



U.S.-NATO lead attack on Tripoli

Libyans resist imperialist takeover

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A six-month-long war against the government of Moammar Gadhafi has reached a new stage as NATO escalates its intervention with air power, naval power, strategy and intelligence to push armed units of the so-called Transitional National Council into Tripoli, Libya's capital

On Aug. 21, the TNC moved into at least three areas of Tripoli and its surrounding suburbs. Meanwhile, NATO warplanes flew coordinated military actions aimed at toppling the government.

As of late Aug. 22, the situation in Libya still remains fluid militarily and politically. A major aspect of the war against Libya has involved psychological operations and media-generated propaganda that seeks to demonize the Libyan leader Gadhafi, his family and government.

The TNC leaders were discredited when they claimed to have arrested Col. Gadhafi's sons, Seif Gadhafi and Mohamed Gadhafi. Seif Gadhafi then appeared in public and led a tour of areas still controlled by the government. Mohamed Gadhafi apparently escaped from house arrest when supporters stormed the house.

Imperialists led the battle

Articles in the London Daily Telegraph and the Associated Press point to the commanding and coordinating role of the U.S., British and French intelligence and special forces units in charting the way for the rebels to enter Tripoli.

"For weeks, military and intelligence officers have been helping the rebels plan their coordinated attack on the capital, and Whitehall sources have disclosed that the RAF stepped up raids on Tripoli on Saturday [Aug. 20] morning in a pre-arranged plan to pave the way for the rebel advance." (Telegraph, Aug. 23)

An Associated Press Aug. 22 article said the facts "suggested covert involvement of the U.S. forces and the CIA in the Tripoli takeover." It quoted an unnamed Washington official who said, "The Qatari military led the way, augmented later by French, Italian

EDITORIAL: Stop NATO in Libya!

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and British military advisers. We simply followed the way the opposition fronts moved. ... Gadhafi's forces usually came out to meet the rebels, and that's when we struck."

"The CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies have been gathering information throughout the conflict from contacts they'd developed when they were working closely with the Gadhafi government on counter terrorism against al-Qaida-related Islamic militant groups operating in Libya. This thawing of relations ... paid unexpected dividends later," reported the International Business Tribune Aug. 22.

Although the storming of the Bab al-Aziziya compound on Aug. 23 was portrayed by the NATO forces, the rebels and the corporate media as a great victory for the TNC, this location has been bombed continuously over the last several months. On the same day that the rebels were credited with taking over the location, NATO had already been pounding the area for hours from British RAF Tornados and Typhoons.

A.U.S.-NATO war of destabilization & conquest

Since Feb. 17, at least a half-dozen imperialist states operating under a NATO banner have supported and supplied weapons for a series of attacks against the Libyan government by armed groups.

The imperialist role became obvious when France, Britain and the U.S. passed U.N. resolution 1970 through the Security Council. It allowed a naval blockade of Libya, allegedly to stop arms. U.N. resolution 1973 on March 19 gave a pseudo-legal cover to military intervention.

Since March 31, U.S.-NATO air power have carried out 19,877 sorties, which included approximately 7,459 rocket or bomb strike sorties. These bombing operations grew more devastating when 105 struck the capital and its environs on Aug. 20. (Center for Research on Globalization, Aug. 22) Later, on Aug. 21-22, there were additional bombings of specifically targeted civilian areas of the capital.

"Tripoli has been the object of extensive
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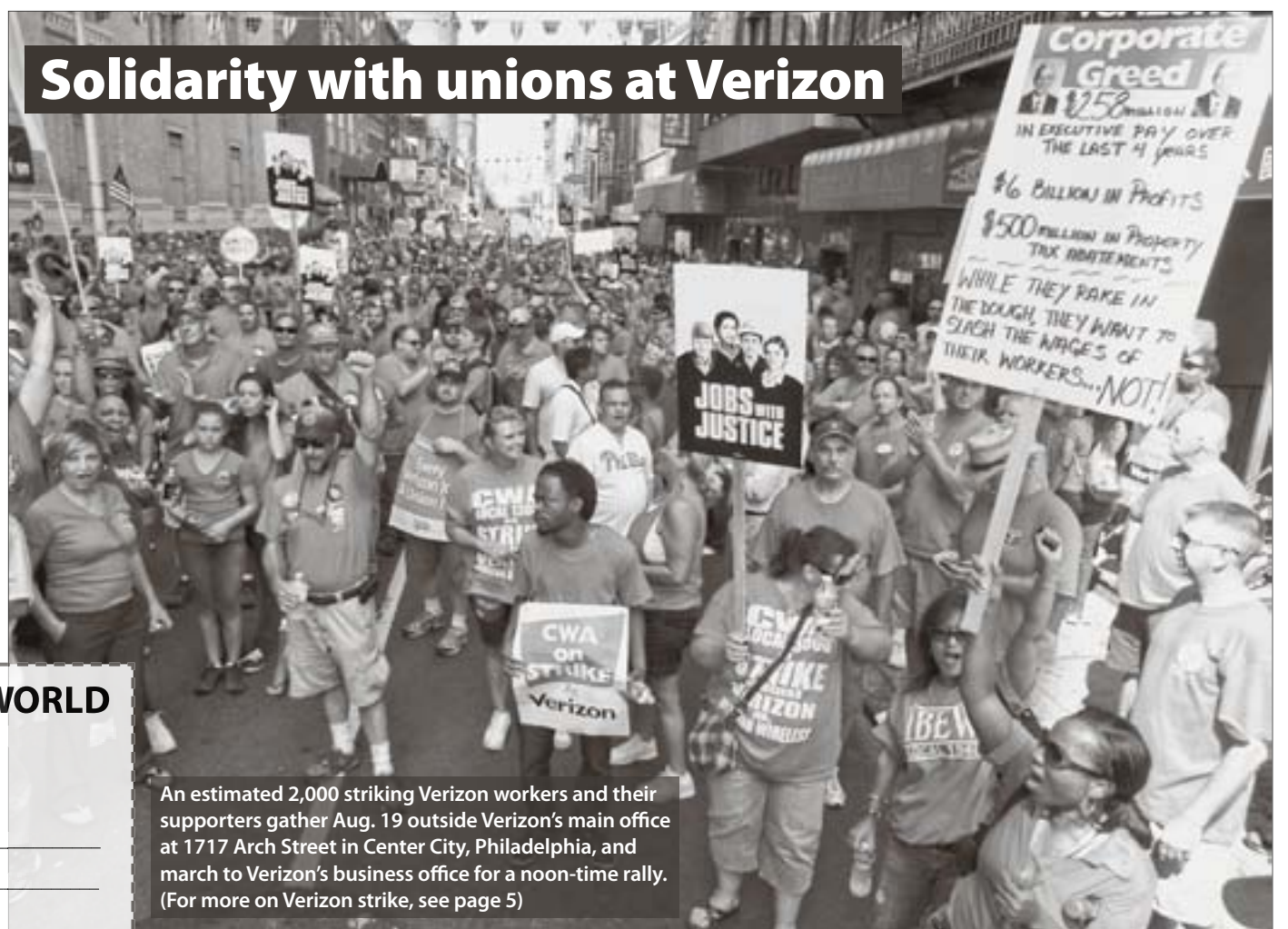


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Solidarity with unions at Verizon

An estimated 2,000 striking Verizon workers and their supporters gather Aug. 19 outside Verizon's main office at 1717 Arch Street in Center City, Philadelphia, and march to Verizon's business office for a noon-time rally. (For more on Verizon strike, see page 5)

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Milwaukee coalition builds anti-Nazi protest for Sept. 3

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee



WWW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

AFSCME Local 82 members and supporters at their annual picnic in Milwaukee.

Left, Professor Doreatha Mbalia at GarveyFest on Aug. 20.



A progressive coalition is building in metro Milwaukee and beyond to counterprotest a planned Nazi rally set for Sept. 3 in West Allis, a working-class suburb just west of Milwaukee. A planning meeting on Aug. 21 included a broad range of labor, community and student individuals and organizations to report on counterprotest activities and to discuss further organizing efforts.

