

# U.S. hands off Syria!



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

By THE EDITORS

The Barack Obama-led march to yet another “war” suffered an important but far from definitive setback when the usual U.S. “coalition of the willing” failed to materialize in late August to lend a fig leaf of Great Power authority to what then appeared to be an imminent U.S. attack on Syria. But Obama’s threatened deadly missile strike still remains high on the imperial agenda and requires nothing less than massive and united mobilizations of all antiwar forces to challenge it.

We wish to stress here that the term war, in the context of endless U.S. “wars” in the Middle East today and beyond, where millions are slaughtered in the name of defending America’s “national security” (that is, oil interests), is horribly abused. What we are looking at today is not war in the traditional sense but rather the unilateral publicly announced and wholesale murder of innocent people.

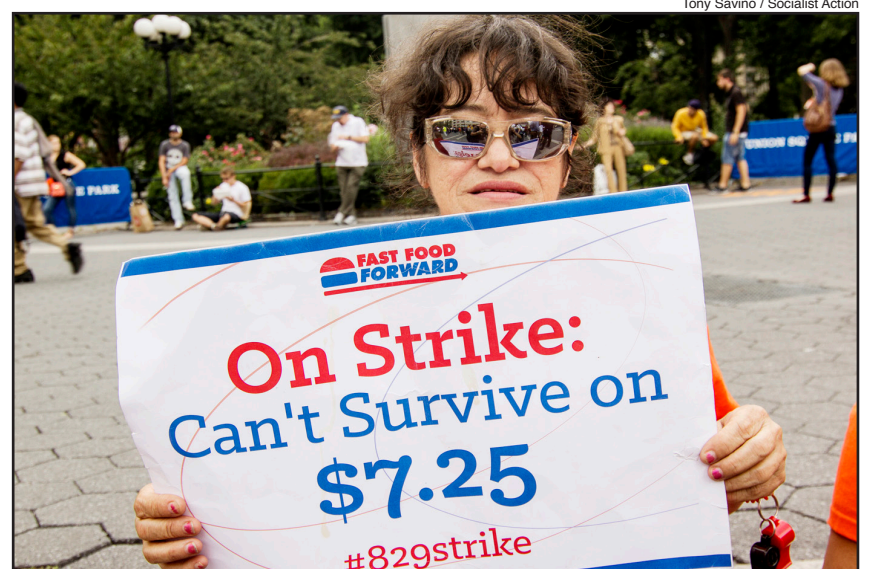
The “other side,” the victims of imperialist and chauvinist domination, rarely

fire a shot in return. The kill figures usually record a few dozen Americans dead, mostly by “friendly fire,” alongside thousands or millions of the “enemy,” as in Iraq, where 1.5 million were slaughtered. The imperialist-fabricated lie, now fully exposed, that Iraq harbored “weapons of mass destruction” has come home to haunt today’s war-makers.

Whatever military equipment the victims of imperialist war might possess is obliterated in the first hours of today’s modern “wars.” The world’s most sophisticated military behemoth is capable of mass murder and destruction without a single boot on the ground or incurring a single dead or wounded soldier. This is what Obama hopes to accomplish in Syria today.

The central U.S. objective is to impose a government capable of repressing the Syrian masses’ struggle for freedom and equality while simultaneously promoting U.S. interests in Syria and the region. Currently, the U.S. finds itself unable to establish any “friendly” and vi-

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Tony Savino / Socialist Action

Some 1000 fast food workers walked off the job for one day on Aug. 29 in 58 U.S. cities. “We can’t survive on \$7.25!” hundreds of workers and supporters chanted in New York City. In some locations, workers briefly occupied workplaces, such as in New York and Los Angeles. Workers are demanding \$15 an hour pay and union recognition without retaliation. Major fast food corporations each have yearly profits exceeding \$1 billion.

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# TransJustice activists fight for health care

By ANN MONTAGUE

TransJustice activists are working on a lot of issues, and a major one is health care. The United States is very far behind countries with national health-care systems, as most of these countries cover whatever transgender people need without prejudice.

The Transgender Law Center is a major resource for information about the problems encountered in access to care in our private insurance system.

Many health insurance companies just deny transgender applicants who apply to their plans. Even in San Francisco, which is a relatively transgender-friendly city, 51% of transgender people have no form of health insurance. This means they do not even have access for generally covered routine care. Repairing a knee ligament without insurance is about \$25,000.

Another problem is that in most states public and private health insurance has what the industry calls "Transgender Exclusion." This means they will not cover any transition-related procedures or care. All treatment is out of pocket, which can be prohibitive, and often because of the cost transgender persons will resort to the black market to get their hormones or even surgery. This can result in great harm or even death.

There are also examples of health-insurance companies that define the Transgender Exclusion very broadly. So there are examples in which coverage of a broken arm is denied because the insurance company assumes any health problems are due to transgender status.

The problem of transphobic medical providers means that often the transgendered person will avoid going to the doctor; so they do not even receive cancer screenings



or gynecological care.

These are some of the issues that TransJustice activists work with every day. They were encouraged when they were told by officials in the Obama administration that they "believed" that the nondiscrimination laws in Obamacare would protect transgendered people. However, the day after Pvt. Manning announced she would be seeking hormone therapy, a spokesperson for the Army stated that they would "not provide hormone therapy or re-assignment surgery for Gender Dysphoria."

After doing further research, activists found that the nondiscrimination section in Obamacare specifically does not require health-insurance companies to pay for gender reassignment surgery, hormone therapy, or "other services." More people need to join the movement both for TransJustice and against a health-care system based on profit. ■

## Lynne Stewart files new appeal

Lynne Stewart filed her third application for compassionate release on Sept. 1. Her request was submitted to Warden Jody Upton at FMC Carswell, the medical prison where Stewart has been incarcerated for the past three years.

Stewart's first application was rejected by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) on the grounds that her health had "improved." Stewart, a courageous 30-year civil-liberties attorney, is dying from terminal metastasized breast cancer.

Her appeal of the BOP fabrication was rejected by her original sentencing judge, John Koeltl, who cited technical reasons preventing him from intervening. With new medical reports verifying Stewart's continuing decline, she filed a second request for compassionate release, only to be rejected once again based on bureaucratic prison regulations.

Stewart's third appeal will be based almost exclusively on further evidence of medical decline, since the BOP's new and touted "liberalized" compassionate release standards are so limited as to barely improve Stewart's chances for freedom.

Stewart is a frame-up victim, jailed for 10 years on frame-up charges of conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism after she released a press statement on behalf of Egyptian cleric Omar Abdel Rachman, whom she represented as an attorney.

Join the campaign to free Lynne! For more information, see [justiceforlynne.stewart.org](http://justiceforlynne.stewart.org).

— JEFF MACKLER

## A WORKERS' ACTION PROGRAM TO FIGHT THE CRISIS

We propose an EMERGENCY CONGRESS OF LABOR to discuss and take steps to implement the following demands —

1) Bail out the people, not the bankers! Open the account books of the banks to full public inspection. Nationalize the banks to be supervised by workers' committees.

2) No foreclosures! No forced evictions! Cancel usurious debt payments, and reduce mortgage payments in proportion to their capitalist-caused decline in value.

3) Full employment at union wages! An emergency public works program to employ all jobless workers and youth! Employ people to build what we need — low-cost quality housing, efficient mass transportation, cheap and renewable sources of power, schools, clinics — and to conserve our water, forests, farmland, and open space.

4) Immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries from Iraq & Afghanistan! No war on Iran! Close all U.S. bases abroad! No money for the military — use funds instead for public works! Convert the war industries to making products for people's needs and to combat global warming.

5) Reduce the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, and cut the retirement age to 55. Provide unemployment and retirement payments at the level of union wages and benefits.

6) To combat inflation: A sliding scale of wages and pensions that matches the rises in consumer prices. To combat high medical costs: A free, universal, public health-care system.

7) Immediate citizenship for all undocumented workers. No job discrimination; equal pay for equal work — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, or national origin.

8) Nationalize manufacturing, big agribusiness, energy, and transportation corporations and place them under the control of elected committees of workers.

9) To mobilize support for the demands it adopts, the EMERGENCY CONGRESS should organize ACTION COMMITTEES in every workplace and neighborhood threatened by the crisis. These committees can draw up more concrete demands than the ones outlined above.

10) To put all these measures into effect, we need a LABOR PARTY — based on a fighting union movement and all people who are oppressed and exploited. For a workers' government!

**SOCIALIST ACTION** Closing news date: Sept. 3, 2013  
Editor: Michael Schreiber Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. RATES: For one year (12 issues, 1st-class mail): U.S., Canada, Mexico — \$20. All other countries — \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials. Socialist Action is edited, designed, and laid out entirely by volunteer labor.

**SOCIALIST ACTION**

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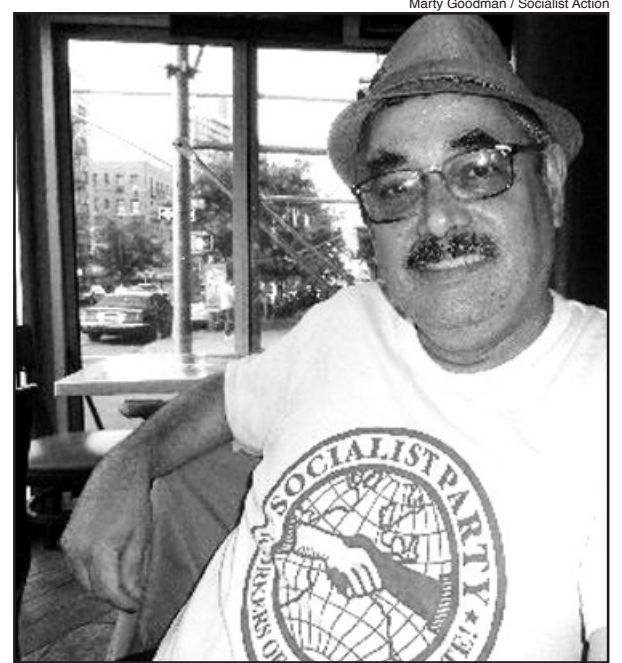
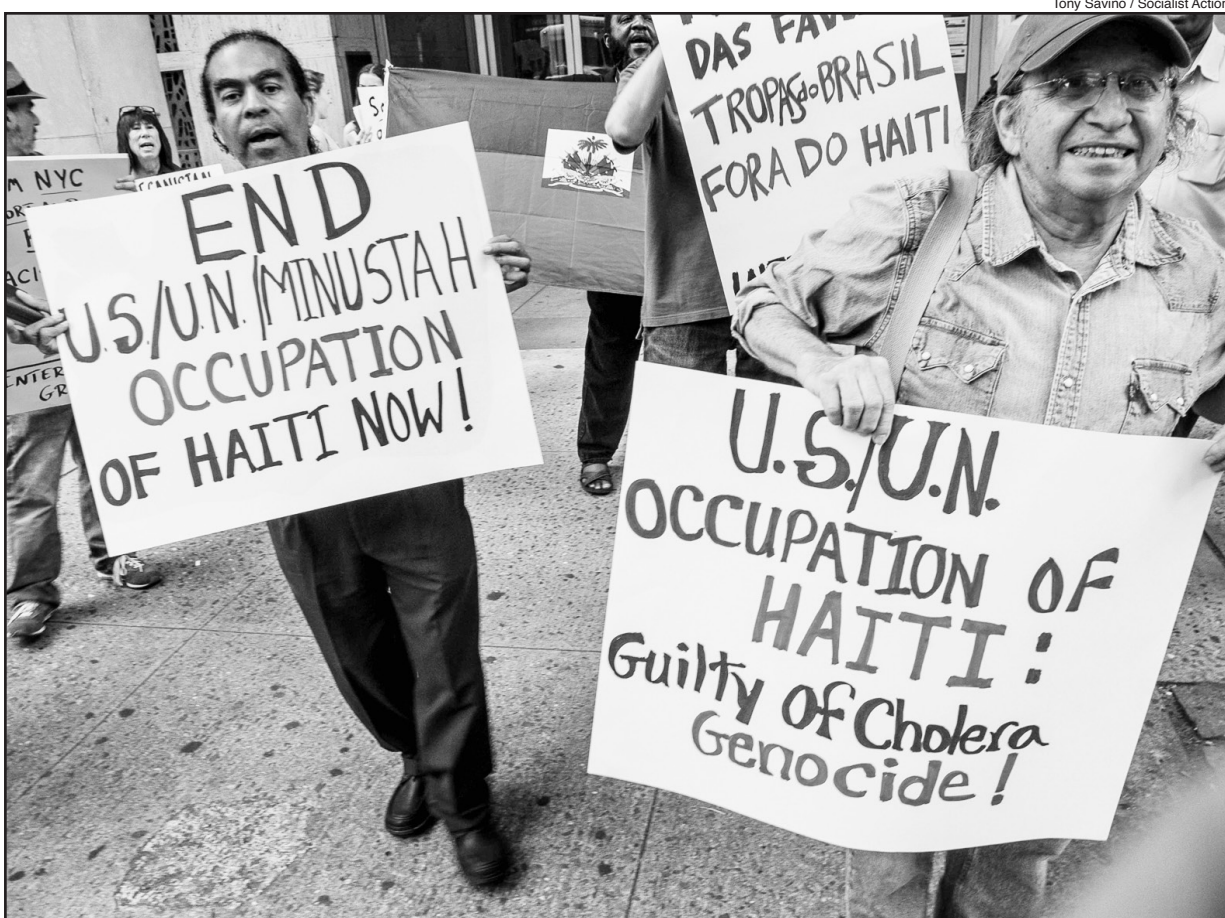
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# U.S. complicit with killers in Haiti



