



Solidarity protests with Ferguson:

'Stop police brutality!'



Left to right: Shandre Delaney, Ramona Africa, Derrick Stanley, Betsey Piette, Gabriel Bryant, Layne Mullet, Suzanne Ross, Patrice Armstead.

Oakland demonstration in solidarity with Ferguson.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE WW PHOTO: TERRI KAY

The demands of the people of Ferguson, Mo., and their continued fight against racism and police impunity are taking root across the country. This was reflected in this year's nationally coordinated actions on Oct. 22 "to stop mass incarceration, police terror, repression and the criminalization of a generation."

About 400 people gathered at Oscar Grant Plaza in downtown **Oakland, Calif.**, on Oct. 22 to join in the national day of resistance. After rallying, the crowd marched to the Federal Building for another short rally, then to the Glenn Dyer Detention Facility. When the march tried to move on to the police headquarters, it was met by a line of Oakland police, armed to the teeth. The crowd chanted, "Move pigs! Get out the way!" After a long standoff, the march reversed direction, headed back by Oscar Grant Plaza and blocked the intersection at 14th Street and Broadway for more than half an hour. Many families of Black and Brown youth killed by police were represented, including the parents of Alan Blueford and James Rivera Jr. and the sisters of Mario Romero. The rally was organized by the Stop Mass Incarceration Network, Bay Area.

In the largest anti-racist demonstration the city of **Rockford, Ill.**, has seen in the past year, roughly 75 people marched in solidarity with the people of Ferguson and against the racist targeting of youth of color. The march, which was heavily covered by local press, was organized by the Rockford Anti-Racist Network and the Unitarian Universalist Church. With a diverse multigenerational and multinational crowd, the march stood out as a level of solidarity with oppressed

communities not usually seen locally.

Workers World Party and Fight Imperialism, Stand Together supported the event and brought a revolutionary perspective on the struggle, denouncing the entire police force as a repressive arm of the capitalist state and defending oppressed peoples' right to resistance, whether in Ferguson or Palestine.

In a bold action, dozens of youth blocked multiple lanes of the Downtown Connector interstate expressway during rush hour in **Atlanta** on Oct. 22. The dramatic blockade was well-organized, with supporters stopping their cars near the Freedom Parkway ramp to allow protesters to get onto the expressway with their signs. Scores of others had marched from Troy Davis Park to the I-75/85 overpass and attached large banners reading "#Black Lives Matter" to the fencing.

Before long, numerous police cars with flashing lights lined up in front of the blockaders. After at least 20 minutes of resisting police orders to move, the youth walked off the interstate with hands and fists raised. No arrests were made.

An earlier rally in the park (formerly Woodruff Park, named for a Coca-Cola executive) had featured the parents of Kendrick Johnson, a Valdosta, Ga., high school student whose body was found in a rolled-up wrestling mat in what authorities called an "accidental death." Johnson's parents and friends have not stopped demanding justice and a real investigation into his suspicious death.

Other speakers included the youth activists who organized a march of some 5,000 people following Michael Brown's murder in Ferguson and who have gone there to support the people's resistance to police terror.

Representatives of the Campaign to Bring Mumia Home, the Askia Sabur Coalition, the Free Mumia Coalition, the Church of the Advocate, the Human Rights Coalition and others came together on Oct. 22 to host a press conference in **Philadelphia** about the grave consequences of Pennsylvania's recently passed "Revictimization Relief Act."

The act, signed by Gov. Tom Corbett in response to political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's recent commencement speech at Goddard College, grants district attorneys unprecedented powers to restrict the free speech of all prisoners under the guise of protecting victims of violent crime from "mental anguish." Under the law, prisoners who speak out — and their supporters — could be sued, fined and even jailed for doing so.

Patrice Armstead of Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower & Rebuild, who recently traveled to Ferguson in support of the uprising against racist police, discussed the links between prisoner repression in Philadelphia and struggle in Ferguson. She called on all people of conscience everywhere to resist this tide of state repression.

Betsey Piette of Workers World Party pointed out that this is only the most recent attempt in a decades-long campaign to silence Abu-Jamal, "the voice of the voiceless." Layne Mullett of Decarcerate PA called on the state government to invest in public education instead of mass incarceration and repression of the poor and people of color.

Ramona Africa, the only living adult survivor of the 1985 police bombing of the MOVE organization's headquarters in Philadelphia, characterized the bill as an attack on all people. She called on all people to realize their collective power and rise up in protest. Derrick Stanley, one of the Dallas 6, spoke about his firsthand experience of inhuman conditions in U.S. prisons.

Some 60 people attended the press conference, which was followed by a protest at City Hall in Philadelphia and a town hall meeting at Temple University. Reporters from NBC10 news and the Philadelphia Tribune were present, along with various independent news sources.

Tommy C., Terri Kay, Dianne Mathiowetz and Matty Starrdust contributed to this report.

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Houston protest 'Death row must go!'



By Monica Moorehead
Houston

The 15th annual march in Houston to abolish the death penalty brought together 200 people on Oct. 25. The families and friends of loved ones on Texas death row, which has the highest number of inmates of any state in the U.S., were joined by political activists, many of them young, from around the state. Harris County, where Houston is located, sends more people to death row than any other U.S. county.

The protest was organized by the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement.

The protesters gathered at the infamous 400-year "Old Hanging Tree" in Tranquility Park, where speakers made the links between the lynchings of Black people during slavery and Jim Crow and today when executions of mainly Black and Brown people take place in the death house in Huntsville, Texas. The march was followed by an outdoor rally at the Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts center.

Numerous signs showed the faces and names of those on death row, some of whom are facing execution dates as soon as Oct. 29. Many signs featured Texas Gov. Rick Perry, with "serial killer" written under his name and headshots of the hundreds of prisoners who have been executed under his watch.

Activists called for the abolishment of the death penalty as a cruel weapon targeting the poor, people of color and those who have legally proved their innocence.

Endorsers of the march included S.H.A.P.E. (Self-Help for African People through Education) Community Center; Houston Anarchist Black Cross; death row exoneree Clarence Brandley; Campaign to End the Death Penalty, Austin; Minister Don Muhammad, Nation of Islam;

Workers World Party, Houston; Kids Against the Death Penalty; End Mass Incarceration, Houston; New Black Panther Party, Houston; and Texas Moratorium Network.

Pam Africa, a leader of International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, was the keynote speaker. □

Mumia Abu-Jamal on A nation in fear

Look at the United States. Really. Look at it. From north to south, east to west; from "sea to shining sea," you'll see the frenzy of fear. Fear of Ebola. Fear of ISIS. Fear of "crime." Fear of — fear.

The reason? Well, fear sells. It sells papers, attracts viewers and pulls listeners. The national media are a virtual fear industry. There used to be an old adage in TV news: "If it bleeds, it leads." There is so much fear in this country that it can barely breathe.

And for politicians, that's fine, for they know that fear is fuel — a power unto itself that can be ridden, like a maddened steed, to power.

Two nurses catch the Ebola virus (and this only because they weren't properly protected) and schools are closed, quarantine orders are issued, and sheer, unadulterated hysteria, hyped by ratings-hungry media, travels the land like a flood.

Much of American history may be seen as frenzies of fear, which, once unleashed, drove social policies that often did more harm than that which was first feared.

The fears of Salem ignited wars against witches and monstrous tortures of women. The fears of Black slave rebellions led to waves of repression and racist violence.

The fear of the ability of drugs to expand minds led to the so-called "war on drugs," which fed a prison-industrial complex that swept millions into the biggest prison boom in history, with little, if any, effect on drug usage.

Fear. Frenzy. Fuels for media and politicians. And disaster. □

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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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Ferguson struggle emblematic of national oppression

By Larry Hales

Book-length analyses could be written on the developments in Ferguson, Mo., the majority Black enclave outside St. Louis where Michael Brown was shot by Ferguson cop Darren Wilson on Aug. 9.

There is the killing itself and then the callous way 18-year-old Michael Brown's body was left to lie in the sun, the trauma it must have caused people in the community, and the inevitable and indelible scar left, plus the message that somehow a Black life must be worth less — what else could describe the callous disregard — and the similarity to the lynchings that preceded the Civil Rights/Black Liberation struggle and how they were used to terrorize and send a message.

There is the neoliberal model and the ethnic cleansing of neighborhoods in St. Louis — more gently referred to as gentrification — and how Ferguson, which was a majority white, middle-class suburb two decades ago, became an impoverished Black city with a high unemployment rate, populated by residents pushed out of St. Louis neighborhoods by developers in collusion with politicians and their army of police.

The same script has been written in cities across the country, where quality-of-life ordinances, zero-tolerance policies, school closings and cutbacks of social services, and the break-up of families through the destruction of public housing — all of this — feeds into a model that allows white middle-class families who fled the inner cities decades ago to move into areas that were disinvested for years, and then property is bought cheap and redeveloped out from under the poor residents of color.

There are, of course, the rebellion and the constant and consistent vigilance of the people of Ferguson and St. Louis County, supported from around the country by the burgeoning movement against police repression and what may be the resurgence of the Black Liberation movement.

However, the way in which an obvious murder of yet another unarmed and capitulating Black person by a cop has been made a case of reasonable doubt of Michael Brown's innocence by virtue of his Blackness underlies any proper analysis.

It is another symptom of national oppression. The mainstream bourgeois media, the bourgeois government and

the state criminalize, vilify and make pariahs out of people of color.

The “leaks” coming from Ferguson point to a process that is purposely trying to poison the memory of Michael Brown. And they seemingly lay the foundation that would justify another heavy and repressive response from police forces in St. Louis County when the grand jury makes its decision — a decision many expect to be in favor of no indictment of Darren Wilson.

Attempts to smear Michael Brown

There have been attempts all along to smear Michael Brown. The first was the video from the convenience store, which the police department released to counter the demand for the release of the name of the cop who shot Brown.

The recent release of the autopsy results, which are being submitted as evidence before the grand jury, is another attempt to smear the young slain Black male and paint Darren Wilson as a cop just doing his job and protecting himself — instead of a person who shot numerous times and shot to death an unarmed person who had his hands up.

That the autopsy results were released

as validating Wilson's version of events is another slant and slander. One can think of several ways in which a person could receive a bullet wound to the hand, but such an explanation would only be believable if it appeared in a society where a Black life matters and a young Black man has a right to his life and, as in the case of Trayvon Martin too, the right not to be victimized.

For this scenario, only Darren Wilson's account matters — not that of numerous witnesses, not the fact that Brown was unarmed, nor that Wilson initiated and escalated a situation because he saw two young Black men walking in the street.

What further adds to the anger — and is a perfect example of white privilege in U.S. society — is that Michael Brown and protesters around the country have been labeled thugs and worse, while college-age whites who rampaged at a pumpkin fest in Keane, N.H., and at a football-related event in West Virginia were treated with kid gloves. The participants were called rowdy revelers and mischief makers — none of the racist, inflammatory language hurled at people in Ferguson who responded to a racist killing of a young college-bound Black man. □

Block the Boat Oakland keeps ship away

WW PHOTOS: TERRI KAY



The Block the Boat Coalition marches in solidarity with Palestine. Oakland, Calif.

