on the defensive, and have been publicly displaying Confederate flags as acts of defiance. However, they have often been confronted with great mass resistance.

Workers Defense Guard formed

In situations such as in Burlington, police departments often wipe their hands clean and do a very cursory investigation. Despite the fact that there is a surveillance video showing someone posting the KKK messages, the police have still not arrested the racist culprit.

Historically, the police have colluded with violent racist organizations and

protected them. Right-wing and white-supremacist organizations often place their members inside police departments, while police departments often recruit members of these organizations and work with them publicly.

A study of the Greensboro Mas-

sacre of Nov. 3, 1979, reveals this type of collusion among the KKK, the police and even the federal government. Five people were killed in this incident, including labor and community organizers.

Bernard Butkovich, an undercover agent for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, later testified that he was aware that Klansmen and members of the American Nazi Party unit that he had infiltrated would confront and kill demonstrators. Although the massacre was fully filmed by a television news agency, not a single person ever served any jail time.

Members of UE Local 203 and the UE Young Activist program in Burlington have formed a Workers Defense Guard to continue to stand against racial injustice and physically defend those under attack by the KKK and other white-supremacist hate groups.

"Workers understand that we cannot rely on the police to protect us against racists and vigilantes like the KKK," stated Elizabeth Nikazmerad, president of Local 203. She continued, "That is why we are organizing a Workers Defense Guard to defend ourselves and anyone in the Black community who needs defense." □

Youth protest austerity

By Gene Clancy

In what many are calling a resurgent movement of student protest, many thousands of youth and their supporters surged through the streets of London on Nov. 4 to protest the British government's treatment of young people and the working class of Britain.

Although billed as a march for "free education," the organizers of the protest, the National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts, accused the government of "waging a war on the young and the working classes across society." Hannah Sketchley, speaking for the group, condemned, "The destruction of the youth housing benefit, the [National Health Service], social housing and working tax credits, and the spreading of anti-migrant narratives and the Prevent 'Counter-Terrorism' Agenda, with its wide-reaching surveillance especially on Muslim students." (huffingtonpost.co.uk, Nov. 4)

There were reports of scattered police violence along the march route. The police used such deliberate tactics as "kettling" — blocking students' progress through the streets by corralling them and refusing to let them move in any direction. When the students protested, the police clubbed them, arresting 12.

The march was heavily violence-baited by much of the British mainstream media before it even started. The London police took the unusual step of tweeting the route of march and warning people to stay away in order to avoid "danger."

The Conservative government and their supporters were especially hostile toward the march because it had received significant political support from the newly elected leader of the opposition Labor Party, Jeremy Corbyn. Corbyn, who is considered much more to the left than previous Labor Party leaders, not only openly endorsed the march, but sent his shadow chancellor, John McDonnell, to speak to the students.

McDonnell, a longtime supporter of student demands, electrified the crowd with a rousing speech: "Education is a gift from one generation to another, not a commodity to be bought and sold. ... This government is betraying you and future



Student march, Nov. 4.

generations and I'm here in solidarity for education. ... Let me say this: your voice needs to be heard." (dailymail.co.uk, Nov. 4)

During his campaign for leader of the Labor Party, Corbyn enraged his opponents by saying he wanted to "apologise on behalf of the Labor Party to the last generation of students for the imposition of fees and the replacement of grants with loans by previous Labor governments." (theguardian.com, Oct. 2)

A struggle against austerity

Until 1998, there were no tuition charges for college students in Britain. The entire cost of higher education was borne by the British government in the form of subsidies to colleges and universities.

In 1998, a Labor government adopted a previous Conservative government's recommendation to allow universities to charge up to 1,000 pounds in tuition. Almost all immediately did so.

In 2004, following the collapse of the worldwide dot.com bubble and the subsequent slashing of government support for education, the fees were raised to 3,000 pounds.

In 2010, following the great recession, the British government tripled the cap on tuition to 9,000 pounds (about \$13,000) and made the terms for student loans — in reality a post-graduation tax — much more onerous. A discriminatory provision against foreign students, unless they come from the European Union, requires them to pay whatever the university wants to charge, without the opportunity to obtain a student loan.

Last July, the Conservative government decided to convert living expense grants for poorer students into loans.

The British youths' fight against austerity is part of a worldwide movement. It deserves the support of progressives everywhere. □

WORKERS WORLD PARTY

WWP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

'Change is made in the streets'

Excerpted remarks by Teresa Gutierrez, WWP secretariat member, to the 2015 Workers World Party National Conference. For the full text, see workers.org.

Workers World Party is announcing today that we are entering the 2016 presidential elections.

Our party does not aspire to be in the White House. It was founded on slavery, on the genocide of Native people, on the robbery of Mexico and on imperialist plunder abroad. It reeks with the blood, sweat and tears of countless workers who have been exploited and crushed by this system, not just from the U.S. but from around the world.

We are told that this is the most democratic country in the world. But a tiny elite rule this country. You cannot become president without millions of dollars. The real issues are never voted on — like a raise in the minimum wage.

But for a year, the airwaves will be filled with news about the elections.

This is the moment to seize the time and forge a path for not only struggle but CHANGE. This is the moment to talk about the end of capitalism and the birth of revolutionary socialism.

In 2008, the masses were riding high. Youth, people of color and progressives — all thought that a Black president might mean real change. There was hope.

But no election can change capitalism. Workers are suffering more and more. Student debt is atrocious. Anti-trans violence is criminal. Mass incarcerations and deportations are criminal. Anti-Muslim racism is sickening. Attacks on women go on and on. Queer people still don't have full rights. Racism and police terror are carried out with impunity. Black and Brown people are shot down in the streets like dogs.

Housing, the climate crisis, health care and on and on are all creating a perfect storm: a perfect storm for upheaval and struggle.

This is why we are running a revolutionary election campaign to remind the people that it does not matter who is in the White House — what matters is who is in the streets.

Our candidates won't just be talking

about our revolutionary platform. They will be at demonstrations, rallies, meetings — as they have been doing most of their lives. They will travel across the country and raise the need for struggle independent of the capitalist parties.

They'll show that racism is not just an issue for Black and Brown people. This is an issue for white workers as well, because racism is meant to divide and conquer the working class.