(Above) Lawrence Rockwood.

By MARTY GOODMAN

Bradley (Chelsea) Manning and Edward Snowden have become contemporary folk heroes—like Daniel Ellsberg, after his outing of the U.S. role in Vietnam in the 1960s. These heroes exposed the lies, hypocrisy, and brutality of U.S. policy.

Although less well known today, Capt. Lawrence Rockwood of U.S. Army counter-intelligence challenged the U.S. policy makers in 1994 to live up to the haughty ideals proclaimed by President Clinton before ordering the occupation of Haiti, misnamed “Restore Democracy.” Clinton had said that the U.S. was going there “to stop brutal atrocities.”

Rockwood put his career and personal freedom on the line to expose Clinton’s pompous propaganda. It changed his life. Rockwood states that “the United States has always said, tongue in cheek, we’re not really imperialist like the Europeans. But that’s baloney, absolute baloney.” Rockwood says his experiences in Haiti made him a socialist, and he is now a member of the Socialist Party.

Rockwood recently spoke with *Socialist Action* about his time in Haiti. He joined the U.S. Army in 1977, served in army counter-intelligence, and worked with the CIA in Haiti in 1994. He had previously been stationed in Central America, Somalia, and Guantanamo, Cuba (“a concentration camp,” Rockwood called it). “I still had not realized that the United States could not be a force for good in my lifetime,” he said.

In early 1994 in Guantanamo, Rockwood was struck by the racist double standard that U.S. authorities metered out to Black Haitian refugees fleeing a CIA-backed coup compared to émigrés from Cuba. The Cubans were labeled “political refugees” and anti-communists, and virtually assured political asylum in Miami.

Haitians, in contrast, were considered merely “economic refugees,” and routinely denied asylum rights under racist U.S. immigration policies after they had been intercepted at sea. U.S. and international asylum law was brazenly flaunted by both Bush I and Bill Clinton. Said Rockwood, “Bill Clinton was in a situation where basically the inherent racism in American culture couldn’t be denied.”

Many Haitians were delivered back into the arms of the CIA-backed junta. Up to 6000 deaths were attributed to the junta, mainly impoverished supporters of President Aristide.

On Sept. 19, 1994, the U.S. Marines led a fig-leaf-covered United Nations force to restore the deposed elected Haitian president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been toppled by a CIA-backed military coup in September 1991. When Clinton announced the occupation Rockwood was elated, “Before we went into Haiti I was on cloud nine.”

This, however, wasn’t Haiti’s first U.S. occupation. The first, in 1915, lasted 34 years; others took place in 1994, 2004, and in 2010 by Barack Obama, under cover of earthquake relief.

Aristide was returned to Haiti on Sept. 19 on an

Air Force C-130 plane, and “democracy” was restored—or so Rockwood thought. As a member of Army counter-intelligence working with the CIA, Rockwood was shocked by extreme right-wing CIA reports about Aristide’s “Lavalas” (“the Flood”) movement. Rockwood recalled, “All the CIA information on Haiti was unbelievably horrible. It was extremely, extremely biased. Aristide was ‘a monster’ who wanted to put tires around everybody’s neck and burn them.”

In reality, Aristide, who had once proclaimed himself to be a socialist, was no longer pretending to be radical. He agreed to an occupation based on reconciliation with the coup makers and a World Bank starvation plan for the masses, outlined in the U.S.-brokered “Governor’s Island Accord.” The U.S. strategy was to prevent a revolution against capitalism in Haiti and a racist backlash against “Black boat people” in Florida.

In Haiti, Rockwood realized that the U.S./UN wasn’t protecting Haitians on “the left” from violent rightists. These weren’t the human rights that Clinton had promised.

Exposés appearing in *The Nation* magazine and *The New York Times* supported Rockwood’s suspicions. Top military coup makers admitted to being on the CIA payroll, including General Raul Cedras, the coup leader. In addition, cutthroat paramilitary leader Emmanuel Constant was bankrolled with CIA cash to set up the paramilitary “FRAPH,” in order to, as the CIA described it, “balance the Aristide forces.” FRAPH became the most feared right-wing death squad.

Another recipient of CIA funding was S.I.N. (National Intelligence Service), outwardly a drug-enforcement unit, which became a den of drug dealers with close ties to the CIA and the coup. It compiled a nationwide database of Aristide activists.

Said Rockwood, “The [Clinton] administration, like the Carter administration, did not have the guts to get in a conflict with the CIA. Clinton didn’t give a shit about Aristide.”

Rockwood recalled, “I was receiving intel reports that people were being eliminated from the prison system and killed. I had 21 reports like that. They would be taken out of the penitentiary and taken to a police station and killed. Considering the history of Haiti, it was impossible to believe it wasn’t going on.” At the time, human rights reports were saying that up to 85% of the inmates in the National Penitentiary were in jail for political reasons.

Rockwood was told by superiors that “we were to go to the national prison to get the names [of prisoners] to compile a list of inmates. But then Rockwood was told to wait a week. He protested the delay to his superiors and wrote complaints. Rockwood reported to *Socialist Action*, “I was told that prisoners would be eliminated within a week, [but] they weren’t going to lose sleep over a bunch of Aristide people being eliminated.”

Moreover, said Rockwood, “We were not in operation with the Haitian army. We moved back, and the

killers came in.”

Rockwood decided to ignore orders to wait, picked up his rifle, and went alone to the National Penitentiary on the evening of Sept. 30, 1994. There was no electricity in the jail when he got there and feces covered the floor two inches deep. He had only obtained a few names when his own soldiers abruptly arrested him and “put me in a psych ward.” He had told one superior officer, “I am an American officer, not a Nazi officer.”

Rockwood was diagnosed by a sympathetic doctor as having “an extreme bout of ethics.” He was flown out of Haiti on Oct. 2 and soon contacted Amnesty International, who got former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark to be his attorney. A full three months later, he received a call that U.S. forces were to finally go into the penitentiary the following week. “When I heard that, I said I’m taking these guys down.”

“I was told to write a detailed statement to my commander, General Mead, on my situation. Luckily, a legal clerk sent it over an unclassified fax machine, and because of that mistake, I knew I could now go to the press and not be charged with espionage like Bradley Manning.”

The trial was in Fort Drum in New York in June 1995. The main charge against Rockwood was “conduct unbecoming an officer.” He faced 10 years in jail.

“The biggest issue in my trial,” Rockwood said, “was testimony from Hugh Thompson, a helicopter pilot at My Lai. He said I was justified.” In the My Lai massacre of 1968, which Thompson had been instrumental in halting, U.S. troops under Lt. William Calley killed close to 500 Vietnamese civilians, including children.

In the end, Rockwood was “dismissed” by a military court on May 14, 1995, a decision Rockwood says is like “Dishonorable Discharge” for an officer. He beat the main charge of “conduct unbecoming” but “they got me on raising my voice to an officer and not being at my place on duty. All the bullshit stuff. I didn’t do any jail time.”

Afterwards, “I got my Ph.D. and my dissertation basically on the Nuremberg principles. How we as a country have not lived up to things we shove down other people’s throats. We don’t apply it and I cited the My Lai massacre.”

Rockwood later authored the book, “Walking away from Nuremberg,” which sharply challenges U.S. military practices and the U.S. refusal to sign treaties that stem from the Nuremberg trials.

Unfortunately, conditions in occupied Haiti have not improved since Rockwood’s time there. Almost 2000 Wikileaks cables received from whistleblower Chelsea (Bradley) Manning reveal more recent outrages in Haiti (see [www.haiti-liberte.com](http://www.haiti-liberte.com)). The cables show bullying of Haiti’s parliament by U.S. officials and sweatshop interests, who urged the legislators to reject meaningful minimum wage hikes for impoverished Haitian workers. Cables also reveal U.S./UN rigging of the last Haitian presidential election in favor of the current U.S.-friendly president, Michel Martelly, a notorious friend of Duvalier dictatorship families.

The moral strength of Lawrence Rockwood will be an example to those who are in solidarity with Haiti and a reminder that we still have far to go. Rockwood says, “You can’t have human rights without socialism.” ■



# Whistleblower Snowden plagues Obama's national security state

BY JEFF MACKLER

When UK *Guardian* staffwriter Glen Greenwald reported last month that whistleblower Edward Snowden could do more harm (in the political sense) to the U.S. government than any other person on earth, most observers believed that his statement was perhaps an exaggeration. Today, it's clear that there is more than a grain of truth to Greenwald's assertion.

The almost comedic yet horrifying image seen around the world of *Guardian* staffers sledge hammering their newspaper's hard drives on orders from the British government, no doubt at the request of top U.S. officials, was aimed at warning any and all Snowden supporters—as well as others who might download his massive trove of U.S.-classified documents—that the price to pay would be high. The 35-year sentence meted out to courageous whistleblower Sergeant Chelsea (formerly Bradley) Manning no doubt serves as a warning to all who would expose the truth about U.S. surveillance practices, military atrocities, and deadly dealings around the world.

On Aug. 21 *Guardian* staffwriter Greenwald captured the brutality and portended repression following this incident. Greenwald wrote: "*Guardian* editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger on Monday night disclosed the remarkable news that UK authorities, several weeks ago, threatened the *Guardian* UK with prior restraint if they did not destroy all of their materials provided by Edward Snowden, and then sent agents to the basement of the paper's offices to oversee the physical destruction of hard drives." (In Britain, "prior restraint" is the legal prohibition against publication of material that the government deems a threat to its "national security interests.")

"As Rusbridger explains, this behavior was as inane as it was thuggish: since this is 2013, not 1958, destroying one set of a newspaper's documents doesn't destroy them all, and since the *Guardian* has multiple people around the world with copies, they achieved nothing but making themselves look incompetently oppressive."