By Terri Kay
Oakland, Calif.

More than 200 pro-Palestinian protesters marched from the West Oakland Bay Area Rapid Transit station to the Stevedoring Services of America terminal at the Port of Oakland on Oct. 26. They were celebrating the failure of the Zim Beijing container ship to arrive at the port for unloading and, in the words of organizers, “show[ing] Zim what they can expect if they try to come back. Let's show the world that the Bay Area says no to Zionism.”

The Block the Boat Coalition had led the effort that kept the Zim Piraeus from unloading the bulk of its cargo in Oak-

land over the course of four days starting on Aug. 16. They declared the Zim Beijing, originally scheduled to arrive at the Port of Oakland on Oct. 25, its new target.

After Block the Boat declared its plans, the Zim website dropped Oakland from the ship's schedule. However, marinetransit.com reported that the ship never changed its Oakland destination. As of this writing, the Beijing continues to head west and is more than 1,100 nautical miles away from U.S. shores.

According to JWeekly.com, a Jewish Bay Area newsletter, “While the Zim Integrated Shipping Services website lists the vessel for an Oct. 25 arrival, the schedule shows no more Zim dockings in Oakland beyond that date, and a re-

port on TheJewishPress.com noted that Zim “may not call Oakland home again.” (Oct. 16)

The Block the Boat call states that “the military assault on Gaza — which killed more than 2,200 Palestinians and left more than 100,000 homeless — has halted, thanks to the Palestinian resistance, but our struggle is not over. With the full support of the U.S. government, Israel continues to carry out its brutal occupation, confiscate more land and build more settlements, imprison thousands of Palestinians and maintain the siege on Gaza as part of its policy of ethnic cleansing.

“The apartheid state of Israel not only impacts Palestinians, but also plays a

role in the oppression of communities all across the globe. The Zim shipping line is instrumental in upholding this system of global repression. There are direct ties — training, weapons and surveillance — between Israel's occupation of Palestine and the increasingly militarized occupation of black and brown communities in the United States. And it is now a well-known fact that police departments in and around Ferguson, Mo., have received training from Israel.”

Solidarity actions were held in conjunction with the Oakland action at the Israeli Embassy in New York City and in Baltimore. Last week, Block the Boat Los Angeles held off the unloading of the Zim Savannah for two-and-a-half days. □

Human right to water violated

U.N. rapporteurs visit Detroit

By Jerry Goldberg
Detroit

After a three-day fact-finding mission in the city of Detroit from Oct. 18-20, two U.N. Special Rapporteurs issued a scathing indictment of all levels of government for violations of international human rights in allowing massive water shut-offs to take place in the city of Detroit.

The report by Catarina de Albuquerque, U.N. Special Rapporteur on the human right to safe drinking water and sanitation, and Leilani Farha, U.N. Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, stated: "Detroit is undergoing large-scale water disconnections. This year alone, at least 27,000 households have had their services disconnected. ... The utility has passed on the increased costs of leakages due to an aging infrastructure onto all remaining residents by increasing water rates by 8.7 percent. This, combined with the decreased number of customers, and increased unemployment rate, has made water bills increasingly unaffordable to thousands of residents in Detroit living under the poverty line.

"Without water, people cannot live a life with dignity — they have no water for drinking, cooking, bathing, flushing toilets and keeping their clothes and houses clean. ... Denial of access to sufficient quantity of water threatens the rights to adequate housing, life, health, food, integrity of the family. It exacerbates inequalities, stigmatizes people and

renders the most vulnerable even more helpless. Lack of access to water and hygiene is also a real threat to public health as certain diseases could widely spread." (ohchr.org, Oct. 20)

At a press conference announcing their findings on Oct. 20, the rapporteurs cited the racially discriminatory character of Detroit's shut-offs, noting the disproportional impact on low-income African Americans. Eighty percent of Detroit's population are African American and 40 percent of Detroiters live in poverty. The rapporteurs noted how Detroiters are asked to make choices — pay rent or pay for water; pay medical bills or pay for water — and emphasized that these are not choices that should need to be made in the richest country of the world.

De Albuquerque asserted that she has visited developing countries where 50 percent of the population is without regular water due to underdevelopment. But she described the crisis in Detroit as a retrograde crisis — a developed city and country moving backward as a result of a "man-made perfect storm."

The rapporteurs' published statement explained: "The human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and to adequate housing both derive from the right to an adequate standard of living which is protected under, inter alia, article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is fully applicable to the United States. In addition, adequate housing and access to safe water

are clearly essential to maintain life and health, and the right to life is found in treaties the United States has ratified, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

They further stated: "In line with the mandates entrusted to us by the Human Rights Council, we would like to underline that the United States is bound by international human rights law and principles. ... These obligations apply to all levels of Government — federal, state and municipal. Moreover, they also extend to the various functions of State, including the judiciary."

The rapporteurs made the following recommendations:

1. Restore water connections for all residents unable to pay and to vulnerable groups of people, and stop further water shut-offs when residents are unable to pay in order to give them the opportunity to seek assistance that must be available through social services.

2. The city of Detroit, state of Michigan and the national government should adopt a mandatory affordability threshold, with specific policies to ensure support to people living in poverty.

3. The city of Detroit should provide urgent measures, including financial assistance, to ensure access to essential water and sanitation (about 100 liters per person per day).

4. The authorities should make an urgent assessment of the public health consequences of the water shut-offs and take

steps to mitigate the adverse impact.

5. Every effort should be made to ensure that the most vulnerable, including those in Section 8 housing, are not evicted or lose their housing due to water shut-offs or arrearages. This includes ending the practice of attaching delinquent water bills to property taxes, which then prompt foreclosures.

6. Every effort should be made to assure shelter, services and access to water to those rendered homeless by the water shut-offs.

7. The federal government should investigate the disparate impact of the water shut-offs on African Americans and other "protected classes."

8. The city of Detroit should develop administrative remedies for those who wish to challenge their water bills or shut-offs.

The rapporteurs emphasized the limits of their enforcement powers, and their conclusions were treated with disdain by Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan. However, their visit had an empowering effect on the victims of the shut-offs, who turned out in large numbers to testify before the rapporteurs, as well as the activists who are challenging the shut-offs. It was refreshing to hear from officials who place human rights and dignity ahead of profits and banks.

The struggle to stop the water shut-offs and against the cruel restructuring imposed on Detroit at all levels will continue. □

Europe anti-labor law threatens U.S. workers too

By Fred Goldstein

In a rare note of agreement, the Wall Street Journal and Novosti, a Russian newspaper, agree on the large size of a workers' anti-austerity demonstration: 1 million. That is the number of Italian workers who marched to the Piazza San Giovanni in Rome on Oct. 25 to protest a new labor law rammed through the legislature on Oct. 9 by Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi.

How does this struggle affect the U.S. working class — and the workers of the world for that matter?

European capitalism is headed into its third recession since 2007. It has not been able to recover from the economic crisis by conventional austerity measures. Their new strategy is to grow out of this crisis by expanding exports.

But in order to expand exports and compete in the world capitalist market, the European capitalists have to bring down their prices to be "competitive." Workers in the U.S. know that when they hear the bosses talk about being competitive, it means cutting wages and benefits while increasing layoffs.

Marxism shows that the working class is a global class bound together by common exploitation. The fate of one section of the working class is inseparable from the fate of the class as a whole — from Johannesburg to Bangkok, from Lima to Cairo. This is the foundation of communist proletarian internationalism.

If the Italian regime succeeds in pushing through its vicious attack on the wag-

es and rights of Italian workers, it will lay the basis for this to spread to the rest of Europe and will put additional pressure on conditions for the U.S. working class as well.

In an article in last week's Workers World, we showed how in the era of globalization and capitalist economic crisis of overproduction, each ruling class tries

and cutbacks in government spending, among other things — all to get money into the hands of the bankers and industrialists. But nothing has worked. Indeed, capitalism in Europe, like capitalism around the world, is at a dead end.

Marxism shows that the working class is a global class bound together by common exploitation.

to climb out of its crisis by exporting — because the workers at home don't have enough money to buy back the goods produced. Thus the bosses go abroad. They cut each other's throats to get overseas markets. In order to keep costs down, they intensify their attacks on the working class.

If the capitalists of Europe challenge U.S. capitalists by driving down the wages of European workers, the bosses here will put pressure on already depressed U.S. wages to meet European competition.

Anti-labor law and 'growth' strategy in Europe

The bosses and governments of Europe have been crying about the need to generate "growth" — meaning growth in profits. They have tried government bailouts, pumping money into the banks,



A million Italian workers march in Rome against austerity law.

ready been carried out in Spain. It did boost Spain's exports, but this was made easier for the bosses by the fact that Spain's official unemployment rate was 25 percent and youth unemployment was over 40 percent.

Italy, with the third-largest economy in the 18-member Eurozone, is next in line. The government of President François Hollande in France and its capitalist masters are watching Italy's attacks on the workers intently, because France is slipping into recession and is planning its own "labor market reform."

This is all being done under the whip of the German ruling class and the government of Chancellor Angela Merkel, along with steady pressure from the International Monetary Fund. The summits of finance capital are fearful of an economic collapse and are demanding that the

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On the Picket Line

by Sue Davis

Costly delay for home-care workers

Enforcement of the federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour and overtime after 40 hours of work a week for over 2 million home-care workers, mostly women who are disproportionately women of color, will not be fully implemented until Jan. 1, 2016. The program was scheduled to begin Jan. 1, 2015. That means, said Jodi Sturgeon, president of the Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute, that these women workers, among the lowest paid in the country, “will have to wait as long as another 12 months to receive even the most basic labor protections, guarantees that most other [U.S.] workers take for granted.” (New York Times, Oct. 8)

The Labor Department announced Oct. 7 that it was postponing the implementation date to June 30, 2015, and then using its “discretion” about enforcement for the next six months because many states had complained about paying “higher” wages and overtime. Illinois claimed overtime for 10,000 workers would exceed \$32 million a year. California estimated it would cost more than \$600 million. That means these workers, who live in poverty although they work full time — let’s call this what it really is: wage theft — have been subsidizing state governments with billions of dollars a year.

How did this happen? When federal wage laws were written 40 years ago, home-care workers were classified as “babysitters,” with no labor rights. Obviously, both sexism and racism dictated their demeaned status and ensuing poverty. Even now, as more and more home-care workers are needed to look after aging baby boomers, the blatant discrimination and profound injustice will continue as state budgets are deemed more important than these workers’ rights and needs.

Just 1 percent of the federal war budget would more than cover wage and overtime costs. “Justice delayed is justice denied” — a national disgrace.

Wage theft bill becomes law in D.C.