Our candidates will explain we don't want just a softer, kinder capitalism or a bigger share of the wealth the workers create. Build the struggle, fight back, don't accept the Republican Tea Party bigots and neofascists. But don't accept the Democrats either, because they want to maintain the status quo.

When our party leadership discussed the campaign, some of our comrades, especially Black comrades, raised, what about Latino representation on the slate? And what about putting two women on the slate?

As a Latina, as a comrade and activist who has been fighting for Chicano liberation and defense of immigrants for a very long time, I say: The road to Latino liberation is through the Black struggle. Latinos need representation and liberation, all right, but they need unity in order to win that liberation.

The road to unity for our class as a whole is through the Black struggle. Elections will matter when Black lives matter — and of course when Brown lives matter, when the lives of poor and working people matter.

But workers' lives won't matter until we have a socialist revolution right here in the belly of the beast. And one of the surest ways to bring socialism — revolutionary socialism, the workers running all of society — is through unconditional and firm solidarity with the Black struggle.

So in the wake of Ferguson and Baltimore, for Trayvon, Eric, Tamir, Sandra Bland, Manuel Angel Diaz, Islan Nettles, and all victims of police terror, I am so proud to present our WWP candidates for the 2016 election: Monica Moorehead for president and Lamont Lilly for vice president. □



Socialist revolution back WWP conference unites Black, Brown, wh

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

What a difference a day makes.

Hundreds of militant fighters against capitalism and all its horrible consequences for the world got together here at the 56th National Conference of Workers World Party on Nov. 7-8, and the result was a small earthquake.

The venue itself said so much. The conference filled the main hall at the Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz Memorial and Educational Center on the edge of Harlem — with its stirring murals of these courageous leaders of the African-American struggle for self-determination. It was in this very building that Malcolm X was brutally gunned down in 1965, after achieving worldwide fame. It has been rebuilt into a beautiful and hopeful place.

The preponderance of people of color, women and LGBTQ people, both in the audience and speaking at the WWP conference — plus what they had to say — was yet another vindication of Malcolm's belief in the rising of oppressed peoples, by any means necessary.

So was the presence of a large delegation of Boston school bus drivers, mostly Black and immigrant, whose union fights on a wide variety of progressive causes.

The conference theme was audacious: "Putting Socialist Revolution on the Table." The word "socialism" is getting around these days, finally. But the WWP message was not of the fuzzy kind. What came through in every speech and every piece of literature was that the national liberation struggles of Black and Brown people in the United States, especially since the rise of the militant Black Lives

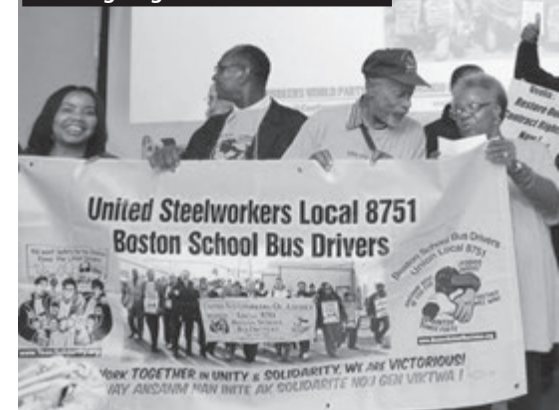
Matter movement and that of low-wage workers, must be and are an integral part of the class struggle to completely transform society by getting rid of capitalism and building socialism.

Young people, like the large number attending the conference, have caught onto this very fast. They said through speeches, poetry and song that they don't want to live in a world where people are humiliated and impoverished because of their nationality, immigration status, sexuality or gender expression.

Socialism isn't just reforming capitalism into something "kinder and gentler," said many speakers. That's impossible. The toll this system takes every day on millions and millions of people here and around the world can only be ended when the rule of the bankers and corporate billionaires is broken up through the determined and revolutionary actions of the workers and oppressed. Wow! No mincing of words here.

Especially moving were Dionne Smith Downs, a mother from Stockton, Calif., who told about how the criminal police had killed her beautiful 16-year-old Black son, and Erica Mines-Simmons, a com-

Boston School Bus Drivers Union USW Local 8751 u
the conference in song with many creative verses o
'We're going to roll the union on.'



Struggle, unity, solidarity

The following remarks were made by Ngọc Loan Trần at the Workers World Party National Conference Nov. 7-8 in New York City.

My name is Loan, and I'm with the Workers World Durham Branch. I wanted to take a few minutes to share how excited I am to be here and what it means for me to be here.

I met Workers World Party in 2012 in Charlotte, N.C., and at the time was organizing with undocumented high school students for access to higher education and an end to deportations. In 2012, the Democratic National Convention was on its way to Charlotte, the Wall Street of the South, the second largest banking city in the U.S. only after New York City.

This was the city I grew up in after my

family and I migrated from Viet Nam. I had always had a weird feeling about the place and over the past two decades, the development, gentrification and corporatization only confirmed my perception of the city as so heavily laden with power and greed.

So of course it was fitting for the Democratic Party to hold their convention there. The city of Charlotte received over \$50 million for the convention — \$25 million of which went toward purchasing new toys for cops. The working people and homeless were pushed out of Center City, forced to use irregularly scheduled public transportation and worked overtime to make sure that Charlotte could uphold its image as a world-class city.

Organizing a demonstration against the Democratic National Convention gave

me a new perspective into the corporate two-party system embedded in the fabric of the United States. Democrat or Republican, there was no people's agenda for these politicians, whose campaigns were being funded by CEOs and multi-million-dollar industries. And while many of us are led to believe there is a moral argument to be made with the Democratic Party — that they are sensible, well-intentioned, and serve the interests of the people — it is all simply a myth. We see Democrats and Republicans behaving rather similarly and unsurprisingly so. The corporate two-party electoral system is populated with the same warmongers, politicians for profits and capitalism's stewards on both sides.

We have an upcoming presidential election and have witnessed the horren-



Ngọc Loan Trần

dous circus and spectacle that it is. Every debate is essentially the same: disappointing, painfully comical and full of propa-

2015 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

Black Lives Matter upsurge needs broad solidarity

Excerpts from the talk to the WWP national conference by Monica Moorehead, WWP Secretariat member and 2016 WWP presidential candidate.