Larry Hales, a national leader of the Bail Out the People Movement from New Jersey, said at that meeting: "The Nazis may still yet be a fringe element on the right but are no less dangerous for it. Just as the ultraright Tea Party was able to attract some white workers on the basis of chauvinism, so could the Nazis. The threat of fascism, whether Nazi or Nazi lite, is a real threat.

"This is especially true," Hales continued, "in the wake of a tremendous uprising in Wisconsin that moderate political forces are attempting to tamp down amid the severity of the capitalist crisis." Hales was in Wisconsin from Aug. 14 to 21 supporting the people's struggle and organizing to directly confront the Nazis.

"This time they are targeting Black youth," said Hales, "taking advantage of the mainstream media's campaign of scapegoating oppressed Black youth. The way to defeat this, as always, is a united front of solidarity led by the most oppressed, that is not afraid and seeks to grind the fascist menace into the dirt."

'We need organization and unity'

Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement conducted a tour of Wisconsin from Aug. 16 to 18 visiting Madison, Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls, Green Bay, Two Rivers, Manitowoc and Sheboygan. National BOPM organizers Hales and Ed Childs from Boston organized and spoke throughout the state with labor, community and student leaders, seniors, the unemployed, women, lesbian, gay, bi, transgender and queer activists, homeless people, members of the Trades Council in Madison and UAW Local 833, and others.

Childs, Hales and other BOPM organizers also attended and spoke at progressive meetings in Milwaukee, including at African-American churches and universities, and they met with union and worker center leaders and members of AFSCME Local 82, the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association, the organization Voces de la Frontera and many others.

"The coalition in Wisconsin of unions; African Americans; Latinos and Latinas; women; immigrants; high school and college students; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; and other organizations fighting for social welfare programs and opposing union-busting is the most successful in this country now," said Childs, who is also a chief steward of Local 26 UNITE HERE.

"Throughout our tour," Childs added, "we have found the people's coalition is at a crucial period now. It's under

forces. To spark a nationwide resurgence of the class struggle, the workers and community struggles and resistance around the country, and the Wisconsin people's uprising need to connect even deeper."

Hales also spoke as part of a diverse community panel at the 23rd annual GarveyFest on Aug. 19 at the Wisconsin Black Historical Museum in Milwaukee. Sponsored by Africans On The Move, the two-day GarveyFest is a Pan-Africanist celebration of the contributions of the historic Universal Negro Improvement Association, led by Marcus Garvey and Amy Garvey and other leaders and movements in Africa and the diaspora.

On Aug. 20, the second day of GarveyFest, there was an afternoon parade/march through the community and cultural events, including youth dancers, drummers and speakers.

Professor Doreatha Mbalia of the Africology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and a member of the Pan-African Revolutionary Socialist Party, is an organizer of GarveyFest.

Speaking on Aug. 20, Mbalia said: "We are African people. Africa is the land of wealth. That's why the United States is bombing Libya, and corporations are taking the oil and other wealth.

"We need organization. It's the key. We need unity. Every person deserves a living wage job, health care and education. We need all of us to come out and say, 'Enough is enough.' If we're falling down as a group of people, we're all going to die."

For more information and how to support the people's uprising in Wisconsin, including anti-Nazi flyers in English and Spanish, see: www.wisaficio.org, www.vdlf.org, www.wibailoutpeople.org, www.defendwisconsin.org. □

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HERSHEY STRIKERS SAY:

'No justice, no sweets'

By Joseph Piette
Philadelphia

Three hundred and seventy-five young adults from around the world paid between \$3,000 and \$6,000 to come to the United States for three months to work, learn English and experience this country's culture. What they experienced instead was crass exploitation of their labor. What they learned was how to fight back — with a sit-in and a strike.

The students from Turkey, China, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Romania, Mongolia, Moldova, Poland and Ghana signed up for the J-1 visa program, expecting to work at hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions for a couple of summer months, followed by the chance to tour the U.S. — a fun way to travel and gain cultural experiences while also earning money to help subsidize their trips.

They were instead forced to lift 50-pound boxes of Reese's candies, Kit-Kats and Almond Joys from a fast-moving production line, one every minute for eight hours a day, in the graveyard shift for many of them.

The students, many from medical and engineering graduate schools, were paid \$7.85 to \$8.35 an hour and had to live in crowded Hershey Company housing (two to four or more to a room) for which they were each charged \$395 a month — twice

the rate for previous workers who lived there. After rent and other fees were deducted from their paychecks, guest workers took home as little as \$40, too little to pay back their sponsor fees and travel costs.

On Aug. 17, the student workers staged the first sit-in against Hershey since 1937.

With the help of the National Guest-worker Alliance and union officials, they stopped working. They demanded that Hershey return the \$3,000 to \$6,000 that each student paid to come to this country; fire subcontractor Exel, which recruited and lied to them; and give their 400 jobs — at higher wages and benefits — to Pennsylvania workers in desperate need of work.

Rick Bloomingdale, AFL-CIO Pennsylvania state president; Neal Bisno, president of SEIU Healthcare Pennsylvania; and Kathy Jellison, president of Service Employees Local 668, were arrested after the company refused them entrance into the packing plant to support the striking students. Guest workers were quickly escorted by police out of the warehouse and remain on strike as of Aug. 21.

According to Dennis Bomberger, the business manager of the AFL-CIO local union that represents Hershey's chocolate workers, while the nonunion Hershey Eastern Distribution Center III in Palmyra, Pa., has grown, Hershey has reduced



Worker/students describe their struggle before sign that is a take-off on Mr Goodbar chocolate bar.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

its full-time union employees by 700 since 2007, to a total of 1,500, with 500 more layoffs expected next year.

On Aug. 19, workers traveled to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, New York and Chicago to publicize their struggle against Hershey.

In Philadelphia, four of them explained their fight to a large noontime rally for striking Verizon workers, ending their time on stage with the chant, "Give our jobs to local people!"

They later rallied with supporters in front of the federal building, energetically explaining their struggle for justice before marching by the Liberty Bell with the chant, "No justice, no sweets!"

Hershey's guest workers' experiences are not rare. In 2010, 353,602 students signed up for this unique program run by the State Department.

Employers have several significant financial incentives to hire J-1 visa holders

rather than U.S. workers. The J visa has no prevailing wage requirement, which enables employers to pay J visa holders wages that are lower than those earned by U.S. workers in the same region and occupation.

Employers are exempt from paying Social Security, Medicare, and federal and state unemployment taxes on J-1 workers. And J visa holders — not the companies — are required to pay for health insurance coverage during their stay in the U.S. Guest workers are especially easy to exploit since if they speak up, they can be deported if companies withdraw their visa.

An Associated Press investigation of the visa program, published last December, found students who were forced to work in strip clubs instead of restaurants. Others took home \$1 an hour or even less, some living in crowded apartments or eating on floors. □

NEW YORK

Public union accepts deep contract concessions

By G. Dunkel

Under the threat of major layoffs, thousands of Civil Service Employees Association members voted to accept a new, five-year contract with major concessions but some protection against layoffs for the first three years. By accepting furloughs and increases in payments for health care, along with no across-the-board pay raises for the first three years, CSEA members took a wage cut.

The results of the vote were announced Aug. 15. According to a union statement, "The agreement was approved by a total vote of 16,896 'yes' to 11,856 'no'," which is about a 60-percent "yes" vote, with less than half of the members voting. It is very rare for contract votes in New York to get more than a 50 percent participation rate.

The CSEA represents about 66,000 mainly blue-collar state workers, from Malone, N.Y., on the Canadian border to Montauk, N.Y., on the eastern tip of Long Island. It is affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees on the national level.

The union's president, Danny Donohue, said in a statement, "These are not ordinary times, and CSEA worked hard to reach an agreement that we believed would be in everyone's best interest."

"This is a big, big win — a win for the union and a win for the people of the state," New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo said in a statement. "The union avoided layoffs, and the state is financially stronger. I'm pleased that our approach of labor and management working together is vindicated."

It certainly was a big win for Democratic Gov. Cuomo, whose election campaign was not endorsed by CSEA, according to a video clip from Donohue. Cuomo also wasn't endorsed by some other large public-sector unions like New York State

United Teachers. (Albany Times Union, Aug. 12, 2010) This lack of support doesn't reflect the unions moving away from the Democratic Party as such, just a rejection of a particular candidate's policies on state workers.