Wage theft is a huge problem in this country for low-wage workers, especially immigrants. Bosses think they can get away with cheating workers out of overtime or paying them sub-minimum wages because they are desperate for jobs. But low-wage workers are fighting back. After years of organizing, strategizing and campaigning in Washington, D.C., by the Employment Justice Center, DC Jobs with Justice and other allies in the DC Wage Theft Coalition, the Wage Theft Prevention Act was signed into law on Sept. 19. Dalia Catalan, an EJC member, exclaimed, “When I knew that we had won, wow, I felt happy because of all of our sacrifices — we did it!” The law goes into effect in early December.

Key features of the bill, which bumped up provisions in the existing law, making it the most protective wage theft law in the U.S., are that employers face much higher civil penalties and damages for violations, and may have their business licenses suspended if they commit willful violations or fail to pay ordered restitution to workers or the city. Bosses have to provide written terms of employment signed when employees are hired, and they are liable for actions by subcontractors or temp agencies. Employees are able to bring class, collective or individual actions in court or choose a 60-day administrative process to get an initial determination. Protections from retaliation, including injunctive relief and statutory damages and penalties, have been expanded. (dcejc.org, Sept. 22)

TWU wins organizing drives in NYC

Transit Workers Local 100 has been busy organizing workers in transit-related jobs in New York City. It didn’t take the more than 200 bicycle mechanics, dispatchers, call center operators and technicians in the city’s bike-share program, which opened in May 2013, long to figure out they needed a union to fight for better wages and regular schedules. Citi Bike worker Dolly Winter called the union victory on Sept. 16 “very empowering.” Local 100 President John Samuelsen said, “We view bike sharing as another important mode of public transit. We fully intend to throw our energy and political support behind expanding these bike-sharing systems and ensuring they are designed to support existing transportation networks.” He added that bike-share workers in other cities, notably Boston and D.C., are looking to join TWU. In addition, 550 call takers and reservation agents at Global Contact Services in Queens, N.Y., who schedule paratransit services for the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, voted to join Local 100 in mid-September. (aflcio.blog.org, Sept. 18) □

Capitalism on trial in Boston

By Tony Murphy

The grievance chair and founder of the Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union will be in court on Nov. 24, facing trumped-up charges brought by the Boston-area district attorney’s office on behalf of notorious union-buster Veolia Corporation.

Steve Kirschbaum, a 40-year member of United Steelworkers Local 8751, is facing charges related to an action held in a bus yard after a pro-union rally on June 30, the day the union contract with Veolia expired. Union members and supporters gathered in a Veolia office that day to continue the rally and hear updates on contract negotiations.

Because there were so many people present at the rally, there are dozens of witnesses who can attest to the fact that the ridiculous charges remaining against Kirschbaum — assault with a deadly weapon and trespassing — are false. Many have already signed sworn affidavits for the defense to that effect.

While Kirschbaum is facing the trumped-up charges, it is the courts that are on trial here — and, by extension, capitalism. That this case was even able to make it to trial reveals the true role of the courts under the for-profit system: it’s part of the bosses’ first line of defense against the workers.

At the pre-trial hearing, Kirschbaum’s defense team produced a falsified repair order it had gotten from Veolia. This work order purported to be for the repair of the door that was apparently damaged when the building was broken into — but the date on the work order was June 30, the same date the incident, which happened in the evening, was alleged to have occurred.

Kirschbaum’s lawyers also read the exact language from the union contract that stipulated union officers were granted “unlimited access to the company property”



Andre Francois, left, and Steve Kirschbaum (with bullhorn) at Sept. 15 rally. Both were illegally fired by Veolia.

PHOTO: HOWARD ROTMAN

— language which alone should have torpedoed the trespassing charge (especially since the breaking-and-entering charge had already been dismissed by the judge).

Veolia using court in union struggle

Other evidence makes it clear that the courts are being used by Veolia in its labor struggle with the union. The evidence includes an affidavit from a mechanic stating there was no damage to the breakroom door, as well as a video of a June 30 conversation between Kirschbaum and a police officer after the meeting in the drivers’ breakroom, in which absolutely no mention was made of any assault.

The case against Kirschbaum is so weak that the judge dismissed two of the four charges originally brought by Veolia — which included daytime breaking and entering and malicious destruction of property — as well as a motion to bar the union leader from the Veolia premises altogether. For the judge to have dismissed all the charges would have signaled to Boston’s bourgeoisie that this court could not be relied upon as a tool against the workers.

The patent absurdity and political nature of the case are evident. What is the “dangerous weapon” Kirschbaum is said to have used? A table — allegedly pushed against someone.

Even Veolia doesn’t deny that the breakroom was used by dozens of people for the after-rally meeting. Then why is Kirschbaum being singled out for criminal charges?

Defense lawyer John Pavlos noted the presence of Veolia General Manager Alex Roman at the Oct. 6 pre-trial hearing. Pavlos asserted that the charges against Kirschbaum were an attempt to “take this man [Kirschbaum] out of negotiations at a critical time in this contract struggle.”

In times of strikes and intensified struggle, workers learn they can’t rely upon the courts, the police, the media or any of the other pillars of capitalism for justice. In St. Louis, Mo., Michael Brown was shot in broad daylight on Aug. 9, and charges still haven’t been filed against Darren Wilson, the cop who killed him. The St. Louis Post-Dispatch has already been caught falsifying the contents of Brown’s autopsy, in an attempt to make it appear to corroborate Wilson’s story.

The Boston School Bus Drivers’ Union fight, which includes the struggle for contract justice and the reinstatement of four of its wrongfully terminated leaders, is entering a new phase. Whether labor allies and supporters start organizing for the union now will be critical in determining if it is successful. □

New York faculty, staff demand contract

The Professional Staff Congress union represents 25,000 faculty and staff at the City University of New York. It has not had a contract since 2010, although New York state law keeps the provisions of the old contract in effect. It is the only union in New York whose contract must be approved by both the city and the state of New York.

Following a big demonstration at a meeting of the Board of Trustees at the end of September, the PSC held a large rally and march Oct. 21. At the rally, held at the Community Church of New York, the top leaders of the union explained their strategy of combining political pressure — lobbying — with street actions, both on the 21 campuses that make up CUNY and in Manhattan and Albany.

After the rally, 300 to 400 union members marched the sidewalks of Manhattan with placards, music and militancy, going past Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s office on Third Avenue and winding up at CUNY’s headquarters on 42nd Street.

— Photo and report by G. Dunkel



Staten Island hosts Ebola Summit

By **Johnnie Stevens**
Staten Island, N.Y.

An Ebola Summit held here at the Bertha Dreyfus Public School 49 on Oct. 25 brought together a diverse group of people representing health care, civil rights, cultural performers, immigrants, city agencies, advocates and those in the community impacted by the Ebola virus disease (EVD). The meeting was co-sponsored by Councilperson Debi Rose and Togba Porte, chair of the African Ebola Crisis Committee. Some 30,000 West African immigrants from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea live in an area of Staten Island known as “Little Africa.”

“We are West African, we are not a virus,” said Porte. “Ebola is a serious ailment impacting the homeland of many North Shore residents. This summit gives us the opportunity to come together as a community to discuss how to address EVD.”

The African immigrant community in Staten Island has had to face large doses of panic over the past month, reaching the level of paranoia. In addition to dealing with the Temporary Protective Status set by the Obama administration, which forces all West Africans to register each year for green cards, EVD is forcing them to send more money in the form of remittances back to their homelands. Like so many other immigrants living in the U.S., they suffer from subminimum housing, health care and schools.

The summit came in the aftermath of an announcement from Govs. Andrew Cuomo of New York and Chris Christie of New Jersey that their states would quarantine all people entering the country from West Africa who had had any contact with EVD. This no doubt had a direct effect on the summit turnout, having prompted a racist paranoia.

The summit was called by Bishop Philip Saywayne of the Christ Assembly Lutheran Church and Staten Island Liberian Ministerial Alliance. Saywayne has lost 14 members of his family to EVD. Officials representing Nigeria, Liberia and Mali participated, as well as Morlai Kamara, president of the U.S. Sierra Leonean Association; Didier Fall, president of the U.S. Guinean Organization of Staten Island; and Oretha Bestman-Yates, president of the Staten Island Community Association.

Bestman-Yates, a health-care worker at a private hospital in Staten Island, spoke of the stigma surrounding EVD. After she returned from a visit to Liberia in July, she was cleared by her doctor to go back to her job. But when she returned, her bosses told her to go home with paid leave. “I asked them, ‘Are you telling me not to come in because of Ebola or because I’m Liberian?’”

‘Nigeria now an Ebola-free zone’

Omar A. Lawal, a senior Foreign Service officer at the Nigerian Embassy, said

Nigeria had successfully contained the Ebola virus by having a tight monitoring and strict communication strategy called “Protect your family, protect your community from the Ebola virus.”

The Nigeria Center for Disease Control declared an Ebola emergency when its first patient, Patrick Sawyer, having traveled from Liberia to Nigeria to get better health care, collapsed in the Lagos airport in July with symptoms of Ebola. This exposed 72 people at the airport and a hospital.

Nigeria has an energetic campaign of public education. Officials went house-to-house to visit 26,000 families. A total of 849 contacts were identified. About 18,500 face-to-face visits were conducted to find them. Public education officers explained the Ebola warning signs and how to prevent the virus from spreading. Leaflets and billboards reached many more with a multi-language social media message.

In all, some eight people died and another 11 patients recovered and were discharged. The World Health Organization announced on Oct. 17 that Nigeria is now an Ebola-free zone.

Councilperson Debi Rose said there was no need to fear contracting EVD: “You have a better chance of dying from influenza than EVD. There are 8 million people in New York City. Only one person has tested positive for the virus, Dr. Craig Spencer of West Harlem.”

Dr. Spencer, an emergency physician

with Columbia-Presbyterian Hospital who treated people with EVD in Guinea, is now being treated in isolation at Bellevue Hospital.

President Kamara of the Sierra Leone Association said, “The Ebola epidemic has led to a hunger crisis of epic proportions” in Sierra Leone, where thousands are infected and more than 900 have died. Some 40 percent of the farmers have abandoned their fields. Coffee, rice and cocoa beans amount to 90 percent of the country’s agriculture. Now billion of dollars in outside investment is gone, and because farming has been decimated, there is a great loss of jobs.

Dr. Aletha Maybank, assistant commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, spoke of EVD and mental depression in both West Africa and Staten Island. With thousands dead, millions of people are thinking about how they may be affected by the loss of loved ones and co-workers. A PowerPoint presentation explained what to do if you or someone you know has EVD or has been in contact with an EVD patient.

A representative of the International Action Center gave solidarity to the Ebola Summit and the West African community “to fight Ebola, not wars.”

On Saturday, Nov. 1, a memorial service for all from West Africa who have died from EVD will be held at St. John’s Episcopal Church, 1333 Bay St., Staten Island, N.Y.

ALBA-TCP charts Ebola action plan

By **Cheryl LaBash**

At the initiative of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, on Oct. 20 heads of state from the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our Americas—Peoples’ Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), along with health agencies and professionals, representatives of the United Nations, the Pan-American Health Organization and the Organization of East Caribbean States, met in Havana to chart an action plan to help confront the Ebola epidemic in Africa and prevent its expansion to other regions.

