

WWP holds Marxist classes

By Garrett Diczembre

Young activists and revolutionaries from across the country attended an educational weekend of Marxist-Leninist theory and practice hosted by Workers World Party in New York City over the July 4 weekend.

The weekend began with a presentation by Fred Goldstein, WWP secretariat member and author of “Low-Wage Capitalism” and “Capitalism at a Dead End,” about how Marxist theory is put into Leninist practice. Goldstein emphasized the importance of theory in guiding revolutionary political practice.

Goldstein discussed that uniting on the basis of struggle against capitalism must include the right of self-determination and self-defense. “Anyone who contemplates proletariat revolution must come to grips with this quickly — an unarmed proletariat cannot defend itself or wage revolution.” Goldstein brought up the example of the party’s militant defense of and material support for Black liberation organizations in the 1960s and 1970s.

The first class included a panel on dialectical and historical materialism, scientific socialism and the role and centrality of the working class. Bill Dores discussed the historical basis of class society, the class struggle and the eventual development of capitalism, drawing from Frederick Engels’ book, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State.” Prior to the development of class society, “hunter/gatherer” cooperative, egalitarian cultures existed in what Engels’ called “primary communism.” Agriculture later gave rise to class society through farming, the development of cities and the resulting changes in the forces of production.

FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) organizer Ramiro Funez gave a presentation on dialectical materialism, the methodology used to understand the historical process from a class perspective. Material conditions determine ideas and drive contradictions — two opposing social forces or systems that are in constant confrontation, such as capitalism and socialism, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Capitalism was presented as “a system from inception which already had the kernel of contradiction that will lead to its own demise.”

Larry Holmes, WWP’s first secretary, spoke on why

historical materialism is critical to understanding developments in the current working-class movement. The current phase of the capitalist crisis was produced by the scientific-technological revolution and the ability to produce more with less labor. Simultaneously, it became possible to produce anything anywhere, which meant the capitalists could find cheaper labor around the globe. As Holmes noted, this development has forged a new working class, the importance of which is overlooked by many. However, these changes have resulted in a global uprising of low-wage workers.

Economics, the state, imperialism, oppressions

An introduction to basic Marxist economics class led by WW technical editor Andy Katz provided an understanding of capitalism, surplus value and the current economic crisis. In another class, WW secretariat member Monica Moorehead and FIST activist Alex Renner discussed the role of the state in class society, as understood by Lenin in his work “The State and Revolution.” The state is “a product of the irreconcilability of class antagonisms” — a repressive apparatus used by the ruling class to “forcibly [keep] the exploited class in the conditions of oppression determined by a given mode of production (slavery, serfdom ... wage labor).”

This laid the basis for classes on the Marxist view of women’s and LGBTQ oppression. WWP national leaders Naomi Cohen, LeiLani Dowell and Phebe Eckfeldt made presentations and facilitated a lively discussion.

Another panel by Imani Henry, Eddie Childs and Honduran activist Lucy Pagoada discussed the national question, the right to self-determination and the importance of internationalist solidarity with liberation struggles. The leadership and perspective of people from oppressed nations is critical to the revolutionary struggle. Exercising affirmative action solidifies this principle in the party and in our principled support for national liberation struggles.

The second day of classes centered on the Leninist view of imperialism. Lenin’s five-point definition of imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism was presented, along with the three main stages of imperialism, by Fred Goldstein.

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY

Who we are & what we’re fighting for

Hate capitalism? Workers World Party fights for a socialist society — where the wealth is socially owned and production is planned to satisfy human need. This outmoded capitalist system is dragging down workers’ living standards while throwing millions out of their jobs. If you’re young, you know they’re stealing your future. And capitalism is threatening the entire planet with its unplanned, profit-driven stranglehold over the means of production.

Workers built it all — it belongs to society, not to a handful of billionaires! But we need a revolution to make that change. That’s why for 55 years WWP has been building a revolutionary party of the working class inside the belly of the beast.

We fight every kind of oppression. Racism, sexism,

degrading people because of their nationality, sexual or gender identity or disabilities — all are tools the ruling class uses to keep us apart. They ruthlessly super-exploit some in order to better exploit us all. WWP builds unity among all workers while supporting the right of self-determination. Fighting oppression is a working-class issue, which is confirmed by the many labor struggles led today by people of color, immigrants and women.

WWP has a long history of militant opposition to imperialist wars. The billionaire rulers are bent on turning back the clock to the bad old days before socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles liberated territory from their grip. We’ve been in the streets to oppose every one of imperialism’s wars and aggressions. □

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Pro-choice march



Women's Fightback Network activists joined a pro-choice march to Planned Parenthood in Boston July 26 to support reproductive rights. Billed as a reproductive justice defense action, the protest was in response to the recent Supreme Court ruling that eliminated the safety zone for patients as they enter women's clinics. "After the Buffer Zone law was struck down by the Supreme Court, anti-choice protesters have come out in full force," noted the Facebook page for this action. "In response, Boston Feminists for Liberation has organized a clinic defense to support reproductive rights and people in need of health care."

— Report and photo by Liz Green

'Justice for Eric Garner!'



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

More than 100 people gathered July 26 to protest the brutal killing-on-video of Eric Garner in Staten Island, N.Y. They met at the site of Garner's death from a cop's chokehold to demand justice and "stop killer cops!" Outrage over Garner's killing has been expressed around the U.S. At the protest were representatives from Rebel Diaz, Peoples Organization for Progress, the December 12th Movement, Workers World Party, Peoples Power Assembly Movement, NAACP and other groups. A march is planned for Saturday, Aug. 2, from Bay Street to the police station. Pictured here is Larry Hamm of POP.

— Anne Pruden and Johnnie Stevens

Senate hearing on abortion

By Sue Davis

The Senate Judiciary Committee convened a hearing July 15 about the Women's Health Protection Act. The law is needed to stop states from implementing laws claiming to protect women's health and safety, but which limit access to legal, safe abortion and drive women's health care providers out of business.

This is the first federal legislation affirming women's right to choose abortion since it became legal in 1973. It's necessary now, as never before, to nullify and stop the avalanche of approximately 250 anti-abortion bills that have been passed by 40 states in recent years.

Bills affected by the law include regulations curtailing medical abortions, mandating invasive vaginal probes, limiting the number of weeks of pregnancy when an abortion can be performed, as-

signing personhood rights to the fetus, setting up strict structural dimensions of clinics and requiring doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals.

All such laws are medically unnecessary and exceed regulations for medical practices with comparable risks. Pro-choice activists have noted that such laws, called "wolves in sheep's clothing," promote politicians' careers, not sound medicine — and they curtail women's rights.

Both sides of the issue — five for it, four against it, with one African-American practicing obstetrician-gynecologist for each side — were invited to speak to the bill. The testimony revealed a chasm as deep as the Grand Canyon between the two sides.

Contempt for abortion and women

But it was refreshing to hear both points of view aired respectfully at the

same time in the same room rather than the usual scene in Congress and state legislatures. There, the Republicans' self-righteous contempt for abortion and the women who have them has prevailed, despite some Democratic women legislators bravely defending their and their constituents' need for legal, safe abortions, as well as access to comprehensive health services that clinics provide.

The speakers opposing abortion reported statistics, as though they were established facts, about how women's lives are ruined by abortions. Though they cited high rates of breast cancer, depression and suicide without noting their sources, all such statistics have been ruled hoaxes by the Guttmacher Institute and the Association of Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Nancy Northup, president of the Center for Reproductive Rights, strongly spoke in defense of the WHPA, while Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, spoke against it. The divide between the two sides was as far apart as ports on either side of the Atlantic.

What upped the ante was when senators on the Judiciary Committee grilled the speakers. Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) asked Dr. Willie Parker, an abortion provider in Alabama and Mississippi, why the hospital near the only remaining clinic in Mississippi had refused to grant him admitting privileges. Dr. Parker said the hospital didn't give him a reason, though he has never had to refer a patient to a hospital.

Then Cruz asked Dr. Monique Chireau, who practices at Duke University Hospital in Durham, N.C., and who is a board member of Americans United for Life, to state why laws mandating hospital admitting privileges were necessary. For patient aftercare, she responded, failing to mention that it's rarely if ever needed.

Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) pontificated that such a federal law was a direct attack on states' rights and should be opposed on that ground if no other. Hatch

supported the notorious 1977 amendment eliminating Medicaid coverage for abortions for poor women, most often women of color, youth, immigrants, lesbians, transpeople and those living in rural areas.

Marching, not voting, to win rights

One right-wing media analyst called the hearing "political theater," pandering to the women's vote in November. (morningcall.org, July 16) And RH Reality Check pointed out on July 16 the many errors in the right's testimony.

The hearing, if viewed as a debate, was essentially a draw. Of course the law doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of passage given the present Congress. But politically, it was vital to have all the pro-women, pro-choice issues aired publicly, after the right's demonization of the issues in Congress and the state legislatures.

What's needed is for all progressive forces to call a national demonstration in Washington, D.C. — and protests in state capitals far removed from D.C. — to affirm in the streets the right of all women to control their own lives and take care of their families. That includes access to free contraceptives mandated by the Affordable Care Act and all government services, a living wage and union representation for all workers.

The right wing is emboldened by the economic crisis, which has benefited the 1% while imposing austerity on the rest of us. Opposing women's rights is another part of the ruling class's divide-and-conquer strategy, along with racism and bigotry against lesbians, gay men, and bisexual, transgender and queer people. Only a wide-ranging, united fightback, like the Civil Rights Movement, can win the rights that all working and oppressed peoples deserve and must have.

Sue Davis, a longtime reproductive justice activist, is the author of the pro-choice novel "Love Means Second Chances."

WWP holds Marxist classes

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A period of inter-imperialist wars (1898-1946) led to a period of war between two class camps representing two irreconcilable social systems: capitalism and socialism. The current stage of imperialism is the war for reconquest and division of the globe after the fall of the USSR. FIST members Colleen Davidson, Garrett Dicembre and Scott Williams made opening remarks.

A final panel discussed why WWP defends workers' states and other countries

locked in anti-imperialist struggles. Internationalist solidarity with countries undertaking the tremendous goal of building socialism and countries under attack by imperialism is a vital task of a Marxist-Leninist party. FIST leaders Caleb Maupin and Taryn Fivek led this discussion.

WWP founding member and WW editor Deirdre Griswold gave a presentation on the origins of Workers World Party, the role of a Marxist-Leninist party and the history of the party since 1959. □



GAZA Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak
Here is the story of the most heroic resistance since 1948 to unrelenting Israeli oppression and violence designed to drive Palestinians from their homeland.

— Ramsey Clark

gazaresistancebook.com Available from major online booksellers

Disability rights in the age of austerity

By Joyce Chediak

In 2007, archaeologists Lorna Tilley and Marc Oxenham found the bones of a young man who lived 4,000 years ago in what is now northern Vietnam. He had been profoundly ill. He had fused vertebrae, weak bones and other evidence that he was paralyzed from the waist down before adolescence as a result of a degenerative disease. He had little if any use of his arms and could not have fed himself or kept himself clean — yet this disabled person lived another 10 years. (“Ancient Bones That Tell a Story of Compassion,” New York Times, Dec. 18, 2012)

These people had no metal and lived by fishing, hunting and raising barely domesticated pigs. The scientists concluded that the people around him took the time and care to tend to his every need. Tilley has written on this view for *Anthropological Science* and the *International Journal of Paleopathology*.