Undoubtedly, Rusbridger was on the mark, but even here there are additional critical elements to the matter, including the fact that Snowden's trove has been encrypted to make its accessibility limited to only those who possess the codes to unlock it. Mindful of this, U.S. cloak and dagger officials began their search for the codes with a vengeance, beginning with a secret order issued to Lavabit, a Texas-based encrypted e-mail service used by Snowden to protect his records of illegal government spying and related abuse. Lavabit, according to Greenwald, announced on Aug. 9 that "It was shutting itself down in order to avoid complying with what it perceives as unjust secret US court orders to provide government access to its users' content."

Greenwald continues, "After significant soul searching, I have decided to suspend operations," the company's founder, Ladar Levinson, wrote in a statement to users posted on the front page of its website. He said the US directive forced on his company "a difficult

decision: to become complicit in crimes against the American people or walk away from nearly ten years of hard work by shutting down Lavabit." He chose the latter."

Greenwald's article continued: "What is particularly creepy about the Lavabit self-shutdown is that the company is *gagged by law* even from discussing the legal challenges it has mounted and the court proceeding it has engaged [emphasis in original]. In other words, the American owner of the company believes his Constitutional rights and those of his customers are being violated by the US Government, but he is not allowed to talk about it. Just as is true for people who receive National Security Letters under the Patriot Act, Lavabit has been told that they would face serious criminal sanctions if they publicly discuss what is being done to their company."

In an exclusive Aug. 26 interview with the on-line publication *Truthout*, Greenwald stated that his research of government documents on the state of decoding encrypted material led him to believe that at least for the moment U.S. experts were unable to break Snowden's encrypted materials.

Snowden's 20,000 to 30,000 documents—perhaps even more according to the most recent reports—accumulated over at least two years, reveal the secret and illegal commission of crimes against the American people and the people and nations of the world.

Rarely a day passes when the Obama administration does not deploy its fire-fighting fleet of cover-up agents to deny what is now universally known. But it is increasingly routine that a U.S.-issued denial is quickly countered by yet another rebuttal based on the trove of secret government documents that constitute Snowden's acquired archives. Every lie is countered by a truth based not on idle speculation but rather on texts from the government horse's mouth.

Adding to Obama's dilemma is a perhaps unusual conflict of interest with the nation's corporate media. *The New York Times*, for example, has partnered with the UK-based *Guardian* in releasing Snowden's frequent exposures. For *The Times*—whose reporters have also been illegally dogged by the government's spies—and for the *Washington Post*, which also partners with the *Guardian*, being forced to remain silent or report important news secondhand is a heavy price to pay. The price is not only a financial one but also with regard to their ability to maintain the necessary image of a "free press" in corporate "democratic" America.

It is more accurate to say that the U.S. corporate media exercise "self restraint" when it comes to telling the full truth about corporate and government misdeeds. Even here, a few dissident voices are inevitably raised when the so-called free press finds its reporters facing jail terms for refusing to divulge their sources.

In the United Kingdom, officials simply ban material from publication; that is, they impose "prior restraint." Violators are subject to severe punishment. In the U.S. the censorship process is subtler but largely results in the same outcome.

A recent revelation by Snowden cited a secret in-

ternal government newsletter published in 2011 that included a complaint by Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Agency (FISA) court Judge John D. Bates citing the government for "Constitution violations" in its willy-nilly collecting of tens of thousands of domestic e-mails.

The judge noted also that he had been consciously misinformed by government officials regarding the scope of the surveillance requested. He detailed his accusations against government sleuths in an 85-page document, which is still classified.

This incident itself, as well more recent revelations that the U.S. government "vacuums" and opens the communications of countless millions of Americans, drove yet another nail in the coffin of the government's credibility.

Snowden appears to leave no stone unturned regarding the government's daily lies and obfuscation. Most recently, he released secret documents wherein the government paid various on-line providers millions for the legal expenses they incurred in defending their illegal government-ordered actions. Of course, the U.S. judicial system, primed in advance to do the government's bidding, including virtually always upholding its "national security" laws, is a comfortable ally of the government and the corporate interests it protects.

As with all such matters, no sooner has the lie been exposed, than Obama or his subordinates note that whatever "errors" might have been committed are now legally rectified. This consists in the government's approval of never-ending "amendments" to its FISA and related legislation that formally legalize what has been exposed as illegal, a neat game if there ever was one!

Several major corporate media noted in mid-August, for example, that while the government does scrutinize virtually all e-mail and other communications of 75 percent of the population's communications, it exercises "discretion" in doing so. Rather than reading every one of trillions of such communications, the government's speed-of-light computers are programmed to intercept only those that include key words, e-mail addresses, or other information deemed relevant to its "war on terror."

But even this "scrutiny" has now been admitted by government officials to be "flawed." An unnamed State Department official admitted to *The New York Times* that additional and non-approved words or terms were added to the government's approved list, thus checking the e-mails of additional millions of internet and cell phone users.

Government apologies for this "accidental" transgression were duly noted by the accepting corporate media, none of which have challenged the wholesale violations of constitutionally protected rights other than with perhaps a modest slap on the wrist and cautioning to be more careful and a bit less intrusive.

Prior to Snowden's revelations Obama and his spokespersons insisted that there was no significant gathering of phone, e-mail, and other such communications. With Snowden's documents made public, their story was changed to the effect that nothing collected had been done illegally; nothing violated U.S. law. But with three billion so-called legally gathered

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# Chelsea Manning sentenced to 35 years

*NOTE: The day after her sentencing, Manning provided a statement to the press, "As I transition into this next phase of my life, I want everyone to know the real me. I am Chelsea Manning. I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible." Socialist Action will respect Chelsea Manning's wishes, and refer to her using female pronouns.*



U.S. Army whistleblower Pfc. Chelsea (Bradley) Manning has been sentenced to 35 years in prison for giving hundreds of thousands of secret military and diplomatic documents to WikiLeaks. The military judge, Col. Denise Lind, offered no explanation for the sentence. As military guards conducted Manning from the courtroom on Aug. 21, her supporters shouted out, "We will keep fighting for you!"

The response to the sentence was swift. Daniel Ellsberg, the whistleblower who released the Pentagon Papers in 1971, stated, "The only person prosecuted for the crimes and abuses uncovered in the WikiLeaks releases is the person who exposed them. That alone proves the injustice of even one more day in prison for Bradley Manning."

Ben Wizner, the director of the ACLU's Speech, Privacy and Technology Project, said, "This is a sad day for Bradley Manning, but it's also a sad day for all Americans who depend on brave whistleblowers and a free press for a fully informed public debate."

"It seems clear," Wizner noted, "that the government was seeking to intimidate anyone who might consider revealing valuable information in the future."

Three and a half years will be credited to Manning's sentence for time served. This will include time for the period that the judge ruled she was mistreated at the Marine Corps Brig at Quantico, Va., before being moved to the prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Throughout her time at Quantico, she was designated a "maximum custody" detainee and locked up alone for at least 23 hours a day. She was forced to sleep naked for several nights and required to stand at attention naked in the morning. She will have to serve one-third of the sentence before being eligible for parole.

Manning faced a possible 90-year sentence. The government had denied her a

whistleblower defense and the right to describe intent or to show that his actions harmed no one. U.S. prosecutors asked for a sentence of 60 years while acknowledging Manning's youth. But it was clear that the true motivation for the prosecution's request for the extremely long sentence was to deter future leaks. Prosecutor Capt. Joe Morrow stated, "There is value in deterrence."

"Pfc. Manning was one of the brave Americans who was not willing to remain silent," defense attorney David Coombs told the media. "Instead he decided to provide us with information that he believed would spark reform, would spark debate and he provided us with information that he believed might change the world."

"Perhaps the biggest crime was that he cared about the loss of life that he was seeing and couldn't ignore it, and was struggling with it."

The forensic psychologist who testified in Manning's defense, Capt. David Moulton, told the military court, "Manning was under the impression that his leaked information was going to really change how the world views the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and future wars. ... It was his opinion that if through crowd sourcing that enough analysis was done on these documents, that it would lead to greater good."

Manning downloaded the leaked material to her computer when she was deployed as an intelligence analyst in Iraq in 2010. What did she actually reveal?

The most widely seen information was seen in the "Collateral Murder" video, which showed an Apache helicopter attack on a group of people walking in a Baghdad street in 2007. Two of the victims were employees of Reuters news agency. A member of the helicopter crew yelled "dead bastards!" at those they killed. They also blew up a van of civilians who had stopped to help the initial victims of the first round of gunfire.

The "Reykjavik-13 Cable" was the first leak to be published by WikiLeaks; it describes frank discussions of meetings between the U.S. embassy chief in Reykjavik and members of the Icelandic government. The scornful attitude of the U.S. representative towards their nation in the middle of its banking crisis so angered activists in Iceland that they edited the "Collateral Murder" video, which was soon released worldwide.

The "Iraq War Logs" were 75,000 Army documents that detailed U.S. nighttime raids with reports from U.S. troops on the ground. These reports have been used to track civilian casualties that officials previously had said were not available.

The "Afghanistan War Logs" were 75,000 pages of documents that *The New York Times* described as "a ground level picture of the war in Afghanistan that is more grim than the official portrayal."

The "Guantanamo Files" included 700 detainee files and 250,000 State Department cables detailing CIA extraordinary renditions, in violation of international law, of people suspected of "terrorism."

Shane Kadidal, a lawyer for the Center For Constitutional Rights, believes the volume of the material is part of the importance of these leaks: "It is one thing to tell a few anecdotes based on a few items, but to be able to say across the board that most of the men that are there shouldn't be there and are people that could be safely released, that is pretty staggering."

The leaks also showed the hypocrisy of the U.S. collaboration with Arab dictators while proclaiming a commitment to democracy.

The Bradley Manning Support Network will continue to keep the spotlight on Manning. They have organized international support through education and activism about her case as well as raising \$1.4 million for defense. Even as the sentence was handed down, the network announced they were teaming with Amnesty International to launch a petition asking President Obama for a pardon.

At the same time, Manning's attorney, David Coombs, is preparing to bring the case to the Army Court of Criminal Appeals to address violations of due process rights. Manning was detained without trial for more than three years in violation of her Constitutional right to a speedy trial. She was only awarded four months off of her sentence for the psychological torture suffered while in solitary confinement for over nine months.

The U.S. Marine Corps was never held accountable for Manning's treatment. Also, Obama declared Manning guilty in April 2011, more than two years before her trial began. This constitutes unlawful command influence, in violation of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The Center For Constitutional Rights has made clear that supporters of Bradley Manning must continue to struggle for her freedom and raise the demand for a presidential pardon. And this campaign will be more aggressive than simply a legal maneuver and petitions. On Aug. 22 Ursula Rozem and Amelia Ramsey-Lefevre interrupted President Obama's speech at Henninger High School in Syracuse by raising a sign saying, "Free Bradley Manning," and shouting, "Private Manning exposed war crimes. Private Manning exposed torture. Private Manning aided the public, not the enemy. Private Manning is a hero." The two women were escorted off the premises. ■

## ... Snowden

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communications monitored daily, Obama promised better oversight. This was followed by the government's insistence that its spying was carefully moderated, only to be refuted yet again with a Snowden revelation that even this "moderation" was violated through "backdoor" channels that allowed virtual total access to everyone and everything under any circumstances.

Reporters James Bell and Spencer Ackerman, writing in the Aug. 9 *Guardian* in an article entitled "NSA loophole allows warrantless search for US citizens' emails and phone calls," noted that a U.S. "spy agency has secret backdoor permission to search databases for individual Americans' communications."

The authors continued: "Details of Section 702 of the FISA Amendments Act (FAA), give the NSA authority to target without warrant the communications of foreign targets. The National Security Agency has a secret backdoor into its vast databases under a legal authority enabling it to search for US citizens' e-mail and phone calls without a warrant, according to a top-secret document passed to the *Guardian* by Edward Snowden."

