

# WORKERS WORLD

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50¢

# Millions in streets seal Obama victory

By LeiLani Dowell  
Harlem, N.Y.

It was truly a great day in Harlem. The election of Democrat Barack Obama as the first African-American U.S. president was celebrated the evening of Nov. 4 in the largest, grandest display of exuberance and hope in the Black community that this 30-year-old reporter has ever seen.

The crowds began gathering early at the Harlem State Office Building for an outdoor screening of the election results as they occurred. Major and independent media with video cameras interviewed people every few feet, asking why they were there. Most replied that they were there to see history being made. A rally at the site featured local politicians and musicians.

The crowd swelled by 8 p.m., when the results first began coming in. While some focused on the huge screen displaying CNN and other news networks, a drumming circle was busy performing to the side, along with chants of "Power to the people."



Harlem, N.Y., rally Nov. 4.

WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

When former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani appeared on one of the networks, the crowd loudly booed and demanded, "Change the channel!" News visuals of simultaneous rallies taking place in Times Square in New York as well as Chicago, where a million people attended, gave the feel that one big party was happening throughout the country.

Down the street at the world-famous Sylvia's soul food restaurant, a man with a chainsaw was carving "OBAMA" into five large blocks of ice, one for each letter. Street vendors sold commemorative

t-shirts, buttons and posters.

An overwhelming sense of camaraderie filled the air. One man remarked, "It feels like everyone is your brother here today." While the crowd was overwhelmingly African-American, Latin@s, Asians and Pacific Islanders, and whites were also present to show their solidarity. Among these were a number of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

When the final projection was made that Obama supporters had defeated the reactionary John McCain-Sarah Palin ticket, the crowds went wild, augmented by new ranks of people who left their nearby homes to join in the revelry. The cops tried to keep people on the sidewalk on 125th Street, then had to open one lane

## SPECIAL ELECTION COVERAGE

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## Cynthia McKinney protests execution



PHOTO: JON AXFORD

Green Party presidential candidate Cynthia McKinney comforts Misty Smith, stepdaughter of Greg Wright, executed in Huntsville, Texas, Oct. 30. See page 3.



WW PHOTOS: SUSAN SCHNUR

Above and right, these youth are among the 80,000 at Obama rally in Cleveland, Nov. 2. See page 7.

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**WORKERS WORLD**  
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# Students, community fight plan to re-segregate Boston schools

This week ...



By Frank Neisser  
Boston

Boston's communities of color are fighting back against attempts by the city and the School Committee, appointed by the mayor, to dismantle desegregation and return to racist, segregated "walk-to" or "neighborhood" schools. The latest attack is a plan entitled "Pathways to Excellence" put forth by the School Department, which runs the schools.

It calls for closing at least 10 Boston schools—eight of them in communities of color in Roxbury, Dorchester, Mattapan and Hyde Park. School closings in communities of color have occurred ever since the beginning of court-ordered desegregation in 1974, which forced a disproportionate transportation burden onto these children. The new plan would compound this inequity.

The plan calls for increasing the "walk-to school preference" from the current 50-50—with half the students living within walking distance—to 60-40. That ratio reduces access to far away schools for children whose community schools are slated for closing.

The mayor stated in January that he would champion the return to neighborhood schools and called for the superintendent to come up with a plan to bring it about.

When the plan was presented to the School Committee meeting on Oct. 15, parents and students from the community and from schools slated to close came out in force to oppose it.

Moving testimony was given by elementary and secondary school students about how important their schools are to them and why they shouldn't be closed. Representatives of the Boston Parents Organizing Network, the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts and the Boston School Bus Drivers' Union, Steelworkers Local 8751 challenged the discriminatory plan. Their mobilizing forced the committee to delay its vote on the plan from Oct. 29 to Nov. 5.

On Oct. 21 City Councilor Chuck Turner, chair of the Education Committee of the Boston City Council, held a public hearing on the plan. Prior to the hearing, Turner had sent a memo to the school superintendent asking for data proving how closing a preponderance of schools in communities of color and decreasing access to schools outside those communities by means of a 60-40 walk-to preference should not be considered discriminatory.

The Black Educators Association of Massachusetts called for an impact analysis of the plan in position papers presented at both the School Committee meeting and the City Council hearing. BEAM demanded that no vote be taken by the School Committee without such an analysis showing what effect the changes would have on equity of access to quality programs by all Boston school children. Boston Parents Organizing Network and the Boston School Bus Drivers' Union similarly called for no vote to be taken until such an impact study was presented and adequate time given to respond to it.

School bus driver Stevan Kirschbaum, who has driven children to desegregated schools since 1974, pointed out that the same racist forces that threw stones at Black children in 1974 are behind the current moves to return to racist, segregated, unequal schools under the code words "walk-to" or "neighborhood" schools.

Students and parents again swamped the Oct. 29 School Committee meeting. The School Department announced that the 60-40 proposal was off the table and that three schools in Dorchester—from which students had mobilized for the prior meeting—would not be closed. Nevertheless, the plan continues to reflect 80 percent of school closings in communities of color.

On Nov. 1, BEAM held a community meeting in Roxbury where members explained their programs to change School Department policies and close the achievement gap. They emphasized that no vote should be taken until the School Department comes forth with the necessary impact data and the community has a chance to respond.