In his opening remarks, Cuban President Raúl Castro underscored the urgency of action: “I stand convinced that if this threat is not held back and resolved in West Africa, through an immediate and effective international response, with sufficient resources and coordinated by the World Health Organization and the United Nations, it may evolve into one of the gravest pandemics in the history of mankind.” (albatcp.cubaminrex.cu)

Prefacing a 23-point action plan, the meeting’s final document noted “concern that the international resources required in order to undertake rapid and efficacious actions to deal with the Ebola epidemic are continuing to be insufficient to confront what could become one of the most serious pandemics in the history of humanity.” And in taking action, it reaffirmed “that ALBA-TCP is sustained on principles of solidarity, true cooperation and complementarity among our countries, and commitment for the most vulnerable peoples and to the preservation of life on this planet.” (albatcp.cubaminrex.cu)

The plan includes an Oct. 29-30 technical meeting of specialists and directors in ALBA-TCP countries to exchange experiences and knowledge, and to draw

up prevention and control strategies for the threat of the Ebola epidemic. The ALBA-TCP health ministers are charged with drawing up an action plan to be presented to the ALBA-TCP heads of state and government for immediate application by Nov. 5 at the latest. The Community of Latin American and Caribbean States will be asked to promote regional efforts.

The document noted, as a priority, “the special needs of our sister countries in

the Caribbean that would allow them to benefit from the cooperation for preventing and confronting Ebola that are agreed to by the ALBA-TCP countries.”

Considerable contributions to fight the Ebola epidemic have already been made, including the dispatch of Cuban medical teams to the African continent and a donation of \$1 million offered by Bolivian President Evo Morales during the meeting, in addition to Venezuela’s \$5 million contribution presented to U.N. Secre-

tary-General Ban Ki-moon on Oct. 16.

Venezuelaanalysis.com reports the meeting “was attended by representatives of member countries Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Commonwealth of Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Saint Lucia. Haiti was also represented as a permanent invited guest of the bloc, as well as Grenada and St. Kitts and Nevis, whose incorporation into ALBA has already been approved.” (Oct. 21) □

Ebola in U.S.

Struggle over quarantine, stig

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

Oct. 27 — Epidemiology nurse Kaci Hickox had traveled to Sierra Leone on behalf of Doctors Without Borders to help treat patients suffering from Ebola virus disease. Upon returning to the U.S. Oct. 24, Hickox was placed under quarantine. She reported no symptoms of the dreaded disease. [She was released from quarantine today after much criticism of the policy and is on her way home to Maine. — Eds.]

As of Oct. 27, there is no consistent protocol across the U.S. for how to treat returning medical workers and other travelers from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea (Conakry). Three days earlier, the governors of New York and New Jersey issued edicts to hold such people in quarantine for 21 days. Illinois and Florida decided to do the same.

Hickox expressed her indignation, saying she was “treated like a criminal” by the authorities in the state. The nurse

said that she was questioned for hours upon entry at Newark Liberty International Airport and immediately ordered into isolation. She was placed in an unheated tent with no bathroom.

Hickox threatened to take legal action against the state of New Jersey, saying the imposed isolation was inhumane. The forced isolation and confinement of Hickox raise constitutional and civil liberties issues, given that she remains asymptomatic and has not tested positive for EVD, said her legal counsel Norman Siegel, a well-known civil liberties attorney. “The policy is overly broad when applied to her,” Siegel stressed.

An Oct. 26 Reuters news article reported, “Kaci Hickox, a nurse placed in 21-day quarantine in a New Jersey hospital after returning from treating Ebola patients in Sierra Leone, will contest her quarantine in court, her attorney said on Sunday [Oct. 26], arguing the order violates her constitutional rights.”

Hickox joins a continuous chorus of complaints by nurses who say that the

U.S. health care system lacks medical protocols for dealing with EVD. This unpreparedness led to two transmissions of the disease in Dallas as well as a general sense of panic and stigmatization of people from Africa, including those from countries far from the outbreak of EVD.

The administration of President Barack Obama has spoken out against a travel ban from West African states. The U.S. government has instituted screening measures for people traveling from the most severely impacted nations. The White House also contested the policies implemented in New York and New Jersey. This led, on Oct. 26, to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo modifying the quarantine order so that people without symptoms can be quarantined at home.

Racism, anti-worker bias and xenophobia

In Maple Shade, N.J., a town in Gov. Chris Christie’s state, two Rwandan children were withdrawn from school after a letter was sent to the parents of all students saying that the East African pupils

Ebola cases surpass 10,000 in West Africa

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

World Health Organization officials announced on Oct. 24 that the number of Ebola virus disease cases now exceeds 10,000. Most people have come down with the disease in three West African states: Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia, where approximately 4,900 people have died.

On Oct. 23, Mali officials announced that one case resulting in a fatality had occurred there. The victim was a two-year-old child, who had been in neighboring Guinea-Conakry. Mali's north is currently occupied by troops from France, Chad and other regional nations in a protracted battle against several rebel organizations.

Markatche Daou, a spokesman for the Malian Ministry of Health, told Agence France Press that the girl had been in Guinea with her grandmother and had visited Kissidougou, a town in the southern part of the country where the Ebola outbreak was first documented in December 2013. (Oct. 24) Forty-three people, including health care workers and others who are believed to have had contact with the child, are now being monitored by Malian officials.

The death from EVD in Mali has prompted the WHO to send a task force team to the country. Three experts were immediately deployed, and others are scheduled to follow.

Mali's long border with Guinea has remained open during the crisis that has burgeoned over the last seven months. Nonetheless, Mauritania has announced that it has closed its border with Mali in light of the one case.

Cases in Guinea rise

While Guinea has fewer EVD cases than Sierra Leone and Liberia, reports indicate that there has been an increase in transmissions in recent weeks.

President Alpha Conde has requested that retired physicians return to practice

in order to address the sudden rise in the number of cases. Approximately 1,500 cases have been tracked in Guinea where over 900 have died.

Though Guinea is a former French colony, it has received almost no help from Paris. Of the three countries most affected by EVD, many expatriate Guineans say that the health care system is far worse there than in Sierra Leone and Liberia, both of which experienced civil wars that lasted more than a decade and ended in 2003.

Guinea too has undergone military coups and rebellions over the last 30 years since the country's first president, Ahmed Sekou Toure, died in 1984. During the transformation from a state-controlled economy under Toure's Democratic Party, which was overthrown

immediately after his death, genuine development has remained elusive.

Frankie Edozien wrote on Oct. 17 in Quartz, "Even though Guinea's bauxite exports ought to make it among the richest nations on the continent, it was lacking basic infrastructure. The major city seemed like a very small town in any other country in the region."

The same article continued, "From Conakry to the Fouta Djallon mountains, France's colonial legacy was visible everywhere. Yet in 2014 the French government has not given the commitment that Britain has given to Sierra Leone in the Ebola fight. The healthcare system is still crumbling."

Sierra Leone was created by London as an outpost where Africans who fought with the pro-British forces during the war

for U.S. independence and who therefore were promised freedom were settled beginning in the late 18th century. Though Britain has invested most of its assistance in Sierra Leone, British imperialism has placed restrictions on flights and personnel to and from West Africa.

U.S. intervention in West Africa has focused on Liberia, a country Washington established in the 1820s through the manumission and emigration of formerly enslaved Africans. Liberia became a republic in 1847 but has remained under the domination of the U.S. since its inception.

Troops from the U.S. military have been deployed to Liberia to help build field hospitals and clinics. Even Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf has called for more support in an open letter published by the BBC in mid-October. □

Heroes of the Ebola crisis

By **Sharon Eolis**

It is clear that Ebola is the most dangerous emerging infectious disease since the HIV/AIDS crisis began in the 1980s.

Health care workers must identify those with the virus, isolate them and monitor everybody who was exposed. This is the only way to break the chain of infection. But, with the exception of Nigeria, the overwhelming number of cases of Ebola in West Africa have made it impossible for health care workers to follow up with all those exposed to the virus.

The heritage of colonialism and the slave trade has left West Africa with too few hospitals and not enough trained health care workers. Since the outbreak, over 200 healthcare workers have died there, and many others are fearful of coming to work, especially when they do not have the necessary protective gear.

The Kenema Government Hospital in Sierra Leone used to be full of patients

and families with ordinary problems, but now Ebola is the main illness being treated. The hospital is located close to where Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia converge — the center of the Ebola outbreak.

The hospital chief of staff was Dr. Sheik Humarr Khan, a highly trained and experienced African who ran the Lassa Fever Program. An internationally known specialist in hemorrhagic viral diseases, Khan worked there for 10 years. His predecessor died of Lassa Fever from a needle prick.

In May 2014, Dr. Khan saw Sierra Leone's first Ebola patient, a woman who had been exposed in Guinea. She was placed in the Lassa isolation ward, which soon became an Ebola ward.

Most of Dr. Khan's patients were poor and couldn't afford food or medicine so he often bought it for them. In a short time the ward was filled with Ebola patients. Kahn always used a type of biohazard outfit that included breathing mask and goggles, a plastic face shield, three pairs of gloves, rubber boots and a plastic apron.

As the number of Ebola patients increased, it was necessary to set up a large plastic tent in addition to the isolation ward. Khan kept in touch with the World Health Organization and the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health, pleading for more help and resources.

Despite the precautions he had taken, in July Khan suspected he had acquired the virus. He isolated himself at home and called for a lab technician to take a blood test. It was positive. An ambulance took him to the Kailahun Ebola center because he didn't want his fellow health care workers to see him dying.

The government of Sierra Leone regarded his infection as a national crisis. Emails were sent to individuals, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Public Health Agency of Canada, the U.S. Army and Doctors Without Borders. The international groups consulted by phone for three days. Their final decision was to not give Dr. Khan the ZMapp drug, which was stored in the very next room at the health center. The reason given was that it had been tested only on monkeys. Khan died a few hours later. The drug was then given to a U.S. doctor and an aid worker who had Ebola and were soon transferred to the U.S. These

two white health care workers survived.

Role of racism, capitalism

How much has racism been a factor in the treatment of this terrible disease?

Was racism the reason that Thomas Eric Duncan was refused admission on his first visit to the Dallas hospital? He had a temperature of 103 degrees and said he was from West Africa, but he was sent home.

When finally admitted, was racism the reason the medical staff didn't request one of the new drugs for him? His family made phone calls and rounded up people on a radio show to press the hospital to get the medicine, but by that time it was too late.

Was racism the reason Dr. Khan wasn't offered a transfusion with plasma from a patient who had recovered from Ebola? It was used for other patients. As a highly skilled, experienced doctor, was he asked his opinion or were his wishes ignored?

The medical-industrial complex didn't send the disposable hazmat suits that have been stockpiled because the countries involved didn't have the money to pay for them. This is racism.

Several small companies have worked for years on Ebola vaccines with potential, but the big drug companies have refused to consider putting money into human trials. Now that Ebola has come to the U.S., the medical-industrial complex, a huge, powerful capitalist industry, is reconsidering whether it can make a profit off this disease.