"The previously undisclosed rule change allows NSA operatives to hunt for individual Americans' communications using their name or other identifying information. Senator Ron Wyden told the *Guardian* that the law provides the NSA with a loophole potentially allowing 'warrantless searches for the phone calls or emails of law-abiding Americans.'"

President Obama took to the airwaves in mid-Au-

gust to forcefully proclaim that, minus some tweaks here and there wherein a handful of secret government oversight individuals would now keep track of what's going on, no changes would be made. It now appears even this "oversight" is meaningless. In any capitalist state, so-called national security interests—that is, ruling-class interests—trump those of the people regardless of the formalities of "the law."

Edward Snowden has been granted temporary status to remain in Russia for at least one year while he negotiates with other governments for permanent residency status. Obama officials were so enraged at the Russian refusal to send Snowden home to be persecuted as a criminal and face charges under the infamous Espionage Act that a long-scheduled Obama-Putin "summit" meeting was cancelled in retaliation.

On Aug. 18, at the behest of U.S. officials and British Prime Minister David Cameron, Glen Greenwald's companion, David Michael Miranda, was detained and interrogated for nine hours at London's Heathrow Airport. Miranda was forced, under threat of imprisonment, to divulge his computer passwords, on the grounds that he was suspected of being in possession of "stolen materials."

Miranda was en route to Brazil from Germany. His confiscated computer and other electronic devices contained some of Snowden's encrypted material. While he was eventually released, his detention demonstrates the ever increasing measures that U.S. and British governments are prepared to employ to terrorize anyone and everyone who dares tell the truth about secret and illegal government operations.

It is no exaggeration to conclude that courageous revelations of Snowden and Manning have cut deep into the credibility of all U.S. government functioning. There is more than a strong whiff in the air akin to the

anti-government "Vietnam Syndrome" of the 1960s and '70s. This was a time when the lies attendant to the Vietnam War and the associated atrocities—four million Vietnamese murdered by unprecedented bombings and the widespread use of chemical warfare—led the great majority to question, if not challenge, all government warmongering statements and actions.

Today's Snowden/Manning revelations and the essentially failed cover-ups have once again brought public confidence in government to a new low. It was only the massive lobbying effort exerted by Obama and his top aides that prevented the U.S. House of Representatives from approving an extremely limited bill restricting government surveillance. The bill, presented by "dissident" Democrats and "libertarian" Republicans, failed by a vote of 205 to 217.

The severely damaged credibility of U.S. imperialism at home and abroad cannot be underestimated. Rapidly increasing numbers understand that they are daily subject to economic, political, socially repressive, and war-making policies. The fact that millions of capitalism's victims have yet to take to the streets in massive protest cannot be taken for consent.

It is only a matter of time until the accumulation of insults of every type and the knowledge that they are unremitting and inherent in the system's day-to-day operations, burst out in new and unprecedented mobilizations that challenge the status quo.

Today's beleaguered whistleblowers will become tomorrow's national heroes. Their names will become synonymous with the early dissidents who helped unleash the pent-up anger of millions who will challenge the purveyors of lies, economic and social degradation, and endless wars and bring a new world into being. ■

# BLOODBATH IN EGYPT EXPOSES MILITARY RULE



BY JEFF MACKLER

Egypt's U.S.-backed military, carefully garbed in "democratic" trappings since the massive January 2011 nationwide protests that forced its 30-year dictator-leader Hosni Mubarak from power, was exposed for the world to see on Aug. 13, 2013.

Having arrested the massively discredited Muslim Brotherhood President Mohammed Morsi a week earlier, the self-appointed regime of the generals, led by Morsi-appointed Defense Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, claimed a "mandate" from the people, instantly appointed an "interim cabinet," effectively declared martial law, and unleashed a monstrous bloodbath beginning in Cairo.

According to statistics from the "government" Health Ministry, well over 1000 pro-Morsi sit-in protesters were gunned down in cold blood at Rabea al-Adaweya and Nahda squares and elsewhere by the now unmasked military dictatorship. Muslim Brotherhood (MB) supporters put the number of dead at that time at 2000.

CBS News on-the-scene reporters noted with shock that many of the sit-in protesters had been murdered by army snipers with deadly shots to their heads and chests. CNN International reported that medical personnel at several field hospitals were ordered to immediately depart at gunpoint, leaving the wounded and dying unattended, if not to be murdered outright. Estimates of the wounded early on in the slaughter ranged from 3500 to 4500.

As we go to press, the number of casualties increases daily as Morsi supporters are demonized as terrorists, foreigners, and traitors—to be hunted down, if not exterminated as "rats." Beginning with Morsi's July 3 arrest, al-Sisi's police and military henchman have decimated the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood, arresting en masse its secondary and now tertiary leadership throughout the country.

The initial Aug. 13 crackdown saw departing Morsi protesters, arms held high in terror-induced surrender, passing through the single cordoned opening allowed by the military—only to regroup in areas around Cairo including Shubra, Abbaseya, and Ramses squares, among other locations. But the military's mass killing spree was twice more repeated, with horrific results.

In the weeks following these initial massacres the repression has been extended, as to be expected, to anyone who utters the slightest words of opposition to the wholesale trampling of due process and all other previously presumed democratic rights.

Striking steel workers in Suez have been smashed

## The terror employed against Muslims and others by the military-led regime must be categorically opposed.

and their leaders arrested while independently minded trade unionists more generally are hounded and persecuted in increasing numbers. Egyptian and foreign journalists, as well as filmmakers, have been subjected to arrest by a regime now confident that a full return to Mubarak-era repression, if not worse, has the support of significant layers of the still deeply divided population.

Indeed, Mubarak himself, imprisoned on charges of killing hundreds of Tahrir Square demonstrators in 2011, was released from Tora prison on orders from an Egyptian public prosecutor. Eighteen of his heirs and loyalists have been appointed to be governors of Egyptian provinces.

### Anti-Morsi forces confused and divided

Egypt's unfolding tragedy initially saw scattered Morsi supporters sometimes taking revenge against those who they deemed to be advocates of their persecution, destroying a few government buildings and Coptic Christian churches. A few dozen people, mainly Christians, were killed in sectarian clashes. While the attacks on Christians must be unequivocally condemned, it is obvious that the damages and casualties were quite minimal when compared with the thousand or more Muslims slaughtered by the Egyptian military.

Following the initial massacres, the vast majority of pro-Morsi protesters gathered in momentary safety at scattered locations for fear of returning home, where the chauvinistic fury unleashed by the capitalist-controlled media in all its variations all but called for house-to-house attacks to drive the "Islamists" from the nation. To date all such encampments have been decimated. A reign of terror prevails.

The repression employed against Muslims and all others under attack by the military-backed regime must be categorically opposed by all who seek to unite Egypt's oppressed masses today and in the future, regardless of the Morsi government's brutal attacks and murderous treatment of Egyptian workers who had struggled to better their lives.

Unfortunately, some groups in the workers' movement have heedlessly echoed the statements against the Muslim Brotherhood that regularly appear in the jingoistic bourgeois media. In this manner, the Socialist Party of Egypt (SP) released a statement early on that heaped scorn on the "authorities" for not sufficiently arresting and holding accountable the "instigators of sedition and violence."

Moreover, the multi-class leadership and initiators of the massive June 30 Tamarrud petition mobilization that called for Morsi's resignation and new elections have largely ignored, if not supported, the current terror employed against the Muslim community.

In fact, the great majority of them, including the three parties that ran candidates against Morsi the previous year along with barely disguised supporters of the old regime, almost immediately declared their support to General Sisi's call for mass mobilizations against MB's sit-in protests and against the Muslim Brotherhood more generally.

These forces, with few exceptions, supported without equivocation Sisi's call for a "mandate" to use force and violence to eliminate the MB from the Egyptian scene. This "mandate" was nothing less than a call to sanction or express authorization for mass murder.

The whirlwind of events since the mass rebellions that first toppled Mubarak in 2011, and since the even greater mobilization of June 30 demanding an end to the year-old Morsi government, have left Egyptian society deeply divided. Significant layers suffer from what might be defined as "historical amnesia" with regard to Mubarak's bloody crimes as well as those of his erstwhile capitalist allies, secular and MB alike. Although they were sometimes persecuted and excluded to varying degrees, the MB leaders nevertheless tolerated or were complicit with his decades-long murderous regime, and were among the last to take to the streets demanding Mubarak's ouster.

Today, ousted president Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood's chief Islamic leader, Khairat Shater, along with daily increasing numbers of MB leaders, remain in prison despite U.S. and worldwide pressure to release them and bring about a negotiated "compromise" wherein the MB would be allowed to participate in new elections and be represented in a future government. Before the Aug. 13 crackdown, Morsi and his leading supporters signaled their agreement with the plan.

The giant June 30 mobilizations demanding Morsi's resignation and new elections were an explosive expression of the mass hatred of Morsi's reactionary and pro-capitalist economic and social measures. He carried out those measures in full accord with the old regime—the still powerful and unchecked *felool* and the U.S.-backed and economically powerful, if not dominant, military-industrial establishment, which controls an estimated 25 to 40 percent of the Egyptian economy.

While it is true that the old regime exacerbated Morsi's insoluble dilemma—that is, presiding over a crisis-ridden capitalist state in the context of a worldwide capitalist economic crisis—Morsi's solutions, like theirs, could only take effect at the expense of the Egyptian masses. No capitalist government on earth, secular or Muslim, dictatorship or "democratic," or any other variant, is today capable of significant reforms, not to mention improvements, in the quality of life of the oppressed masses.

Morsi remained tied to the old regime and its policies by his inherent incapacity to break with the exploitative capitalist social system. He remained tied to this system by a thousand chains and institutions of the old order, which he left virtually intact.

### Role of the imperialists

Obama administration officials continue to pressure the now unveiled military dictatorship to exercise a

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modicum of restraint, if for no reason other than to lend credence to the fiction of U.S. government concern for “democracy.” It is clear, however, that the now unleashed military-led regime—battered with the delusion that its brutal repression will be accepted or go unanswered indefinitely by the Egyptian masses, and boosted by the \$18 billion promised by the Saudi and Qatari monarchies—feels no need to maintain any pretence of enlightenment.

The U.S. has expressed polite words of concern over the renewed military repression in Egypt. There is little doubt, however, that behind the scenes the world’s imperial powers intend continued support to their long-time Egyptian allies. Such is the case with the puppet regimes and/or dictators that the U.S. backs with impunity throughout the Middle East and the Magreb, from Tunisia and Libya to Afghanistan and Iraq—not to mention the racist, Zionist Israeli settler state, whose daily actions portend the “final” physical exclusion of the Palestinian people from their historic homeland.

The leading politicians and top advisers of U.S. imperialism cynically believe that anything and everything can be “negotiated” with their lesser capitalist “allies” if the alternatives (privately or secretly posed) would be the imposition of imperial power via death-squad governments akin to Mubarak’s, overt military intervention, economic embargo/blockade, or selected drone assassinations. These U.S. weapons of mass destruction have been routinely employed to varying degrees in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and elsewhere to “stabilize” U.S. imperialist-destroyed states and advance U.S. corporate interests.

The lion’s share of Iraqi oil profits, however disguised, flow into U.S. corporate coffers; Afghanistan’s resources and strategic geographic location remain under imperialist control; Libya’s oil, and the resources of poor nations throughout Africa and Asia more generally, are mercilessly re-colonized. It matters not if the new rulers are “elected” or come to power in imperialist-backed coups; the end result is the same. From the new imperialist point of view, unstable regimes and dictatorships of every variety can be tolerated—provided only that they are subservient.