The recent disruption of Hillary Rodham Clinton in Atlanta by a handful of Black activists chanting “Black Lives Matter” shows that activists are not enamored of the year-long sham known as the presidential election. This ongoing rebellion with no-business-as-usual tactics continues to put the police, the government on all levels and the status quo on the defensive, even without a unified program of demands.

The Black Lives Matter movement is another phase in the struggle for Black liberation involving a diverse array of political and ideological currents that is a work in process. It is important for our party and the entire progressive movement to support and defend the Black Lives Matter struggle, not because we agree with all the spectrum of political positions, but because it is the most oppressed engaged in struggle and is constantly under vicious, racist attack by the repressive state, which represents the interests of the billionaire ruling class.

Black Lives Matter embodies the national question — a cornerstone of the struggle against capitalist exploitation along with other oppressed nations, whether they exist inside or outside the U.S. and regardless of social status.

The Black Lives Matter movement has helped to raise consciousness that within this movement there exists the women’s question, the LGBTQ question and the disabled question. In the forefront of the BLM movement are Black women and LGBTQ people, especially transwomen who are impacted by this racist war.

And an astoundingly large percentage of Black people killed by the police have some kind of disability — the most recent being Jeremy McDole in Delaware, who was shot 10 times while in his wheelchair.

Black workers are an integral part of the revolutionary potential of the global working class due to the deepening global

ganda about how the current system can be reformed by simply getting more people to participate in the political process.

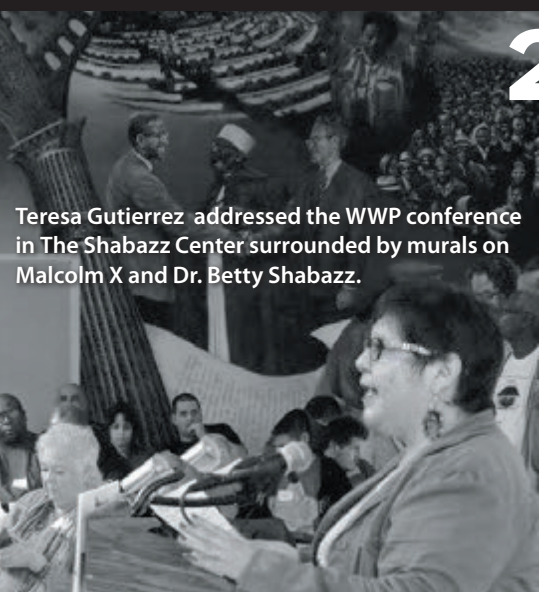
But Workers World and revolutionaries bring attention to the question: Why are the masses not involved in the political process already?

Well, because this political process is not meant for the masses. Because young Black and Brown people are being policed, brutalized, locked up and killed daily. Because many of the Black and Brown people murdered are disabled and mentally ill, blocked from access to adequate health care and mental health resources. Because trans women of color are facing death and violence that is still being ignored. Because workers have to have three minimum wage jobs just to pay rent. Because immigrants are being

detained and deported after U.S. policy pushed them here to begin with. Because women are still facing attacks on health and reproductive freedom and the basic right to control their bodies. Because LGBTQ people are being pushed out into the streets and into the jails. Because communities across the country and globe are being bulldozed into landfills, polluted with waste, and people are dying because of environmental racism. Because working and oppressed people everywhere have boots on their necks, and the two-party system has done absolutely nothing to change that.

The working class is bombarded with and exhausted by speeches and campaign ads that promise a better U.S. if only they’d vote. But once things go awry, when there

Continued on page 6



Teresa Gutierrez addressed the WWP conference in The Shabazz Center surrounded by murals on Malcolm X and Dr. Betty Shabazz.

on the table ite to fight capitalism

community activist from Philadelphia who rocked the hall as she led hard-hitting call-and-response chants born out of the Black Lives Matter movement.

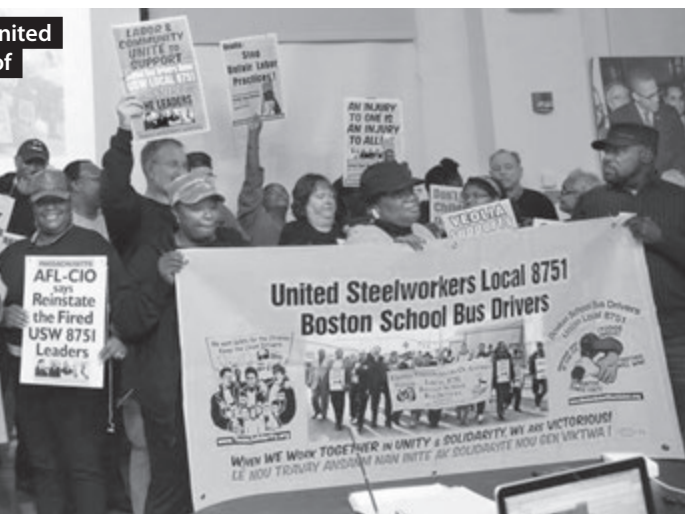
WWP’s revolutionary 2016 election campaign

After so many heartfelt speeches that laid out the deep suffering in working-class communities, all that pain and anger fused into a collective shout of jubilation when it was announced that WWP would run a revolutionary election campaign in 2016 and that its candidates would be Monica Moorehead and Lamont Lilly: a Black woman for president, a Black man for vice president.

It was Teresa Gutierrez, a dynamic Latina leader and now the WWP election campaign manager, who explained why it was most fitting to run two African-American candidates at this time, and how they would do an excellent job of bringing support for the migrants’ struggle and other issues to a broad audience.

The feeling in the hall was unmistakable: A mutual confidence and understanding had been forged between this

Continued on page 6



Presidential Candidate Monica Moorehead with Dionne Smith Downs outside the Shabazz Center. Smith is the mother of James Earl Rivera Jr., killed by the Stockton, Calif., police in 2010.

‘Capitalism can’t be reformed’

‘We must support and fight harder than anyone else for the demands of the workers and oppressed, for better wages, for jobs, for a union. Yet we must never forget, not even for a second, that capitalism cannot be reformed; it must be destroyed. It is our sworn duty as revolutionaries to do all that we can to assist our class in the process of realizing this fundamental truth.’