Cuomo still found a way to get major concessions from unions without a direct confrontation like the attacks in Wisconsin and New Jersey conducted by Republican governors. This preserves Cuomo's "liberal" image for a future career in national politics while he carries out a major attack on the wages and living standards of state workers.

According to the civil employees' weekly *The Chief*, of July 1, after the executive board of the CSEA accepted Cuomo's offer in late June, the Professional Employees Federation was waiting for the state to respond to its counteroffer, since Cuomo's

offer to PEF was much worse than the one CSEA got. PEF is the second-largest union representing New York state workers, mainly professional, scientific and technical personnel, with 55,000 members. It was formed in the late 1970s as a split from the CSEA and is affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers on the national level.

While PEF was on hold, management started calling its members into "layoff meetings" with "little or no notice." (www.pef.org) According to PEF's website, these meetings didn't always conform to the contract provisions. They also took place while CSEA members were voting.

Finally, in early August, PEF got an offer similar to the CSEA, and PEF's executive board, a body of 135 members from every department in the state, agreed to send it out to its members on Sept. 2.

In a statement released Aug. 11, PEF president Ken Brynien said: "There were no good choices. In the past, contract negotiations achieved significant gains for our members. Unfortunately, the state of the economy, the will of the state's political leaders and public sentiment have created an environment where the services our members provide are undervalued."

Neither Donohue nor Brynien mentioned the fact that the "will of the state's political leaders" not to "enhance revenue" by maintaining the tax surcharge on wealthy New Yorkers, and perhaps even increasing it to the levels in force before former Gov. George Pataki cut it drastically, was the real problem. Maintaining or increasing it would have meant the budget crisis in New York would not have to be solved by slashing wages and

Continued on page 6

Montes' case delayed

Do they expect progressives to grow exhausted? They're wrong

By Aracely Espinosa
East Los Angeles, Calif.

Freedom Road Socialist Organization activist Carlos Montes appeared for his Aug. 12 hearing in the Los Angeles Criminal Court.

This trial had been postponed on two previous occasions by the Court of the City of Alhambra in East Los Angeles, and from there it was finally transferred to a criminal court.

On each occasion, the crowd supporting the FRSO activist's cause has overwhelmed the federal and judicial authorities, who have tried to keep the case private and avoid public support from the progressive movement.

On the latest occasion, the hearing began in the scheduled room, but the judge ruled that it should not have been held there. The public was then sent to another room within the criminal division, where another trial was being conducted by Judge Marylou Del Villar Longoria. As she started to review the case of Carlos Montes, the judge determined that she could not be on the case because she knew the Montes family and therefore could violate the rule of "fairness" sworn by law officials.

This caused another delay, and the audience once again had to wait and move to another room. There, another judge was waiting just to tell Carlos Montes and his lawyers that there will be another ap-

pointment on Aug. 19 for the release of the confiscated properties, and that the next hearing will be on Aug. 29 in the same criminal court.

The hypocrisy and bad intentions of those in charge of delivering justice in this system, once more show their failure to comply with the real and fair task of implementing their responsibilities in a transparent way. In this way they fail to display humanity and professionalism.

Does all this represent fear of the people, who demand justice and knowledge of the truth? Are they waiting for the masses to grow weary, in order to carry out illegal repression without witnesses?

Well, they are wrong. We will be there again and again until the final victory! □

PENNSYLVANIA

Fund schools, not prisons

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

Protesters gathered outside the Center City offices of Hill International, Inc. in Philadelphia Aug. 17 to demand funding for schools not prisons, and to tell Gov. Tom Corbett to stop building new prisons and Hill to stop profiting from prison construction.

Pennsylvania plans to spend \$685 million to construct three new prisons and expand nine others. Two of the new prisons will include a death row. After cutting around \$1 billion from education funding, Corbett increased the state's corrections budget by nearly the same amount.

Organized by DecarceratePA, the early evening protest brought together a diverse number of community, anti-racism and social justice activists, along with people who either had family members in Pennsylvania prisons or were themselves former inmates.

Their message of "No new prisons" boldly displayed on signs and banners received positive support from passersby. A giant puppet depicting Corbett with arms flailing was surrounded by protesters with signs demanding money for social services not prisons. One sign read: "Prisons are concentration camps for the poor."

The multinational corporation Hill International, Inc. stands to receive \$14 million from the state to manage construction of two new prisons at Graterford. Hill International has global connections, having managed construction of the Chunnel between England and France, construction projects for the Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, and a new security center for the Saudi Arabia Department of the Interior.

Gov. Corbett: 'Need to nurture youth'

The growing capitalist economic crisis, which has fueled the expansion of prison populations across the U.S., is one factor behind the demand for new facilities. According to the Justice Department, from 1995 to 2005 the imprisoned population in the U.S. ballooned by more than 600,000.

The World Prison Population Briefing covering 218 countries, published in July 2011 by the International Centre for Prisons Studies, University of Essex in Britain, found that the U.S. remains the leading country with 2.29 million people in prison. It also has the highest prison population rate in the world: 743 per 100,000 people. The overall world prison population rate is 146 per 100,000. (Harm Reduction Internal, July 2011)

As state facilities reach their capacity, the private prison industry has mushroomed, taking advantage not only of overcrowding in government facilities, but the recent mass incarceration of undocumented immigrants.

Growing opposition to massive spending on incarceration led to some sentencing policy changes and a decline in the number of state prisoners nationwide in 2009 for the first time in 38 years. Yet the prison population in Pennsylvania grew in 2009 by 4.3 percent — more than in any other state. "We're telling Governor Corbett to get with the times," said Decarcerate PA member Dan Bergen. (citypaper.net, Aug. 17)

One large banner laid out DecarceratePA's program: "We propose that PA build communities not prisons — quality schools, jobs and job training, community-based re-entry, health care for all, stable housing, access to healthy food, and restorative forms of justice."

Theresa Shoatz, daughter of political prisoner Russell Shoatz who has been in solitary confinement for 21 of the 39 years he's been in prison, connected the struggle against prison construction with the recent "flash revolts" of oppressed youth in Philadelphia. "The prisons are taking up the money we need for our kids for education," she said. "The city needs to nurture its youth." □

On the picket line
By Sue Davis

Calif. farm workers march for union rights

Gov. Jerry Brown, once considered a "liberal" when he was governor 30 years ago, vetoed the Fair Treatment for Farm Worker Act in June because he said he was "not convinced" the law was needed. The United Farm Workers, who sponsored the bill, have organized a 13-day, 167-mile "pilgrimage" Aug. 23 to Sept. 4 from Madera up the Center Valley to the state Capitol in Sacramento to "convince" Brown that they need a bill to make it easier to unionize farmworkers.

A UFW release notes: "For farm workers, 'not yet' means farm workers don't get water and shade. 'Not yet' means farm workers continue to die of heat illness. 'Not yet' means farm workers do not have basic justice implemented by the Agricultural Labor Relations Act. 'Not yet' means hundreds of farmworkers who last year voted for union representation have waited more than a year for the Agricultural Labor Relations Board to take the simple act of certifying the elections." Two UFW-sponsored bills are currently before the state Legislature: a revised version of the Fair Treatment Act and a bill giving farmworkers the right to be paid overtime after eight hours like other workers.

Fifty full-time marchers, joined by farmworkers and community supporters along the route, will end the protest with a giant rally on the Labor Day weekend. Organizers have issued an appeal for financial contributions to help cover the cost of the march, including meals, water and ice for the marchers and bus rentals so thousands of workers can attend the closing rally. For more information and to donate, visit www.ufw.org.