The slaughter of the Cairo sit-in protesters—which shocked the entire world—was not the preferred choice of the leaders of global capitalism. Virtually all of them issued perfunctory statements of condemnation. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said that Egypt’s political reconciliation efforts had suffered a “serious blow.” Kerry added, according to the BBC, “This is a pivotal moment for all Egyptians. The path toward violence leads only to greater instability, economic disaster, and suffering.” Similar statements came from the UN Secretary General and the UK’s Prime Minister David Cameron.

However, all rejected designating as a coup the military’s usurpation of a legitimate and unprecedented mass mobilization against a regime that had lost its credibility. The U.S. government in particular, threats to the contrary, ignored its own law prohibiting aid to regimes that come to power by forcibly removing elected governments. To date, the U.S. has declined to cut off the \$1.3 billion it annually bestows on its long-time Egyptian military allies. In fact, this sum has already been allocated to the regime of the generals. Regardless of the formalities, there is little doubt that next year’s payment for the regime’s services to imperialism will continue, perhaps in veiled forms.

Notwithstanding his threats to halt the aid, or to order a temporary face-saving suspension of it, President Obama and his representatives stand ready to facilitate or force a settlement that, for the moment at least, refurbishes the image of Egypt as a “democratic” albeit blood-stained state. Indeed, shortly after the July 3 coup, top State Department officials proclaimed that Egypt would now have “a second chance at democracy.” This “second chance” is by no means to be excluded today. Just as the overtly corrupt Afghan Karzai regime retains “power” with U.S. support, following the present bloodletting, Mubarak’s men may well accede to “democratic” elections once again, having vanquished all potential opposition.

Healing the massive divisions that today plague Egypt’s workers, peasants, and the poor is a prerequisite to re-focusing the just anger of the vast majority against the horrific conditions imposed by Mubarak and Morsi—that is, against Egypt’s capitalist elite.

The relatively sudden shift of popular sentiment from Morsi to the military, with the latter tragically hailed by many in the streets as national saviors, is far from the final chapter of the still-unfolding revolutionary wave in Egypt today. No wing of Egypt’s capi-



## In the United States, anti-war activists must demand an immediate end to all U.S. aid to Egypt.

talists offer the slightest solution to the critical issues that have repeatedly brought millions and even tens of millions into the streets demanding fundamental change.

In the United States, antiwar and social justice fighters must begin by demanding an immediate end to all U.S. aid to Egypt and an end to all U.S. intervention in the affairs of that nation.

### Need for mass revolutionary party

In Egypt the still extremely limited and varied socialist currents have hopefully learned some critical lessons, including rejecting electoral or any other support to any and all capitalist candidates. In their propaganda and agitation they must also warn against the possibility that the vast majority’s wholly justified expectation of democratic change may again be manipulated to achieve reactionary ends. This was the case when the U.S.-backed and advised Egyptian military seized the moment to remove Morsi and to posture as national saviors, only to be unmasked as the murderers that they have always been.

The catastrophe that almost immediately followed the June 30 multi-million-person mobilization demanding Morsi’s resignation was likely unexpected by the great mass of the participants. But this was certainly not the case with the Tamarrud’s central leadership, most of whom undoubtedly believed that Morsi’s removal would be a mere act of regime change at the top carried out by the military, perhaps akin to Mubarak’s “removal” in 2011. Without doubt, it is incontestable that elements in the Tamarrud had previously consulted with the military regarding the mobilization’s desired outcome, that is, an overt return of the military to power, if not the annihilation of the MB.

The tragedy here lies in the massive disconnect between the desire of the vast majority to continue the revolutionary process begun with Mubarak’s removal following the historic mobilizations and confrontations at Tahrir Square in 2011 and the almost total absence of any conception as to what institutions might be imposed or even suggested to replace the Morsi government, not to mention the capitalist state power.

There may have been some barely audible voices among the Tamarrud supporters calling for a general strike to bring down Morsi, but no discussion as to what institutions might replace him, other than perhaps a new election—presumably to be scheduled and organized by the military.

Whatever aspirations for a general strike might have been expressed by forces with little influence, there was absolutely no response from any of Egypt’s multiple and deeply divided reformist or overtly pro-government trade-union federations. In fact, a central leader of the relatively new Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions accepted a top post in the “interim cabinet” announced by the military following its coup.

This federation, largely a decentralized and unconsolidated association of local unions with little or no authoritative centralized leadership, as well as all

other trade unions that endorsed the June 30 mobilization, acceded to the Tamarrud leadership’s request that they not march under their own union banners and instead accept those of the Tamarrud.

In short, June 30 was an unprecedented and justified mobilization of the Egyptian masses for fundamental social change. But it was also lacking in any coherent leadership other than those controlling elements that looked to the military as the only force to, at best, organize new elections, and at worst, to be the agency for the literal extermination of the MB and the open restoration of the old regime.

From the earliest emergence of class-divided societies, the historic struggle for liberation from the rule of the few over the many has been marked by great advances as well as tragic defeats. In the modern era no capitalist regime has ever been replaced by a majoritarian socialist-oriented social order without the active participation of the masses of the oppressed and exploited **and** without a previously organized massive and deeply rooted revolutionary party.

Such a party would be prepared to challenge the exploiters for power and prepared to bring into being a new social order based on the emergence of fundamentally new institutions created by the working class and their allies themselves. In the revolutionary Russia of 1917, these institutions were the workers, peasants, and soldiers councils (*soviets* is the Russian term).

These democratic organizations represented the vast majority of the working masses. They were based on direct election of delegates from the organizations of the people where they worked or toiled as well as among the soldiers’ regiments themselves. All elected delegates were subject to immediate recall, thus assuring that they reflected the political consciousness of the masses on virtually a day-to-day basis.

The revolutionary aspirations of Egypt’s working masses have been at least momentarily thwarted. The same is the case with virtually all the momentous uprisings of the Arab Spring. They have been hampered by a profound crisis of leadership. History once again teaches with a vengeance that the world is not lacking in the capacity of its peoples to rise up to challenge the most demonic regimes. It is lacking, for the time being at least, in revolutionary socialist parties that are capable of channeling the power of these repeated mass mobilizations for profound social change into a challenge for state power itself.

History teaches that there is no straight line to this revolutionary transformation of society. The great Russian Revolution of October 1917 had its roots, at least in part, 12 years earlier when the St. Petersburg masses had marched, religious icons in hand, to the Tsar’s Winter Palace, demanding bread. They were met with gunfire and death, but their illusions in the “great monarch’s” benevolence were shattered. They came back twice again in 1917, the first time to remove the Tsar and the second to remove the “liberal” provisional capitalist government that had proved incapable of meeting their elementary needs.

In the course of those 12 years in Russia, revolutionary fighters carefully constructed a deeply rooted and massive revolutionary socialist party, which was free from any illusions in capitalist self-reform, and was prepared to storm the heavens to bring into being the world’s first state based on the direct rule of the working masses and the expropriation of the expropriators—that is, the ruling capitalist minority. Nothing less will meet the challenges posed by the uprisings that the Arab Spring ignited throughout the Middle East. ■



## Fourth International youth camp hosts revolutionaries from around the world

By DANIEL ADAM and LISA LUINENBURG

On Aug. 3-9, some 400 young revolutionaries from around the world gathered in Greece to attend the Fourth International's 30<sup>th</sup> annual youth camp. The authors of this article, members of Socialist Action (U.S.), were able to participate in the camp this year and share their experiences in the United States while learning from other young socialists.

Socialist Action is a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International (FI) since reactionary legislation in the U.S. prevents its being a formal member.

The gathering comes amid years of world economic crisis and a series of mass uprisings throughout the globe, most notably in Greece itself. This context made the camp a highly fertile ground for broad ranging political discussion. The central debates in the camp concerned the very political direction of the Fourth International and its member parties.

Representatives from every country reported cuts in health care and education, youth unemployment rates sometimes above 50%, and attacks on teachers and students. In Denmark, 70,000 teachers were locked out, and in Greece teachers recently went on strike. Students in Denmark, Canada, Spain, the UK, and Mexico are fighting back against education cuts and tuition hikes. Delegates frequently discussed the increase in precarious work. The increases in political repression and surveillance in a number of countries were also striking.

At the same time, the young delegates reported that trade-union leadership in most of their countries has proved incapable of leading a pushback. Social democrats and other reformists have taken office in many countries but have only continued the austerity cutbacks and attacks on workers.

The spontaneous protests, workers' and students' struggles, and even general strikes unfolding in countries like Greece, Tunisia, Brazil, and Turkey still have not been able to overcome the absence of a revolutionary leadership. Frequently these struggles have been dispersed after a few months; some political movements are beginning to face grave threats.

In Greece, Golden Dawn, a fascist party, has targeted immigrants and other oppressed groups with violent attacks and racist propaganda. By all accounts the group appears to have cooperation from the police. In Tunisia, two leaders of opposition currents have been assassinated, including the leader of the alliance supported by the FI section there. Even in Germany, where the struggle has been at a much lower level, delegates said that over 150 people, including immigrants and people of color, have been killed by fascists.

Still, members of the Greek section made sure to caution visitors against overestimating the present strength of the Golden Dawn. Their new socialist office, for instance, rests in a neighborhood controlled by the left, where the fascists never set foot, and the police enter only in large armed contingents.

Two young women from Turkey described their

work within the recent uprisings centered on Istanbul's Taksim Square. They described the persecution that many left groups underwent in Turkey in the 1980s, and the opportunities they have had to work together again during the recent protests. Despite weeks of protests they believe that a lot of work still needs to be done to unite the different groups that make up the left in Turkey.

A young socialist woman from Ireland spoke about the struggle for reproductive rights in her country. She described how her pro-choice group helped break the recent story about Savita Halappanavar, a dentist living in Galway, who died after she was refused an abortion when she was miscarrying. Her death led to protests of thousands in Ireland and provoked an international outcry.

The Mexican delegation from the PRT (Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores) is working in the SME (Sindicato de Electricistas Mexicanos, or Mexican Electrical Workers Union) to help form an alternative labor party. Unfortunately, the leadership of the new party supported a bourgeois candidate, Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, in the last election. The SME is one of the most combative unions in Mexico. Some 44,000 workers were fired several years ago during an attempt to privatize the Mexican electrical system, and 16,000 of those workers are continuing to struggle. The young comrades have also been active in Yo-Soy132, a recent student movement.

According to long-time participants, the discussions in the camp dealt far more directly with the political direction of the Fourth International than in previous years. The sharpest expression of this debate grew over the direction of the NPA (New Anti-capitalist Party) in France.

The NPA was founded in 2009 by the LCR (Revolutionary Communist League, the former French section of the Fourth International), by drawing in its periphery and a few much smaller tendencies to create a far more heterogeneous grouping. The formation was initiated in order to build a larger left party, and grab the political space that the social democracy had lost when it began implementing austerity measures on behalf of the capitalist class.

The NPA was founded with over 9000 members—an increase of 6000 over its predecessor, the LCR. Now the NPA's numbers have fallen down to 3000 or fewer. Losses include a split of some 700 who left to join Jean-Luc Melançon's reformist Left Front, taking with them a major layer of young leaders, including many staff.

This crisis, coming as mass uprisings around the world are bursting in wave after wave, has bolstered opposition tendencies within the party. These tendencies were represented at the NPA's last convention as W, Y, and Z. (the X platform represented the positions of the incumbent leadership).

Members of the Y platform believe that the launch of the NPA was necessary, but argue that the sharp fall in membership expresses a crisis of orientation and

political clarity. They oppose the orientation of seizing the space formerly held by reformists. In their experience this has meant preventing many key debates from reaching a conclusion, and failing to systematically educate the ranks in revolutionary politics.

