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Asking wrong questions about Ebola (and other things)

By Emile Schepers

There is a panic because a man in the heavily populated Dallas-Forth Worth area in Texas, who had recently traveled from Liberia to the United States, has come down with the Ebola virus. There are indications of a lack of vigilance by the hospital: He was sent home for two days before the institution realized what they might be dealing with, even though he had emphatically warned them about his Liberia trip. Then it was found that there were no emergency response protocols to sanitize his dwelling place, clothing and bedding, because of a lack of subcontractors immediately available to do the work. The sick man may have had contact with as many as 100 people in the interim. If any of them have been infected, each of them could have had contact with as many others.

Why should the Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital, state and local health authorities have been so unprepared? Why should anybody have been taken by surprise by this situation? Why should the situation in West Africa have been allowed to fester? Do some people think that the three main African countries where the epidemic is raging are on the moon?

Three things characterize today's world:

*First, it is highly integrated and there is more trade, travel and exchange of populations than



at any time in human history. This is the result of globalization driven by the corporate drive for greater and greater profits, which in turn leads to greater instability and massive population movements, of job seekers and of refugees.

*Secondly, increasingly unsustainable levels of environmental degradation produce such things as global warming, storms and droughts, and contamination of the food and water supplies.

*Thirdly, there are ever-greater extremes of in-

T H I S W E E K :

- Asking wrong questions about Ebola (and other things)
- Rep. McDermott votes no to arming Syrian rebels
- Ferguson residents speak out
- ¡Ya Basta! Es Hora de Actuar
- Connecticut celebrates Freedom summer anniversary

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equality both within and among countries. Countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea, where the epidemic is raging, are so poor that their state institutional structures are unable to cope with crisis situations, including epidemics, wars and natural disasters.

We must demand that our leaders prioritize the ending of inequality among and within nations.

In short: The potential of Ebola running wild is caused by capitalism run wild.

An immediate reaction on the part of many in the wealthy countries is to pull up the drawbridge, stop people from coming here, and blame the poor countries and their inhabitants for the mess.

Sometimes they even manage to pressure the poorer countries to help with this backward approach. The Liberian government has announced that it may prosecute the sick man in Texas because he did not tell airline authorities that he had helped a person sick with Ebola just before he left.

Right now, there is a massive drought in Central America, which comes on top of a coffee blight. The drought may be related to global warming. The failure of crops is likely to have a far flung impact, as the people of the region have no other way to feed their families, and the countries lack strong state institutions to help their poor. This is a natural disaster leading to population dislocations, but some in the United States will blame it on the "criminal" proclivities of the darker

skinned people.

Rather than engaging in panicky reactions which in the end only worsen the situation, our governments should be reminded of the words of the 17th Century English poet John Donne: Since no man is an island, "therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee."

We must demand that our leaders prioritize the ending of inequality among and within nations, as well as protection of the natural environment, over the profits of rapacious transnational corporations. Countries like Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and the rest, need to be able to develop strong institutions to protect their own people against epidemics and other disasters. Slamming the door against the main victims of imperialist exploitation is impossible; microbes know no borders.



Emile Schepers is international sec'y for CPUSA.

Rep. McDermott votes no to arming Syrian rebels

By Jim McDermott

Congressman Jim McDermott (D-WA), Ranking Member of the Ways and Means Health Subcommittee, made the following statement after voting no to the motion to approve U.S. military training and arms for Syrian rebels:

"Today, I voted in opposition to the motion to approve U.S. military training and arms for Syrian rebels. I did not arrive at this decision easily. The threat ISIS poses to the people of Iraq and Syria and to U.S. personnel across the wider Middle East is a serious one. I also empathize with Americans' emotional desire to respond assertively, and immediately, to the abhorrent murder of our two journalists.

The President continues to show admirable restraint; his speech last week was careful and thoughtful. However, after much deliberation and reflection on the perils of rushing into yet another military conflict in the Middle East, I decided I could not support the McKeon Amendment.

This amendment, which is valid only through early December, serves as nothing more than a faux authorization designed to get Congress through the election season. Moreover, it addresses only one aspect of the strategy the President outlined last week. That is not a responsible way to conduct public policy.

The McKeon Amendment calls for the U.S. to arm and train moderate Syrian rebels, some of whom have murky identities and shadowy allegiances and who could - in the not too distant future - turn the very arms we supplied against the United States.

Over the next several weeks, I will continue to urge the President to present his plan before Congress and ask for our support. When this Congress reconvenes in December, when this amendment expires, I will push for a robust and deliberative debate over a new Authorization for the Use of Force, one that is limited in scope and addresses the whole of the President's plan.

I did not arrive at this decision easily.

Ferguson residents, at council meeting, voice concerns over lack of change

By Riley Winters



On Tuesday evening, town residents lined up and filled the pews, one by one, inside the First Baptist Church. The city council was about to begin another 7 p.m. meeting, giving the community their weekly platform to voice questions and concerns.

As I took a seat amongst many life-long residents I overheard mention that even being in a “place of God” could not stop or soothe rising tempers nor could it bring all those present to a place of mutual understanding.

At 7:05 p.m., Mayor James Knowles rose from his seat at the city council’s table and asked everyone to stand for the Pledge of Allegiance.