By contrast, when West Africa called for help, socialist Cuba answered. Fidel Castro wrote that "the time of duty had come," and 15,000 doctors and nurses volunteered. Cuban doctors set up a hazmat training hospital in Havana. The first 256 Cuban health care volunteers had two weeks' training, and are now in West Africa. Hundreds more are undergoing special training in Cuba.

The many courageous health workers who are fighting this epidemic, like the Cubans and Dr. Khan, are today's heroes.

Eolis is a retired Emergency Department nurse and family nurse practitioner. The information on Dr. Khan came mostly from the article "The Ebola Wars" by Robert Preston, New Yorker magazine, Oct. 27. □

Stigmatization

would be monitored three times a day. Rwanda, which is in East Africa, nearly 3,000 miles away from any of the severely impacted states in the far western part of the continent, has not reported any cases in the latest EVD outbreak.

Four cases of EVD have been diagnosed in the U.S. since the latest outbreak in West Africa. Thomas Eric Duncan, a Liberian national, died after he was first sent home when reporting to an emergency room at the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Dallas. Incompetence there contributed to his death and to the infection of two nurses who provided care for Duncan.

Both of the nurses, Nina Pham and Amber Vinson, were determined to have recovered and have been released from specialized treatment units at the National Institutes of Health and Emory University, respectively.

Dr. Craig Spencer, a graduate of Wayne State University Medical School in Detroit, is the latest diagnosed case, and he is being treated at Bellevue Hospital in

New York City. Spencer was also a volunteer with Doctors Without Borders in Guinea. He had traveled widely in the city on Oct. 21, the day before he registered a slight fever, and the ensuing publicity raised enormous fears in the city despite the unlikelihood of transmission.

According to those who treat EVD, transmission requires exposure to bodily fluids from someone exhibiting symptoms. The need for a rational and humane response to EVD is seriously needed in the U.S. Officials and media sources must be educated about the most recent outbreak of the disease and the nature of transmission.

In addition, the U.S. ruling class and state should provide maximum assistance and support to those countries where the disease has had a devastating impact. Attempts aimed at the isolation and stigmatization of the people from these West African states, and those who are assisting them, can worsen the existing conditions in both the U.S. and internationally. □

After fraudulent Ukraine elections

Donbass republics brace for new attack

By Greg Butterfield

Oct. 27 — Parliamentary elections held in Ukraine Oct. 26 will bring six far-right parties into government for the next five years while excluding any significant opposition, according to exit polls.

Early elections were announced in August by President Petro Poroshenko, the billionaire figurehead for the junta of oligarchs, neoliberal politicians and fascists who seized power in Kiev during a violent coup last February.

“According to the first results of the elections, the winner is the party of war rather than the party of peace,” said Donetsk People’s Republic Prime Minister Aleksander Zakharchenko. Referring to the junta leaders, he added, “Yatsenyuk, Turchynov, Lyashko and Poroshenko himself — all these politicians backed military actions against us.” (RIA Novosti, Oct. 26)

Donetsk Deputy Prime Minister Andrei Purgin added, “The elections were not free; it’s a farce. People are intimidated; the east of Ukraine is not represent-

ed. There are armed men everywhere across the country.”

The Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics declared independence from Ukraine after popular referenda in May. The young republics of the Donbass mining region withstood months of brutal war crimes by Kiev’s forces, with more than 5,000 killed and 824,000 made refugees, according to the United Nations. (PressTV, Oct. 24)

In September, Russia and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe had brokered a ceasefire agreement between Kiev and the People’s Republics. While the forces of Novorossia, as the union of Donetsk and Lugansk is known, faced intense pressure from Moscow to comply with the so-called Minsk accords, even in the face of constant ceasefire violations by Kiev, their enemies suffered no such constraints from their backers, the U.S. and NATO.

“The ceasefire that we discussed since September 5 was used by Kiev for troop repositioning, getting fresh forces and new weapons,” noted Zakharchenko.

For weeks, there have been ominous signs that Kiev was preparing a new offensive.

Military intelligence of Novorossia predicts it will begin around Oct. 28.

Militia leader and Ghost Brigade commander Alexey Mozgovoy, an outspoken opponent of the Minsk agreement, said: “Every day it has been confirmed that the enemy is concentrating forces, that new columns are coming. Not only is heavy artillery not being pulled back behind the ‘neutral’ territory [as stipulated in the Minsk agreement], it is being added daily.” (Fort Russ, Oct. 22)

Former Donetsk Defense Minister Igor Strelkov sounded the alarm Oct. 23: “A movement of Ukrainian Armed Forces from all directions to initial positions for an attack on Donetsk has begun.” (Rusvesna.su)

Strelkov explained that Kiev most likely plans a blitzkrieg attack aimed at capturing the capital of Donetsk and dividing the People’s Republics.

There are several motives for a lightning attack. First, it would forestall any

military response from a reluctant Russian Federation to help Novorossian forces. Second, the restive Ukrainian troops can’t be relied on for a long offensive. And third, as invaders from Napoleon to Hitler learned to their chagrin, it is suicide to attack the locals during the brutal Russian winter.

U.S. declares election ‘free and transparent’

According to exit polls, Poroshenko’s bloc led the parliamentary elections with 22.2 percent of the vote, followed by Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk’s People’s Front with 21.8 percent. These right-wing neoliberal parties are most favored by Washington and the European Union.

Five other parties met the 5 percent threshold to enter parliament. Four of them are far-right or openly fascist parties: Self Help, Radical Party, Svoboda and Fatherland.

Several neo-Nazi figures are expected to take seats under their auspices, including notorious Right Sector leader Dmytro Yarosh. (RIA Novosti, Oct. 27)

The Opposition Bloc, which received around 9 percent of the vote, is composed of former members of the deposed president’s Party of Regions.

Among the organizations conducting “official, objective” international exit polling is the U.S.-based International Republican Institute. (RIA Novosti, Oct. 26) The IRI has trained and financed pro-coup forces in Ukraine and aids counterrevolutionary movements from Venezuela to Syria.

Most true opposition forces were banned. Anti-fascist organizations — like the Marxist Union Borotba (Struggle) and other participants in the mass movement against the coup — have been forced underground, their leaders driven into exile or arrested.

The Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU), previously one of the largest parties in parliament, did not meet the 5 percent vote threshold. Although its name appeared on the ballot, KPU candidates were essentially prohibited from campaigning. Earlier, the party’s elected delegates were driven from parliament by an extraordinary law, and the KPU currently faces an outright ban in a court case brought by the rightist Interior Ministry.

“Whatever the outcome of the vote, the Communist Party does not recognize the elections as either democratic or legitimate,” said KPU leader Peter Simonenko during a meeting with European Parliament members. (KPU.ua)

Nevertheless, U.S. Ambassador Geoffrey Pyatt rushed to declare the elections “free and transparent.” (Kyiv Post, Oct. 26) Along with State Department official Victoria Nuland, Pyatt was one of the architects of the February coup.

The Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, a supposedly neutral party to the Minsk ceasefire agreement, also declared the elections “essentially free and fair” despite some “irregularities.” (RIA Novosti, Oct. 27)

Yet by the morning after, independent media and activists in Ukraine had already documented hundreds of instances of voter intimidation, attacks on opposition candidates, ballot-box stuffing and other fraud.

Even the junta’s Interior Ministry, headed by fascist Arsen Avakov, reported 330 violations, including vote buying, intimidation and false ballots being

Anti-fascists massacred in Odessa to be remembered, honored

By Greg Butterfield

November 2 marks six months since the horrific massacre of at least 48 anti-fascist activists and trade unionists in Odessa, Ukraine.

On May 2, neo-Nazi gangs directed by the U.S.-backed Kiev junta attacked an Occupy-style protest encampment in the multinational port city of Odessa. After the fascists set fire to the camp on Kulikovo Field, activists fled to the nearby House of Trade Unions.

Pro-coup goons set fire to the building and shot at people through the windows. Many who fled from the burning building were beaten to death by the fascists.

Although the massacre was videoed and many of the culprits plainly identified, none have been brought to justice. Meek “official” inquiries have been stonewalled by the Ukrainian Interior Ministry and police agencies.

On the six-month anniversary, activists around the world will remember this crime and honor the victims with memorials, rallies, meetings and photo exhibits.

In New York, the International Action Center has called for a protest at the U.S. military recruiting station in Times Square on Sunday, Nov. 2, at 1 p.m., to remember the murdered anti-fascists. Participants will tell Washington, Kiev and the corporate media to stop the cover-up of those responsible for the massacre.

The demands of the protest include: an independent investigation of the massacre and those responsible; autonomy and self-determination for Odessa and all of southeast Ukraine; stop U.S. money and weapons to the Kiev dictatorship; stop the war against the people of Donetsk and Lugansk; end NATO expansion, military threats and sanctions against Russia; and freedom for Odessa activists Vlad Wojciechowski and Nikolai Popov and all political prisoners.

Odessa survivor remembers

Odessa Regional Council Deputy Alexei Albu is a survivor of the May 2 massacre. A member of socialist Union Borotba (Struggle), he now lives in exile in Crimea, where he was forced to flee under threat of arrest following the neo-Nazi attack. Albu is a co-founder of the Committee to Liberate Odessa and the investigative website 2May.org.

Albu recently spoke with the newspaper Mirror of Crimea about his experiences. He recalled: “I came to the Kulikovo Field an hour before the attack. There were about 200 people, among them many of the older generation. After some time, a small group returned from [a confrontation with the neo-Nazis on] Greek Street, including my friend Andrew Brazhevsky. That was the last time I saw him alive; he later jumped from a window of the burning House of Trade Unions and was killed by the fascists.

“When we were attacked,” said Albu, “the Kulikovo activists decided to take refuge in the building. ... I was one of the last who went in, when the attackers started shooting. Inside, people built a barricade of furniture. Nobody expected that a massacre would begin. We thought there would be a fight, mayhem or something like that, but not mass burning and shooting.

“I was on the second floor above the entrance and felt a suffocating smell [from tear gas]. That’s the last time I saw 17-year-old communist youth Vadim Papura, who was killed after he came down from the second floor. He, too, was finished off by the Nazis on the ground. He did not die from the fall, as the officials say.”

Albu remembered: “From the first floor someone shouted that the fascists had already made their way into the building, which started a panic. Many ran upstairs. I had previously been in the House of Trade Unions and knew some of its corridors. I realized that the roof was a dead

end, and if there was a large fire, it was unlikely we could escape from there.

“I called out to those who were close to me, and we ran to the right, going down the stairs. We saw that the door leading to the courtyard had almost been knocked down by the ultra-nationalists. We began to retreat to the second floor, encountering a few more of our people along the way.”

Albu continued: “Our people climbed out through a window. I tried to swing, to distract the Nazis to buy a little time for the others. When there were only three or four left, people could no longer wait for their turn on the ladder, so we just climbed out of the window past the air conditioner and jumped into the yard.

“We were led out into the street from the courtyard, conducted through a corridor of police. The fascists constantly broke through and bashed us with whatever was handy: chains, pipes, fittings, rods, barbed wire. I fell under the feet of the police and began crawling on all fours. Someone jumped on me and sank his teeth into my left leg.