The mass exodus towards Melançon's Left Front demonstrates one obvious weakness of the present approach: The membership increase that is won at the expense of clear politics can just as easily be taken away by a new, larger reformist party.

The Y platform has come to see the focus on electoral strategy itself as a distraction from building independent mass action in the streets. In a formal panel debate on the question, a Y representative emphasized that the recent uprisings around the world have underlined the need to prepare for a revolutionary crisis. The Y platform will establish itself as a formal tendency of the NPA in the coming months.

The Z platform originated in a tendency founded by followers of the Argentine Trotskyist Nahuel Moreno. Its members at the camp agreed with many points of critique laid out by the Y platform. Members of the Z platform presented a relatively finished program, while the Y platform's members expressed a wider variety of perspectives, reflecting all levels of political sophistication. The W platform represents an anarchist tendency that did not appear to be present at the camp.

The debate surrounding the NPA touched upon burning questions for practically every section. Many countries now have more than one affiliate to the Fourth International, each with a different approach to party organization, electoral strategy, or even revolution and reform. The FI section in Italy split down the middle, with one portion rejecting parties altogether, and possibly even trade-unions as well.

Many sections have experimented with NPA-like formations, joining reformist parties, or joining electoral alliances. For quite a few it has involved serious errors and betrayals, including votes for austerity measures, for imperialist war credits, and often the complete disappearance of the FI section. It is certainly heartening that many of these turns are facing increasing scrutiny.

Nonetheless, at a time when mass upheavals are becoming the norm, the question remains: How will revolutionaries make contact with the radicalizing masses? The conscious seizure of power by the working millions requires a mass revolutionary party. Of course, the question of alliances or entry into other groups was not at all off the table for anyone. The issue was the political orientation expressed by such projects.

The women's space and the debate on feminism were highlights of the camp. Every day included a separate women's space, where young women from the camp met to discuss issues that affect them all as women and as Marxists. Women and LGBT people led workshops and participated in panels and discussions throughout the week and were given ample time to contribute their unique perspectives on all issues.

The numerous perspectives and experiences shared by the participants were invaluable. This meeting concretized for participants the understanding of what it means to build an international party of the working class. ■



# ... SYRIA

(continued from page 1)

able “transitional national council” with a semblance of credibility among the Syrian masses. Syria’s most principled and effective fighters oppose Assad, U.S. intervention, and reactionary fundamentalist or other “rebels” forces armed and beholden to imperialism.

Obama has prescribed “limited” and “precise” Tomahawk Missile strikes, perhaps 300, launched from four “ready on the alert” U.S. warships stationed in the Mediterranean Sea in order to “punish” Syria. However, the British Parliament’s vote to reject support to U.S. military action against Syria, followed by Chancellor Angela Merkel’s statement that Germany would not become involved militarily (at least for now), has slowed the U.S. war machine’s desire for an immediate strike.

Moreover, despite the enormous pressures they have exerted, U.S. diplomats failed to announce any significant support from Middle Eastern nations, including from the Arab League and countries that are even more intimately aligned to U.S. policy.

Although he lacked UN, NATO, or Middle Eastern support, or even a partner among the ranks of top U.S. allies, and despite the fact that national polls demonstrated majority American opposition to a war against Syria, Secretary of State John Kerry nevertheless pressed on for a “go it alone” military strike.

But Obama’s rush to war was at least temporarily stalled when bipartisan Congressional opposition indicated that even in the legislative belly of the imperial beast the president might not have majority support.

Obama virtually taunted Congress to defy him, declaring at the White House on Aug. 31, “I am ready to give the order.” However, a section of the ruling rich no doubt believes that little or nothing would be accomplished with Obama’s proposed adventure, and much more might be lost with regard to the already severely diminished U.S. credibility.

The matter will supposedly be decided when Congress resumes on Monday, Sept. 9. In the interim, antiwar and social justice forces are mobilizing for protests across the country—in almost in every instance, properly focusing on the demand, “No U.S. War on Syria!”

Socialist Action fully supports this critical focus and the efforts of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) to unite and mobilize the broadest sections of the antiwar movement and all social justice fighters in mass actions to stop any U.S. attack on Syria. UNAC co-coordinators Joe Lombardo and Marilyn Levin have



properly made explicit their coalition’s view that everyone opposed to U.S. imperialist intervention, regardless of their views on the civil war in Syria, must take to the streets in united efforts to stop the proposed U.S. military strike now.

Socialist Action stands squarely opposed to all U.S. intervention in Syria while simultaneously supporting the right of the people of Syria to self-determination. Socialist Action was among the first to hail the massive and repeated popular and peaceful uprisings that challenged the dictatorial regime and neoliberal economic policies of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. These mobilizations were regularly met with brute military force.

Today these forces, organized largely in Local Coordinating Committees that provide a modicum of defense and significant vital social services to Syria’s beleaguered people, if they prove capable of sinking deep roots into the entire population, can become central to any working-class challenge to Assad’s power, or that of any other tyrant who might follow. The critical need to build a revolutionary socialist party and associated mass working-class formations, however limited the opportunities today, remains essential to any successful challenge to Syria’s capitalist order.

Socialist Action rejects support to the U.S. or Saudi-Qatari-funded forces, or to any others in the region that funnel aid to achieve U.S. objectives. Many of these semi-secret U.S. weapons providers,

while advancing U.S. corporate interests, simultaneously seek to impose on the popular opposition, and on Syria itself, a reactionary fundamentalist ideology and practice that would have Syria ruled by clerical reaction rather than the oppressed working masses.

It is not at all peculiar that the fundamentalist forces that are militarily backed, directly or indirectly, by U.S. imperialism are the same forces simultaneously deemed as terrorists by the Obama administration. U.S. imperialism has no qualms about supporting the most heinous elements provided only that they are subordinate to its global pursuits.

Tragically, Syrian society is deeply divided, with even a portion of the secular forces in the diffuse Free Syrian Army demanding and receiving U.S. imperialist aid, acceptance of which never comes without agreements to subordinate the interest of the vast population to the rich and powerful in Syria or their U.S. benefactors. However fraught with immense difficulties at the present juncture, Syria’s future rests in the capacity of its working masses to chart a revolutionary and independent course—the only political and social orientation capable of effectively defeating Assad’s dictatorship and imperialist efforts to re-colonize Syria.

The U.S. antiwar movement in the main has courageously and properly stood above Obama’s effort to justify a U.S. war based on the unproven charge that the Assad regime used Sarin gas to murder hundreds of Syrians. So deep has been

the exposé of previous U.S. pretexts for war, that there are few takers who today automatically jump to the conclusion that the evidence produced by U.S. spy agencies is true.

From “Remember the Maine!” (the 1898 pretext used to conquer Cuba and take Guantanamo Bay), to the Tonkin Bay fabrication that was employed to justify escalating the Vietnam War that killed four million Vietnamese, to Iraq’s alleged “weapons of mass destruction,” a deep skepticism has permeated the American conscience.

No doubt the massive spying on the e-mails and all other phone and electronic communications of virtually all Americans, revealed by Edward Snowden, add to the ever deepening questioning by millions of people as to the truth of anything put forward by U.S. politicians. A Jan. 1, 2013 report on a recent Gallup poll is headlined, “Congress begins 2013 with 14% approval: Average approval for 2012 is the lowest in history.”

Even if the Assad government were proven to have employed Sarin gas, virtually no one in the U.S. antiwar movement would argue that the U.S. would-be “cop of the world,” whose routine torture and imprisonment of prisoners without charges or access to counsel has been universally condemned, has the moral or political standing to attack anyone.

Syria’s future resides in the will of its people to deal with their oppressors. In that endeavor, U.S. imperialism is a false ally. It should be recalled that the U.S. funded and helped orchestrate Iraq President Saddam Hussein’s 1980-88 war against Iran. With the full knowledge and consent of the United States, Hussein’s government employed sarin gas against Iranian Kurds—which killed thousands. That secretly U.S.-funded war is estimated to have taken the lives of well over a million people.

U.S. imperialism’s aim then was to punish the Iranian people for their revolutionary ouster of the U.S.-imposed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi regime, installed in 1953 by a U.S.-orchestrated, CIA-led coup. Today, no one doubts that the overriding objective of the U.S. in the Iraq-Iran War was to recoup the oil resources of the region.

Each and every U.S. war in the Middle East has been met with, and continues to be met with, the concerted opposition of the people of the occupied nations. However distorted this opposition may be at any given time, it is clear that the re-colonization of the Middle East today by the world’s top superpower is detested by the world’s people. ■

*No U.S. war on Syria! Self-determination for the Syrian people! Money for jobs and education—not for war!*

## ... March on Washington

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was ignoring all those who told him to just stay in his lane, just stick to talking about civil rights. Yet here I am decades later, staying in my lane. I have not been speaking publicly about the relationship between drones abroad and the War on Drugs at home. I have not been talking about the connections between the corrupt capitalism that bails out Wall Street bankers, moves jobs overseas, and forecloses on homes with zeal, all while private prisons yield high returns and expand operations into a new market: caging immigrants.

“I have not been connecting the dots between the NSA spying on millions of Americans, the labeling of mosques as ‘terrorist organizations,’ and the spy programs of the 1960s and 70s—specifically the FBI and COINTELPRO programs that placed civil rights advocates under constant surveillance, infiltrated civil rights organizations, and assassinated racial justice leaders. I have been staying in my lane.

“But no more. In my view, the most important lesson we can learn from Dr. King is not what he said at the March on Washington, but what he said and did after. In the years that followed, he did not play politics to see what crumbs a fundamentally corrupt system might toss to the beggars of justice. Instead he connected the dots and committed himself to build-



ing a movement that would shake the foundations of our economic and social order, so that the dream he preached in 1963 might one day be a reality for all. He said that nothing less than ‘a radical restructuring of society’ could possibly ensure justice and dignity for all. He was right ... I’m getting out of my lane. I hope you’re already out of yours.”

Frankly, Alexander is being a little hard on herself

(Left) March leaders ignored the fact that Dr. King was an unflinching activist against U.S. war policy.

and minimizing the crucial voice she has provided around the New Jim Crow, enabling millions to think anew about connections between issues. But we stand squarely behind her call for all of us to deepen our understanding of those connections. And as socialists we see those connections as part of a system, one governed by a ruling class that combines class exploitation with national and gender oppression, with wars and repression, to maintain its profits.

For that reason we trace the similarities noted by Professor Jones between the Kennedy and Obama Administrations (and, we would add, that of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, target of Randolph’s first “March on Washington Movement”) back to the ruling-class dominance of this country’s two major parties.

And the conclusion we draw from all that, when viewing this year’s March, is the dire and pressing need for independent politics free of the Democratic and Republican parties, an independent politics rooted in the working class, especially in communities of color and among women workers. Only then will we be able to unleash the militant and creative spirit manifested in the Trayvon Martin rallies, a spirit latent in this year’s March on Washington but shrouded under its organizers’ spirit-dampening agenda of subservience to the powers that be. ■

By BARRY WEISLEDER

Bowing to enormous public pressure, the Special Investigations Unit of the Toronto Police Service on Aug. 20 charged Constable James Forcillo with second-degree murder in the death of 18-year-old Sammy Yatim, three weeks after the shooting on an empty streetcar. While the charge is a nod to the power of street protest, including a July 29 march of nearly 1500, it falls far short of justice for Sammy, a young Syrian immigrant to Canada, or for the many victims of violent Toronto cops.

Outrageously, Forcillo got bail in record time (less than 10 hours). He remains suspended with pay (\$106,800 in 2012) while the case slowly makes its way through the court system. It will undoubtedly take years. None of the 22 “witness officers,” so designated by the SIU, are charged.

So, is the indictment of Forcillo merely a release valve? Is it an exercise in distraction? Would there even be an arrest if not for the video-gone-viral showing nine shots fired by one cop at Sammy, followed by another’s use of a taser gun on Sammy’s motionless, prone body?