—Larry Holmes, First Secretary, Workers World Party, at WWP National Conference

economic crisis of low wages, austerity and cutbacks. This permanent stage of capitalism has created a crisis for Black workers that includes marginalization and isolation, making them even more vulnerable and a target for police repression and mass incarceration. When there are no jobs, drastic cuts in education and the militarization of the schools, then the ruling class is sending a clear message to the police that it is open season on Black and other oppressed youth.

Young Black people are part of the working class, whether they have a job or not. When I visited Ferguson in August and October of 2014, young Black people told me two things: They want the police to stop killing and racially profiling them, and they want decent paying jobs; they want to be in unions, not in jails.

Young Black workers need broad solidarity from the movement, especially those on the front lines fighting state repression. It is the same kind of solidarity that immigrant youth need as they are being viciously attacked by ultra-right-wing racists like Donald Trump along with [Immigration and Customs Enforcement], the police and other racist agencies.

Which direction the Black Lives Matter movement will take will be explored in due time, but now is not the time to criticize this movement. This movement

right here, right now needs solidarity, and we all should be thinking about how to be helpful to this dynamic movement, which will come under even more vicious attack, especially by the police, in words and deeds. We should all be thinking about being part of the solution and not the problem.

It is so crucial for [members of] the Black Lives Matter movement to see that socialists and communists stand shoulder to shoulder with them — meaning defending their right to self-determination as an oppressed nation. As our late chairperson Sam Marcy wrote about time and time again, the national question is synonymous with the class struggle, especially inside the U.S.

The national question impacts every aspect of the class struggle because super-exploitation, which lays the basis for all forms of inequality, could not exist without it. This is what keeps the ruling class in power and the working class at its mercy.

Taking this kind of principled stand not only will build unity that our class desperately needs for the battles ahead, but will win new revolutionaries over to the only alternative to police terror: socialist revolution. □

Socialist revolution: Not a new idea

Excerpts from talk by Workers World editor Deirdre Griswold to Workers World Party National Conference.

Workers World Party believes firmly in the inevitability of socialist revolution in this country. For two main reasons.

One is the level of development here. Workers are able to produce in tremendous abundance everything the people need to enjoy a secure, comfortable life.

But real wages continue to decline. The gulf between rich and poor grows wider. Production is stagnant. And oppressed people are increasingly the targets of violence.

What a lesson in the horrible contradictions of capitalism! To liberate the wealth of society, we have to build a strong revolutionary movement.

Can it be done?

Well, at one time in this country millions of people were considered nothing but property, like a chair or a wagon. The slaveowners said, “You can’t take my property away! I paid good money for them. I have the ownership papers right here!”

But the enslaved people and the Abolitionists said, “Owning human beings is wrong. Tearing children away from their parents and selling them is wrong. We’ll fight you and your system.” We all know that the Civil War didn’t end racism in the U.S., but it ended the system of chattel slavery.

We’re saying, “Owning the labor of human beings is wrong. Trading in the wealth created by workers is wrong. It’s nothing but wage slavery. The stock markets, the private corporations and banks rule over this society. We’ll fight you and build a socialist society where the wealth created by the people BELONGS to the people.”

This is not a new idea. There have been many socialist revolutions in the last century. We salute them ALL. Their achievements have proven that socialism is an infinitely superior system — even when

those revolutions have happened in very underdeveloped countries that have been attacked on all sides.

Achievements of socialist revolutions

Today is the anniversary of the Russian Revolution — Nov. 7, 1917. It opened a new period in human history. For the first time, the working class seized power and began trying to reorganize the economy on a socialist basis.

The revolution conquered through a heroic struggle by the exploited and oppressed classes. But it also suffered the consequences of being first. Other revolutions attempted in Europe failed. That left the Russian revolutionaries alone and at a terrible disadvantage, because Russia was so underdeveloped. It immediately became the target of a class war waged by the most advanced capitalist countries of that time.

If you’ve never read anything by Lenin, you should try. All his writings and speeches are on the Web. He never tried to cover up the shortcomings of the revolution. He told it like it is.

Lenin called for cutting down the state bureaucracy to just what was necessary, so positions in the party and the state would not become filled with privilege seekers. It was hard. The poor people had a burning desire to overturn all the injustices of the past, but most were illiterate. They had to learn how to administer the country, how to modernize its industry and agriculture. The better educated already had the skills, but not the same revolutionary energy.

Given its immense problems, it is amazing that the Soviet Union achieved as much as it did. The planned economy achieved enormous industrial and scientific development. This formerly agrarian country of illiteracy and hunger became the first to put up a space satellite. And it also gave much aid to liberation movements around the world.

That was the socialist side of the

USSR, the side that forged ahead when the capitalist world was in the Great Depression; the side that enabled the people to beat back a head-on attack by millions of troops from imperialist Nazi Germany.

Each revolution after that gained from not being alone. In this hemisphere, the 1959 Cuban Revolution inspired tremendous hope after the horrible years of right-wing dictatorships. In 1961 Fidel Castro declared that Cuba had made “a socialist revolution under the very noses of the Yankee imperialists,” and Cubans rejoiced. Fidel made this speech during the Bay of Pigs invasion, when Cuba was being attacked by CIA-backed mercenaries!

But Cuba was not alone. The Soviet Union came to Cuba’s defense, even risking a nuclear confrontation with the U.S. in 1962. Cuba survived, and today the U.S. government has finally had to admit that the revolution is here to stay.

Workers World did a lot to support the Cuban Revolution. In January 1992 Washington increased its blockade and threats. Our comrades stepped up and said, “We’ll organize a Peace for Cuba rally at the Jacob Javits Convention Center.” The hall held thousands of people. Ramsey Clark as well as Harry Belafonte, Alice Walker, Ossie Davis and other well-known artists were on the program. We organized security against right-wing Cubans who tried to disrupt. It was one of those moments when having a strong, determined party of revolutionary workers made all the difference.

Great revolutions in Asia put socialism on the agenda for one-fifth of the world’s people.

The socialist revolutions in both Korea and Vietnam were attacked by U.S. imperialism with such ferocity that the scars linger even today. We can’t count the hundreds of times that our party and its youth group confronted the U.S. capitalist establishment demanding no war and aggression against Vietnam and north



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Deirdre Griswold

Korea. Comrades went to jail for resisting the draft, holding militant demonstrations and supporting anti-war GIs.