This and other cases of what appear to show tender care for the sick and the aged reflect a new and different view of so-called primitive cultures. According to the Times article, Tilley says, “Not only does his care indicate tolerance and cooperation in his culture, but suggests that he himself had a sense of his own worth and a strong will to live. Without that, she says, he could not have stayed alive.”

About 30 similar cases have been found in areas ranging from Europe to Asia, the U.S and the Middle East. Some remains go back 45,000 years and show disease and pathology so severe that the affected people must have needed round-the-clock care.

The Times found this story extraordinary enough to give it front page coverage in the science section. It was news because these archeological findings are the exact opposite of the general beliefs about Stone Age peoples: that they were barbarians, had no compassion, were brutal and warlike with each other, and threw away people with disabilities. Popular belief is that compassion and care

for people with disabilities and others is a product of civilization.

‘Disability’ at different times in history

These archaeological discoveries prompt a revisiting of what “disability” has meant at different times in history. This is especially true since many people with disabilities today — this writer is dyslexic and hearing impaired — feel that the economic and social system we have now wants to throw us away and that to get our rights we must fight the system.

Take the Americans with Disabilities Act, for example. It took years of struggle to get this legislation passed in 1990. Now even that is being undermined by cutbacks.

It has always been a fight to get benefits, compensation, medical care, accessibility, education and other things disabled people need and deserve in order to fully contribute to society.

The book “Disability History of the United States” by Kim E. Nielsen gives voice to the Indigenous people of this continent and their views on disability. She relates a story about disability in pre-1492 Indigenous culture that was carried down in the New York state-based Iroquois Confederation, a grouping of different tribes.

“A Huron man brought the Great Law of Peace to the Iroquois ... as a pathway to restore peace, compassion and righteousness, and a way to develop the strength necessary to live out the law.” The man went to all the nations in the Iroquois Confederation. One day when he was teaching the Mohawks, a sad man came who had lost all his family to death. The Peacemaker consoled him.

This person went on to become the Peacemaker’s interpreter or spokesperson. This was needed “because the Peacemaker had a stutter that made it difficult for people to understand him.” With his helper, the Peacemaker reminded the people of the Iroquois of the need for harmony.

In traditional culture, Nielsen explains, everyone was believed to have a

gift, skill, ability or purpose. When individuals, communities and the world are in harmony, individuals share their gifts and benefit from the gifts of others.

Most pre-Columbian Indigenous communities had no word or concept for what we call disability. For example, if someone described today as being “cognitively impaired” was a good water carrier, that was the person’s gift and it was appreciated. There was no stigma attached, and he or she was loved and welcomed. People were not defined by their ability or their disability but by their contribution to the whole. People were appreciated for what they did and the wholeness of their personalities.

Disability and alienation under capitalism

Nielsen says that in some tribes the closest thing to the word “disability” was a relational term. It applied when someone had weak community relations or lacked them, or when a person was removed from or unable to participate in community reciprocity. Today we might call this “alienation.” So if you were alienated from society, that was a disability.

This was a sophisticated and compassionate concept developed by a society where there were few if any divisions and most people lived as equals, working together and sharing food and resources. In a general way, the pre-1492 economic and social conditions mirror those of our ancient ancestors described in the Times. Their social relations were probably similar as well. This society was hardworking, sophisticated, compassionate and accepting.

How did Christopher Columbus view the people he met in the “new world”? He wrote in his journal, “They would make fine servants. ... With 50 men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want.” This representative of civilization went on to enslave native people and stole their land.

Civilization is not the protector of the weak and the nobler emotions. Civilization marks the beginning of class soci-

ety and the exploitation of one person by another for material gain. The form class society takes today is capitalism, a system that allows a tiny percentage of the population — some call it the 1%, although it’s really many fewer people — to own the means of production and take for themselves most of what the 99% have sweated to produce.

While class society has certainly brought technological development, it has not brought compassion. It has brought inequality, stratification, judgment and great suffering to most people.

Under capitalism this alienation, which the Indigenous people found so wrenching that they called it a disability, is actually built into the system. The alienation woven through capitalist society originates in working people’s alienation from their own labor. Most of the value of what a worker produces is taken by the boss, while the worker is left with a tiny salary, often barely enough to survive on.

If disability in pre-1492 Indigenous culture is defined as alienation, then how is disability defined under 20th- and 21st-century capitalism? It is defined as the inability to toil for the boss.

While Indigenous cultures regarded all people as having gifts, including those with severe motor impairments, capitalism labels these same people as worthless and grants them a shameful stigma. Indigenous cultures freely shared the little resources they had and willingly gave care as it was needed.

Under capitalism, if you are not part of the profit machine, if money can’t be made from you, you are not entitled to resources or care and are thrown on the scrap heap. Under capitalism, people with disabilities must fight the system to get basic rights such as food, shelter, housing, community and dignity — so freely given as part of the system in Indigenous cultures.

Why is knowing this important to the struggle to preserve and enlarge disability rights today?

To be continued.

Swedish train workers settle strike

By Mike Powers
Stockholm

July 22 — The Swedish Union for Service and Communications Employees [SEKO], the national union representing the striking train workers in Sweden against the French-based multinational monopoly Veolia, signed an agreement in late June that ended the conflict. An earlier article in *Workers World* described the massive sympathy with the strikers from other unions and much of the working-class riding public. (See tinyurl.com/ny8pytj or visit workers.org.)

Under threat of escalating sympathy measures from many of the other national unions, a national agreement was reached that limited the number of part-time employees to 5 percent of the work force. SEKO called the result “a historic victory for the Swedish union movement.” Many on the left here in Sweden, however, see the agreement as a traditional reformist compromise.

The agreement will make it more expensive for the company to hire tempo-

rary employees. On the other hand, the workers will have to share the cost for the “flexibility” the bosses demanded. No mention was made of Veolia’s original plan to fire 252 employees.

In keeping with Veolia’s record as an anti-worker, union-busting company, no sooner had the ink dried than management announced new layoffs. They plan to let go 95 workers — 22 of these workers will be rehired but on 75 percent contracts.

In doing this, the Veolia capitalists are not only following their hunger for profits. As one union official said, “They are looking at ideology, the neoliberal ideology, where you have neither unions nor the legal right to strike.” In these circumstances dictated by the agreement, further action by the workers in SEKO, as well as sympathy actions, become illegal.

The challenge now for the local union is how to mobilize the fighting spirit and public support that the strike had galvanized. Only those efforts will determine whether this fight was a small step in the right direction and just how historic a victory was won. □

Detroit pension theft

By David Sole
Detroit

The results of retiree voting on pension cuts in the Detroit bankruptcy proceedings were announced on July 21. It was reported that 73 percent of the voters approved the cuts while 27 percent voted “no.”

The fix was in from the start.

Only about half of tens of thousands of retirees voted. This is not surprising since the ballot package included a disk with more than 400 pages of documents and several booklets of summaries and instructions. Each retiree got two ballots — one for pension cuts and the other for medical care cuts. Confusion was widespread.

The pressure for retirees to vote “yes” was huge from the day they received the ballots in mid-May. Included in the ballot packages were two pieces of literature urging them to approve the “plan of adjustment.” No literature opposed to the plan was allowed to be included.

The politicians and their faithful corporate media hammered that voting “yes” was the only option. The ballots and the propaganda threatened that if retirees rejected the plan, then cuts to their pensions would be two or three times worse.



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

Unions caved yet retirees resisted

Those in official positions who could have rallied retirees and supporters to a massive “no” vote and a mass struggle in the courts and in the streets immediately caved in to the pressure. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25 is the largest union representing city of Detroit workers and retirees. It ignored the national threat to pensions that the Detroit case represents and urged a “yes” vote as the lesser evil. AFSCME had not sponsored any protests outside the court since a demonstration last year on Oct. 23.

The Detroit Retired City Employees Association leadership made no attempt to rally retirees, thousands of whom belong to this voluntary organization. DRCEA President Shirley Lightsey pressed hard for retirees to agree to the cuts. Both general and uniformed pension boards pushed for a “yes” vote. The nine-member “official retiree committee” appointed by the bankruptcy court also held mass meetings pushing the “yes” vote. When retirees spoke out toward the end of these sessions, the microphone was sometimes cut off to silence opposition.

The threat of even deeper cuts frightened many retirees. In one case, approv-

Support Boston union school bus drivers

The attempt by the city of Boston to impose a racist austerity regime on its schools involves Veolia Corporation's attempt to rip up the school bus drivers' union contract. This includes the illegal lockout of union members last October, the firing of four of its leaders and now the frame-up charges against grievance chair and union founder Stevan Kirschbaum. The immigrant workers' local, mainly Haitian and Cape Verdean but also African American, is highly mobilized and fighting back fiercely. So much so that even the Boston media had to admit that the union turned Kirschbaum's July 14 arraignment into a protest that took over the chambers and steps of the Dorchester courthouse.

The union's strong fightback urgently needs the support of



Steve Gillis, Andre Francois, Steve Kirschbaum and Garry Murchison

the national labor movement. Below is sample text for a union resolution supporting the Boston school bus drivers' union, United Steelworkers Local 8751. Please do what you can to get a resolution passed by your union or organization and send to schoolbus5@teamsolidarity.org.

— Tony Murphy

WHEREAS: The financial and corporate sector, joined with anti-union and right-wing forces, have sunk their roots in dozens of "right-to-work states" and are now expanding into industrial states such as Ohio, Michigan and Illinois, threatening public and private unions which have historically fought to retain the integrity of their unions and collective bargaining rights;

WHEREAS: These Tea Party forces have descended on Massachusetts, and on Boston in particular, to expand their "right-to-work" strategy to organized labor and the oppressed communities and have enlisted Veolia, an international conglomerate notorious for its anti-union abuses, assaults and violations of civil law, to carry it out;

WHEREAS: Veolia, which has contracted with the city of Boston to provide school transportation for 24,000 children and which has financial allies such as Boston-based Fidelity, the country's largest mutual fund company, which provides services to more than 20 million individuals and institutions as well as 5,000 intermediary corporations and manages 566 mutual funds with assets of \$1.71 trillion;

WHEREAS: Veolia, drunk with power and resources, has targeted United Steelworkers Local 8751, whose 800 predominantly Black, immigrant and women members have a contract with Veolia to

provide school bus transportation for approximately 24,000 children and, under different employers, have been providing this service for over forty years with care and concern for the safety of the children;

WHEREAS: Veolia, driven by greed, profits and no concern for the children, backed the latest city program to send 7th and 8th graders to travel alone on public transportation; has been relentless in its attack on union sisters and brothers, firing four leaders — Stevan Kirschbaum, Garry Murchison, Andre Francois and Steve Gillis — and falsely charging a founding member with phony felonies, and most of all attempting to tear up the collective bargaining agreement, now expired; and has issued an avalanche of union-busting ultimatums, unfair labor practices and demands for future contract concessions and givebacks that would destroy this proud union;

WHEREAS: USW Local 8751, with the support of the members, has heroically fought back against Veolia and their powerful anti-union, racist 1%ers; has mobilized militant fightback bus yard rallies, meetings and marches — included four solidarity actions which brought together the Black community, their elected representatives and regional labor leaders of the AFL-CIO, as well as organizations which are opposing the return of neighborhood school segregation;

nears approval

al of the cuts would result in about \$300 less per month with a \$1,700 pension. This retiree was told that failure to approve would result in up to \$700 in cuts. In the face of this, it is remarkable that 27 percent of voting retirees rejected the plan. They did so hoping that appeals to higher courts would reverse the bankruptcy judge's ruling that public pensions could be slashed, even though protected by strong language in Michigan's state constitution. Those campaigning for a "no" vote also pressed for mass demonstrations and protests by retirees. They often pointed out that the Civil Rights struggle was won in the streets.