The SIU is itself a distorted product of mass protest. Created in 1990 with the Police Services Act in Ontario, the SIU was a response to widespread social discontent arising from a series of police killings of civilians, predominantly in Toronto’s Black community. Black Action Defense Committee leader Dudley Laws (deceased, March 2011) gave voice to the movement for accountability and for an end to racist policing practices.

In its 23 years, the SIU has conducted 3400 investigations into police actions causing serious harm or death. Only 95 led to criminal charges, only 16 to convictions, and only three to jail time.

Const. Forcillo is just the second cop in over two decades to be charged with causing a death while on duty. Since 2011 alone, Toronto police have shot at least 15 people, seven of them fatally. No Toronto cop has ever been convicted of murder in an on-duty killing.

Lawyer Peter Rosenthal, who is representing the family of slain Toronto man Michael Eligon at an upcoming coroner’s inquest, said the video in Yatim’s case could make a difference. And Rosenthal goes a step further. He says it’s time to consider disarming front-line police officers. With “lesser weapons,” Rosenthal argues, street-patrol police might be more inclined to talk to potential arrestees, especially people exhibiting mental issues, with the option of calling in the armed emergency task force should that appear to be necessary. He notes that regular police in Britain do not carry guns.

Without any illusions that such a step

## Disarm the cops! Abolish the Toronto SIU!



(Left) Constable James Forcillo.  
(Right) His victim: Sammy Yatim.

would fundamentally change the nature of the police force, socialists support the call to disarm the cops. Why? Because it would save civilian lives, it would boost grassroots movements that demand an end to racist policing, and it would marginally weaken the repressive capacity of the state.

Recent events dramatize the urgency of building social protest movements—organizing that could lead to self-policing by poor and working-class communities, in alliance with labour unions.

During the infamous G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010, authorities spent nearly \$1 billion turning the downtown core into a police state. Arbitrary beatings and detention in inhuman, makeshift facilities ensued. “Kettling” entered the lexicon. Despite 1118 arrests, only 308 were charged, and six convicted of any offence—and no police have been punished for their transgressions.

In the fall of 2011 police harassed protesters and forcefully uprooted the Occupy Toronto site at St. James Park. Also in 2011 a Toronto police spokesperson told a York University audience that “women should avoid dressing like sluts in order not to be victimized.” That cop’s brazen sexist declaration sparked the defiant, international “slut walk” movement. Such misogynist musings give rise to the question: What do police have to say about the hundreds of missing and murdered aboriginal women?

Quebec provincial and Montreal city police savagely attacked students and their supporters at marches and picket lines during the mass movement against university fee hikes in Spring/Summer 2012. They arrested thousands, enforc-

ing a law that made it illegal for more than three people to gather in one place.

Add to this the police practice known as “carding.” It involves detaining and prying personal information from people, stopped on the street because they appear suspicious. Police admit this *investigative procedure* disproportionately targets black and brown racial minorities, as well as youths and the poor. It is estimated that Toronto cops are “carding” 400,000 annually; some young people report being carded up to 20 times in the past two years.

So why is all this happening, and what’s the solution? Liberals and social democrats tend to argue that the main problem is a lack of training; that police lack sensitivity, and are not provided the necessary social work tools.

Certainly social expenditure cutbacks, and chronic lack of attention to the needs of mentally and emotionally challenged people, aggravate the situation. But let’s not miss the forest for the trees. Dealing with human needs has never been a priority for the police or the establishment—nor can it be in a world increasingly characterized by gross inequality and deteriorating living conditions for the vast majority. The Great Recession only aggravates these failings. The system has less room for maneuver, while it drives more people to desperation.

The Toronto police motto, “To serve and protect,” really means to *serve the bosses and protect the rich*. Notwithstanding other duties, like traffic control, search and rescue, dealing with illegal

drugs, minor thefts and assaults, etc., the primary police function is the protection of major private property, and the repression of political challenges to the profit system. Police attacking workers’ picket lines, indigenous peoples’ blockades, anti-capitalist marches, and racialized youths is commonplace. Their role flows from the class nature of the state in capitalist society.

The state is never neutral. It serves the interests of the class that owns and controls the major means of production, distribution, and exchange. Today that’s the 0.1 per cent. At its core, as Frederick Engels explained over a century and a half ago, the state consists of “special bodies of armed men.” The police, the courts, the state bureaucracy and the military are guardians of the social status quo. Some well-meaning people enter those occupations hoping to make “improvements.” But soon they are overwhelmed by the major material determinants: the controlling force of wealth and power in class-divided society.

Sexism, racism, homophobia, and police brutality are inherent features of capitalism, crucial to its rulers’ divide-and-conquer strategy. Austerity measures, including the current round of attacks on public services and union liberties, foment wider social discontent—which the state confronts with mounting surveillance, its propaganda for more “security” spending, and blatant repression.

While the bosses claim there is no money to fund social services and youth employment, on Aug. 27 Madelaine Meilleur, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, announced that the Ontario Liberal government had approved the wider use of Tasers. Her aim is to provide all 26,000 police in Ontario with the lethal devices, at a cost of \$1500 apiece. It is fatuous to claim that this is a “safer” alternative to guns and bullets given how frequent and widespread the use of Tasers will be.

The response of socialists is to reject more weapons for the cops, and to pose the need for workers and oppressed communities to take control of policing. We say: Refrain from reliance on the bosses and their state. Promote mass mobilization of the ranks of labour, the labour-based NDP, and progressive social movements. Fight for a Workers’ Government and a Workers’ Agenda.

Socialists demand: Reverse the social cuts. Money for decent jobs, for quality health care, child care, education, and environmental protection—not for war.

We say: Disarm the police. Jail killer cops. Abolish the SIU. Fire Toronto Police Chief Blair!

Free political prisoners and unjustly detained immigrants and refugees! Stop the harassment of Arabs, Muslims, and people of colour! Justice for Sammy and for all victims of state violence! ■

### Fruitvale Station: Oscar Grant killing portrayed in film

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

“Fruitvale Station.” Directed by Ryan Coogler; starring Michael B. Jordan, Olivia Spencer, and Melonie Diaz

“Fruitvale Station” is filmmaker and director Ryan Coogler’s first work and is as polished as any seasoned Hollywood filmmaker’s. He opens his film with the authentic, jumpy, low resolution of the cell-phone videos taken by passengers of the killing of Oscar Grant III by a BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) police officer that early New Year’s morning. Towards the end, Coogler recreates the scene fictionally, capturing the verisimilitude of the original.

“Fruitvale Station” is a docu-drama, a fictionalized account of Grant’s murder on Jan. 1, 2009, by BART cop Johannes Mehserle (whose identity is not revealed in the film). The film shows him shooting

Grant in the back as he lay prone and handcuffed on the platform of Oakland’s Fruitvale BART station.

Grant is played by Michael B. Jordan, who has Denzel Washington’s charm and winning smile. He, his girlfriend Sophina (Melonie Diaz) and mother of his four-year-old daughter, Tatiana (a delightful, natural Ariana Neal), and their friends were on their way home on a BART train from the New Year’s Eve fireworks in San Francisco. An altercation broke out, and while the train was stopped at Fruitvale Station, BART police arrived and ordered Grant and his friends off the train. What followed was a brutal attack along with undue harassment and beating by the cops on innocent people, which ended with Grant’s death.

Grant insisted that they weren’t doing anything. The audience in the theater, including me, involuntarily gasped and cried out in disbelief when the shot was heard that killed Grant, even though we knew the outcome. The camera stayed on Grant’s face as it registered his confusion. You felt him thinking, “This can’t be happening.”

Though we saw the scene captured by cell phone at the beginning of the film, Coogler’s recreation of it towards the end has more impact in that he allowed us to get to know Grant during the 24 hours before he was killed. Heartbreaking. We see him with Sophina,

playing with Tatiana, taking her to preschool; and in a fictional scene he’s caring for a dog that had been hit by a car. Also, there’s a joyous celebration for his mother’s birthday with grandparents, siblings, and kids. Coogler makes it feel as though we’re there.

Grant was not blemish-free. During the hours before his death, we learn that he had lost his job but pretended he was still working and threatened his ex-boss when he tried to get it back; lied to his girlfriend about seeing other women; and sold marijuana to make money. In a scene by the bay, as Grant waits for his contact, he reflects on his time in San Quentin (shown in flashback) and how it affected his mother, Wanda—beautifully played by Olivia Spencer—his girlfriend, and their daughter. In that scene, Jordan lets you witness Oscar Grant’s epiphany; he’s that good an actor. He made his New Year’s resolution, but Mehserle kept him from realizing it.

As of this writing, an appeals court has granted Oscar Grant’s parents the right to sue the BART police officer for killing their son.

Oscar Grant III and Trayvon Martin are symbols for the young Black men in America who, more frequently than any other group, are subjected to killings and beatings by “law enforcement” officials. This must change. ■

By JOHN WILSON

Outrage over the Putin regime's recently enacted vicious anti-gay law has sparked a debate over how best to oppose it, and support queer communities in Russia. Already many protests have occurred. Aug. 3 was an international day of protest, which originated in San Francisco and saw demonstrations in many cities. In Toronto several hundred people marched to the Russian consulate. Protests continue, including one of 10,000 in Denmark held on Aug. 20.

The anger behind demands to boycott the Winter Olympics is more than justified. But is this the way to go? First of all, boycotts are notoriously ineffective. Two of the most successful, that against apartheid South Africa and the one in support of U.S. farm workers, took years to organize and succeed. The campaign for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) against the Zionist apartheid state of Israel is starting to have some bite, with a long way to go still.

Secondly, considering who controls the Olympics, the prospects for success are remote. For the spectacularly corrupt and reactionary International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its local franchise, the Canadian Olympic Committee (COC), the overwhelming priorities will, as always, be profits and power. Both organizations have refused to protest Putin's law ("inappropriate"! ) and both prohibit any kind of demonstration or protest.

Let's not forget that anti-gay and anti-poor "cleanups" have been a feature of practically every Olympics in living memory. Thirdly, as Greg Louganis, the openly gay Olympic gold medalist diver points out, a previous Olympic boycott meant the sudden end of many athletes' international careers. And while it's true that many contestants from rich countries come from a privileged elite, many do not, especially from the global South. The reactionary way that the Olympics are organized is not the fault of the participating athletes.

Rather than spend enormous time and effort on an almost certainly unrealizable goal, it makes more sense to organize mass protests both inside and outside the 2014 Winter Olympics. The International Coalition of LGBT Sports and Human Rights Organizations demands that the IOC organize a Pride House at Sochi. Lou Englefield, a spokesperson, says, "We believe in action that is concrete and goals that are attainable. We also believe in listening to our partners in Russia

# Northern Lights

## News and views from SA Canada

website: <http://socialistaction.ca>

# Boycott Sochi?



Letteris Pitarakis / AP

who tell us they don't want a boycott. Athletes should not bear the burden of Putin's homophobic regime and what in effect is the complicity of the IOC."

The Olympics of 1968 proved that protest can be very effective. Then, Tommie Smith and John Carlos gave the Black Power salute after their medals presentation. This action rocketed into international fame. Of course, outrageously, the IOC reactionaries rescinded their wins after the fact. Effective protest actions can

take place again. Let's make every effort to see that they do.

Significantly, in all the furor, the mainstream corporate media have failed to mention the tragic irony that the early Soviet Republic was the first state in the world to decriminalize homosexuality. This, along with the right to abortion, was reversed by Putin's predecessors during the consolidation of Stalin's dictatorship in the 1930s. ■

# Prorogation x 4

By BARRY WEISLEDER

On Aug. 19 the federal Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared its plan to prorogue the Canadian Parliament—for the fourth time.