The imperialists failed. But they feared and hated socialism so much they would rather kill half the Koreans and Vietnamese than let them build a society free of bankers and bosses.

The Chinese Revolution was an earth-shaking development. But China, like the Soviet Union, had to overcome extreme poverty and underdevelopment.

We all know that China’s progress since the revolution has been very complex, especially since the Communist Party decided to allow private capital there. Nevertheless, some things stand out crystal clear. China has lifted 500 million people out of poverty in the last three decades. Wages have tripled in just the last 10 years. Planning on this scale is impossible under capitalism, where competition and the profit motive dictate wages. It is because socialism still has strong roots in China that U.S. imperialism grows more hostile every day.

We cannot be complacent about the dangers to any of the countries trying to build socialism as long as imperialism exists. But our role is not to abandon them if the policies of the leaders change. Most of all, we must build the revolutionary struggle here, which will help the whole planet get rid of the scourge of capitalism. □

To read more

All the excerpted talks in this special section were delivered at the 2015 Workers World Party National Conference in New York on Nov. 7-8. The full speeches will soon be made available at workers.org.

Struggle, unity, solidarity

Continued from page 5

is yet another war, yet another economic crisis, yet another bailout for the banks and not the workers, the working class is told to turn the other way.

How do we make sense of this all? That is why I’m here today and that is why I know many of y’all are here today. We can only change these conditions by struggling for socialism. Struggling for a world where we plan for human needs, where workers are regarded as humans and not property, where oppressed people are not pitted against each other, and where we can live in our whole selves without fear of state repression. That is how we change these conditions.

Capitalism is not fit for humanity, no matter how hard the billionaires and the politicians work to convince us that it is. Because capitalism at this stage in time — as we’ve seen from Staten Island to Ferguson, to Charleston and everywhere in between — will do whatever it takes to protect profit and property. Capitalism is hanging on by such a thin thread that we see people being murdered every single day because their mere existence has the

possibility to ignite an entire uprooting of this wretched system.

I decided to start my candidacy with Workers World earlier this year because these are revolutionaries who when — in my comrade Imani’s words — “there is nowhere to run,” we “stay and fight.” These are revolutionaries who run toward the battles, confront power and put it back in the hands of working-class people. These are revolutionaries who fight with dignity, conviction and love.

To fight side by side with comrades who understand the necessity of a working-class struggle that means LGBTQ liberation, the liberation of oppressed nationalities, the liberation of women, and the liberation of young people is an honor and a privilege. And since 1959, Workers World has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to workers and oppressed people all around the world. Because it is not enough to know what to say, we must know how to act on what we say.

I started my candidacy with Workers World because it is through principled struggle, unity and solidarity that we win. It is through an understanding of self-determination — that oppressed

people decide their destinies — it is through an understanding of the relationship between racism and capitalism that we fight for a new world for workers and oppressed people.

The world is bursting at its seams, and the ruling class is running out of ideas to keep the masses from rising up. Revolutionaries say: Let the world burst and let us make something new — something that prioritizes human needs and not corporate greed, something that prioritizes basic necessities like food, health care, employment and housing, and not prisons and killer cops. We know it is possible to live in a world that is not in perpetual crisis, a world where there is enough for everyone, a world that doesn’t get by on oppression. And we must fight like hell for that world.

Welcome comrades and friends of the party. Let’s make this year’s national conference the best one yet.

Free Palestine and end the occupation! Black lives matter — disarm the cops! Stop killing queer and trans women! Free Mumia and all political prisoners! Stop exploiting youth and workers! We need a socialist revolution! □

Socialist revolution

Continued from page 5

multinational party — in which Black, Brown and white working-class revolutionaries of all ages, genders and sexualities work and learn together — and outstanding activists in the movements for long-overdue social change.

The conference received many messages of solidarity from progressives, socialists and communists around the world and in the U.S. (To read them, go to workers.org.)

While rightly focused on the developing movements against national oppression here at home, and with many trade union militants also discussing strategies for fighting the bosses, the agenda also elevated the anti-imperialist, anti-war struggle and supported countries facing threats and sanctions, imposed because they either try to build socialism or just try to keep imperialism from destroying their political and economic sovereignty. □

Bernie Sanders and Cuban socialism

By Danny Haiphong

If Bernie Sanders loses the Democratic Party nomination, does socialism also lose? A recent reading of Fidel Castro's speeches from the late 1980s defending socialism cast a spotlight on the differences between building a real socialist society, in Cuba, and "socialism" as it is discussed in the context of Sanders' election campaign.

Cuba's revolutionary leader, in a 1988 book entitled "In Defense of Socialism," provides key insights into what the defense of socialism looked like for Cuba in the last years of the Soviet period. Fidel explained to the Cuban people that "imperialism is trying to present socialism as failure in practice ... and it is extolling to the utmost the alleged advantages of its selfish and repugnant capitalist system."

This only intensified after the Soviet Union fell in 1991. The world capitalist crisis of the 1970s produced a general slowdown in production and prompted U.S. imperialism to escalate its war on socialism around the world. Many young people born after the Soviet period were left with little opportunity to examine the prospects of revolutionary socialism.

A Nov. 5 CNN article suggests that the Sanders campaign is losing ground to Hillary Clinton. Clinton's deep corporate support and long record of performance in service of the military industrial complex has ultimately made her the favorite for the Democratic Party nomination.

However, the number of months Sanders stayed competitive with Clinton had much to do with his self-proclaimed title as a "socialist." He promoted policies such as student debt relief and universal health care to back up his title. But Sanders isn't a socialist. Socialism must be defended from the misleading confines of the capitalist elections.

The appeal of Sanders-style socialism rests on the reality that workers and oppressed people are being drained by the crisis of U.S. capitalism. Simultaneously, U.S. capitalist society has continued to mislead the masses that socialist countries such as Cuba are corrupt dictatorships at worst and unrealistic at best.

Sanders has been useful to the ruling capitalist class, even though they don't reward him for this. His campaign hooked the growing number of disaffected workers back into the Democratic Party with his commentary on issues such as the lack of affordable health care and the predominance of low-wage work. He has done so under the assumption that such issues can be resolved under the dictates of U.S. capital.