Irregularities abounded throughout the entire voting period. Thousands of retirees received incorrect calculations of their projected cuts and had to be sent new ballots. When Detroit's emergency manager feared that voting might be going against his plan, it was announced that retirees could get a new ballot and reverse their vote. Early returns were leaked to the emergency manager and the press, reporting that "yes" votes were predominating. That only stopped on orders of the federal bankruptcy judge.

The cost of pension cuts

For those city workers who retired prior to 2003 or did not contribute weekly

to an annuity savings fund run by the general pension board, cuts to pensions amounted to 4.5 percent. In addition, all general fund retirees and survivors lost their annual 2.25 percent cost-of-living adjustment. This will reduce pensions 18 percent over their lifetimes.

Those who retired later, however, will have to pay back what the emergency manager deems "excess interest" paid to them between 2003 and 2013. This amounts to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on how much an individual paid into the savings plan. This can amount up to an additional 15.5 percent cut to pensions.

What was not mentioned in the ballots, however, is that the annuity "claw-back" amount is subject to 6.75 percent interest. Many retirees were unaware of this proviso, which will cost them tens of thousands of dollars more. Many retirees will never live long enough to pay all this back. If they opted to leave their surviving spouse all or part of their pension, then the spouse will have to continue paying back.

Pensioners have filed objections with the bankruptcy court.

The final trial on Detroit's bankruptcy is set to start Aug. 14.

David Sole is a retired Detroit Water and Sewerage Department worker.

WHEREAS: The city of Boston, in collusion with Veolia Corporation, has orchestrated a frame-up campaign against Stevan Kirschbaum, the local's grievance chair and a founder of the union, charging him with an outrageous series of made-up charges that scores of witnesses say didn't happen and have in fact given signed statements to the effect that they didn't happen;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: We call on the Boston District Attorney to drop the false frame-up charges on Stevan Kirschbaum now and on the Veolia Corporation to re-hire Kirschbaum, Garry Murchison, Steve Gillis and Andre Francois now;

On the Picket Line

by Sue Davis

Low-paid workers win big raises at Johns Hopkins Hospital

Some 2,000 low-paid workers — janitors and service, maintenance and technical workers — at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore won substantial raises under a new four-year contract reached July 8 by Service Employees 1199 United Healthcare Workers East. In 2015 veteran workers of 20 years at one of the country's leading nonprofit university hospital systems will receive increases to \$15 an hour, with 15-year veterans earning \$14.50 an hour. Hopkins workers now make so little that 70 percent qualify for food stamps, said SEIU.

The workers struck for three days in April and then held a huge downtown rally in May where they talked openly about their poverty wages and the need for food stamps and Medicaid. They voted to strike in June. Worker Yvonne Brown explained in a Baltimore Sun op-ed: "I've worked at Hopkins for 19 years, and I make just \$12.97 an hour," just above the poverty and food stamp line. Meanwhile, hospital President Ronald Peterson was paid \$14.5 million last year. If Petersen's pay was split up, she noted, it would give each of the 2,000 workers the raise they needed.

Highlights of the agreement include: Total raises as high as 38 percent for long-time, low-paid workers; a boost of as much as \$4.30 an hour over the life of the contract; base pay of \$13 an hour for all current workers, regardless of service, by 2018; across-the-board raises of at least 2 percent every year, plus an 0.5 percent bonus in the contract's first year and a 2.75 percent raise in 2017. The two sides also agreed to establish a committee to review market rates for surgical and pharmacy techs and other workers whose pay is under market rate. (Metropolitan Washington [D.C.] Council, AFL-CIO, July 13)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: We call on Veolia Corporation to honor the terms of the contract it signed with the city of Boston — a contract that stipulates that it will foster good relations with the union and therefore requires it to not make concessionary demands in negotiations but improve working conditions for the members of Local 8751;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: This resolution is an appeal for unity. USW Local 8751 is under siege and supports this resolution. It's an appeal to organized and unorganized labor; working-class communities especially those of color; immigrant rights; youth and students; people with disabilities; and women's and LGBTQ organizations which are all under attack. Allies are needed to support the heroic fightback of Local 8751 such as: (1) Pass resolutions, sign petitions denouncing Veolia, the 1%ers and their racist, union-busting, anti-immigrant program and plans to create a low-wage workforce. (2) Build and broaden solidarity against hostile corporate and financial powers that are imposing austerity, war and occupation, unemployment and underemployment, hunger and homelessness, racism and prisons, and migrant children incarcerated in concentration camps. □

Teamsters at grocery warehouses ratify contracts

Hundreds of Teamsters at three grocery warehouses in Washington state — Safeway, SuperValu and Unified Grocers — voted overwhelmingly July 19 and 20 to ratify contracts. The agreements contain annual wage increases and protections against subcontracting and the rising cost of health care. "Our members in the grocery distribution industry help maintain the supply chain that feeds hundreds of thousands of families across the Puget Sound region and the West," said Tracey A. Thompson, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 117. He noted that workers do physically demanding work in ambient, refrigerated and freezer environments, manually handling heavy cases and operating forklifts and pallet jacks to receive, load and stock grocery products under a tight production standard. (The Stand, July 22)

Minn. home care workers file for union recognition

More than 26,000 home care workers in Minnesota filed for union recognition on July 8. Organized under the slogan "Invisible No More," the workers are seeking representation by SEIU Healthcare Minnesota, a statewide local. "[I]n other states where home care workers have formed a union, they have won significant wage increases, access to benefits and training opportunities, and most importantly, a voice in the state decisions that affect them," said Darleen Henry, a home care worker. Pay is currently so low that many caregivers qualify for food stamps, and they don't receive paid sick leave or health and retirement benefits. The election, which will be the largest union vote in the state's history, is planned for August. (Workday Minnesota, July 8)

See workers.org for entire article.

WORLD STANDS WITH GAZA &



Global protests support Gaza

By **Betsey Piette**

During the week of July 21-27, millions of people turned out in protests around the world to demand that Israel “Stop the war on Gaza.” As news that the mounting civilian death toll in Gaza surpassed 1,000, mass marches filled the streets of nearly every major world city, including in **Israel** itself.

On July 26, over 5,000 anti-war Israelis rallied in Tel Aviv calling for an end to the occupation and the siege of Gaza. Two hours before the rally, police cancelled their permit, then reinstated it just before the event. By this time buses of protesters en route to the march had turned back.

Earlier in the week more than 50 Israeli reservists, including many women, issued a joint statement refusing to serve in Israel’s invasion and occupation of Gaza.

International al-Quds Day protests

Hundreds of thousands held pro-Gaza

rallies on July 25 in observance of International al-Quds Day – the last Friday of Ramadan, initiated by Iran in 1979 to express solidarity with the Palestinian struggle.

In **Iran** millions turned out in over 770 cities and towns. A massive rally of hundreds of thousands in Tehran carried a blocks-long Palestinian flag.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani joined the protest. Homayoun Samayeh Najafabadi, head of Tehran’s Jewish community, encouraged Palestinians to keep up their struggle against Israel. “We, as the representatives of all Iranian Jews, condemn the crimes committed by the Zionist regime in the Gaza Strip,” he said.

In **Egypt** an anti-coup alliance led by the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood held rallies on July 25 denouncing Egyptian President Sisi for closing key crossings into Egypt from Gaza, which help Israel maintain its deadly siege.

In **Pakistan’s** largest city, Karachi, thousands of marchers trampled U.S. and Israeli flags, while chanting “Down with Israel” and “Down with America.”

Sunni and Shiite scholars held a joint

vigil in support of Gaza in Marwahin, a village on **Lebanon’s** southern border with occupied Palestine.

Turkish protesters in Istanbul and Ankara have marched on Israeli embassies every day since the offensive against Gaza began. On July 25, the Turkish humanitarian relief organization IHH announced plans for a Freedom Flotilla II of aid to Gaza. In 2010 the Israeli Navy attacked the first Freedom Flotilla, killing nine Turkish activists. Turkish army troops will accompany the ships in the new flotilla.

Protests supporting the people of Gaza also took place in **Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Japan** and **Australia**. Demonstrators in New Delhi, **India’s** capital, burned Israeli flags and blamed the U.S. for the slaughter in Gaza.

ANC expels Israeli ambassador

Nationwide protests took place across **South Africa**. The African National Congress called on the Israeli ambassador to leave immediately. An ANC statement of July 22 read in part, “The situation involving Palestine and Israel is an undeclared war, in which the aggressor, Israel, has destroyed the Palestinian economy, robbed people of their land, unilaterally changed borders, and unilaterally built a wall of exclusion to keep Palestinians out of their land. ... Palestinians have been reduced to



World condemns Israel — Palestine resists genocide

Continued from page 1

offensive, 52 Israeli soldiers have been killed so far by the resistance — three times the number in earlier attacks.

Palestinians have carried out successful military operations inside Israel at least six times. U.S. and European airlines suspended their Israeli flights and landings for 24 hours in fear of Gaza’s missiles.

The Israeli war on Gaza would be impossible without total U.S. support. This is as much a U.S. war as those against Iraq and Afghanistan. It is waged with U.S. equipment, dollars, and political and diplomatic support.

Secretary of State John Kerry has been frantically racing through the region trying to shore up Israel’s position. He is not engaged in talking up a ceasefire out of concern for the Palestinian people.

Hamas, the elected leadership of Gaza, is holding out in order to end Israel’s blockade. (See workers.org, “Hamas’ conditions for ceasefire.”) Their fight is for the very survival of Gaza.

The population is united around a minimum goal: Israel must end its blockade of imports and exports. All armed groups in Gaza are cooperating. With so many armed fighters, the government could not

survive without this unity.

Israel agreed in 2012 to a ceasefire. It then violated every provision of the agreement, kept the strangling blockade in place and rearrested Palestinians it had released in a prisoner exchange.

This July 27 Israel declared a ceasefire and then announced it would continue with “limited operations” to clear tunnels. On July 28, it struck Gaza’s major hospital, al-Shifa. That’s when it also bombed the Shati refugee camp and killed 10 people, including eight children playing on a swing set.

Isolation in the face of outrage

Searing images that can’t be kept out of the world media are stoking international outrage against Israel. U.S. imperialism is virtually alone in backing Tel Aviv.

When the attack began, not only the U.S., but all the imperialist powers of Europe, plus the Gulf state monarchies and the Egyptian military dictatorship, supported it. But mass pressure from below has forced many states to recalibrate their public position.

On July 23, 29 members of the U.N. Human Rights Council voted to launch an independent commission to investigate violations of human rights un-

leashed by Israel’s assault on Gaza. Only the U.S. voted no. Washington’s European allies abstained.

The council condemned the “widespread, systematic and gross violations of international human rights and fundamental freedoms” arising from Israeli military operations since July 13 and called for an immediate ceasefire. It demanded that Israel immediately reopen the occupied Gaza Strip and called upon the international community to provide urgently needed humanitarian assistance and services to the Palestinian people.