Harper used prorogation in 2007, but subsequent moves to prorogue in 2008 and 2010 drew the most fire. In 2008, Harper's minority government used the tactic to prevent the combined opposition from removing him and forming a coalition government. He prorogued

again in 2010 in the midst of a controversy over the Canadian Force's mistreatment of prisoners in Afghanistan, and just prior to the 2010 Winter Olympics hosted by Vancouver.

Before the summer break this year, Harper faced daily criticism in the House of Commons over the ongoing scandal involving the expenses of senators, including three Conservatives he had appointed. Opposition Leader Tom Mulcair accused Harper of shutting down Parliament to evade accountability and to avoid questions on the Senate.

"People aren't going to be fooled. This is clearly a desperate government worn out by ethical scandals and mismanagement. Stephen Harper refuses to answer legitimate questions from the public," the NDP leader said.

Senate reform legislation is just one of several bills that will die on the order paper with prorogation. The government is awaiting a Supreme Court opinion on Senate reform that could come in Fall 2013. The NDP is presently conducting a commendable cross-country campaign to abolish the Senate.

Prorogation would not affect the Auditor General's review of Senate expenses. However, the recommendations of a Senate report concerning Senator Pamela Wallin's expense claims would be on hold until they are adopted by the full Senate. That can't happen while Parliament is prorogued.

Other affected legislation includes changes to the Canada Elections Act to establish new rules for political loans, and a bill to change parole rules for offenders found not criminally responsible for their actions. However, these bills can be reintroduced at their most recent stage in the House of Commons.

A private member's bill that would require labour unions to publish de-

tailed financial information, known as Bill C-377, would be restored to third reading, the last stage completed by the House of Commons.

The bill, strongly opposed by the Canadian Labour Congress and its union affiliates, had been the subject of heated debate in the Senate, where it was amended and sent back to the House of Commons. But prorogation would wipe the slate clean as far as the Senate deliberations are concerned, according to the Library of Parliament.

"Thus, the bill would be sent back to the Senate in the same state it had been when it was passed at third reading by the House in December 2012, prior to the Senate amendment," the library said in an e-mail to The Canadian Press.

"The Senate would then begin the process of considering the bill anew;

the Senate may vote to pass the bill unamended, amend the bill in precisely the same way it had been amended before, or introduce entirely new amendments."

Harper's frequent use of prorogation does more than add an arcane word to everyday political jargon; it shrinks and withers bourgeois democracy so its henchmen can serve more ruthlessly the capitalist austerity agenda. This is what some call the new authoritarianism—replete with increasing state surveillance of the population, curtailment of the right to strike, arbitrary police beatings and detentions, expulsion of refugees, and strident promotion of the military.

It must be stopped—not just the P word, not just Harper, but the system that drives this descent into a living hell for working people. ■

## Jobless Recovery isn't Working

Chronic job insecurity and declining living standards mark the "recovery" from the Great Recession. Statistics Canada reported in mid-August that, while the private sector gained 34,600 jobs, the public sector lost 74,000. The net loss of 39,400 belies the claim of Conservative Finance Minister Jim Flaherty that his austerity policies are working.

But it's worse than that, according to Citizens for Public Justice: Although the official unemployment rate is 7.2 per cent, it is actually 10.3 per cent if "discouraged workers" (those who have given up their job search in frustration) are included.

With billions of dollars in "dead money" hidden in corporate coffers, untaxed off-shore accounts, mega-mergers and acquisitions, there is no lack of capacity to generate jobs to meet human needs. All that stands in the way is the outmoded system of private ownership of the means of production.

## Tar sands toxic deeds go unpunished

Less than 1 per cent of the environmental violations arising out of Alberta's tar sands have been penalized. So says a survey by Kevin Timoney, a biologist and environmental consultant, and Peter Lee of Global Forest Watch.

The authors of the 677-page report found the same problems recurring again and again, suggesting that the province's claims that it has strict control over the industry's environmental impact are false.

"What we're seeing is the tip of the iceberg," said Timoney, who filed a massive number of Freedom of Information applications, starting in 2008, in order to see details of breaches of environmental regulations and conditions that were kept under wraps in Alberta Environment's data library in Edmonton.

Timoney and Lee eventually com-

plied a list of 9262 infractions since 1996—ranging from spills into the Athabasca River, to excessive smoke-stack emissions, to the discovery of random waste dumps in the bush.

Nearly two-thirds of the violations were of air quality, usually involving emissions of gases like sulphur dioxide and hydrogen sulphide in excess of the hourly limits on the tar sands facilities.

Of the total number of incidents, about 4000 were reported as "alleged contraventions"—a breach in a facility's license conditions. Since 1996, the Alberta government took action in 37 of those cases for an enforcement rate of 0.9 per cent. The median fine was \$4500.

Call it the *cost of doing this dirty, but highly profitable business.*

— B.W.

## Washington march organizers fritter away fightback potential

By ANDREW POLLACK

The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the 1963 March on Washington, held on Aug. 24, drew perhaps 100,000 participants. The main conclusions to be drawn from the day's happenings are how very far we have to go on organizing, educating, and mobilizing around the issues that raised, especially how far we are from building an independent political movement to end racism and achieve social justice. But the gathering also demonstrated how much potential there is to achieve these goals if the growing discontent throughout the nation can be tapped.

A sizable turnout was universally expected on Aug. 24 given the massive, youthful mobilizations a month before against the acquittal of the racist who murdered Trayvon Martin, as well as the evisceration of the Voting Rights Act, and the deepening crisis of jobs and services impacting workers of color so disproportionately. In the end, though, the crowd was much more middle-aged and sedate than at the Trayvon Martin rallies, a composition reflecting the commemorative (rather than protest) character stamped upon the event by its middle-class, pro-Democratic Party organizers—e.g. the National Action Network, the NAACP, the Urban League, etc.

The upside of the March was its size, filling both lawns on the sides of the Reflecting Pool plus more at either end. But March organizers and speakers led very few chants from the stage, and as the afternoon wore on the event increasingly took on a picnic atmosphere. (And it was a constrained picnic at that: photos from the '63 March showing attendees cooling their feet in the Reflecting Pool are a shocking wake-up call for 21<sup>st</sup>-century marchers who are used to being herded behind police steel barriers—as we were on Aug. 24.)

One notable exception in terms of militant spirit was the Dream Defenders, who formed a circle of 75 to 100 youth, joyfully dancing and chanting. The Defenders had just finished a 31-day sit-in at Florida Governor Rick Scott's office against the school-to-prison pipeline, Florida's "Stand Your Ground" law, and for an end to racial profiling.

Still, the organizers had to let some glimpses shine through of the dire social reality and the slowly growing fight against these conditions. Thus, for instance, we heard the short but fiery speech of nine-year-old Chicago Public Schools student Asean Johnson—a speech that would have been even shorter had not Asean said to teachers' union head Randi Weingarten, "Hey, I'm not done!" when she tried to grab the mike away from him.

Asean achieved national fame with a brilliant speech in Chicago exposing the lies of Chicago Public Schools officials who falsely claimed his and other schools had to be closed for budgetary reasons. In the end, his and some other schools were saved. The self-confident militant spirit produced by the years-long joint fight of teachers' unions, parents, and students was wonderfully visible in the contingent of marchers from Chicago, who displayed a particular eagerness to trade fightback stories with, and buy literature from, socialists staffing tables at the March.

(We have to note in passing that Weingarten's attempted mike grab is symptomatic of her disregard for grassroots voices fighting to save school and teachers' jobs. Just the week before she had given a speech praising labor-management collaboration to "refine" the anti-teacher, anti-student testing mania embraced by Obama and his education bureaucrats.)

Organizers also allowed speeches by the father of Emmett Till, victim of a racist murder in 1955, as well as Trayvon Martin's family. But the clear sentiment among the huge crowd to actually do something about such atrocities was given no concrete outlet, no announced plan for future activity.

And the very presence on the platform of Eric Holder, Obama's chief aide in twisting and breaking the



### 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington

laws of the land in pursuit of ever-growing surveillance and denial of civil liberties, and of Nancy Pelosi, his most prominent aide in pushing his reactionary agenda through Congress, was an obscenity, an insult to those present—and those moldering in the grave—who have given their lifetimes or even their lives in the fight for freedom and social justice. The same, of course, can be said about Obama's scheduled speech on the commemorative events on Aug. 28 (the exact 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1963 March).

And Obama-era repression was even visible at the March itself: Radical sports columnist Dave Zirin reported that as a contingent with signs denouncing racist violence and police tactics was gathering, DC cops seized hundreds of their signs with no legal justification. Still, links among attendees and across issues were forged, as is inevitable at such mammoth gatherings and is the reason socialists advocate building them—as well as linking them back to struggles in neighborhoods and workplaces before and after.

The crowd was 85% to 90% Black; probably the majority were middle-aged. The biggest contingents (judging by organizational t-shirts) were the Urban League, NAACP, Black sororities and fraternities, the United Auto Workers, and the Laborers' Union (LIUNA). The Communications Workers of America had a smaller but still very visible turnout, as did the A. Philip Randolph Institute (considering their general invisibility throughout the year, it was a shock to see the banners of so many local chapters there).

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees 1199 of Philadelphia had a respectable turnout. But New York unions had relatively tiny contingents, with the exception again of the UAW.

One UAW marcher from Flint, Mich., said that his Region brought 105 buses, a huge number for such a long trip. Given what's been happening in auto, and the intertwined crisis in now-bankrupt Detroit, the eagerness of UAW members to rally is understandable. And the potential of the union to easily mobilize such huge numbers is testament once again to the still remaining organizational power of even the most beaten-down unions. But that is a potential yet to be realized in program and in practice.

One indication of that gap was brought out in a *New York Times* op-ed published the week after the March, in which labor historian William P. Jones compared

the marches of 1963 and 2013. Jones, author of a just-released book on labor's role in the '63 March, noted a key similarity in the respective eras' political climate.

"A. Philip Randolph," said Jones, "the veteran trade unionist who had first called for a march on Washington to protest employment discrimination in 1941, wanted the demonstration to focus on the shortcomings of Kennedy's economic policies. Pointing out that black workers were restricted to entry-level jobs that were most vulnerable to the automation and offshoring of manufacturing under way in the 1960s, he warned that without measures to end discrimination and create more jobs, blacks would be condemned to struggling for survival 'within the grey shadows of a hopeless hope.'"

"The [1963] march was so successful that we often forget that it occurred in a political environment not so different from our own. Kennedy's victory over Richard M. Nixon in 1960 signaled a break from the conservatism of the 1950s. But like the election of Barack Obama in 2008, hope for a return to the liberalism of the 1930s was dampened by an administration that rejected 'old slogans' like wage increases and public works in favor of tax cuts and free trade to stimulate growth."

The week after the March another prominent Black author drew important conclusions about its significance and what we need to do to follow up. Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," wrote a note on her Facebook page that went viral. In it she promised to link issues of racial injustice with other issues that she admitted not having addressed as regularly, such as U.S. militarism and mass surveillance.

Said Alexander: "For the past several years, I have spent virtually all my working hours writing about or speaking about the immorality, cruelty, racism, and insanity of our nation's latest caste system: mass incarceration. But as I pause today to reflect on the meaning and significance of the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington, I realize that my focus has been too narrow."

"Five years after the March, Dr. King was speaking out against the Vietnam War, condemning America's militarism and imperialism—famously stating that our nation was the 'greatest purveyor of violence in the world.' He saw the connections between the wars we wage abroad, and the utter indifference we have for poor people, and people of color at home. He saw the necessity of openly critiquing an economic system that will fund war and will reward greed, hand over fist, but will not pay workers a living wage."

"Five years after the March on Washington, Dr. King

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