As Mayor Knowles ended his recital of the pledge, the soft murmuring of the final words, “justice for all,” echoed throughout the chamber. It was a reminder that, for many, justice is never served and that in this suburban Missouri town justice is, as of yet, nowhere in sight.

Many at the meeting felt that the wheels of justice are turning too slowly, if at all.

Around 7:30 p.m., after the city council completed formal business - including tabling a bill to create a police civilian review board – residents both black and white, queued up at the two available

microphones and prepared to ask questions and deliver comments. They were met with the cold, blank stares of council members who explained that they would not answer any questions or respond to any comments.

All eyes were on an elderly gentleman sporting an I Love Ferguson t-shirt. He spoke of his life in the town and the many changes he had witnessed personally, from the civil rights movement to the flight of white residents.

Sandy, a long-term African-American resident, took her time to let the council know that they could make a real change. “You have the power to fire Darren Wilson and Chief Belmar,” she said, closing her comments by letting everyone know that they needed to take a stand for their community.

As the evening progressed, it was obvious that the black people in attendance, along with some white residents, wanted to tackle the issue of race relations. They don’t want the issue to be swept under the rug. It is about racism and police brutality, it is about the lack of transparency from this city council!” You got the feeling that many Ferguson residents are grappling with a status quo that goes well beyond Ferguson and encompasses the entire nation.

They don’t want the issue to be swept under the rug.

Connecticut activists mark Freedom Summer anniversary

By Win Heimer

Don't shy away from race and institutionalized racism; these remain real forces in today's world," Larry Rubin urged a gathering sponsored by the Hartford Labor Committee of the People's World. Rubin was a Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee field secretary in Georgia and Mississippi between 1961 and 1965.

Rubin, who also worked with the Southern Conference Educational Fund, drew a parallel between the issues of the '60s and current activity. The powerful discussion that followed shared similar Mississippi experiences of those in attendance. Themes included huge disparities that limit options and opportunities for working families.

Activists from the Hartford Service Workers club took time out from a busy day of door-knocking union households urging support for the re-election of Gov. Dannel to join the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Mississippi Summer. They discussed the election struggle and the movement to pass Question 1 which would allow a constitutional amendment providing measures for early voting. Under Malloy's administration, Connecticut became the first state to enact paid sick days and a \$10.10 minimum wage. Home health care and home child care workers won the right to organize and have signed their first contract.

¡Ya Basta! Es Hora de Actuar

Por Javier Sierra

De las miles de pancartas que llevaban los 400,000 participantes en la Marcha Climática de los Pueblos en Nueva York, hubo dos que realmente me impactaron. Una decía: "La Madre Tierra no es una mercancía", y la otra, "¡Basta de racismo medioambiental!"

Juntas definen bien el pensamiento hispano sobre el cambio climático y la degradación medioambiental. El planeta no es nuestro, se lo pedimos prestado a la siguiente generación. Y nosotros sufrimos desproporcionadamente la contaminación de combustibles fósiles y el daño que hace al clima mundial.

Es por ello que para nosotros resulta inconcebible que a estas alturas del partido, el negacionismo climático siga tan atrincherado en nuestro país. "La gran mayoría de los expertos está de acuerdo en que [el cambio climático] es un problema muy serio y que se ha estudiado con mucho cuidado y mucho detalle", me dijo en una entrevista el Dr. Mario Molina, el único científico mexicano en ganar el Premio Nóbel. "Negar este problema es una barbaridad, una irracionalidad gigantesca".

El Dr. Molina —quien descubrió la causa del agujero en la capa de ozono de la atmósfera y por ello recibió el Premio Nóbel de Química en 1995— ha colaborado en un estudio sobre el cambio climático que acaba de publicar la Asociación Americana para el Avance de la Ciencia, titulado "Lo Que Sabemos".

"El reporte establece que hay aspectos del cambio climático que no son cuestionables, igual que no es cues-

tionable la existencia de moléculas y átomos. De la misma manera que sería absurdo que alguien cuestionara que la Tierra fuera redonda", subraya el Dr. Molina, asesor científico del Presidente Obama.

En su reciente discurso durante la Cumbre Climática de la ONU, el Presidente hizo énfasis en la gravedad y urgencia de esta crisis.

"Las alarmas siguen sonando. Nuestros ciudadanos siguen marchando. No podemos pretender que no les oímos. Tenemos que responder a este llamado", dijo el mandatario en un dramático discurso en el que se comprometió atacar el problema e instó al resto del mundo a hacer lo mismo.

El Dr. Molina, sin embargo, reconoce los obstáculos a los que se enfrenta el Presidente, calificándolos de "irracionales", y responsabiliza concretamente a uno de los dos partidos del país.

"Es nada más que el Partido Republicano, y ni siquiera son los republicanos de antes, yo también estoy trabajando con republicanos de administraciones anteriores que también quieren resolver el problema. Así que son problemas de identidad actual", dice.

El Dr. Molina también identifica la urgencia de atacar la crisis climática desde el punto de vista de la comunidad hispana en Estados Unidos, quizá la más vulnerable a los efectos de este fenómeno.

En otras palabras. ¡Ya basta, es hora de actuar!

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