The task at hand is to distinguish revolutionary socialism from Sanders' politics so the two are never confused. The fundamental contradiction under capitalism is that between the tiny clique of capitalists that privately own the means of production and the billions of workers they exploit. The capitalists keep power through the army, police, courts and media that serve them. It is this social relationship that allows the bosses to exploit workers and oppressed peoples for immense profits.

Revolutionary socialism is socialized production administered by the government, popular army, and other forces that serve the proletariat and oppressed people. Until workers and oppressed people seize the means of production, i.e., the banks, factories and distribution centers by taking state power, no revolutionary country or movement is safe.

The seizure of state power by the op-

pressed masses is a necessary precondition to the fundamental transformation of the social relations inherent under capitalism. The state must be transformed into an organ of the masses capable of suppressing the old order and implementing the necessary economic and political policies of the new. Sanders-style socialism keeps the old order intact and thus represents a variant of the ruling capitalist system.

This variant of the capitalist system fits snugly into the Democratic Party milieu. Sanders has openly endorsed the proxy war on Syria and the bloody invasion of Yemen currently being conducted by Saudi Arabia. He has a track record that includes support of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and a staunch defense of Israeli expansion in Palestine.

Sanders' support of imperialist war is a negation of socialism. Imperialist war only serves the interests of the ruling capitalist class, which requires endless warfare in order to expand into new markets and maintain influence in old ones.

This is not the type of socialism Fidel was defending when he addressed the Cuban people at the close of the 1980s. The Cuban people were defending revolutionary socialism, a social system that has been in place in Cuba since 1959. Under revolutionary socialism, Cuban workers hold ownership over the means of production and plan the economy around the necessities of housing, health care, and education for all. Cuban socialism has fulfilled these necessities for the vast majority of Cuban people.

Cuban socialism is rooted in international solidarity, not imperialist war. Hundreds of thousands of Cubans fought alongside anti-apartheid forces in South Africa and continue to stand with the peoples of the world through the administration of free, quality health care. Cuban socialism is a model for the oppressed.

The Sanders style of socialism is a model for the oppressor. There should be no question that it is Cuba's socialism we defend. □

Students strike blow to racism

Continued from page 1
solidarity with Butler's actions. (cnn.com, Nov. 9)

On Nov. 7, the university football team announced it would boycott the remainder of the season. Sophomore defensive back Anthony Sherrills posted on social media a photo of 32 football players, Black and white, with a statement demanding Wolfe resign or be fired as president. Head coach Gary Pinkel announced solidarity with his team on Twitter on Nov. 8: "The Mizzou Family stands as one. We are united. We are behind our players. #ConcernedStudent1950 GP."

In the public announcement the players said, "The athletes of color on the University of Missouri football team truly believe 'Injustice Anywhere is a threat to Justice Everywhere.' We will no longer participate in any football related activities until President Tim Wolfe resigns or is removed due to his negligence toward marginalized students' experience. WE ARE UNITED!!!!!" (espn.com, Nov. 9)

Payton Head, president of the Missouri Student Association at Mizzou, had racist epithets hurled at him as the academic year began in September — on two occasions he was called the n-word.

WORKERS WORLD statement

A salute to Black students!

Continued from page 1

and chancellor and have already inspired mass struggles against racism and other forms of oppression and discrimination at Yale University in Connecticut.

The Moorehead-Lilly Campaign, launched on the same day as this strike, stands in full solidarity with these inspiring athletes and all the students and supporters who have risked so much to take a stand against racism. We not only salute their victory, but we call on the broad progressive movement to extend a hand of concrete solidarity to this ongoing struggle against racism here and everywhere. We cannot allow any struggle against racism to face isolation! An injury to one is an injury to all!

Actions like these remind us all of the power of withholding one's labor, in this case, the unpaid work of Black college football players and of all the athletes who stand in solidarity with their initiative. In college big-budget athletics, the student-athletes are workers who produce huge profits for universities while receiving no wages. Merely missing one game next weekend would have cost the university \$1 million. This made the strike by Black athletes, along with a solidarity strike by Black graduate students

and a walkout by faculty, even more powerful. Student athletes, like unemployed youth, need union jobs.

The struggle at the University of Missouri is a microcosm of struggles going on across the United States. Graduate students there have waged a unionization drive. Soon-to-be-former Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin had cut women's access to reproductive health care. Meanwhile, women students face a sexual assault epidemic. These same conditions exist not only at universities across the country, but throughout society, with the police assault on people of color leading the list of injustices.

The Moorehead-Lilly Campaign will continue to build solidarity with and spread this struggle among all layers of the diverse working class in the United States for this and future struggles against racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of oppression and discrimination. Above all, we will fight against the capitalist system that engenders them.

See #concernedstudent1950
Black Lives Matter!

For more information on the Moorehead-Lilly Campaign, visit workersworldparty.org or call 212-627-2994. □

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: Workers World
2. Publication Number: 053-990
3. Filing Date: October 12, 2015
4. Issue Frequency: Weekly except first week of January
5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 51
6. Annual Subscription Price: \$30.00
7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4) 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911; Contact Person: R. Neidenberg; Telephone: 212-255-0352
8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911
9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank): Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): WW Publishers, Inc., 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911; Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Deirdre Griswold, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911; Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Gary Wilson, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911
10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as that of each individual. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.): WW Publishers, Inc., 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911; Gary Wilson, 147 W. 24th St. 2nd Fl., 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-1911
11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities. If none, check box: None
12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates.) (Check One) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one): Has Not Changed During Preceding 12 Months
13. Publication Title: Workers World 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: September 24, 2015
15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 4039. b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail). (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies and exchange copies) 1691. (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541 (include paid distribution above nominal rate, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies) 47. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails Including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales and other Paid Distribution Outside USPS 230. (4) Paid Distribution by other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail) 1976. c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4) 3944. d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail). (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included PS Form 3541 0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 33541 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail) 0. (4) Free of Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (carriers or other means) 55. e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4) 55. f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e) 3999. g. Copies not Distributed 402. h. Total (Sum of 15f and g) 4039. i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100) 98%
- No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date. a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 4000. b. Paid Circulation (By Mail and Outside the Mail). (1) Mailed Outside-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1439; (2) Mailed in-County Paid Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 65. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails including Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution. Outside USPS 11. (4) Paid Distribution by other Classes of Mail Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail) 1913. c. Total Paid Distribution (Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3), and (4) 3435. d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail). (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies included on PS Form 3541 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail) 0. (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 545. e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 545. f. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15e) 3980. g. Copies not Distributed 20. h. Total (Sum of 15f and g) 4000. i. Percent Paid (15c divided by 15f times 100) 87%.
16. Publication of Statement of Ownership. Publication will be printed in the October 22, 2015, issue of this publication.
17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner: Deirdre Griswold, Editor, October 12, 2015

I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties.)