Uprising in West Bank

As the assault on Gaza intensified, tens of thousands marched in cities across the occupied West Bank on July 24 and 25, despite checkpoints, soldiers and settler/snipers gunning down demonstrators in Hebron. Nine Palestinians were killed near the West Bank cities of Nablus and Hebron. At the Qalandia checkpoint, Israeli soldiers shot approximately 200 protesters. The wounded were rushed to Ramallah Hospital where two died.

This uprising in the West Bank was the largest protest there since massive repression crushed the 2000-2005 Palestinian uprising, called the Second Intifada.

Among Israelis, a small but outspoken opposition rejects racism and brutal repression. Some 130 young people face jail for signing statements and refusing to enlist in the military. Udi Segal, a 19-year-old from Kibbutz Tuval, was jailed on July 28 after saying he refused to accept a life filled with violence, occupation, fear and hostility.

Fifty former Israeli soldiers refuse to be part of the reserves and say they will support all those who resist being called up.

A large “Stop the War” rally in Tel Aviv held on July 26 by Palestinian and Israeli members of Combatants for Peace was attacked by right-wing Israelis. Israeli vigilante groups are targeting Palestinians and Jewish leftists. But Jews Against Genocide went to the Israeli Holocaust memorial Yad Vashem to honor Palestinian children being systematically murdered.

The war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Gaza today are the latest stage of an ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing and genocide against the Indigenous people of this land.

Dire warnings

Outrage is growing against U.S. imperialism for backing this criminal onslaught.

Lebanese resistance leader Hassan Nasrallah declared at a massive rally in Beirut

DENOUNCES U.S.-BACKED WAR

U.S. protests decry Israel's terror

cheap labor for the Israeli economy. This relentless destruction of the Palestinian territory and its people by Israel must be stopped.”

Demonstrators in Kano, **Nigeria**, marched nearly four miles on July 25 carrying mock figures of injured children and chanting anti-U.S. and anti-Israeli slogans.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrators filled the streets of many European cities on July 25, including **Spain, Italy, Belgium, Sweden** and **Macedonia**. In Berlin, **Germany**, Jewish people joined protesters in a pro-Palestinian march. For the second week in a row pro-Palestinian protesters across **France** defied a ban on demonstrations, turning out in the tens of thousands in Paris and other cities on July 23.

Over 50,000 people rallied outside the Israeli Embassy in **London** on July 25 and marched to Parliament, where they called on British Prime Minister David Cameron to “Stop supporting Israeli war crimes.” Earlier in the week over 21,000 noted individuals demanded an immediate arms embargo on Israel.

Pro-Palestinian demonstrations were held in more than 16 cities across **Ireland**, hosted by the Ireland Palestine Solidarity Campaign.

Pro-Palestinian protesters clashed with pro-Israeli protesters in rival rallies in Toronto on July 25 during one of several demonstrations held across **Canada**. □

By Workers World Staff

Protests on and around Al-Quds Day, the last Friday of Ramadan on July 25, took place in a number of U.S. cities. Some demonstrators linked the war on children in Gaza to the attacks on children from Central America who are crossing the U.S./Mexican border to seek refuge. Here are descriptions of some of the protests in support of the people of Gaza and against the U.S.-backed Israeli military machine.

Linking the children of Gaza with the children seeking refuge in the U.S. was the theme of a 200-person rally in **Oakland, Calif.**, on July 24 outside the Federal Building. The action was initiated by the International Action Center, Bay Area and supported by AROC (Arab Resource & Organizing Center); EBIYC (East Bay Immigrant Youth Coalition); Middle East Children's Alliance; American Friends Service Committee; Lake Merritt Neighbors Organized for Peace; Xicana Moratorium Coalition; International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network; BAYAN-USA; Black Alliance for Just Immigration; United Native Americans; AF3IRM; Marcha Patriótica, Capitulo California; Jewish Voice for Peace, Bay Area; Workers World Party; and Facts For Working People.

More than 750 people signed up for “Block the Boat for Gaza” actions scheduled Aug. 2 to stop the unloading of an Israeli ship at the Port of Oakland.

Several thousand rallied at Chelsea Manning Plaza in **San Francisco** July 26, blocking traffic for over an hour.

In **San Diego** hundreds of activists at a “Stop the Genocide in Gaza” rally marched through downtown July 25. They made a large banner on which were written the names, ages and cities of hundreds of Palestinians killed in Gaza. The action was called by the Palestinian Right to Return Coalition, which includes the American Islamic Foundation; International Action Center, San Diego; Colectivo Zapatista; Palestinian Youth Movement, San Diego; Unión del Barrio, San Diego; BDS San Diego; and many other organizations.

Several demonstrations in solidarity with the Palestinian people have been held in metropolitan **Detroit**, home to one of the largest Arab populations in the U.S. Several hundred marched in downtown Detroit on July 25. Around 600 Arab and Palestinian people rallied July 26 in nearby **Dearborn, Mich.**, against the Israeli onslaught. Moratorium NOW! Coalition activists and



PHOTO: DEREK ABBAS MAZEH

Workers World Party organizers attended both protests.

Facing down racist Zionists

In **Atlanta**, hundreds of Palestinians of all ages, along with people from many other Arab countries and Atlantans of all nationalities, marched on the CNN Center July 25 in support of the people of Gaza. The protesters were confronted by Zionist supporters of Israel, including several armed with assault rifles and handguns. Organizers of previous Gaza protests had received scores of threatening messages from men associated with this pro-war display. While police set up barricades to contain the pro-Palestinian protesters, no action was taken against the gun-toting proponents of Israel. After an hour of defiant chanting, the Palestine supporters broke out of the confined sidewalk area and took to the streets, where they remained for hours.

Thousands of demonstrators in **Philadelphia** have been in the streets to demand an end to Israel's siege of Gaza. Hundreds of Palestinians and their supporters gathered July 23 in a two-hour showdown opposing a Zionist rally. Around 1,000 pro-Palestine demonstra-

tors rallied outside the Israeli Consulate July 25 and marched through Center City. These protests were organized through word of mouth in the mosques and by social media networks of the International Action Center, Temple University Students for Justice in Palestine and other solidarity groups.

About 100 people gathered July 27 at the Irish Memorial — a monument to Irish resistance to the British-imposed famine of the 1840s — to show Irish-American support for Palestine.

In **Syracuse, N.Y.**, more than 200 people, including Muslim and Jewish demonstrators, gathered in front of the Federal Building July 25. In **Rochester, N.Y.**, over 200 Palestinians and supporters came out for a rally July 25, which was described as one of the biggest anti-war protests in that city since the height of the Iraq war. This was the third week of protests.

In a quickly organized emergency response to counter a July 23 “Stand with Israel” rally in **Hoboken, N.J.**, people came from cities in northern New Jersey to show support for the Palestinian people. The demonstration, which outnumbered the pro-Israel rally, included Arab, Black and Latino/a people, plus members of Jewish Voice for Peace and a member of the synagogue where the Zionist rally was being held.

In **Jersey City, N.J.**, members of the Jersey City Peace Movement and Jews United Against Zionism held a protest, including a symbolic die-in, July 27 at Journal Square Plaza.

Hundreds marched July 25 from Copley Square to Park Street to protest Israeli attacks on Gaza in the seventh demonstration in **Boston**. Steve Gillis — vice president of United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union; a leader of Team Solidarity, the Voice of United School Bus Union Workers; and one of the four union leaders illegally fired by anti-union Veolia Corp. — delivered a militant solidarity speech denouncing U.S.-sponsored Israeli apartheid.

Several large demonstrations have taken place in **New York City** since the beginning of the U.S./Israeli war on Gaza.

Judy Bello, Marsha Goldberg, Kris Hamel, Terri Kay, Dianne Mathiowetz, Monica Moorehead, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Verdieu and Scott Williams contributed to this report.



Ecuador

See article page 9.

ide

that Israel is on a path toward “suicide” in Gaza and praised the Palestinian resistance.

A July 22 article by Ali Abunimah, co-founder of Electronic Intifada, was titled “Israel is being defeated in Gaza as it was in Lebanon.”

Anti-Zionist Israeli Gilad Atzmon writes: “The IDF's defeat in Gaza leaves the Jewish State with no hope. The moral is simple. If you insist on living on someone else's land, military might is an essential ingredient to discourage the dispossessed from acting to reclaim their rights. The level of IDF casualties and the number of bodies of Israeli elite soldiers returning home in coffins send a clear message to both Israelis and Palestinians.” (occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com, July 21)

The rulers of Israel and the U.S. arrogantly assumed they had politically isolated Hamas through the coup in Egypt and war in Syria. Israel was determined to break the announced unity government of Hamas and Fatah and the armed opposition in Gaza.

This heroic resistance will resonate globally. It will strengthen the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. It is urgent that everyone opposed to war and oppression stand up for Palestine NOW! □



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD



WW PHOTO: SCOTT WILLIAMS

Canadians show water solidarity

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

Efforts by Emergency Manager Kevyn Orr to carry out the program of restructuring in favor of the banks and corporations during the city's bankruptcy proceedings have drawn growing opposition from inside Detroit and beyond.

On July 24, a delegation from Windsor, Ontario, representing the Council of Canadians and the Canadian Union of Public Employees, arrived to find a crowd of more than 100 people waiting outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, where the EM and local political officials have their offices. While waiting for the Canadians' arrival, representatives from a number of community organizations spoke out against the ongoing attacks leveled against the working class and poor residents of this majority African-American city.

Representatives from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, People's Water Board and others are calling for an indefinite halt to the water shutoffs, which have escalated since the spring. They are also demanding that every household whose water services have been terminated have its water turned back on and that there should be no privatization of the public water system in Detroit.

The Detroit Water and Sewerage Department announced in federal bankruptcy court on July 21 that it was suspending shutoffs for 15 days. However, Homrich Co. trucks, from the private firm hired by Orr to carry out many of the shutoffs, are still on the job, this time



Thousands demand water in Detroit, July 18.

WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

going after those who have allegedly "turned their water back on illegally."

After being held up briefly at the tunnel crossing at the Windsor-Detroit border, the water convoy arrived to cheers from waiting activists. Maude Barlow, chairperson of the Council of Canadians, spoke to the crowd and reiterated the organization's view that the water shutoffs are a complete violation of human rights.

Barlow, a concerned advocate for water rights, was instrumental in bringing the dire situation in Detroit to the United Nations' attention. A U.N. statement that the massive termination of water services was inhumane assisted in the political struggle to draw national and international attention to the plight of the people of Detroit.

After the rally concluded, the convoy headed to St. Peter's Episcopal Church near downtown, which is currently serving as a water station. The water convoy then went to other locations to drop off

gallons of water.

The delivery of 750 gallons of water to Detroit will not make even a minor dent in filling the void left by shutoffs impacting 17,000 households. But this symbolic water delivery helps illustrate the failure of the emergency management and the overall capitalist system in the U.S. in addressing a problem that is bound to worsen not only in this city but throughout the country and the world.

'Make the banks pay'

The 11th Freedom Friday demonstration began July 25 outside the water department headquarters downtown on Randolph Street. After rallying for a half-hour, demonstrators marched to the Greek Town entertainment district where they held a street meeting outside the Wayne County Treasurer's Office on Monroe Avenue.

This target was selected since more than 40,000 tax foreclosures have tak-

en place in the county this year. Money from the federal government turned over to the state of Michigan for the so-called "hardest hit" fund — which is ostensibly designed to assist distressed homeowners in working out terms of payment for mortgages and property taxes — is not being used for these purposes.