“I’m sure there were a lot more killed than the official number,” said Albu. “The mother of one of my dead comrades told me that in the morgue she was shown more than 60 bodies.

“A week after the tragedy at the House of Trade Unions, I had to leave Odessa when it became known that my arrest had been ordered,” Albu stated.

“We are trying to conduct an independent investigation, but because the Security Service of Ukraine and Interior Ministry are completely secretive about it, we are forced to work with what is in the public domain and occasional leaks.

“All parliamentary inquiries into the case of May 2 have met with no response. This again suggests that the massacre in Odessa was organized with the help of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and their senior management,” concluded Albu. □

FIST publishes 'Red Flag'

given to voters.

Odessa 'spat on Poroshenko'

The elections were carried out in areas of southeast Ukraine, as well as occupied areas of Donetsk and Lugansk, where the population lives under violent repression by the Kiev regime.

In Slavyansk, a city in Donetsk besieged for months before its occupation in July by Ukrainian forces, the turnout was just 13 percent. Locals reported that the only voters were occupation troops and functionaries and that polling stations were surrounded by camouflaged soldiers wielding automatic weapons and "patriotic" yellow ribbons. (Novorossia News Agency, Oct. 27)

In Kharkov, Ukraine's second-largest city, people tweeted photos showing masked "election observers" at polling stations.

In Odessa, where neo-Nazis dispatched from Kiev massacred at least 48 anti-fascists and trade unionists on May 2, the turnout was just 8.8 percent by noon on Oct. 26. Election officials claimed a 39 percent turnout at the end of the day — a virtual impossibility given the earlier figure — but still the lowest ever recorded in the city's history. (Timer.od.ua)

Perhaps one reason was President Poroshenko's Oct. 23 campaign visit, when he declared that the May 2 massacre and burning of the Odessa House of Trade Unions was necessary "because we see now what happens if we had not stopped the attempt of the separatists."

He also monstrosly proclaimed Odessa a "City of Bandera," after the World War II Nazi collaborator Stepan Bandera. (Rushor.su)

Exiled Odessa Regional Council Deputy and Borotba activist Alexei Albu said, "I believe the elections in Odessa were our victory. Odessa residents made the most important choice — not to support the regime. Odessa has shown that more than 70 percent do not support the junta, do not support the farce called elections, and do not support the government's policy."

"Seventy percent responded to our appeal and boycotted the elections, or went and spoiled ballots, or voted against all or for opposition parties," Albu added. "Even a huge amount of ballot stuffing could not save the situation."

Albu is co-founder of the Committee for the Liberation of Odessa, which issued a call to boycott the sham elections. "This was Odessa's response to Poroshenko declaring it a 'City of Bandera.' The people of Odessa spat in his face and wiped their feet on him." (Borotba.su) □

The revolutionary socialist youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) has begun publishing a quarterly magazine entitled "Red Flag." The magazine contains articles about ongoing struggles against injustice and oppression as well as the revolutionary science of Marxism-Leninism.

The first issue, now available, contains the following articles: "Think Revolution Is Impossible? Check out Ferguson, Missouri"; "Justice for Michael Brown: End Racist Police Killings"; "The National Question and Black Liberation"; "Baltimore Youth Slam New Curfew Laws";

"The Central American Child Migrant Crisis and Neoliberalism"; "FIST Salutes Palestinian Resistance! We Must Do Our Part to End Imperialism"; "FIST Stands with Palestinians in D.C."; "In Detroit, Water Is Not a Human Right"; "Why We Defend Workers' States"; and "Why We Are Marching Against Capitalism."

Contact local FIST or Workers World Party activists about ordering individual print copies or bulk orders for distribution.

A PDF file of Red Flag Issue 1 is available at fightimperialism.org. □



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**SAT
Nov. 15
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Nov. 16**

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**HANDS UP
DONT SHOOT**

FIST

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WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Ferguson, Mo., Aug. 26, 2014.

- X If you're sick, sick, sick of endless wars and oppose the U.S. invasions of Iraq, Syria and Africa ...
- X If you're angered by genocidal attacks on youth of color by the police and the prisons ...
- X If you detest the bankers and bosses making the workers pay for the economic crisis they didn't create ...
- X If you know from reading Workers World that capitalism is at a dead end ...
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WORKERS WORLD editorial

The U.S. mercenary war drive

Because of the enormous pressure placed on the U.S. government by the heroic surviving victims and witnesses to the Blackwater massacre at Baghdad's Nusoor Square, a federal jury convicted four Blackwater contractors on Oct. 23 in Washington, D.C. One was found guilty of murder and three of manslaughter, as well as several weapons charges.

Seventeen civilians were killed, including two children, on Sept. 16, 2007. Twenty more were injured.

The four killers were underlings in the criminal U.S. war machine, whose executive officers included the top war criminals of the George W. Bush administration and the Blackwater bosses.

"Seven years ago, these Blackwater contractors unleashed powerful sniper fire, machine guns and grenade launchers on innocent men, women and children," said Ronald Machen, the U.S. attorney who prosecuted the case.

"It was horror. People running out of their cars were being shot at. ... Anything that moved in Nusoor Square was shot. Women, children, young people, they shot everyone," said witness Hasan Jaber, who himself was shot three times. (CNN, Oct. 23)

"Holding individuals responsible is not enough," noted Baher Azmy, the legal director of the Center for Constitutional Rights, which represented Iraqi victims of the killings in a human-rights case against Blackwater that settled in 2010.

"Private military contractors ... have engaged in a variety of war crimes and atrocities during the [2003 Iraq] invasion and occupation while reaping billions of dollars in profits from the war. To this day, the U.S. government continues to award Blackwater and its successor entities millions of dollars each year in contracts, essentially rewarding war crimes," Azmy said. (atimes.com, Oct. 23)

None of Blackwater's executives were charged with any crimes around this massacre, even though they tried to cover it up. Blackwater Worldwide repaired and repainted its trucks immediately after the Nusoor Square shooting. "The repairs essentially destroyed evidence that Justice Department investigators hoped to examine in a criminal case that has drawn worldwide attention." (Harpers Blog, Jan. 19, 2008)

Blackwater execs, Bush leaders walk free

Letting Blackwater executives walk free is in stark contrast to the prosecution of heroes like U.S. Army whistleblower Chelsea Manning, who face decades in prison for exposing U.S. war crimes.

For its "services," Blackwater has received some \$2 billion in U.S. government contracts for providing armed personnel to the Pentagon, the State Department and, secretly, to the CIA.

Other U.S. mercenary companies, like CACI and L-3 Services (formerly Titan Corporation), were involved with the torture of prisoners at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison. Numerous reports indicate these private firms also worked with the CIA in its infamous "rendition" torture campaign.

Why is Wall Street employing its own private armies when it has the most powerful war machine in the world at its disposal — the U.S. military? To supplement U.S. recruits, reduce the number of U.S. troops killed in action and provide more tax dollars for private profit, the Pentagon hires companies like Blackwater.

U.S. imperialism has poured billions upon billions of dollars from the people's treasury to pay these hired killers like those from Blackwater to conduct torture and murder, much of it in secret, to further protect the vast flow of wealth into its coffers.

Erik Prince, the former head of Blackwater, told a reporter that the new "promised land" is Africa, where he is "investing in firms providing services to the oil and gas industry, in places where he thinks his expertise in providing logistics and security can give him a competitive edge." (economist.com, Nov. 23, 2013)

The conviction of the Blackwater contractors is a step in the right direction. But why stop there? The Blackwater executives also deserve punishment. And it was the political leaders in the Bush administration who plotted the plunder of Iraq; sold it to the rest of the U.S. ruling class by promising an easy, quick and cheap victory; and sold it to the world with the Big Lie that Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction."

Massacres like the one at Nusoor Square will not stop until all these mercenaries and those who stand behind them are brought to justice before the people of the world. □

Belgian railroad workers protest austerity plans

By G. Dunkel

Railroad workers and the services they supply to their passengers are under attack all over Europe. In September and early October, German railroad workers walked out. The third week of October, Belgian train engineers walked out in a series of spontaneous strikes and blocked the tracks in place like Liège and Charleroi.

They were upset that the government-owned Belgian railroad system, the SNCB, is planning on cutting its annual budget by at least 663 million euros (\$842 million) from 2014 to 2019, which would involve laying off 5,000 workers and cutting service. The government is planning to make them work more while paying them less.

Belgium is a small country of 11 million people who speak either French in the south or Dutch in the north. It was one of the founding countries of the European Union, and its capital, Brussels, hosts the headquarters of

both the EU and NATO.

Railroads are a very important part of Europe's transportation system and in many countries are operated by a single, state-owned company. While the EU doesn't have an official policy yet, it is clear that it intends to open competition to the state-owned railroad systems.

England is the shining example of how "liberalizing" a railroad system can be a huge capitalist "success." There the railroads were broken into 25 different companies between 1994 and 1997. Tickets now cost four to five times what they did in 1994, and British railroads now have the worst on-time record of any European railroad system. Because the railroad companies don't own their tracks, they don't invest in safety, and major accidents have occurred in 1997, 1999, 2000, 2002 and 2007. (Solidaire [PTB], Oct. 22)

The official Belgian trade unions were caught off guard by these spontaneous strikes. They are planning a big walkout on Dec. 15, and they urged the rail-

road workers to be patient and hold off until then. But the transport unions are planning some protests in November.

The company and the Belgian government are calling the walkouts "wildcat strikes" and plan on disciplining the workers who took part in them. They are claiming that more than 166,000 passengers were inconvenienced by these "unplanned, unannounced" walkouts, which Jo Cornu, head of the SNCB, claimed were organized by an "unofficial union." (RTBF, Oct. 24) The workers who walked out refused to move the trains and also blocked the tracks, as seen in Belgian television clips on YouTube.

Earlier, Cornu charged that the Workers Party of Belgium (PTB), which he called a Marxist organization, had organized these strikes. In a communique PTB denied that it was "the base of the spontaneous strike actions at Charleroi and Liège" and urged Cornu to "challenge the austerity imposed on the SNCB by the government." (RTL Group, Oct. 21) □

Europe anti-labor law threatens U.S. workers too

Continued from page 4

European governments make the workers pay to reverse the downturn.

Eurozone capitalists target wages of permanent workforce

This development was well explained by economic writer Jack Rasmus in an Oct. 21 article in CounterPunch. Rasmus shows the economic numbers driving the new strategy and how the economic downturn is now threatening France and Germany, the two biggest imperialist powers on the European continent. He then writes about the explosive unemployment numbers.

"Perhaps the best indicator of the deep weakness of the Eurozone economy today is its labor market. In the region overall, unemployment has remained consistently in the 11%-12% range for more than five years now. In Italy more than 12%, France 10.5%, and Spain still nearly 25%. But the picture is even worse than these often reported general job statistics. Youth unemployment rates in both Italy and Spain, for example, are 45% plus. And those youth who have been able to obtain work have been largely limited to part time and temp work. In France the percent of youth in the workforce age 15-24 who are employed as temps has risen to 59%. In Germany 52%, Italy 54%, and in Spain an incredible 65% can only find temp work, when any work at all.