AFL-CIO interns learn what it takes to organize

Forty-five AFL-CIO interns learned more about organizing, research and community outreach programs working with local central labor councils and local unions in eight cities this summer than they could ever learn in college. For instance, five interns in Charlotte, N.C., created a video showing how they helped build a community coalition; Milwaukee interns participated in a successful effort to defeat two anti-union senators; while Miami interns spent 12-hour days visiting workers' homes to interest them in joining United Teachers of Dade, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, and UNITE HERE. For one intern in Minneapolis, the experience was life changing. After helping child-care providers and city workers form unions with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Nyssa Towsley wants to be a union organizer. This year's group of interns was the most diverse: 64 percent were female and 65 percent were people of color. (AFL-CIO blog, Aug. 18)

Ohioans defy governor, defend unions

A coalition that includes union representatives, We Are Ohio, which initiated a referendum to repeal the law limiting rights for public sector unions, rejected Gov. John Kasich's request to withdraw the referendum. We Are Ohio said on Aug. 18 that the measure must first be repealed. The law would restrict 360,000 public sector workers to bargain only for wages, hours and work conditions. The law was never implemented once the referendum was validated and scheduled for a vote on Nov. 8. (New York Times, Aug. 19) □

EASTLAKE, OHIO

Striking musical instrument makers 'in it for the long haul'

By **Martha Grevatt**

Conn-Selmer bosses are at it again, but once again workers are fighting back.

When United Auto Workers Local 2359, representing workers who make brass horns in Eastlake, Ohio, sat down at the negotiating table this year they were face to face with the company's lead negotiator, attorney Larry Hall. "I decertified the union in Elkhart," Hall immediately boasted.

In 2006, the parent company of Vincent Bach, a brass instrument manufacturer, demanded huge pay and benefit concessions from its workers in Elkhart, Ind. When on April 1 the contract expired, 230 members of UAW Local 364 walked out. Within a month the company was running production with permanent replacements, i.e., permanent scabs.

Repeatedly, the workers rejected the company's demands, which included

unlimited mandatory overtime. For over three years, the workers walked the picket lines. The strike ended in August, 2009, when the National Labor Relations Board upheld a vote in which scabs were allowed to cast ballots, to decertify the union.

Hall flat out told Local 2359 that "we have the money to pay you, but we don't want to." The anti-union company wants to impose new discipline procedures that make it easy to fire workers, and they also want the right to unilaterally abolish classifications and force workers into a lower pay rate. They want to force all workers, whose pay rates vary widely, down to "book rate" and to take cuts as big as \$22 an hour.

These are highly skilled workers. From high school bands to the world's greatest orchestras, Conn-Selmer horns are the instrument of choice. Trumpets, trombones and other instruments are hand-

crafted from beginning to end.

Since July 26, Local 2359 members have been on strike. Already the American Federation of Musicians has called a boycott of Conn-Selmer and symphony musicians in Baltimore, Seattle, Cleveland, Philadelphia, London and Detroit have pledged to support the boycott and avoid using Conn-Selmer instruments in upcoming performances.

Musicians of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra remember their own six-month strike that ended this past April. The brass section of the nearby Cleveland Orchestra recently came to the picket line to perform a concert for the strikers.

"The rich get richer and the hell with the poor," a member of the union negotiating committee told this writer. "We're in it for the long haul."

Support messages can be posted to the "supportlocal2359" Facebook page. □

CALIFORNIA

Union support grows for Cuban 5

The following is excerpted from an email issued by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 (www.thecuban5.org).

On Aug. 13 more than 200 workers, labor leaders and community activists came together at the United Service Workers West Hall to participate in an event in solidarity with the Cuban Five. That same day Rene González, one of the Five, spent another birthday in prison far away from his loved ones.

Those attending the event were able to see a traveling exhibit of Gerardo Hernández's political cartoons. They also watched a short video of Danny Glover and another on the campaign of British unions in support of the Five.

This meeting marked the first [time] that a union from the U.S. organized an event solely to inform their rank and file and leadership about the colossal and ongoing injustice being committed against the Cuban Five. The purpose was to expand exposure of the case, which is boycotted by the [corporate] media, to the U.S. labor movement and ask them to join the struggle.

Tony Woodley, former president of UNITE, the largest union in England, traveled all the way to Los Angeles to participate in the event. He spoke about the importance of solidarity: "Make no mistake about it, this is a historical event. The Cuban Five enjoy a great deal of support on the international level, but that is not the

case inside the U.S. Solidarity is absolutely crucial in this case; the political struggle will be decisive for the return of the Five to Cuba." Woodley shared an emotional meeting he had with the families of the Five on his last visit to Cuba. "The Five and their families are all people with great pride, and nothing will break their spirit."

Workers and union leaders represented a number of Southern California unions, including teachers, musicians, electricians, service, transportation and health care workers, among others. Mike Garcia, president of [the United Service Workers West, an affiliate of the Service Employees union], reminded the audience that the struggle is the only tool the workers have

Continued on page 7

Verizon strikers end action, remain vigilant

By Kathy Durkin

The 45,000-strong, two-week strike of Verizon workers in nine states along the East Coast and mid-Atlantic regions is over. For now.

The militant strikers have pushed the corporation back to the bargaining table. They had walked off their jobs on Aug. 7 after their contract expired and Verizon refused to negotiate. The company would not budge on its demands for 100 concessions from its unionized workforce. That Verizon would agree to bargain shows the effectiveness and strength of the strike, although the fight is far from over.

On Aug. 19, the Communication Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers — which represent workers in the landline division and new FiOS Internet and cable operations — reached an agreement with Verizon Communications to resume and restructure negotiations to focus on key issues.

The next day, the two unions announced that striking CWA and IBEW members would return to work on Aug. 23, and — in what is clearly a concrete gain for the workers — the old contract would be back in force indefinitely, until there is a settlement with a “fair” contract. There would be no cuts now in pensions or sick days, no imposition of higher health insurance costs and no loss of job security.

However, union leaders have made it clear that they are not ruling out the right to strike again if it becomes necessary to do so.

The union leadership says that the corporation agreed to discuss the givebacks, which it was trying to ram down workers’ throats. The profit-hungry conglomerate seeks to wrench \$1 billion — or \$20,000 per worker per year — in concessions from its unionized workforce. Though it cries

crocodile tears that it must cut back — or rather, its workers must cut back — to be “competitive” or because of the economic downturn, the real story is that its net income was nearly \$14 billion last year, says Morgan Stanley, and it recently gave \$10 billion to its shareholders.

The strike showed that the Verizon workers will not submit to the company’s aggressive assault on their wages, benefits and job security without a fight. Their very standard of living and that of their families is at stake. They courageously showed they will not be cowed by a global conglomerate which unleashed not only an all-out war on their hard-fought gains, but also aimed to weaken, if not eliminate, their unions’ collective bargaining rights.

In a boost to the labor movement, and to all workers at a time of corporate and government attacks on workers’ rights to unionize and bargain collectively, they stood up, took bold action and fought back. They showed the strength of the working class, and used its most powerful weapon — the withholding of their labor power.

Their actions could even be a catalyst for other workers, in the public or private sector, to do the same.

The end of the strike may be temporary, however. Already, Verizon executives are publicly criticizing the unions and backtracking on their agreement. Union leaders are adamant that they will fight hard when necessary if Verizon distorts the agreement, and tries to smear and bully the unions. They know this fight is not over.

There are different dynamics now than existed a month ago. The form of the class struggle has changed since the strike. The workers feel the strength of the strike and their own collective power, which they are bringing back to the offices and the plants. They also are bringing solidarity to their workplaces.

They have a spirit of fightback. By their

militant actions and defiance, they are telling Verizon officials to “back off.”

National strike support

The unions organized a strong strike. CWA reports 350 picket lines outside Verizon offices and stores, spanning areas from New England to the mid-Atlantic, along the East Coast to Florida, to the Midwest and even to the West Coast. CWA members outside the strike region showed solidarity by picketing Verizon Wireless stores.

Support was demonstrated by public and private sector unions, propelled by pressure from their memberships, who were in solidarity with the strikers.

United Parcel Workers, as directed by the Teamsters leadership, did not cross picket lines to deliver to Verizon stores. Letter carriers, sanitation workers and other union members honored the lines, too.

Many labor federations and unions joined the picketers and called for members to assist them. The Metro Washington Council AFL-CIO website reports that its president, Jos Williams, congratulated the strikers, “who bravely held the line for working people.” He promised that if necessary, “We stand ready, willing and able to walk the line with them again.”

Community support grew, along with outrage at Verizon’s vicious, anti-worker demands. More than 150,000 petition signers called on the company to bargain in good faith.