Instead the resources that should be allocated to keep people in their homes are being appropriated to fund blight removal efforts in Detroit. The Detroit Blight Removal Task Force is headed by multibillionaire banker and business magnate Dan Gilbert. It is Gilbert and his business interests, among others, that are deciding the future economic landscape of the city of Detroit.

After leaving the Greek Town district, the Freedom Friday protest moved to Campus Martius Park in the center of the financial district. Marchers walked around the park as an officially sanctioned party was being held to commemorate the 313th anniversary of Detroit's "founding," that is, the French occupation of Detroit.

Demonstrators chanted "Make the banks pay!" and then marched past Chase Bank to City Hall where they held another brief rally.

During the course of the march through the financial district, private security guards at Dan Gilbert's corporations followed the group, lining up outside the banks and office buildings owned by the Quicken Loans chief who now owns over 60 buildings in the downtown area.

On July 26, Workers World Party hosted a public forum on the water crisis from a revolutionary viewpoint. □

Guest Commentary

GARNER & GAZA

By Henry Hagins

Against the illuminating backdrop of the Dred Scott Decision of 1857, there exists disturbing parallels between the cowardly New York Police Department's racist killing of Eric Garner and the on-going, genocidal assault against the heroic Palestinian people by the Zionist garrison state of Israel. These parallels are fervently anchored in the ideology of exceptionalism, imperial expansion and white supremacy. They go to the very heart of how the United States developed into an unprecedented empire, along with the creation of Israel as an extension to that end.

In effect, this settler-state, intrusively planted in the Middle East, owes much of its existence and behavior to the world-threatening model, carefully crafted by the United States, from its bloody inception. Israel is a "mini-carbon-copy" of U.S. imperialist greed and dominance.

The Indigenous population of what was to become known as North America was virtually wiped out and replaced by enslaved Africans, forcibly deposited on its shores. Neither the Native peoples nor Africans, contrary to myths, passively accepted the practices of land theft and stolen labor. Chief Crazy Horse and Harriet Tubman immediately come to mind as symbols of resistance. Rebellion continues to run through their children's veins, despite ingenious attempts by the ruling class to pacify and smokescreen its disgraceful deeds.

As Dr. Martin Luther King prophetically pointed out, "Truth crushed to earth shall rise again." The pristine monument of him, recently erected in Washington, D.C., can never fully hide the J. Edgar

Hoover-led FBI war waged against him and other freedom fighters. Many still remember his April 1967 speech at New York's Riverside Church strongly opposing the deceitfully introduced and criminal U.S. military presence in Vietnam.

The Dred Scott Decision of 1857, presided over by Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney, nefariously reaffirmed the legal and culturally held belief that Africans in the U.S., slave or free, had no rights that whites were bound to respect! When looking at the NYPD-instigated death of Eric Garner and the fraudulent excuse by Israel about the deaths of three Israeli teenagers as the pretext to resume its genocidal attacks against the Palestinians by a heavily militarized state, the immediate and stark violations become unavoidable in the Dred Scott context.

Disenfranchisement and destruction

African-American Eric Garner lived in the NYPD-occupied Black and Latino/a section of Staten Island. Palestinians live in Israeli-controlled Gaza and the West Bank. Both peoples are subject to the whims of occupying armies. In both instances, their human and political rights are eroded and made a mockery of on a daily basis. The history of contempt and the evasion of responsibility for causing such pain are well-documented, yet disingenuously denied by the occupiers.

Adding insult to injury, the besieged parties are shamelessly blamed for authoring their own misery and/or death by these same, heavily armed and numerically superior forces!

The courageously recorded video of Eric Garner's demise on July 17 clearly

tells what happened when the "Five-O" NYPD attack dogs surrounded him. With his hands in the air, the deadly chokehold was applied in sneak-attack fashion from behind. While he was being wrestled to the ground, his last words were, "I can't breathe." His earlier denials of any wrongdoing were cavalierly ignored. And he expressed indignation about being badgered by the cops. According to the video footage, not a shred of effort was made to restore his breathing by the cops and the Emergency Medical Services!

To no surprise, none of the police involved in the killing of Garner has been charged with any offenses, much less for murder. In fact, Daniel Pantaleo, the officer who put the chokehold on Garner, has been put on desk duty despite a well-known history of police abuse.

There are countless, outrageous and humiliating stories about Palestinians being abused at checkpoints, from molestations to death at the cruel hands of settlers and Israeli military forces. Israeli President Ben Netanyahu, like NYC Police Chief Bill Bratton, doubletalks while generally defending these obscene practices. In 2012, the NYPD opened an office in Israel!

State-sponsored terrorism

Blacks and Latinos/as, in the main in the U.S., like their sisters and brothers in Palestine, remain the targets of state-sponsored terrorism. It is reinforced with declared and undeclared Jim Crow laws. The results are largely the same. The results are not acceptable!

Adolph Hitler, in his book "Mein Kampf," credits none other than the U.S.

itself in laying out the formula he used for land theft, population reduction and the enslavement of subject people in his demented pursuit of world domination!

The United States seeks world domination, big time! Rationales offered are found in the notions of manifest destiny, U.S. exceptionalism, imperial expansion, along with open, crude or cleverly hidden doses of racism. That is the fuel that powers its economic and political systems. And that won't change on its own accord. Take a critical look at its sordid record!

Israel, as an extension of this philosophy, added the woefully specious argument of "A land without a people, for a people without a land" to justify, since 1948, the heartless displacement of the Palestinian people from their indigenous land.

A junior partner in the U.S. lust for control of the world and its resources, particularly the oil, gas and water in the region, Israel has been backed up with countless stockpiles of military and political hardware (to the tune of billions of dollars), as a reward and obligation to carry out the insidious plans of its relentless benefactor, as well as its own plans. It cannot prevail.

As we honor the memories of Eric Garner, Anthony Baez, Amadou Diallo, Eleanor Bumpurs, Ramarley Graham, Kimani Gray, Kyam Livingston and so many others at the time of Israel's recent assault inspired by U.S. imperialism, at home and abroad, let's remember comrade Joe Hill's admonishment, "Don't mourn, organize!" In truth, "We are all Gaza."

Henry Hagins is a co-chairperson of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition in New York City.

South Africa

NUMSA agrees to end strike

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

A strike by 220,000 members of the National Union of Metalworkers in South Africa, the largest labor organization in the country, ended with a three-year agreement for a wage increase. The strike shut down production at General Motors facilities and other industrial locations beginning on July 1.

NUMSA Secretary General Irvin Jim said that the workers had agreed to a 10 percent pay hike for the lowest paid employees. Jim said his members voted overwhelmingly to accept the deal.

"We urge all our members to report for work tomorrow," Jim told the international press in Johannesburg on July 28. The strike had impacted 12,000 firms throughout South Africa.

The metal workers' industrial actions halted production at large companies, including construction and engineering group Murray & Roberts Holdings Ltd., beverage-can maker Nampak Ltd. and Toyota Motor Corp.

To end the strike, the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa agreed to pay the lowest earners an annual wage increase of 10 percent for three years. NUMSA and smaller labor unions such as Solidarity accepted that offer.

Nonetheless, another industrial owners' group, the National Employers' Association of South Africa, refused the wage deal, NUMSA announced. "We are not happy with the deal that has been done and will lock out the striking workers from Tuesday (July 29)," NEASA spokesperson Sya van der Walt-Potgieter told reporters. (moneyweb.co.za, July 28)

The strike reportedly cost the owners of the affected firms 300 million rand (\$28 million) per day. A series of strikes have hit major industries in South Africa the last two years. Western-based financial publications no longer consider the country to be the leading economy on the continent. Nigeria, an oil-producing state in West Africa, is now regarded as having the top economy.

During the final days of negotiations the employer's group SEIFSA and NUMSA reached a compromise. The union will be allowed to strike over issues unresolved in the talks.

The bosses credited South African Minister of Labor Mildred Oliphant for her intervention as a major factor in ending the strike. The African National Congress government has been quite concerned with the economic and social impact of extended labor struggles in the country.

SEIFSA Chief Executive Officer Kaizer Nyatumba acknowledged that a deal had been reached over section 37; the

employers' group was satisfied this would shield firms from two-tier bargaining. He welcomed the end of the strike and praised Oliphant for her role in facilitating negotiations which were stalled for several weeks.

NUMSA strike tests political strength

This strike by NUMSA was also designed to test the political will of its members as well as public support for such an industrial action. The labor organization has been involved in an intense ideological struggle in the Congress of South African Trade Unions, where it is the largest affiliate, over its role in the Tripartite Alliance with the ruling ANC and the South African Communist Party.

NUMSA has accused the ANC and the SACP of advancing policies that do not serve the class interests of South African workers. At the same time, other COSATU affiliates and officials have charged NUMSA leader Irvin Jim with being an ultraleftist who is no longer functioning democratically within Alliance structures.

In addition, NUMSA has threatened to form a workers' party that could challenge the ANC in upcoming provincial and national elections. NUMSA refused to endorse the ANC for re-election in the recently held national poll on May 7.

Despite the NUMSA leadership's lack

of support, the ANC still won over 62 percent of the vote and remains the dominant political party in the parliament and the administration. Two other opposition parties, the Democratic Alliance and the Economic Freedom Fighters, made gains in the national parliament.

The EFF was formed by Julius Malema, the former president of the ANC Youth League. The ANC expelled Malema along with other former ANCYL leaders during 2012-13.

Malema has advanced demands for the nationalization of land and mines by the South African state. The DA advocates neoliberal policies to the right of the ANC's existing program.

The ANC says that it has not abandoned the Freedom Charter demands for land nationalization and people's control over the economy, but its critics say otherwise. Debates about the future of the South African democratic transition will continue among the various parties and sectors of the working class.

Ultimately it will be the people, based upon the political balance of forces, the level of organization of the working class and their consciousness, who determine the future of the struggle. Whether NUMSA is successful in building an alternative to the ANC will depend upon these variables as well as the popular will of the South African masses. □

Anti-Maliki coalition formed in Iraq

By **John Catalinotto**

July 26 — In early June news from Iraq suddenly burst out in the media, which told us a "terrorist" Sunni group called the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant was about to storm Baghdad. In a June 19 speech, President Barack Obama promised U.S. military advisers to aid the regime of unpopular Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.

On June 10, ISIL declared a caliphate or Islamic state in areas of Iraq and Syria where its military had a presence and became known as I.S. Like al-Qaida, the I.S. is a fundamentalist Sunni sect that excommunicates other sects as enemies of Islam, treats women as near slaves, is socially repressive and doesn't recognize Iraqi nationhood.

When the offensive stalled north of Baghdad, media news from Iraq almost disappeared, replaced by reports of battles in Ukraine and Palestine, but the crisis in Iraq continues. To blame is U.S. imperialism, whose criminal invasion and occupation of Iraq (2003-11) supported Maliki's rise and which continues to play a thoroughly negative role in the region.

Washington wrecked Iraq

In the 1980s, the U.S. offered military aid to both Iraq and Iran to encourage them to keep fighting each other in a war that debilitated both countries. In 1991, the U.S. bombed Iraq mercilessly and then imposed murderous sanctions for 12 years that killed a half-million children.

In 2003, making up the pretext of "weapons of mass destruction," the U.S.-British alliance invaded and occupied Iraq, a war crime which led to the death of 1.5 million Iraqis and drove another 5 million into foreign exile or internal relocation. Faced with a heroic Iraqi resistance, the U.S. occupation imposed conditions forcing Iraqis to identify as Sunni or Shiite Muslims and as Arabs or

Kurds, creating and exacerbating differences to "divide and conquer."