"And it's not just age 15-24 youth workers. In Italy, 70% of all new hires have been temp workers. Temp means lower wages, fewer benefits, far less job security, and employer 'rights' to lay

off and fire at will. The chronic high unemployment and the large number of low-wage temp jobs translate into wage compression in general, with few exceptions, for the rest of the Eurozone working class.

"Nevertheless, the target of the 'new model' austerity now on the Eurozone agenda is designed to extend and deepen that wage compression by introducing what is being called 'labor market reform.' In addition to high unemployment and temp hiring, which will continue as a dual force already depressing wages, the new third force of 'labor market reform' will extend wage cutting further, targeting the non-temp, permanent Eurozone working class in Italy, France, and elsewhere in particular."

Italian ruling class prepares attack on workers

That is precisely what is happening in Europe in general. Right now, the cutting edge of the battle is shaping up in Italy.

According to Rasmus: "Not all the details are apparent as yet, but some outlines are. About one fourth of all of Italy's 25 million workers are the target of the new reforms. What is known so far is that Italy's new 'labor market reform' rules will make it easier for employers to hire and fire workers — both newly hired permanent workers as well as temp workers.

"New hires' benefits, severance pay, and rights will also be reduced when initially hired, and only slowly 'phased in' as they gain seniority on the job. Limits on workers' collective ability to wage bargain are reportedly to be part of the new 'reforms' as well,

although details so far are lacking what this will mean. [Prime Minister] Renzi's reforms include reducing costs by business tax reduction. Business labor tax cuts equivalent to 32 billion Euros are part of the Renzi reforms. Declining tax revenues will likely require more government spending reductions, thereby ensuring traditional austerity measures will continue as well."

Right now the Italian workers have threatened to strike against the law. Hopefully, this struggle will escalate not just into a strike against the law but against the rotten capitalist system of exploitation itself. It is the system of wage slavery that keeps workers down.

All the wealth of society is created by the workers. This wealth should belong to them collectively to be used for their well-being. The workers should not have to sell their labor power to greedy, money-grubbing bosses year after year for the right to be exploited. The destruction of capitalism and the establishment of socialism, a system based on human need and not capitalist greed, is the only long-term way out of this nightmare we are facing. □

Capitalism at a Dead End

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

By Fred Goldstein

lowwagecapitalism.com
Available online and at stores around the country.

Global day of protest

'Return the missing students — alive!'

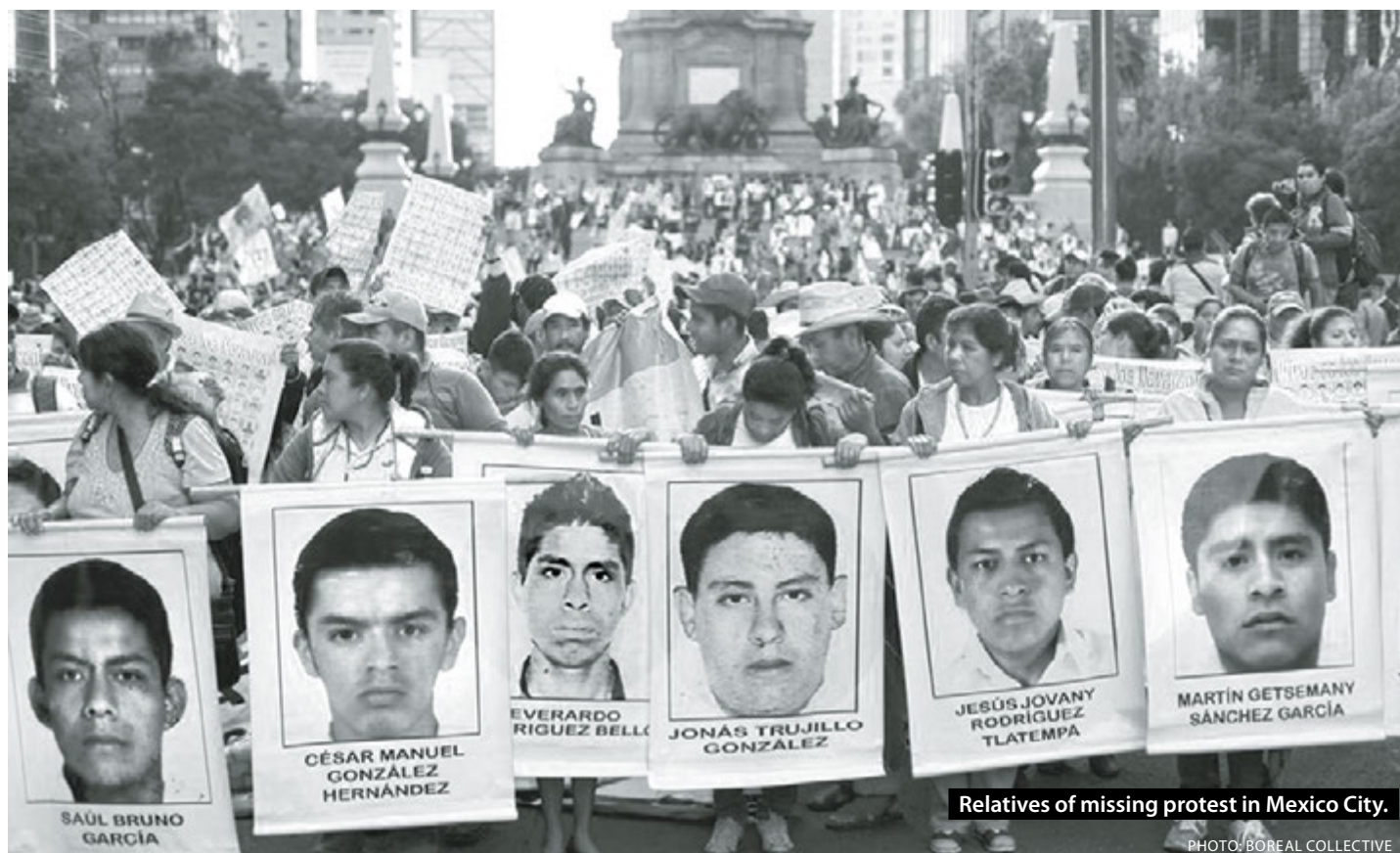
By Deirdre Griswold

A global day of protest on Oct. 23 demanded the return — alive — of 43 Mexican student activists missing since Sept. 26. While many large demonstrations occurred in cities around the world, the biggest was in the Zócalo central plaza of Mexico City, where estimates of the crowd ran as high as half a million.

The 43 were students at the Ayotzina-pa teachers' college in the town of Iguala, in the state of Guerrero. They were involved in planning a commemoration of the anniversary of the notorious massacre of students in 1968 by government authorities. The Mexican government at that time had been pressured by the U.S. to guarantee there would be no protests during the Olympic Games taking place in Mexico City.

Today's students know this history and are determined not to let the memory of that horrible crime die. When the Ayotzina-pa students arrived in buses at the town of Iguala, however, local police and gunmen surrounded them and began firing.

Journalist John Gibler described what happened: "Scores of uniformed municipal police and a handful of masked men dressed in black shot and killed



Relatives of missing protest in Mexico City.

PHOTO: BOREAL COLLECTIVE

six people, wounded more than 20, and rounded up and detained 43 students in a series of attacks carried out at multiple points and lasting more than three

hours. At no point did state police, federal police, or the army intercede. The 43 students taken into police custody are now 'disappeared.'" (Gibler email quoted in "Crisis in Mexico: The Disappearance of the 43," by Francisco Goldman, New Yorker, Oct. 24)

As the demands of the growing protests have escalated to a call for the resignation of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto, the government has scrambled to show some results. On Oct. 24, right after the global day of protest, Ángel Aguirre Rivero, the governor of Guerrero, finally resigned his post.

The Mexican government also issued arrest warrants for the mayor of Iguala,

José Luis Abarca, and his spouse, María de los Ángeles Pineda Villa, both of whom are reported to be connected to the drug lords of Guerreros Unidos.

Right after this heinous crime happened, a search was made of the area and many mass graves were uncovered. They contained at least 30 bodies, some of them scorched by fire, confirming that assassinations here are commonplace and the authorities do nothing about them or are actually complicit. So far, however, none of the bodies have matched the DNA of the missing students, keeping alive the hope that, with enough pressure on the government, they can be rescued. □

Brazil:

The re-election of Dilma Rousseff

Odiario.info is maintained by Portuguese Marxists. They published the following commentary on Oct. 27, after the second and final round of the Brazilian presidential elections.

Dilma Rousseff will take presidential office on Jan. 1, 2015, to govern Brazil for another four years.

This election was the closest contested ever in Brazil. Rousseff got 54.5 million votes (51.64 percent) and Aécio Neves got 51.0 million (48.36 percent).

The president won in the states of the North and Northeast, benefiting there from her welfare assistance policies, as well as in Rio de Janeiro and in Minas Gerais.

Neves, a neoliberal masquerading as a social democrat, won in the South and Southeast, including in São Paulo, where the motor of the Brazilian economy is located. He could count on the support of the USA, the banks, foreign capital, big business and the majority of the middle class.

The electoral campaign was characterized by a low level of political debate, marked by an exchange of insults between the candidates. The participation of Lula da Silva in support of President Rousseff attracted attention by its populist tone and the grossness of his speeches.

In her victory speech, Rousseff asked Brazilians to unite, promised deep reforms or "changes." She took on commitments that, just as in her first term, she won't keep. Her party, the Workers Party (PT), got fewer votes than it had in the 2010 election in 15 states; it only elected five governors in all 27 states of Brazil.

Rousseff will confront a Congress more hostile to her than the last one, which will oblige her to make large concessions to the parties that oppose her.

In the opinion of the majority of observers, the future government will carry out policies more conservative than that of her first term.

The Agrarian Reform will make no progress, and the repression striking the Landless Workers' Movement (MST) in the different states will grow, with the tacit acceptance of the federal government.

A shift toward the right in foreign policy can be foreseen. Rousseff will do everything possible to improve Brazil's relations with the United States and other imperialist powers, distancing herself from Cuba and from the progressive governments in Bolivarian Venezuela and Bolivia. The revision of Brazil's international policies will also impact on the participation of Brazil in the BRICS [Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa] alliance and in the organizations promoting Latin American integration, such as ALBA [Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America], UNASUL [Union of South American Nations] and CELAC [Community of Latin American and Caribbean States].

Yesterday's appeal for unity among the Brazilian people, as purely rhetorical as it was, will not be forgotten.

Brazil is entering into economic recession. Its GNP is falling, social inequalities are growing, and inflation is taking off. Government scandals, above all the one involving Petrobras [state-run oil giant], are arousing popular anger. Corruption in the state apparatus is spreading. The country is trapped in a quagmire.

Everything indicates that the demonstrations of popular discontent that reached a high point last June and July will grow even larger next year.