Union leaders laud the tremendous amount of strike solidarity demonstrated on picket lines all over the country. The CWA says that tens of thousands from coast to coast — working families, unions, students, progressive groups, civil rights and community organizations, religious leaders and even public officials — joined the union members’ fight in hundreds of supporting events.

The United Auto Workers urged its

members to leaflet and picket Verizon Wireless stores. “In San Francisco, members of HERE, ILWU, OPEIU,” says the CWA, joined with Jobs with Justice and the BlueGreen Alliance to rally for the strikers.

Showing class solidarity, 3,000 delegates to a recent Steelworkers union convention in Las Vegas cheered CWA District 9 vice president Jim Weigkamp when he said, “You cannot be spectators,” and called for them to join the struggle.

The strike affected the corporation. Verizon’s plan to replace well-trained and experienced workers with management strikebreakers didn’t work out so well. Customers, especially businesses, were angry about terrible service, with long waits for repairs or installations. The IBEW reports the lack of safety equipment or checks, as the corporation used thousands of untrained “replacement workers and managers.”

Verizon was testing to see if it could break the strike. It couldn’t. Even right before the agreement, the company notified strikers that their health insurance would be severed by the end of August.

Because the fight is far from over, the communication workers’ unions are urgently calling for continuing mass support and strong pressure on the corporation.

Unionized private and public sector workers know that they face a continuing corporate onslaught. They see the Verizon workers as standing up for all workers to stop “the race to the bottom.” Although corporations are watching to see what Verizon achieves here, the workers are watching, too.

The strike support from union members and other working people, is a big step in the development of class solidarity and bodes well for future struggles, which are sure to unfold as workers oppose the corporate/government anti-labor, anti-union siege. □

NYC rally stands with Verizon workers

By Dee Knight

If Verizon management was present at the Aug. 17 meeting of New York City’s Panel on Education Policy, where a \$120 million contract with Verizon was voted on, it might have helped them to see that they had to sit back down and start negotiating with the Communications Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. These unions represent the Verizon workers, who went on strike on Aug. 7.

Members of the CWA and their supporters rocked the meeting, denouncing a sweetheart deal with this union-busting company at a time when Verizon is already under investigation for massive fraud in its contract business with the NYC Department of Education. This multimillion-dollar deal makes the city’s billionaire mayor and the DOE the biggest strikebreakers.

PEP officials admitted there is a freeze on payments to Verizon while the investigation proceeds, but they still insisted they had to approve the new \$120 million contract “to improve and maintain phone and Internet service for the city’s 1,600 schools.”

But the audience wasn’t buying it, and the hall rang with chants of “Delay the vote, delay the vote!”

Leonie Haimson, director of Class Size Matters, a teachers group, denounced the deal, mentioning “at least four good reasons to vote no” — that Verizon is engaging in unfair labor practices with its workers; that it has already engaged in a multimillion-dollar fraud of the city; that

our kids are suffering from huge cuts causing increased class size, the loss of 2,600 teachers, and decreased educational achievement; and that the deal is “probably illegal.”

Teachers United, a progressive caucus in the 100,000-strong United Federation of Teachers, called the rally, which got an overwhelming response from the CWA, together with the Grassroots Education Movement, Service Employees union Locals 1199 and 32BJ, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37. Many community groups and activists also participated.

Henry Singleton, Local 1199 SEIU delegate, brought the crowd to its feet when he said the 45,000 Verizon strikers “got about 30,000 people ready to come join them! We’re getting ready to march. If you don’t want your bridges shut down and your streets shut down, mess with them and see what happens! We will shut you down!”

Tony Murphy, of the Bail Out the People Movement, spoke for the New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts coalition, and said, “This is a rubber-stamp committee, with the exception of some borough presidents, that is helping billionaire Bloomberg funnel billions of dollars away from our children and into banks.” He turned his back on the PEP members to say, “This is really a CWA rally,” as the hall rocked with chants of “CWA!”

At a street rally next to Verizon’s corporate headquarters — across the street from the high school where the meeting



WWW PHOTO: MIKE OTTO, PVN

Local 1199 SEIU’s Henry Singleton: “Mess with them and see what happens. We will shut you down!”

was held — People’s Video Network interviewed Derrick Echevaria, Bronx organizer for the Transport Workers union Local 100. The local represents the 38,000 NYC subway and bus workers. “This is the last stop,” Echevaria said. “If they go down, we all go down.”

Sandy Pope, president of Local 805 of the Teamsters, told PVN: “They’re trying to break down the contracts we’ve fought for over so many years to get where we are today. In the Teamsters, we’re fighting the same battles — with UPS, Pepsi-Cola, and others. That’s why it’s very important that we fight for each other.” Pope is a candidate for Teamsters international president, and has broad support among progressive Teamsters.

Sebastian Natera, a NYC high school teacher, denounced the whole city education budget. He said: “These budget cuts are racist. You want to come after our con-

tracts next? I’m on their side. The workers united will never be defeated!”

Lennie Dick, a delegate to the Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York, said, “The 28,000-strong PSC supports the CWA all the way!”

Many private individuals spoke, as well as numerous members of community organizations. They all had one message that came through loud and clear: They declared unity in support of the Verizon workers and against the fraud.

Despite all this support for the Communications workers, the pro-corporate PEP voted for the sweetheart contract with Verizon. However, it’s very likely that Verizon got the message that the strikers are far from isolated.

A People’s Video Network video, “We Are One with Verizon Workers,” covering the events above can be viewed on YouTube. □

Speak up now – U.S./NATO out of Libya!

The NATO powers of Europe and the U.S. are declaring victory after having pounded the small country of Libya for five brutal months. They are claiming that the “rebel” forces they command, whose road to Tripoli was paved by NATO air strikes that knocked out much of Libya’s civil and military capability, now control the capital.

Britain, France, the U.S. and most of the other imperialist bandits have given diplomatic recognition to the grouping they themselves cobbled together. There should be no confusion about who these “democratic” forces are. They are like the contras of Nicaragua, the Cuban mercenaries at the Bay of Pigs, and earlier the Manchukuo puppet regime set up by Japan to facilitate its imperialist invasion of China.

After the exposure of all the trickery and outright lying that U.S. governments used to mask their criminal aggression against Iraq and Afghanistan, there is no excuse for any progressive person to act confused and stand on the fence. The motives of Washington and Wall Street for this latest aggression are clear and unambiguous.

Just as in Iraq, there is a big economic motive on the part of the small group of politically powerful, transnational companies that control the world’s oil. Libya, with a population of only 6 million people, has the largest oil reserves in Africa. The giant energy companies of Britain, France, Italy and the U.S. have for months been in a ruthless competition over who will get the biggest spoils from this undeclared war. While the front pages may talk about Libya in terms of freedom and democracy, the business sections of the same imperialist newspapers focus on the bottom line: oil profits.

Moreover, the U.S. ruling class sees breaking down Libya as an opening for further penetration into sub-Saharan Africa and implementation of its plans for military domination of the entire continent through Africom – the Pentagon’s new Africa command structure.

However, the Libyan people’s resistance has been heroic. For nearly half a year they have stood up to not only bombs but a blast of propaganda worthy of Hitler’s Joseph Goebbels. Around the world, in every language, the corporate media have depicted the aggressors as angels of mercy, even as they systematically terrorized the people of Libya with nearly 7,500 air strike sorties that have deprived this desert nation of electricity, water, food and fuel. With its oil wealth, Libya has built a modern, largely urban environment. As in Iraq, this raised the people’s quality of life but also left them more vulnerable to the damage that high-explosive bombs can do to a city’s power supply, water pipes and purification plants, roads and ports.

The media are now in a feeding frenzy over who can use the vilest, most racist terms to describe Col. Moammar Gadhafi, whom the West has never forgiven for having supported African freedom struggles and nationalized Libya’s oil. Having personalized the issue – “Gadhafi must go!” – the U.S. government and the servile media are trying to whip up a lynch mob mentality that is supposed to climax with the capture or assassination of Gadhafi – after which their cameras and reporters will go elsewhere while the people’s wealth is partitioned out among the imperialist bandits and their henchmen. That, at any rate, is the scenario.

As this is written, those defending Libya

from the new colonialism of NATO are reportedly continuing to fight the “rebels” in Tripoli. Despite all the air cover and the presence of British, French and undoubtedly U.S. special forces on the ground, taking over this city of 2 million people is not a cakewalk. The resistance to imperialism can take many forms, especially among a people who have been armed by the Libyan government.