When it comes to groups like the I.S. and al-Qaida, U.S. imperialism and its absolute monarchy clients in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states have armed, funded and used groups like these to weaken or overthrow progressive regimes — for example in Afghanistan in the 1980s and more recently in Libya and Syria. At the same time imperialist politicians and media demonize these groups as "Islamic terrorists" to justify military intervention from Africa to South Asia.

While the presence of I.S. and its ambivalent relation to imperialism raise questions about the anti-Maliki opposition, the Iraqi uprising nevertheless has a popular following based on mass hostility to Maliki. Other participants have their own agendas and supporters. These include Iraqi tribal leaders from the mostly Sunni areas and organizations associated with the Ba'ath Party, whose bourgeois nationalist regime had ruled Iraq before the 2003 U.S. invasion.

The Ba'athists declare publicly that there is no permanent agreement between them and the I.S. and that they have always been a secular party that promotes a unified Iraq and will protect the rights of religious minorities, educate women, etc. Thus they are in direct conflict with the I.S. program.

The Ba'athists' public statements oppose both Washington's and Iran's support for the Maliki regime.

Maliki has persecuted all his opponents, especially those in the mostly Sunni areas. Much of the Sunni population see him as a sectarian anti-Sunni dictator, set up by the occupation. Steeped in corruption, he also faces organized and mass opposition from the majority Shiite regions; this is hardly ever reported in the corporate media.

On July 16 in Amman, Jordan, some 200 Iraqi tribal leaders, Ba'athists, Isla-

mists and activists representing about 90 percent of the tribal and rebel groups in Iraq gathered to form the Iraqi opposition's first unified coalition at the "Amman conference to save Iraq." The meeting excluded I.S., which was not invited.

As the meeting closed, Ahmed Dabashi, head of the Islamic Army revolutionary group in Iraq and conference co-organizer, said, "We call on the international community to cut ties with the Maliki government, which is killing its own citizens, and to support the Iraqi revolution to restore a united Iraq." (jordantimes.com, July 16) Opposition leaders agreed to unite all rebel forces under the leadership of former Saddam-era military commanders, in what they called the Revolutionary National Iraq Army.

The coalition plans a second meeting in Amman in August where it hopes to gather more than 1,000 representatives from the opposition to Maliki.

According to the same report, the coalition was unable to reach agreement re-

garding its future relations with the I.S., which has the military initiative in much of the opposition-controlled territory.

The one event in July that received corporate media attention was I.S.' expulsion of Iraqi Christians from the city of Mosul. The Muslim Scholars Association in Iraq, which had given ideological support to the anti-U.S. resistance during the occupation, denounced this forced deportation. (middleeastmonitor.com, July 21) The MSA often calls for actions that would reinforce unity among Iraqis, such as defending the integrity of Shiite holy sites in areas controlled by the opposition.

As International Action Center co-coordinator Sara Flounders wrote in Workers World on June 25, it was Washington that "promoted Iraqi organizations founded on religion, ethnicity, nationality or sect" and the only solution for Iraq is anti-imperialist unity that can force the U.S. to get out and stay out of Iraq. (tinyurl.com/lnc5b9p) □

Latin America stands with Gaza

By **Berta Joubert-Ceci**

July 27 — Solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for freedom and self-determination has long been strong among Latin Americans. With many having lived decades under rightist regimes, they identify with the fight against state repression. Now, their success bringing popular governments to office gives them confidence in victory and strengthens that solidarity.

Since the latest criminal U.S.-Israeli attack against Gaza, there have been

many demonstrations, pronouncements, petitions and other actions, often weekly, expressing firm solidarity with the Palestinian people in almost every country of South and Central America and the Caribbean. Organizers say that as long as the genocide continues, so will the protests.

In several countries demonstrations have united unions, students, women, peasants, the Indigenous, Afro-descendants, LGBT peoples, artists, academics, etc., all behind one common goal. Artists and young collectives use their creativity

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WORKERS WORLD

editorials

Why the Palestinians struggle

What is it that keeps the Palestinian people struggling?

The Israeli rulers, with the Pentagon, Wall Street and Washington at their back, are going to the most heinous lengths to break the spirit of the Palestinians with indiscriminate mass killings. Attacking Gaza mainly from the air, their bombs and rockets have murdered more than 1,000 Palestinians in this current blitzkrieg. Their targets — little boys on a beach, children in a playground, hospitals trying to save the wounded, crowded apartment buildings — seem deliberately chosen to show that they will stop at nothing in order to crush the resistance.

Yet even now Israel is wary of sending its ground troops into central Gaza City, knowing that even if just a few more are killed, the political effect will ripple throughout Israeli society and turn more people against this horror.

The imperialists and their protégés in Tel Aviv scramble to find something sinister or irrational about the determination of the Palestinians not to give in to Israeli terror. But a growing body of world opinion finds their resistance heroic and the crimes of Israel ever more despicable.

Despite all the disinformation, two things become clearer all the time.

The Palestinians won't stop struggling because they are indigenous to the place now called "Israel," and can trace their culture and their ancestors back for countless generations. They are rooted in the land and the soil. They know every olive tree that has been growing since before their parents and grandparents were alive. They will fight on without end for freedom and self-determination in this land that has been robbed from them.

Most of the Israelis, on the other hand, are settlers or descendants of settlers. The wave from Europe in 1948 feared a revival of the terrible Nazi Holocaust that had wiped out so many millions of Jews there. Palestine wasn't their first choice, but the U.S. had effectively closed its borders to most of these would-be immigrants, while giving money and diplomatic support to the Zionist project.

Once Israel became wealthier, a second wave of Jews migrated there from the U.S.

and elsewhere for economic and/or ideological reasons. Their colonial mentality is similar to that of the white settlers in southern Africa who benefited from domination of the Indigenous peoples and their land.

This is why, around the world, those opposed to colonialism and imperialism call for self-determination for the Palestinian people — meaning supporting their right to their own independent state in their own homeland. The Israeli regime refuses to even recognize the existence of the Palestinians as a people. The U.S. for years has been pretending to be an honest broker while trying to force conditions on the Palestinians that would make them give up their right to self-determination.

As the founder of Workers World Party, Sam Marcy, wrote more than two decades ago, about 50,000 Jews, many having immigrated from Europe with the encouragement of the Zionist movement, lived alongside 1.25 million Palestinians by the 1920s.

"If this were just an immigration of individual Jewish people seeking a haven from continual anti-Semitic outrages in Europe," wrote Marcy, "it might be regarded from a wholly sympathetic point of view. But it was much more than that. It was part of a planned and engineered conception to take over Palestine and disperse and oust the native population. ..."

"Viewing it in abstract terms from the point of view of mere logic, without seeking its material roots, it could appear to be merely a fantastic plan. But this phantasmagoria was part and parcel of what by the 19th century had become a common practice.

"Is not the entire Western Hemisphere the result of barbarous invasions that resulted in the displacement and extermination of millions of native people, a process that continues to this very day?"

"It is improper to divorce and isolate the invasion of Palestine from the entire course of imperialist invasion and the subjugation of oppressed peoples over several centuries." ("Palestine and the new world order," *Workers World*, Feb. 13, 1992)

Then, as now, the heroic Palestinian people deserve wholehearted support as they struggle to achieve the right to control their own destiny in their own land. □

No ban on the Communist Party of Ukraine!

Workers World condemns in the strongest terms the latest moves by the far-right government in Ukraine, backed by the United States ruling class, to ban the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU).

The new measure against the country's largest political organization comes on the heels of a war frenzy against Russia and the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, whipped up after the crash of the Malaysian airliner on July 17. Both Kiev and Washington have accused Moscow and the rebels in southeastern Ukraine of downing the civilian plane — without a shred of evidence.

We have also learned that a local Communist Party leader in Donetsk, Glinisky Secretary Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Kovshun, was tortured and murdered by the Ukrainian National Guard near the town of Luzhky the night of July 22.

The lynching of this longtime communist activist, like the massacre at the Odessa House of Trade Unions on May 2, exposes the Ukrainian junta's real agenda: to murder, imprison or exile not only KPU leaders, but all anti-fascist and pro-socialist fighters in Ukraine.

A show trial of the Communist Party was set to begin July 24 in Kiev, charging the country's largest political organization with supporting "separatism" and "terrorism."

The KPU has been targeted for its opposition to the February coup d'etat, which brought a coalition of neoliberal politicians, oligarchs and outright fascists to power, and for opposing the civil war unleashed against the largely industrial, working-class, southeastern Donbass region of Donetsk and Lugansk, where a strong anti-fascist resistance is contending for power.

Since the coup, Communist Party offices have been occupied and burned down by neo-Nazi groups like Right Sector and Svoboda, party activists have been kidnapped and beaten, and parliamentarians physically attacked.

While campaigning for president last May, Communist Party leader Peter Simonenko survived an assassination attempt after a television debate.

Not satisfied to await the results of the kangaroo court, the Verkhovna Rada (parliament), having effectively banned elected members of the KPU, the Party of Regions and others following the illegal coup, changed its rules July 22 to allow parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchynov to dissolve the Communist Party parliamentary group. Billionaire President Petro Poroshenko signed a bill the same day legalizing the move.

"Tomorrow morning [Thursday], it will be published in *Golos Ukrainy* [official newspaper of the Verkhovna Rada], meaning it will come into force, and I will fulfill a historic mission and announce the Communist Party's cessation," Turchynov said while opening the July 23 parliamentary session.

Don't expect any condemnation of this blatantly anti-democratic measure from the U.S. or its NATO allies. Washington spent billions of dollars to topple the elected government of President Viktor Yanukovich and has pumped in billions more to assist the regime's terrorist war on Donbass, as part of its campaign to station NATO troops and weapons on Russia's border.

Sergei Kirichuk, national coordinator of Union Borotba (Struggle) — himself forced into exile by the junta following the Odessa massacre — writes:

"Destruction of the Communist Party today will drive all leftist movements underground. This will set a precedent for the fierce persecution of all who share anti-fascist and socialist views. The country has slid into a bloody dictatorship under a regime of rightist politicians who for the first time in a hundred years have unleashed a civil war against their own people. And now we need broad solidarity with those who face the repression of rights."

Stop the war on Donbass! U.S. out of Ukraine! Hands off the Communist Party, Borotba and the anti-fascist resistance! □

Latin America stands with Gaza

Continued from page 9

to expose Israel's crimes and Washington's support.

In Brazil, for example, demonstrators projected slogans at night on the walls of the Israeli and U.S. embassies. Huge banners cross an entire street and educational forums about Palestine, videos, documentaries, poetry, music and all forms of arts are used to express the outrage and the solidarity. People call for boycotts, sanctions and divestment, including academic sanctions.

In Trelew in Argentina's Patagonia region, a broad coalition including the Landless Movement marched under the slogan: "We are all Gaza." They took down the Israeli flag and raised the Palestinian. When the Trelew government restored the Israeli flag, the coalition wrote a protest statement, recalling the Trelew people's heroic history of struggle, including facing massacres. "The dignity of this people is intact, as is the flag of Palestine that will fly again high on our sky," they wrote.

Every progressive writer has written

on Gaza. Eduardo Galeano's essay circulates on the Internet. Nobel Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel just wrote a call to end the Israeli military attack, block military trade with Israel, apply sanctions like the ones against apartheid in South Africa and give humanitarian aid to Palestine while recognizing it as a sovereign state, independent and free.