Head used Facebook to report the incidents and speak out against racism, sexual assault and oppression of gender expression. This social media transparency caused an avalanche of student outrage and support for the struggle.

Other incidents include the flying of Confederate flags and a swastika scrawled on a dormitory bathroom wall in feces.

Reuters reported Nov. 9 that hashtag #ConcernedStudent1950 is one of the

most trending topics on Twitter and Facebook, while #Mizzou was the most trending hashtag in the U.S.

Most social media users are reporting Wolfe's resignation as a victory in the fight against racism. Many are stating that the struggle has just started and much still needs to be done on the Mizzou campus, in Columbia, Mo., and in other cities throughout the U.S. to address and eradicate racism and racist terror. □



Crisis de Puerto Rico – creada en EUA

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

La urgente y creciente crisis económica y financiera por la que atraviesa Puerto Rico ha sido tema de editoriales y análisis en los medios noticiosos de Estados Unidos las últimas semanas. Con una deuda de \$73 mil millones de dólares, cuatro veces mayor que la deuda de la ciudad de Detroit, y la posibilidad real de impago a sus acreedores de Wall Street, Puerto Rico se ha convertido en tema un tanto “popular”.

El pasado 22 de octubre se realizaron vistas sobre la situación económica y fiscal de Puerto Rico en el Comité de Recursos Naturales y Energía del Senado de Estados Unidos. Casi un mes antes, el 29 de septiembre, se habían realizado otras en el Comité de Finanzas del Senado estadounidense.

Y el 21 de octubre, el día anterior a las últimas vistas, el presidente Barack Obama finalmente rompió su largo silencio sobre la crisis puertorriqueña al emitir una declaración donde le

recomendaba al Congreso aprobar para PR la extensión de la ley federal de bancarrota, protección a la cual la isla ahora no tiene acceso, para que se pueda reestructurar la deuda que tiene.

No extrañaría que la declaración presidencial respondiera no a las necesidades reales del pueblo boricua, sino a la urgencia de asegurar el voto para su partido de la comunidad puertorriqueña en EUA que ahora sobrepasa los 5 millones. Una semana antes, específicamente el 13 y 14 de octubre, líderes políticos puertorriqueños/os, dirigentes de agencias y otras personalidades de la diáspora boricua alineadas con el Partido Demócrata, celebraron una conferencia en Orlando-Florida, ciudad que aloja 1 millón de las/os nuevos emigrantes boricuas. Bajo el nombre Unidos por Puerto Rico, las/os organizadores intentaban ejercer presión para que tanto la administración Obama y el Congreso aprobaran la ley de quiebra para PR y se le concediera a la isla las ayudas financieras necesarias para salir de la enorme crisis.

Rivera expone que las transferencias de EUA a PR varían año por año, entre los \$13 a 16 mil millones. Esto incluye dos categorías: las “unilaterales” que se otorgan como becas, cupones de alimento y otras ayudas, por un monto de \$1,9 a 2 mil millones al año. También están las “Devengadas”, es decir, las transferencias de dinero que la persona ha pagado, tales como pensiones, desempleo, Seguro Social, Medicare, etc., los cuales se sustraen de los sueldos automáticamente. Aquí hay que aclarar también que por ejemplo, para el Medicare y el SS se descuentan la misma cantidad que en los EUA, aunque los beneficios no son recibidos al igual que en EUA.

Sin embargo, las transferencias desde Puerto Rico hacia los Estados Unidos son alrededor de \$58 mil millones. Rivera divide en tres renglones estas transferencias.

Una es por las importaciones desde EUA. Recordemos que EU ha ido destruyendo la agricultura y la manufactura puertorriqueña desde que invadió la isla en 1898. Más del 85 por ciento de los productos alimenticios se importan, sobre todo de los EU. Casi todo lo que se consume, incluyendo las materias primas, se importa. Esto representa \$22-25 mil millones anuales.

Otra cifra aún mayor de \$34 mil millones anuales, representa las ganancias que las firmas estadounidenses generan en PR. Las megatiendas como WalMart, HomeDepot, etc, tienen un amplio margen de ganancias por la irrisoria tasa contributiva que el gobierno colonial les otorga.

Rivera habla de todas estas transferencias como una “puerta giratoria”, de donde llega el dinero desde EUA, por ahí mismo se va. Las ganancias de las corporaciones vuelan hacia su casa matriz, no se quedan en PR.

El gobierno criollo además subvenciona por ejemplo, la agricultura estadounidense y no la boricua. Un ejemplo es el café. Tan preciado producto y de tanta calidad como el café puertorriqueño, el gobierno subsidia la PR Coffee Roasters que pertenece a la Coca Cola.

Ésta compró las firmas de los cafés más populares en la isla, el Yaucono, Rico, Crema, etc. Con la agravante de que el grano usado no es necesariamente de PR, sino importado y mezclado con granos puertorriqueños (si los usa) de menor calidad. Los cafetaleros puertorriqueños, sin embargo, han tenido que despedir trabajadores porque el costo se ha incrementado de tal forma que es muy caro producirlo.

El último renglón que incluye Rivera, es el costo estimado por las Leyes de Cabotaje. Estas obligan a que todo producto que vaya de EUA a PR y viceversa, se haga únicamente en barcos estadounidenses con personal estadounidense, los más caros del mundo. Esto representa de \$800 a 1.500 millones.