Anyone who stands for the right of nations to self-determination, who understands the predatory character of the U.S. wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, who believes in people before profits and is for jobs and housing and education, not more billions for the Pentagon, should speak up now against this atrocity being committed in north Africa.

And we should remember that this dirty war is happening when desperate times have come to hundreds of millions of workers all over the world. A prolonged capitalist economic crisis eats away at their livelihoods and safety nets. The imperialist countries whose ruling classes have fattened the most off the resources and labor of the oppressed nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America must now destroy jobs at home and slash social budgets to guarantee the profits of the billionaires.

Whatever happens in Libya over the next few days and weeks, one thing is clear: It is becoming more and more difficult for the imperialist powers, despite all their death-dealing weaponry, to keep the billions of workers and oppressed people around the world under their iron heel.

This is not the dawn of imperialism, when a few thousand soldiers armed with rifles and field guns could be sent overseas to drown a people’s resistance in blood while finance capital spun its web around the local elites.

This is the age of rotting, moribund imperialism when the profit system is undercutting its own markets, pauperizing workers everywhere in a chase for ever greater profits while production stagnates. It is the age of high-tech war and high-tech production, both of which require enormous capital outlays at the expense of the shrinking class of producers.

In the imperialist countries, all of which are now home to workers of many nationalities, it is an age of awakening internationalism, class solidarity and resistance to the hardships that imperialist war brings to those at home as well as abroad.

U.S. and NATO out of Libya! The struggle to end imperialism and wage slavery continues!

HAITI

U.N. troops spread cholera

By G. Dunkel

The United Nations Mission to Stabilize Haiti, also known as Minustah, has shown its complete disdain and lack of respect for the people of Haiti by dumping raw sewage containing fecal matter in the Guayamouc River east of Hinche, near the Dominican Republic border. (Ronel Odatte in *Alter-Press*, Aug. 9) It is also dumping in areas in Port-Salut, where the local community is trying to develop tourist facilities. (Haïti-Liberté, Aug. 17)

This is a recipe for spreading cholera.

The U.N. introduced cholera to Haiti last year, according to the U.S. Centers for Dis-

Events in Syria –

Obama threatens U.S. intervention

By Sara Flounders

President Barack Obama on Aug. 18 demanded that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad step down, saying that his days are numbered. The governments of Britain, France and Germany joined in this demand.

This threat is blatant imperialist interference in Syria’s internal affairs. More than that, it is an open threat to again intervene militarily in the region, just as the U.S. and its European allies have done already in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Somalia.

Two weeks earlier, Russian NATO envoy Dmitry Rogozin told the media that NATO was planning a military campaign to overthrow the Assad government. In an interview with the Russian daily *Izvestia*, Rogozin added that the Western imperialist military alliance also may have plans to attack Iran. (Xinhua, Aug. 5)

When imperialism states its intention to bring down a government or movement, as the U.S. is doing now to Syria, it is cowardly to stand on the same side as the imperialists who seek to dominate the world, or even to be neutral. This has been an ABC in class-conscious workers’ movements for 150 years, since Karl Marx. Whatever one’s assessment of the government under attack, imperialist intervention, whether through sanctions or armed attack, must be opposed.

Obama’s double standard

The Obama administration has called on the governments of Libya and Syria to resign, as though they were the only ones using force against a portion of their population.

Look across the Atlantic to Washington’s closest ally. The British government just sent 16,000 police against the rebellious people of London and other cities. After hasty trials, some people were sentenced to four years in prison for sending messages with their BlackBerry. Even before the recent rebellions there, the police had killed 333 civilians in England and Wales over the last 13 years. (Report of the Independent Police Complaints Commission, reported in *The Guardian*, Dec. 3, 2010)

In May police of the Spanish state fired rubber bullets at people camped out in Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona protesting an austerity budget. The Greek government has repressed many strikes and demonstrations in the past

year. Washington cheers on the state power in all three allied capitals for punishing legitimate rebellions.

Even more blatant is the repression in Bahrain, a country of half a million people that hosts the U.S. Fifth Fleet. There was not a word of criticism from Washington when the monarchy killed dozens of protesters and arrested and tortured hundreds more, or when Saudi troops invaded the island to help put down the uprising.

The threat to Syria is connected to the social explosion shaking the Arab world. U.S. imperialism and all the old regimes tied to it in the region are trying desperately to manage and contain this still unfolding mass upheaval into channels that do not threaten imperialist domination.

The U.S. and its collaborators are also trying to divide and undermine the two main wings of the forces resisting imperialist domination – the Islamic forces and the secular nationalist forces – which together overthrew U.S.-backed dictators in Egypt and Tunisia. There is now a concerted effort to turn these same political forces against the two regimes in the region that have opposed U.S. domination in the past: Libya and Syria.

U.S. diplomatic cables revealed by Wikileaks showed that the U.S. campaign to overthrow Assad began years ago under President George W. Bush. (“U.S. secretly backed Syrian opposition groups,” *Washington Post*, April 18)

Now Obama’s open declaration against Assad makes it no longer necessary to see secret cables to know where U.S. imperialism stands.

Flounders is co-director of the International Action Center. For more on Syria see: www.iacenter.org/nafricamideast/syria050611.

Public union contract

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social services.

There are a few other smaller state unions, like United University Professions, which represents faculty and staff at the State University of New York, and the Professional Staff Congress, which represents faculty and staff at the City University of New York – partially state-funded – which do not have contracts.

Cuomo was able to effectively threaten the CSEA and PEF with layoffs and play one off against the other. Both unions had a number of small demonstrations statewide, mainly of their own members, but the New York state labor movement was not able to build a mass movement to defend the needs of these two unions.

Other states in the Northeast, like Connecticut, have also used threats, intimidation and changing the rules to get contracts with deep concessions accepted by union members. □

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After deadly incident in Sinai

Egyptians cheer burning of Israeli flag

By Deirdre Griswold

Ahmed el-Shahat became an instant hero, known on Twitter as #Flagman, when in the early hours of Aug. 21 he scaled the walls of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, removed its flag and replaced it with an Egyptian flag.

A huge crowd that had been demonstrating at the embassy then burned the Israeli flag that Shahat had captured.

It was another sign that the people of Egypt are furious at the killing of three Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai. Israel has not admitted officially that it killed the Egyptians, but has said that their deaths were an accident that happened during Israel's aerial pursuit of unidentified militants who had earlier carried out several attacks on soldiers in southern Israel, killing at least eight.

Richard Lightbown, writing for the Palestine Chronicle, said of the attacks inside Israel: "A large variety of weaponry is reported to have been used in the attacks including mortar fire, an anti-tank missile and an RPG [rocket-propelled grenade] device that was fired at a pursuing helicopter. Explosives were laid alongside the road. In a further shooting attack in the same area later that afternoon two Israeli soldiers were wounded and three gunmen died. The sophistication and success of this attack demonstrate an unusual level of competence."

Israel blamed Palestinians coming from Gaza for the attack, but Hamas, the elected authority there, categorically de-

nied that Gaza had anything to do with it. The attack occurred near Israel's border with Sinai some 150 miles south of Gaza.

The anger of the Egyptian people had been simmering for a long time before this incident brought it to the boil. Like most of the Arab world, they have long sympathized with the Palestinian struggle. The Camp David Accords, signed by Hosni Mubarak's predecessor Anwar El Sadat of Egypt and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and brokered by U.S. President Jimmy Carter, had returned the Sinai desert to Egypt in 1979, but with qualifications. Israel, which had seized the Sinai from Egypt in 1967, withdrew its troops, but Egypt was required to police

the area in coordination with Israel.

In recent years, since Israel imposed a blockade on Gaza in 2007, the U.S.-supported Mubarak regime of Egypt had helped Israel keep the Palestinians in Gaza sealed off from the world. But this year's uprising in Egypt that brought down Mubarak also resulted in an easing of the siege of Gaza. Obviously, Israel didn't like that.