Narciso Isa Conde, a revolutionary from the Dominican Republic, wrote in a commentary, "I hope that Hamas and the Palestinian resistance organizations can impart to Israel a similar political-military defeat that Hizbullah dealt when it invaded Lebanon."

Government actions

Not content with words alone, the government of Venezuela acted, handing over a shipment of medicine for Gaza during an event in Cairo commemorating the 62nd anniversary of the revolution in Egypt. Last spring the Bolivarian Republic signed an agreement to send diesel fuel to Palestine and increase cooperation in political, educational, economic and

trade areas. President Nicolás Maduro stated: "We must act and prosecute those who are killing the Palestinian people."

Both Venezuela and Bolivia broke relations with Israel after the 2008-2009 bombardment of Gaza.

Bolivian President Evo Morales and Cuba's Fidel Castro have strongly condemned the criminal massacre.

Cuba has long supported the Palestinian people, this time calling on the international community at the U.N. to demand that Israel cease the attacks. Palestinians at the Shatila refugee camp in Lebanon who had studied in Cuba, commemorated the 61st anniversary of the Cuban youth's attack on the Moncada barracks on July 26, which was the first blow of the revolution. They also expressed their immense gratitude to the "permanent solidarity of Cuba with the Palestinian cause." (*Prensa Latina*, July 27)

Nicaraguans inaugurated a mural celebrating 34 years of relations with Palestine. The mural has the images of common martyrs — Palestinians who died fighting in Nicaragua and Nicaraguans

who died fighting for Palestine.

Ecuador, Chile and Brazil have recalled their ambassadors in Israel. Israel reacted by labeling Brazil an irrelevant and dwarf country. Brazil's government responded, stating that it will bring the issue up for discussion and support at the Mercosur meeting on July 29 in Caracas. The Mercosur common market includes Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Organizations in Latin America are demanding their governments break all relations with Israel. Those countries that still have trade and relations with the criminal state are under enormous popular pressure to end them, even those who have condemned the genocide in words.

Miguel Mejía, the Secretary General of the United Left Movement of the Dominican Republic, who was invited to the third Congress of the United Socialist Party in Venezuela on July 26-28, plans to ask President Maduro to promote a resolution in Mercosur to break relations with Israel. □

Stop execution of Rodney Reed

By Gloria Rubac
Bastrop, Texas

After Texas death row prisoner Rodney Reed's family and supporters rallied and marched at the Bastrop County Courthouse and then took over Main Street for an impromptu march on July 24, they met in a community park to make more plans to stop Reed's scheduled execution date of Jan. 14, 2015.

The goals of the trip to Bastrop were to demand that District Attorney Bryan Goertz drop the execution date and test all the crime scene evidence for DNA.

"By the time we left Bastrop, we were optimistic that we can stop this miscarriage of justice," said Allison Hubbard, a member of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

The day began with a rally that heard encouraging words from Sandra Reed, Rodney Reed's mother, who told the crowd: "We are not giving up! They know Rodney is innocent and so do we. We will fight until my son is home with us. This district attorney needs to withdraw the date and decide to test all the evidence so Rodney's innocence can be proven."

Supporters included the spouse and mother of Juan Balderas, sent to death row in March after a farce of a trial in Houston. His mother, Maria Reyes, shared in Spanish that as a mother she knew what Reed's mother was feeling, but "together we can fight for what is right." Balderas' spouse, Yancy Escobar, translated for her.

Another man who fought to prove his innocence for many years is Hank Skin-

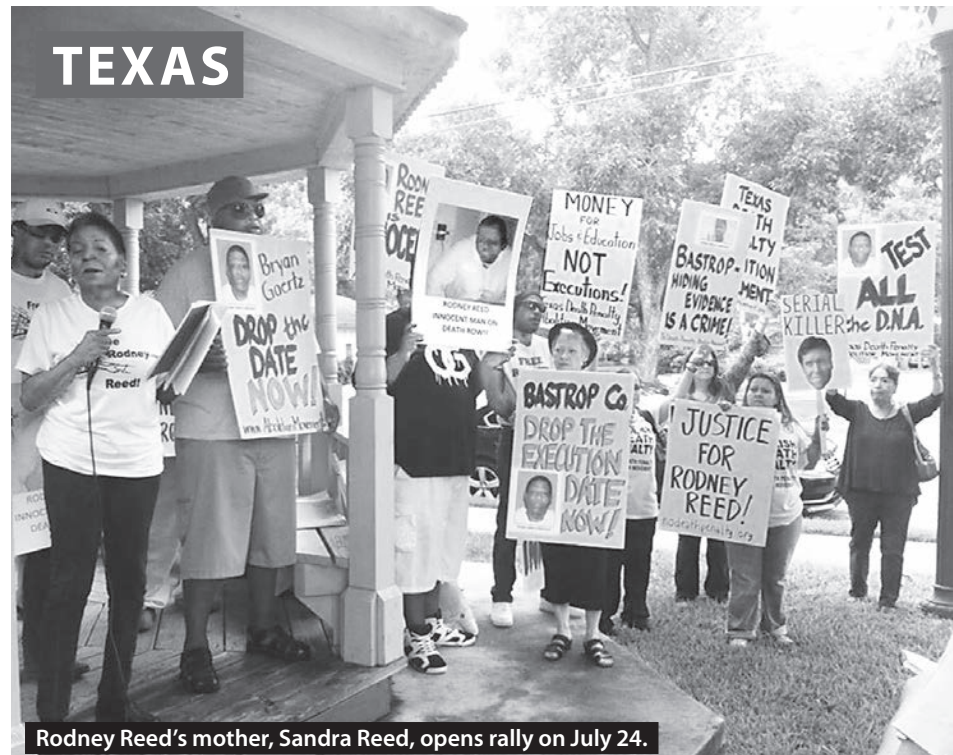
ner, who finally got some DNA testing even though the crucial piece of evidence had "disappeared." His spouse, Sandrine Ageorges-Skinner, spoke about how having a decent judge is crucial to receiving justice.

Visiting judge sets execution date

Just one week earlier, visiting Judge Doug Shaver callously set an execution date for Reed even though both the prosecutors and defense agreed to DNA testing. Now Reed must live on the "Death Watch" section of an already repressive and isolated death row.

Roderick Reed, one of Rodney's five brothers, told the demonstrators at the rally that the corrupt system must be replaced with justice. He declared, "Let's march on Main Street!" Shoppers in the quaint specialty stores that have become a tourist attraction in this small town just 30 minutes from the state capital came out to see the protest with its banners and signs held high, and many indicated their support. There were resounding cheers and words of encouragement from onlookers, many of whom were familiar with the Reed case.

Reed, who is African American, was sent to death row in 1998 for the crime of raping and killing Stacy Stites, a young woman he was having a secret affair with. Stites was white. The only physical evidence connecting him to Stites' murder was a semen sample because he had a consensual sexual relationship with her. There were no fingerprints in her vehicle, no murder weapon or other evidence. Reed was tried by an all-white jury from



Rodney Reed's mother, Sandra Reed, opens rally on July 24.

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

this small town, which still has a monument to "Confederate heroes [sic]" on the courthouse lawn.

After the successful morning protests, bolstered family members and supporters met in the park for lunch and to strategize further activities. Film showings of "State v. Reed" in Houston, attending the prison board meeting in late August and holding a community meeting in Austin were put on the map.

The Jim Crow justice system in Bastrop is beginning to crumble. More and more people do not want to have a Troy Davis in Texas. Just a few days before

this event, eight retired federal and state judges filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court asking them to accept the appeal from Reed and return his case to trial court.

Bastrop District Attorney Goertz, Judge Doug Shaver and the cops are sticking to their racist application of what they call justice. But those supporting Reed are determined to have his name added to the growing list at the National Registry of Exonerations so he can come home to his community.

Current information can be found at [facebook.com/texasinjustice](https://www.facebook.com/texasinjustice). □

Postal workers target privatization

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

The threat of privatization hung in the air as thousands of postal worker union members met in separate conventions July 21-25. More than 6,000 National Association of Letter Carriers delegates met in Philadelphia, while 2,000 delegates attended the American Postal Workers Union convention in Chicago.

Both unions organized marches to nearby Staples stores responding to a boycott called by the APWU. Last fall, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) announced a no-bid, sweetheart deal for a "pilot project" to open postal counters in more than 80 Staples stores in four states. The boycott has been endorsed by the AFL-CIO; American Federation of Teachers; Service Employees; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees; the Firefighters union; and many other labor and community organizations.

The unity created by the recently formed Postal Union Alliance was demonstrated when National Postal Mail Handlers Union President John Hegarty addressed the APWU meeting and when APWU President Mark Dimondstein spoke from the NALC convention via video. (The National Rural Letter Carriers Association is the fourth union in the PUA.)

The theme of the APWU convention was "Stand Up, Fight Back," which was reflected in such workshops as "How to Win a Grievance Without Filing (Using Our Power at Work)" and "Building Worker-Community Coalitions to Fight Post Office Consolidations." Delegates unanimously passed resolutions in support of fast food and Walmart workers' struggles for higher pay and a union.



Letter carriers protest at Staples, July 23.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

The APWU announced plans to fight the closure and consolidations of 82 processing plants with new emphasis on coalition building with other unions and community groups. NALC President Fredric Rolando has pledged to support that campaign, though no specific details were announced.

Philadelphia workshop against privatization

Members of Community-Labor United for Postal Jobs and Services (CLUPJS) and Community and Postal Workers United (CPWU) handed out 4,000 fliers urging delegates to attend a "Forum for a Broad United Fightback Against Privatization." Organizers urged union officials, shop stewards and letter carriers to view their struggle against privatization in the context of the challenges facing the whole U.S. multinational working class.

The event featured Warren McLendon, of APWU Local 7048; Christa Parlacoski,

of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers' Caucus of Working Educators; and Justin Watson, of Fight for \$15. CLUPJS leader Johnnie Stevens and CPWU organizers Dave Welsh and Melissa Rakestraw all emphasized how the unions and workers represented at the forum share a common interest in fighting together against privatization and raising wages for all workers.

Invited speakers Wendell Young IV, president of Food and Commercial Workers Local 1776, and Joe McGarrity, of Utility Workers Union 686, did not attend, because they were reluctant to cross the informational picket line set up by the Carpenters Union outside the Convention Center. They promised to participate in a future forum.

Forum organizers invited Ronald Curran, of Carpenters Local 8, to address the meeting. He explained to the 50 labor and community members that while four of six building trades' unions have agreed to

a "customer service agreement" with Convention Center management, the Teamsters Union and the Carpenters have been unfairly locked out since May 9.

Many NALC members joined the carpenters' rally on the street on the last two days of the convention. The Metropolitan Regional Council of Carpenters responded by officially endorsing the Staples boycott and organizing a contingent of 20 members to join more than 300 letter carriers who marched to the Staples store.

Broad fightback can win

APWU membership has already been reduced by tens of thousands of workers, reflecting the USPS management's decisions to close half of all postal processing plants, reduce window service hours and close thousands of post offices. After a decade of serious setbacks, the APWU leadership and membership seem ready to "Stand Up, Fight Back."

Letter carriers are beginning to understand that what happens to other postal workers ultimately affects them. For instance, increased distances between mail processing plants result in late mail delivery for carriers, often forcing them to make unsafe home deliveries in the dark.