Rivera demuestra de manera concluyente que las/os trabajadores puertorriqueños están subsidiando a la economía capitalista de Estados Unidos, y no al revés. □

DEJEN VIVIR A SIRIA No tropas de EUA

Por Chris Fry

Apenas un mes después de que el Pentágono admitiera que fracasó su programa de \$500 millones para armar y entrenar a “fuerzas de la oposición árabe” en Siria, logrando sólo entrenar a cuatro o cinco llamados “combatientes”, el gobierno de Obama anunció que unos 50 “asesores” de las Fuerzas Especiales de EUA están siendo enviados a Siria.

Esta escalada representa un nuevo intento del imperialismo estadounidense por reiniciar otra guerra a través de terceros en el Medio Oriente. Es evidente que la asistencia de Rusia al gobierno sirio en la lucha contra las fuerzas del Estado Islámico ha complicado los planes del imperialismo estadounidense. Aaron Miller, vicepresidente del Centro Internacional para Académicos Woodrow Wilson, describe la estrategia de EUA tras el envío de tropas a Siria: “Vigilen al EI, mantengan sus fuerzas fuera del camino de Rusia pero mejoren su perfil después de que Moscú haya aumentado el suyo”. (New York Times, 30 de octubre)

Junto con las tropas de las Fuerzas Especiales, el gobierno de Obama anunció que el Pentágono está desplegando aviones de combate A-10 y F-15 a la base aérea de Incirlik en Turquía. Estos aviones están especialmente diseñados para proporcionar “apoyo” a las tropas en tierra.

Y miles de soldados estadounidenses están ahora “reasignados” a Irak, para lo que el Pentágono llama despreocupadamente una “función de formación y asesoramiento”. (Theguardian.com, 30 de octubre)

Estados Unidos ve la brutal guerra civil en Siria como una oportunidad para librarse del gobierno encabezado por el presidente Bashar al-Assad, quien consistentemente ha sostenido la soberanía siria. El hecho de que esta guerra ha costado la vida de decenas de miles de personas y millones de desplazadas/os de sus hogares no significa nada para el Pentágono, Wall Street y Washington.

El envío de tropas estadounidenses rompe claramente la promesa que Obama hizo en 2013, cuando durante un discurso dijo: “No voy a poner tropas estadounidenses sobre el terreno en Siria”. (USA Today, 31 de octubre) Esto recuerda la

promesa hecha por Lyndon Johnson durante su campaña electoral de 1964 de no enviar tropas regulares estadounidenses a Vietnam en momentos en que las fuerzas especiales ya estaban desplegadas.

Esa promesa rota costó la vida de decenas de miles de soldados estadounidenses y puertorriqueños, y de millones de vietnamitas. Durante décadas, el pueblo de EUA ha estado dolorosamente consciente de que cualquier uso inicial de “asesores” podría conducir fácilmente a una intervención a gran escala.

Por supuesto, el gobierno de EUA dice que esta nueva campaña está dirigida únicamente contra las fuerzas del EI. Pero al enviar tropas estadounidenses para ayudar a las denominadas fuerzas moderadas que luchan contra el gobierno sirio, EUA claramente apunta al gobierno elegido de Siria.

Eso hace que esta movida sea una escalada extremadamente peligrosa. El gobierno ruso está llevando a cabo lo que parece ser una campaña aérea efectiva en Siria, en alianza con el ejército sirio, contra las fuerzas del EI. Por lo tanto, el Pentágono está utilizando claramente estas pocas fuerzas especiales estadounidenses como un mensaje a Rusia de que está dispuesto a ampliar drásticamente la guerra, incluso a un conflicto global, con el fin de derrocar al gobierno sirio.

“El Pentágono quiere construir una pared de contención alrededor de las fuerzas aliadas con EUA - tanto kurdas como la coalición sirio-árabe respaldadas por Obama - para permitir que estos combatientes mantengan el territorio capturado”. (nytimes.com, 31 de octubre)

¿Y qué utiliza el gobierno de Obama como justificación legal para su campaña militar? “La Constitución exige que el Congreso declare las guerras, pero en este caso, Obama dijo que él no necesita la aprobación de legisladores porque una abarcadora (de la era Bush) ‘Autorización para el Uso de Fuerza Militar’ del 2001 cubre sus acciones”. (Huffingtonpost.com, 3 de junio)

Como el Congreso no puede y Obama no está dispuesto a enfrentarse a una nueva aventura de guerra del Pentágono, entonces es claramente tarea del movimiento contra la guerra y el pueblo hacerlo - ¡en las calles! □

¿Quién mantiene a quién?

Si bien hay muchísimo que escribir sobre los hechos recientes alrededor de esta crisis, tanto en PR como en EUA - de donde emana el problema - este artículo pretende abordar un aspecto casi desconocido en los EUA. Es el tema de las “ayudas federales”. Mucho se dice, sin saber, sobre la “inmensa” “ayuda” que el gobierno estadounidense otorga a la isla, usando calificativos como “el mantengo”, hasta la noción de que las y los puertorriqueños somos - y me incluyo pues soy puertorriqueña - vagos y no queremos trabajar.

Ahora que por fin Obama ha puesto el tema, es importante esclarecer esta noción, pues muchas/os ciudadanos estadounidenses se están preguntando el porqué se “auxiliaría” a PR si aquí mismo hacen falta tantas ayudas.

Pero antes que nada es imprescindible dejar claro la naturaleza de Puerto Rico, ¡es una colonia de Estados Unidos! Lo cual en pocas palabras quiere decir que no tiene ninguna soberanía; ni económica, ni social, ni territorial, y ni siquiera legal. Cualquier ley que la legislatura boricua apruebe, puede ser derogada por EUA. El más reciente ejemplo fue la Ley de Quiebra Criolla que el actual gobernador de PR, Alejandro García Padilla - lacayo del imperialismo yanqui - trató de asegurar para poder reestructurar la deuda de agencias estatales, pero fue derogada por los tribunales federales.

Muchos economistas en PR han abordado la situación y la mayoría (claro está, no quienes están al servicio del imperialismo y sus voraces multinacionales) concluye que la transferencia de dinero de PR hacia EUA es mucho mayor que la de EUA a la isla.

Rosario Rivera, economista y catedrática de la Universidad de Puerto Rico ha disertado ampliamente sobre esto. Se puede incluso ver un video con explicaciones muy claras en una entrevista a la televisora Telemundo. (telemundopr.com)