The U.S. has been maneuvering behind the scenes to keep this latest incident from igniting the Egyptian masses once again. Before the Israeli aerial attack that killed the Egyptian soldiers, it looked as though the old pattern of the Egyptian military collaborating with both Israel and the

U.S. had been restored. But since the Egyptian masses took to the streets again to protest Israel's violation of Egypt's airspace and territory, the Egyptian cabinet has been meeting in crisis mode.

Despite the historic rising of the masses in Egypt that toppled Mubarak, the ruling cabinet is still dominated by the same military. But, as was seen during the Tahrir Square demonstrations, the loyalty of the rank and file of the army if called out to repress the people is questionable. During the huge demonstration at the Israeli Embassy, "Egyptian soldiers took up positions in armored cars nearby, but kept their distance in an apparent attempt to avoid confrontations." (New York Times, Aug. 22) □



Youth in NYC protest Israeli attack

A multinational crowd, including many youth and a significant number of Jewish men and women, gathered before the Israeli Consulate in New York to protest the recent attacks on the Gaza border and in Gaza. They chanted, "Stop the bombing! Free Palestine!" and "Not another penny, not another dime, no more money for Israel's crimes. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!"

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden

U.S.-NATO lead attack on Tripoli

Libyans resist imperialist takeover

Continued from page 1

bombings of residential areas, creating an atmosphere of panic. Rebel forces are not the decisive factor. The decisive forces are the extensive NATO bombings and the support provided by NATO to the rebels," reported Mahdi Darius Nazemroaya from Tripoli. (CRG, Aug. 22)

"Operation Mermaid Dawn," aimed at taking Tripoli, began on the evening of Aug. 20 with armed actions of TNC cells involving several hundred people. In violation of U.N. Resolution 1970, a NATO warship anchored off the shore of Tripoli delivered heavy weapons and additional TNC rebel forces. Government and medical sources said 1,350 deaths and 5,000 injuries took place that night.

"Fighting started again during the night. There were intense firefights. NATO drones and aircraft kept bombing in all directions. NATO helicopters strafed civilians in the streets with machine guns to open the way" for the opposition forces, wrote Thierry Meyssan for CRG on Aug. 21.

NATO forces have been the most important factor in this war aimed at regime change in Libya. According to the Aug. 22 New York Times, U.S. military aerial surveillance proved crucial in the recent fighting. Unnamed U.S. and NATO officials told the Times that "coordination between NATO and the rebels, and among the loosely organized rebel groups themselves, had become more sophisticated and lethal in recent weeks, even though NATO's mandate has been merely to protect civilians, not to take sides in the conflict."

NATO's bombing operations attacked thousands of targets. "The cumulative effect not only destroyed Libya's military infrastructure but also greatly diminished

the ability of Colonel Gadhafi's commanders to control forces, leaving even committed fighting units unable to move, resupply or coordinate operations." (New York Times, Aug. 22)

The TNC leaders also credited NATO with providing them an opportunity to advance in the eastern and western parts of Libya. In earlier battles on their own, the TNC forces had quickly been sent running when in battle with the government forces, even after NATO warplanes had eliminated much of the government's armor.

It was thus not these ragtag "rebels" that stormed Tripoli, but the combined force of Britain, France, Canada, Italy and the United States — and the support of more of the old colonialist allies. This most powerful military and economic alliance supplied air cover, intelligence and special forces as well as warships that have supplied the TNC with weapons, training

and transportation to fight an oppressed African country of 6 million people.

Implications of U.S.-NATO war against Libya

Much of the information circulated about the political and military situation in Libya has been designed to turn both the people inside the country and the international community against the Libyan government. International conferences convened by the imperialist states have bestowed "recognition" to the TNC rebels as the sole legitimate forces representing the country.

Nonetheless, the people of Libya and throughout the regions of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf can only be alarmed by the Western military assault on the Libyan people. Next, U.S. and NATO ground forces could be deployed into Libya, should the TNC appeal for "boots on the ground" to pur-

portedly restore "stability" to the country.

Africa and the Middle East have a long history of struggles against colonialism, neocolonialism and imperialism. Recent uprisings throughout the region have set off panic among the ruling classes of North America and Western Europe due to the strategic minerals, especially oil, that are supplied to the world capitalist markets from various countries.

However, the workers and oppressed of the region will not benefit at all from these imperialist military interventions. In all the countries allied with the U.S. and other capitalist states in the region, the conditions of the masses of people have worsened.

As these conditions deteriorate along with those of the workers and oppressed in the imperialist countries, greater opportunities will arise for international solidarity among people throughout the world. □

Union support grows for Cuban 5

Continued from page 4

in their fight for justice. "The struggle for the freedom of the Cuban Five should be part of the struggle of U.S. workers, because it is part of the same fight."

Cristina Vazquez from Workers United briefly explained who the Cuban Five are, saying: "Many of you are learning about the Cuban 5 for the first time ... because this story has been kept out of the news media. Every day we fight against injustice, and one of our biggest struggles has been the reunification of families and immigration reform. This fight is no different than that; here we have wives, children and parents who have been sepa-

rated for 13 years. We need to be the voice of the families of the Cuban Five. We need to be the voice here for the people of Cuba who want their five heroes back home." Vazquez encouraged the audience to pick up postcards designed by the union she represents to be sent to President Obama asking for the release of the Five.

Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five spoke about the different campaigns in the U.S. to spread the word about the case. Jrapko explained that this is a case of human rights and basic justice. "These men came to the U.S. unarmed simply to defend their country from terrorist

attacks coming from U.S. soil. With a stroke of a pen Obama can free them."

Members of the International Committee presented plaques on behalf of the Cuban Five to Woodley, Garcia and Vazquez. Another plaque was awarded to Natasha Hickman, editor of Cuba Si!, a publication in solidarity with Cuba produced by unions in the United Kingdom.

An informational table received a lot of attention, with people signing up to receive updates and taking hundreds of postcards to send to Obama. Many copies of the new documentary, "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?" were also purchased. □

Se intensifica campaña en defensa de Víctor Toro

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

Se puso en marcha la siguiente fase de la campaña para detener la deportación de Víctor Toro, un activista y revolucionario chileno de 69 años.

Diana Crowder, coordinadora de la campaña, dijo que el Comité de Defensa Víctor Toro se ha reunido con frecuencia para diseñar nuevos y emocionantes planes para revitalizar el movimiento en pro de Toro. El equipo de defensa de Toro ha recibido un nuevo impulso con la incorporación de la Clínica por los Derechos de Refugiados Inmigrantes de la Escuela de Derecho de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York, que ha tomado el caso de Toro como su representante legal.

Toro fue detenido por agentes de la patrulla fronteriza de los Estados Unidos el 5 de julio de 2007 en Rochester, Nueva York, mientras viajaba en un tren de Amtrak. El Comité afirma que Toro fue racialmente perfilado, pidiéndole documentos y deteniéndole.

Toro y su esposa, Nieves Ayress, son luchadores por la libertad desde hace mucho tiempo. En Chile, Toro jugó un papel decisivo en la lucha por la supervivencia básica en su comunidad, incluyendo la lucha por el agua y la vivienda. Ayress es una veterana activista por los derechos de la mujer y los derechos indígenas.

Ambos organizaron y lucharon contra el dictador respaldado por EE.UU., Augusto Pinochet, en la década de 1970 y fueron obligados a abandonar Chile por las tortu-

ras brutales y la ola de represión contra el movimiento político. Decenas de miles de chilenos/as fueron masacrados/as.

Pero Ayress y Toro nunca abandonaron la lucha por los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as. Son fundadores de La Peña del Bronx y organizadores activos en la Coalición del Primero de Mayo por los Derechos de Inmigrantes y Trabajadores/as. Ambos siempre se ven en las manifestaciones de todas las luchas, ya sea contra las guerras de los EE.UU. en el extranjero o en apoyo a Mumia Abu Jamal, a los Cinco Cubanos y otros prisioneros/as políticos/as.

Toro y su familia, junto a sus partidarios y su equipo legal, han llevado a cabo un agresivo desafío jurídico y político exigiendo el asilo político. Sin embargo, el pasado marzo la jueza Sarah Burr negó la solicitud de asilo para Toro. Ahora enfrenta una posible deportación en cualquier momento.

Esta negación es un golpe a la lucha por la justicia no sólo para Toro, sino para todos/as los/as inmigrantes indocumentados/as y documentados/as por quienes ha luchado tan duro.