Postal workers are not alone. Workers at city, state and federal levels all face threats of privatization, which, at its core, is a drive to replace unionized workers earning decent wages and benefits with low-wage, non-union workers. Privatization and austerity mean the services our communities need are reduced, but at a higher price to boot. It's in the interest of all workers, organized and unorganized, and neighborhood organizations to join in the common fight against the forces of privatization — the 1%. □

Todos somos Gaza

EUA provee armas y cobertura diplomática para la limpieza étnica israelí en Gaza

Por Joyce Chediak

22 de julio — La horrenda agresión de Israel contra el pueblo de Gaza se encuentra en su 14º día. Hoy mismo, Tel Aviv utilizó su arsenal suministrado por Estados Unidos para atacar cinco mezquitas y una unidad de cuidados intensivos del hospital Deir al-Balah, matando al menos cinco personas, incluyendo médicos e hiriendo al menos 70, entre ellos 30 paramédicos.

Hoy mismo, bombas lanzadas por Israel incendiaron 19 botes de pesca e impactos directos demolieron muchas casas, incluyendo una torre residencial en el centro de la ciudad de Gaza matando a 11 personas, entre ellas cinco niños; una casa en Khan Younis, acabando con una familia extendida de 26 miembros que se reunían para la cena de Ramadán; y una casa en Rafah matando a 10 personas, entre ellas cuatro niños y un bebé.

La agresión ha matado a más de 575 palestinos/as hasta la fecha. [Nota redacción: hoy 29 de julio van ya más de 1.100 personas] Según la ONU, más del 75 por ciento de las víctimas son civiles palestinos, un aumento marcado de las agresiones anteriores israelíes, y un gran número de ellos niñas/os.

A pesar de la abrumadora fuerza desplegada contra ella, la población de Gaza está contraatacando. La resistencia calle por calle por parte de Hamas y otros combatientes en el barrio Shijaia de la ciudad de Gaza, ha dejado 27 soldados israelíes muertos y uno capturado. Los misiles siguen siendo disparados contra Israel. En Cisjordania, la electricidad fue cortada en varios asentamientos israelíes, y un puesto de control israelí fue tomado.

Obama y Kerry culpan a Hamas

Mientras tanto, el gobierno de EUA ha proporcionado la cobertura diplomática que permite continuar el asalto asesino contra las/os civiles de Gaza. Esta semana, mientras las bombas suministradas por EUA caían sobre casas palestinas, Barack Obama afirmó por dos veces el “derecho” de Israel a defenderse.

Gaza no tiene ejército, fuerza aérea ni marina de guerra y ha estado bajo asedio israelí durante seis años. Es increíble pensar que mientras Israel dispara miles de misiles de alta tecnología en los hogares en Gaza, cualquier diplomático pueda decir que la “amenaza” viene de misiles y túneles de Gaza.

Los misiles palestinos disparados desde Gaza hacia Israel siempre han sido una respuesta a la agresión y la negación de los derechos de las/os palestinos por Israel. Ni una sola vez los bombardeos y la matanza que Israel perpetró varias veces en Gaza fue capaz de detener los misiles palestinos. La manera de detener los misiles desde Gaza una vez y por todas es levantar el bloqueo de Gaza y dar al pueblo sus derechos.

EUA e Israel buscan alto al fuego pro imperialista

Ahora, obligado por la ola de indignación internacional al horror que su alia-



do más importante en Oriente Medio está infligiendo en Gaza, el gobierno de EUA ha reconocido finalmente - de manera enrevesada - el impacto de los asesinatos del ejército israelí. El 21 de julio, el secretario de Estado de EUA John Kerry dijo: “Estamos profundamente preocupados por las consecuencias del esfuerzo adecuado y legítimo de Israel a defenderse”. (www.aljazeera.com, 21 de julio)

Kerry alega que va al Oriente Medio para detener los combates. En realidad, él se apresura al Oriente Medio para tratar de imponer un alto el fuego pro-imperialista contra Hamas y el pueblo de Gaza.

Este es el objetivo de los ataques de liberados de Israel contra civiles palestinos/os - castigar de tal forma a las/os palestinos de Gaza que permita a Israel imponer un alto al fuego en sus propios términos, que incluye debilitar aún más la capacidad de Hamas para gobernar, o separar de plano a Hamas de su cargo.

Hamas ha dado sus términos para un cese del fuego, el cual incluye levantar el bloqueo de Israel, la apertura de la frontera con Israel y Egipto y la liberación de prisioneros palestinos.

Los gobiernos de EUA e Israel también quieren poner fin al acuerdo de unidad entre Hamas y la Autoridad Palestina.

El “crimen” de la población de Gaza es que eligieron a Hamas para que los represente en el año 2006. Por ello sus hogares, hospitales y mezquitas están siendo bombardeados y sus hijos asesinados.

Niños asesinados frente a medios de comunicación

Desde el 8 de julio, el primer día de los bombardeos, las/os civiles han sido los objetivos. Familias enteras, un centro de discapacitados y ambulancias han sido atacadas de forma deliberada. La impunidad con la que el gobierno israelí ha matado a los no combatientes, incluidos a niños, se puso de manifiesto el 17 de julio. Ese día el fuego desde un barco israelí mató a cuatro primos palestinos, de 9 a 11 años de edad. Estos niños estaban jugando fútbol en una playa vacía justo frente al hotel que alojaba a los medios internacionales, por lo que los asesinatos fueron presenciados por muchas/os periodistas.

El primer proyectil mató a un niño, y los otros tres comenzaron a correr. Mientras corrían, cayó un impacto directo sobre ellos y los niños fueron despedazados. (Democracy Now! 17 de julio)

Esto ocurrió en una “playa completamente vacía a excepción de los cuatro niños”, que estaban “muy, muy claramente visibles desde la distancia”, dijo un periodista de France 24.

El fotógrafo ganador del premio Pulit-

zer del New York Times Tyler Hicks explicó en Democracy Now! que Israel tiene “una máquina militar muy sofisticada que puede ver lo que está pasando, ya sea desde un dron o un barco. Ellos saben lo que están golpeando. Es bastante difícil en mi opinión confundir a hombres adultos, los militantes de Hamas, con niños de no más de 4 pies de alto, vestidos con ropa de playa, huyendo de la explosión inicial. ... especialmente teniendo en cuenta la ventana de 30 segundos entre la primera y la segunda explosión que mató a tres de los chicos... los próximos 30 segundos deberían haber sido suficiente para evaluar si se trataba de niños o personas civiles o militantes de Hamas”.

Civiles redefinidos como ‘objetivos militares legítimos’

Es significativo, además, que la respuesta de los militares israelíes fue llamar a la muerte de los cuatro niños “un desenlace trágico”, no un “error trágico”.

De hecho, el ejército israelí ha inventado todo un escenario para declarar a las/os civiles palestinos “objetivos militares legítimos”. Esto incluye una campaña de carteles de propaganda en Twitter que alega que Hamas esconde armas en mezquitas, escuelas, hospitales y hogares palestinos, aún debajo de los refugios antiaéreos, justificando así su bombardeo. “El intento es transferir a civiles a que sean daños colaterales, personas que puedan ser matadas sin violar el derecho internacional”, explicó Nicola Perugini en su artículo “Sobre ‘el blindaje humano’ en Gaza”. (Al Jazeera, 18 de julio)

Otros mensajes militares israelíes en Twitter decían: “Israel utiliza armas para proteger a su población civil. Hamas usa civiles para proteger sus armas. Hamas pone a civiles palestinos en la línea de fuego”.

La realidad es que esta población de 1,7 millones de personas se encuentra atrapada en esta faja de tierra de 25 millas de largo, sin tener adónde ir, mientras está bombardeada y disparada por el cuarto ejército más poderoso del mundo. Mientras los soldados israelíes avanzan con cobertura aérea, Tel Aviv alega que advierte a la gente para que salga. Pero ¿adónde iría? Israel y Egipto controlan las fronteras, y no permiten a la población salir de Gaza que está rodeada por muros de concreto y por vallas.

E Israel, que alegó que la invasión terrestre era para encontrar y destruir túneles cavados por Hamas y la resistencia palestina en la frontera del este de Gaza, tiene ahora sus tropas avanzando en el Oeste. Mientras tanto, decenas de miles de palestinos/as se alejan de las fronteras y ocupan la Ciudad de Gaza la cual ya está llena de gente.

Senado EUA demoniza Hamas y apoya Israel

Mientras tanto, el Senado de EUA unánimemente aprobó una resolución en apoyo a la invasión israelí y a “Israel que se defiende”. El voto del Senado fue el 17 de julio, el mismo día que los israelíes mataron a los cuatro niños palestinos en la playa. La resolución demonizando



ECUADOR

a Hamas, pide que el presidente de la Autoridad Palestina Mahmoud Abbas “disuelva el acuerdo de unidad de gobierno con Hamas y condene los ataques contra Israel”.

Irónicamente, el Primer Ministro israelí Benjamin Netanyahu, dijo que las palabras que describen con precisión las declaraciones de Obama, Kerry y el Senado EUA: “Ellos sentaron las bases diplomáticas que nos han dado el crédito internacional para operar”. (New York Times, 21 de julio)

Israel justifica sus crímenes de guerra en Gaza demonizando a Hamas. Pero las/os palestinos en Cisjordania, gobernada por la Autoridad Palestina, que Israel alega preferir – no lo pasan mejor que sus familiares en Gaza. Mientras que las/os palestinos de Gaza enfrentan bombas y tropas israelíes, las/os de Cisjordania enfrentan una versión del Ku Klux Klan. Colonos ultraderechistas armados, muchos inmigrantes de EUA, terrorizan y asesinan a la población y sirven como frente de avanzada para el robo de la tierra palestina por Tel Aviv. Un grupo de colonos israelíes confesó haber secuestrado y quemado vivo a un adolescente palestino de 16 años de edad, Muhammad Abu Khudair, en Jerusalén.

EUA/Israel tratan de borrar la identidad palestina

Los ataques israelíes/estadounidenses contra el pueblo palestino son anteriores a la fundación de Hamas en 1987. Cada dirección palestina ha sido demonizada y agredida por Israel desde que robó la tierra palestina en 1948. Los misiles y túneles de Hamas y la muerte de tres israelíes judíos en Cisjordania son todos pretextos para un ataque sanguinario largo y cuidadosamente planeado.

La realidad es que a lo largo de décadas, los ataques israelíes han sido dirigidos a quienes profesan la identidad palestina. Es esta misma identidad la que Israel trata de destruir porque la mera existencia de un pueblo que se llama palestino expone como una mentira las alegaciones de Israel de ser legítimo en vez de ser un estado colonizador. Es por ello que esta guerra contra Gaza es genocida en carácter. Esta es la razón que esta guerra — hecha posible por EUA — es una limpieza étnica.

Los gobiernos de EUA e Israel creen que pueden dar un golpe decisivo a las aspiraciones de los pueblos árabes y que pueden asegurar su control del petróleo del Medio Oriente al derrotar a las/os palestinos. Pero esto no va a suceder. El pueblo palestino se mantiene fuerte y desafiante, como lo ha sido desde que su país fue robado en 1948. Su valentía frente a enormes obstáculos ha provocado manifestaciones en todo el mundo en solidaridad con Palestina.

Aquí en EUA podemos mostrar la solidaridad al exponer las distorsiones de los medios de comunicación, los intentos verdaderos de EUA e Israel, y al aumentar la presión sobre el gobierno de Obama para que cese toda ayuda a Israel y salga del Oriente Medio.

¡Todas/os somos Gaza! □