Translation by WW managing editor John Catalinotto.

Antonio Guerrero's birthday Baltimore's Cuban 5 party



Baltimore's Fight Imperialism, Stand Together youth group and Workers World Party held a special birthday party for Cuban 5 member Antonio Guerrero. Activists from 5 years old to 65 dedicated Oct. 16, Guerrero's birthday, to a night of learning more about the Cuban 5. They sang "Happy Birthday" and made cards to send to him. The youngest participant, 5-year-old Imari Benjamin Rucker, drew a special card proclaiming "Happy birthday, we love you!"

The group was mesmerized as they watched an entertaining YouTube video entitled "Discover the Five — 16 years is too long." (www.discoverthefive.com) WWP organizer Carl Lewis prepared a special packet of information from the www.thecuban5.org website and made a more detailed presentation. Participants left that night with a deeper sense of the heroism of the Cuban 5 and the special role that workers and youth in this country need to play in winning their freedom.

— Photo and story by Sharon Black



Corte Suprema confirma ley racista de Texas

Por Chris Fry

Una vez más la mayoría derechista de la Corte Suprema estadounidense ha cometido un escandaloso atentado contra los derechos democráticos duramente logrados por la población negra y latina. El 18 de octubre, la Corte mantuvo la ley de identificación de votantes de Texas, la más draconiana y restrictiva en el país.

Las juezas Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor y Elena Kagan discreparon. Ginsburg escribió un fuerte documento de siete páginas denunciando la decisión: “La mayor amenaza para la confianza pública en las elecciones en este caso es la perspectiva de la aplicación de una ley deliberadamente discriminatoria, una que probablemente impone un impuesto inconstitucional y corre el riesgo de negar el derecho al voto a cientos de miles de votantes”, afirma Ginsburg. (houstonchronicle.com, 18 de octubre)

Esta decisión se produce una semana después de que un tribunal federal de distrito encontró que la ley de Texas era inconstitucional. La jueza Nelva Gonzales Ramos presidió un juicio de nueve días sobre la ley de Texas. En un detallado documento de 143 páginas, encontró que la ley de Texas significaría un impuesto al sufragio y por tanto, era inconstitucional. Ella dictaminó que la ley de Texas podría privar de derechos a 600.000 votantes, en su mayoría lati-

nas/os y negras/os.

En el pasado Texas ha tenido normas restrictivas de identificación de votantes. Pero estas normas habían sido bloqueadas en virtud del artículo 5 de la Ley Federal de Derechos Electorales de 1965, que requiere a aquellos estados con una historia de discriminación obtener permiso federal antes de cambiar el procedimiento de votación.

Pero en el 2013, la Corte Suprema revocó la Sección 5, allanando el camino para que la Legislatura de derecha y el gobernador hicieran cumplir esta ley de identificación.

Sólo siete formas de identificación, incluyendo las licencias para portar armas, se pueden utilizar para obtener una identificación de votante de Texas. No se permiten otras formas de identificación, como ID de la universidad, tarjetas de seguro social y las de las tribus nativas reconocidas por el gobierno federal.

La ley de Texas requiere un certificado de nacimiento para obtener una credencial de votante. El costo para este es generalmente de \$22, aunque si hay cambios necesarios debido a cambios de nombre por matrimonio u otras razones, el costo sube.

Y muchas personas necesitarían viajar dos o tres horas a una oficina del gobierno para obtener la credencial de elector. Aunque el estado ofrece una versión de la partida de nacimiento por \$2 o \$3 para las/os votantes, no ha hecho nada para

que esa opción se sepa en las comunidades pobres. Es por ello que el tribunal de distrito federal dictaminó que esta ley asciende a un impuesto de sufragio.

En respuesta a esta decisión, Natasha Korgaonkar del Fondo de Defensa Legal de la NAACP, declaró: “Esta batalla aún no ha terminado. Estamos comprometidos a asegurar que las próximas elecciones de noviembre de 2014 sean las últimas contaminadas por esta medida discriminatoria”. (Houstonchronicle.com, 18 de octubre)

Detrás del voto reaccionario

¿Por qué la Corte Suprema de Justicia, siempre en sintonía con los deseos de Wall Street, defiende esta ley racista de Texas? Después de todo, las/os activistas de derechos civiles habían luchado durante décadas, soportando palizas, ataques de manguera contra incendios, e incluso linchamientos a manos de policías y del Klan, para ganar el derecho al voto para las personas oprimidas. ¿Por qué debe ahora ser quitado ese derecho?

La explicación “pública” del Tribunal Supremo es que no deseaban hacer un cambio “de última hora” a los procedimientos de votación en Texas. Por supuesto, eso es absurdo. Es mucho más perjudicial para el proceso de votación bloquear el derecho de la gente a votar en lugar de permitir que lo hagan.

No, la verdadera razón se encuentra

dentro del mismo sistema capitalista, encerrado en las garras de una crisis económica que no puede superar.

Sumidos en una recuperación sin empleo después de la Gran Recesión, sin perspectivas de crecimiento y expansión económica, los bancos y las corporaciones que gobiernan sobre el panorama político están recurriendo cada vez más a medidas de austeridad, recortes, extracción de plusvalía de la mano de obra barata aquí y en el exterior, para mantener su dominio parasitario.

Conscientes de que esto crea resentimiento público y resistencia, han elegido erosionar todo el derecho democrático duramente ganado, sobre todo en las comunidades oprimidas, con el fin de prevenir cualquier desafío a su dominio. Hasta el derecho de escoger entre candidatos que en su mayor parte son completamente leales al sistema capitalista, es ahora una gran amenaza para ellos. Podría ser utilizado como herramienta por un público desafiante y organizarse en una fuerza vital para lograr un cambio fundamental. Eso es lo que los banqueros, sus políticos y sus tribunales temen.

Junto con los asesinatos por la policía y los vigilantes, el encarcelamiento de millones de jóvenes oprimidos y pobres, y la deportación de millones de trabajadoras/es indocumentados y sus familias, la amenaza del ID del votante debe ser recibida por la lucha decidida de una clase trabajadora multinacional unida. □

Orden de mordaza contra Mumia Abu-Jamal silencia todos los prisioneros

Por Betsey Piette

Filadelfia — Ahora cuando más y más condenas están siendo revocadas y las/os prisioneros puestos en libertad debido a las acciones impropias, racistas e incluso criminales de los fiscales, algunos casos expuestos a través de pruebas de ADN, el estado de Pensilvania se apresura por pasar una orden de mordaza para imposibilitar que los prisioneros puedan hablar al público, sobre todo cuando son políticos como Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Protestas están siendo organizadas para decir no a este escandaloso ataque a la libertad de expresión.

El 16 de octubre la Legislatura de Pensilvania pasó rápidamente la “Ley de Alivio de Revictimización” (RRA por sus siglas en inglés) para dar discrecionalidad ilimitada a los fiscales de distrito, al fiscal general y a las víctimas de crímenes para silenciar las palabras de prisioneros aduciendo que tal discurso hace que las familias de las víctimas sufran “angustia mental”.

Introducidas como las leyes HB2533 y SB508, enmiendas a la ya existente Ley Estatal de Víctimas de Crímenes, la RRA fue apresurada para pasar justo antes de que la Legislatura se suspendiera por el año. El gobernador Tom Corbett la firmaría en Filadelfia el 21 de octubre en el mismo lugar donde el periodista de radio

Mumia Abu-Jamal fue baleado y detenido hace 33 años.

Esta legislación políticamente cargada fue introducida a nombre de la Orden Fraternal de la Policía y sus aliados después de que intentaran sin éxito, detener al prisionero político de Pensilvania Mumia Abu-Jamal dar su discurso de graduación a Goddard College en Vermont el 5 de octubre. Las/os estudiantes de Goddard colectivamente escogieron a Abu-Jamal como su orador de graduación y la administración apoyó la invitación.

Esta nueva ley negaría a la escuela el derecho de oír a su ex-alumno Abu-Jamal quien obtuvo su bachillerato allí en 1996, mientras estaba en el corredor de la muerte.

La ley RRA negaría el derecho de las/os prisioneros a la libertad de expresión bajo la Primera Enmienda de la Constitución al permitir la presentación de demandas civiles para impedir que hablen, se comuniquen con los medios o graben comentarios de radio. Los medios de comunicación que difundan las voces de las/os prisioneros podrían ser también objeto de daños monetarios punitivos bajo la ley.

El senador estatal de Pensilvania Daylin Leach señaló que esta ley es “la más extrema violación a la Primera Enmienda que se pueda imaginar”. (Philly.com, 17 de octubre)

Al tratar de silenciar el discurso legal-

mente protegido de las/os prisioneros, el estado también menoscaba los derechos y la libertad de las/os ciudadanos para conocer, en un momento cuando hay más atención enfocada en la encarcelación masiva, la brutalidad policíaca y el sistema judicial injusto. Es un ataque a la libertad que debe ser protegida especialmente cuando los funcionarios del gobierno no están de acuerdo con el contenido del discurso que escuchan.

Aunque el objetivo sea silenciar a Abu-Jamal, la ley afectaría a todas/os los prisioneros en las cárceles de Pensilvania, así como a las/os ex-prisioneras/os. También obstaculizaría campañas como la que ganó la liberación de décadas de aislamiento, al prisionero político Russell Maroon Shoatz.

Este último esfuerzo para silenciar el movimiento solidario con Abu-Jamal y contra la encarcelación masiva viene luego de la creciente militarización de las fuerzas de la policía civil que salió a la luz durante las manifestaciones contra la brutalidad policial en Ferguson, Misuri.

Cada vez más las mismas fuerzas encargadas de hacer cumplir la ley son las que más a menudo la violan.

En un comentario sobre la RRA en Radio Prisión, Mumia Abu-Jamal declaró: “Doy la bienvenida a la firma del gobernador Corbett en un proyecto de ley inconstitucional que demuestra que

el gobierno de Pensilvania — el poder ejecutivo y el poder legislativo — no dan ni una pizca por su propia constitución de la Mancomunidad de Pensilvania ni la Constitución de Estados Unidos. Esto demuestra que ellos son los que están fuera de la ley.

Mientras quita la financiación a la educación pública en Pensilvania, el gobernador Corbett gasta miles de millones en la construcción de nuevas cárceles y millones más por honorarios legales para defender, sin éxito, la legislación aprobada anteriormente que también violaba los derechos constitucionales. Se espera que la RRA tenga desafíos legales tan pronto como se firme.

Activistas por los derechos de prisioneros y simpatizantes de Mumia Abu-Jamal se enfrentarían a Corbett al venir a Filadelfia para firmar la ley el 21 de octubre.

El 22 de octubre, que es también el día nacional de acciones contra la brutalidad policial y el encarcelamiento en masa, tuvo lugar una conferencia de prensa para denunciar esta ley y para anunciar acciones preventivas que tendrán lugar en Filadelfia, seguida de acciones en la calle y una noche de asamblea popular.

Un número de grupos ya ha firmado un llamado en respuesta a la ley. Para ver la declaración completa, visite tinyurl.com/mpk5qae. □