La evidencia presentada, junto con el testimonio de Toro, fueron de tal magnitud que ningún juez imparcial podría haber negado la petición de asilo presentada por el ex prisionero político chileno. El Comité de Defensa exige que Toro pueda permanecer en Estados Unidos, dado que la expulsión a Chile le desarraigaría de su familia y de la comunidad en el Bronx. Además, si regresa a Chile enfrenta represión e incluso el

peligro de ser asesinado, porque el aparato represivo de la era de Pinochet, aunque en las sombras, aún está vigente.

La jueza Burr concluyó que Toro tardó mucho tiempo en presentar su solicitud de asilo político y que las condiciones políticas en Chile han cambiado lo suficiente para que Toro pueda volver a Chile sin problemas. Esta conclusión ignora totalmente el testimonio presentado por Toro y su equipo de defensa.

El equipo jurídico de Toro expresó su preocupación de que una acusación de terrorismo por la fiscalía no permitiría que aunque sin fundamento, el caso no sea juzgado con justicia y objetividad. Los abogados del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional (Homeland Security) habían introducido la idea de que Toro estaba vinculado al terrorismo o que él mismo era un terrorista. La decisión de Burr muestra que las preocupaciones del Comité eran válidas.

¿Cómo puede justificarse la denegación de la solicitud de asilo político de Toro -- especialmente para un hombre cuya labor política y social representa la esencia misma para lo cual el asilo político debe existir? ¿Cómo pueden ignorar la persecución y el sufrimiento que experimentó Toro durante la dictadura militar de Pinochet, una dictadura que fue financiada por los Estados Unidos? ¿Cómo puede minimizarse el riesgo que enfrentó como objetivo de la Operación Cóndor: la campaña infame y sangrienta de represión política en la década de 1970 ideada por Estados Unidos para América Latina?



Víctor Toro

Cómo Ud. puede ayudar

El Comité de Defensa de Víctor Toro insta a los/as progresistas, activistas sindicales y por los derechos de inmigrantes, organizadores/as contra la guerra y a todas las personas de conciencia a que exijan la no deportación de Víctor Toro. Se están escribiendo cartas pidiendo apoyo a varios miembros del Congreso, sobre todo los/as representantes del Estado de Nueva York.

El Comité está elaborando una postal para enviar al fiscal general de los Estados Unidos Eric Holder, así como a la secretaria del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional Janet Napolitano. Una petición en línea también se está elaborando y pronto estará lista.

Los/as partidarios/as también pueden ayudar mediante la movilización de los/as miembros de sindicatos, líderes religiosos, organizaciones anti-guerra y otros/as a que se unan al apoyo para que Toro permanezca en los Estados Unidos. Toro, Ayress, su abogado y otros/as miembros del Comité están disponibles para entrevistas de prensa o para hablar en eventos para dar a conocer el caso.

Si desea una copia de la petición, folleto o postal o para involucrarse con el trabajo, visite <http://www.may1.info> o llame al 718-292-6137. □

Continúa la lucha por los Cinco Cubanos

Le niegan documentos de hábeas corpus e información a Gerardo Hernández

Por Cheryl LaBash

El plazo para el recurso de habeas corpus para el héroe Gerardo Hernández de los Cinco Cubanos es inminente, sin embargo, el gobierno estadounidense continúa reteniendo la información esencial y el acceso a los documentos legales requeridos para su apelación extraordinaria, según la Asamblea Nacional del Poder Popular de Cuba.

“Debemos exigirle a las autoridades estadounidenses que entreguen la información que están ocultando sobre su conspiración con los llamados ‘periodistas’ de Miami que difamaron a los Cinco Cubanos y provocaron y amenazaron a miembros del jurado, a pesar de las protestas de la propia jueza,” dice una declaración del parlamento.

El parlamento cubano exhortó al gobierno estadounidense a revelar imágenes de satélite, escondidas por 15 años, que pueden revelar el sitio verdadero del incidente del 24 de febrero de 1996 que resultó en el enjuiciamiento de Hernández. Ese día tres aviones piloteados por miembros de Hermanos al Rescate — un grupo contrarrevolucionario terrorista basado en Miami — violaron el espacio aéreo cubano; posteriormente, dos de ellos fueron derribados. (www.antiterroristas.cu)

El 25 de abril, cuando la fiscal estadounidense Carolyn Heck Miller le dijo a la corte federal de Miami que rehusara la audiencia de apelación de Hernández, el Comité Internacional por la Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos preguntó ¿“A qué le teme la fiscalía si deja a Gerardo usar su derecho a presentar en corte sus argumentos y pedir la



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert, Fernando González Llort y Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez.

supuesta evidencia que tienen contra él”?

La respuesta es que los Cinco Cubanos son héroes inocentes mundialmente conocidos por impedir horribles ataques terroristas contra Cuba. Su historia fue conformada por unos llamados “periodistas” de Miami que recibieron un cuarto de millón dólares del gobierno estadounidense para satanizar a Hernández y a sus cuatro compañeros en su reportaje antes y durante el juicio — creando así prejuicio e influyendo al jurado. (theCuban5.org) La evidencia de estos contratos y pagos fue descubierta solo años después y es parte de la base para nuevas audiencias — especialmente en el caso de Hernández que fue sentenciado a dos cadenas perpetuas más 15 años de encarcelamiento y se le ha negado el derecho de visitación de su esposa, Adriana Pérez.

La corrección de esta narrativa falsa se convirtió y sigue siendo el gran reto para los/as seguidores/as. Los Cinco Cubanos monitoreaban a los autores de los ataques violentos contra Cuba y contra los/as partidarios/as de la revolución cubana, incluso dentro de los EE.UU. El nuevo vídeo de Saul Landau, ¿“Puede ponerse en pie el verdadero terrorista, por favor”? repasa la

historia sangrienta del terrorismo basado en los EE.EE. con el objetivo de destruir el camino independiente hacia el socialismo en Cuba.

En una entrevista el 26 de julio en la radio KPFK de Los Ángeles, Landau señaló que “Cuando EE.UU. no estaba directamente auspiciando los actos terroristas contra Cuba, miraba hacia el otro lado permitiendo que los exiliados cubanos los llevaran a cabo. Así que o trabajaban directamente con la CIA o eran alentados informal y pasivamente por las autoridades estadounidenses. Hay una escena en el film en la cual encontramos en los archivos una cita del entonces presidente [Dwight] Eisenhower. Cuando le informa el secretario de estado de esa época, Christian Herter — esto fue en 1959 — que exiliados cubanos estaban usando sitios en la Florida para el despegue y bombardear Cuba, y que los cubanos estaban quejándose, la respuesta de Eisenhower es ¿Y por qué los cubanos simplemente no derriban los aviones”?

Sin embargo, el derribo en 1996 de dos de los tres aviones de Hermanos al Rescate que violaron el espacio aéreo cubano fue usado para pasar varias leyes en el

Congreso estadounidense. Estas nuevas medidas intensificaron el brutal bloqueo económico estadounidense de Cuba e infligieron una inhumana y totalmente injustificada sentencia doble de cadena perpetua a Hernández, quien fue difamado como líder del derribo.

En un mensaje del 12 de agosto, el Comité Internacional por la Libertad de los Cinco Cubanos dijo: “Es tiempo de que Gerardo Hernández y sus cuatro compañeros de causa sean liberados. Aunque sólo sea por razones humanitarias, después de 15 años de injusto encierro es tiempo que los Cinco sean liberados. Nosotros no esperamos algo diferente de las cortes norteamericanas, pero creemos que el gobierno de EE.UU. debería tomar la decisión correcta de permitir el regreso de los Cinco con sus familias.

El [presidente Barack] Obama puede liberar a los Cinco haciendo uso de las prerrogativas que le confiere la Constitución de EE.UU. en su carácter de Presidente. Es hora que ponga fin a esta injusticia y escuche el clamor de la humanidad.

El Comité exhorta, “Les rogamos enviar telegramas, fax, correos electrónicos a la Casa Blanca y las embajadas de EE.UU. en sus países exigiendo el cese del trato ilegal y arbitrario contra Gerardo Hernández Nordelo”.

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