City Councilors Turner and Charles Yancey both addressed the meeting, which was well attended by community activists. The Boston School Bus Drivers' Union had a strong delegation, including President Frantz Mendes and Chief Steward Andre Francois. Miya Campbell of FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) urged students and youth to mobilize to stop the vote on Nov. 5. □

## ICE threatens Obama's aunt

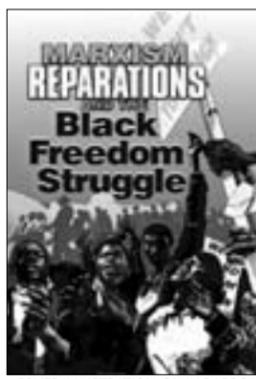
In another attempt to smear politicians of color, Immigration and Customs Enforcement has threatened to deport Zeituni Onyango on immigration charges less than a week before the U.S. presidential election. Onyango is presidential candidate Sen. Barack Obama's aunt.

A native of Kenya, Onyango has been living in South Boston since 2002, working for the Boston Housing Authority as a resident health advocate. In 2005 her request for political asylum was denied.

The attempt to deport Onyango is not just an attack against the immigrant communities. It is the latest racist attack against Obama, who may well be the first African-American president. According to reports, the information concerning Onyango's status was leaked to the media by at least one person involved in federal law enforcement. This disclosure, as well as the claim that Onyango made donations to Obama's campaign (totaling all of \$265), should leave no doubt as to the real reason why this information was released with less than one week to go before the election. □

## MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

The following sections of the book are an outline of its contents: • Black liberation & the working-class struggle • The material basis for reparations in the U.S. • Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance • What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world • Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty • Justice for the Caribbean • A salute to women revolutionaries • Why fight-back is inevitable • Black labor and class solidarity



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## Cynthia McKinney in Texas

# Presidential candidate joins protest of execution

By Gloria Rubac  
Huntsville, Texas

Cynthia McKinney made history in Texas tonight. Never has any politician or any candidate for public office been in Huntsville, Texas, on an execution night to join in with those protesting.

McKinney, the Green Party candidate for president of the United States, joined the ranks of protesters this evening, Oct. 30, and quietly introduced herself to the family and friends of Greg Wright, who was scheduled to be executed 45 minutes later.

As Wright's stepdaughter stood outside of the death house holding a cell phone in one hand and a framed photo of Wright in the other, McKinney approached her and asked about the photo. "How long has your family been dealing with fighting this execution? Did you ever think that your family would ever have to deal with the issue of the death penalty in such a personal way?"

McKinney listened to Misty Smith

explain that they had been fighting to prove Wright's innocence for seven or eight years and that never did she think she and her mother would be going through this injustice.

Then McKinney was introduced to the crowd opposing Wright's execution.

The candidate told them: "I am sad to join you tonight, those of you who have a conscience and who want the U.S. to join the community of nations that respect life, rights and the administration of justice. It's one thing to feel politically, academically and intellectually opposed to the death penalty. It's quite another thing to meet the family of someone who has maintained his innocence throughout his entire ordeal and yet they find themselves on the opposite side of justice.

"Most people in this country have believed in the justice system. They believe that they would never be the victims of injustice. And yet I am here in the very place where Shaka Sankofa was murdered by the state of Texas.

"Texas is the execution capital of the

country. Why is it that the state of Texas wants the world to know that killing is wrong yet it engages in killing?"

McKinney continued: "Our president, George W. Bush, has engaged in killing. One million Iraqis are dead from war and occupation. How many Afghans are dead from war and occupation? How many Pakistanis dead from war and occupation?"

"The war machine is a death machine. It's a killing machine. As a leader of the Green Party, I join with the families that are here right now and say that we must end all of this killing, including the death penalty, including the use of depleted uranium munitions, and including the interminable march of the imperialistic war machine.

"Misty, thank you for allowing me to be here. Thank you for helping me to understand how barbarically this country can treat people, people who believe in it still. Thank you."

Greg Wright expressed his appreciation for the Green Party just hours before

his execution when his spouse, Connie Wright, told him that Cynthia McKinney would be in Huntsville for the protest. "Well, now, you sure know who to vote for, don't you?" he told Connie. "I can't believe she will be here for me."

Music that Connie Wright and Greg Wright chose for the evening played over the sound system outside of the death house as the prison clock chimed at 6:00 p.m. Then Connie and the four other witnesses to the execution walked into the death house for the 419th Texas execution, while "You are the Wind Beneath My Wings" could be heard for blocks around.

Some 1,125 people have been executed in the U.S. since the death penalty was reinstated in the 1970s. Over one-third of all executions have been in Texas and over 85 percent have been in the South. Texas has 13 more executions scheduled, including another likely innocent person, Eric Cathey. Over 65 percent of those on death row are African-American or Latino. □

## Detroit housing crisis

# Coalition presses moratorium demand to mayor

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

Sixteen of the many activists from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions demonstrating on Oct. 27 left the cold rain and entered City Hall to meet with Coit Cook Ford III, interim Mayor Kenneth Cockrel Jr.'s executive assistant for public policy.

Their demands: that Mayor Cockrel declare a state of economic emergency in the city and formally apply to Gov. Jennifer Granholm for the same declaration and a two-year moratorium on foreclosures in Detroit.

Detroiters suffer from high poverty and unemployment rates, as well as a high number of foreclosures caused by the racist and criminal subprime lending fiasco. Ten percent of homeowners in Detroit neighborhoods are or were in foreclosure, with some neighborhoods at 17 percent. Detroit has 18 percent vacant homes, second in the country only to New Orleans with 33 percent abandoned homes, according to an Aug. 30 New York Times article.

Coalition activists had given Mayor Cockrel several letters over recent weeks requesting a meeting to discuss the foreclosure crisis in the city and informing him that under Michigan law he has the authority as mayor to take the measures raised by the coalition.

Cockrel had ignored the letters until the coalition leafleted two community meetings Cockrel hosted and took the floor at one of them. This was despite being constantly harassed by the mayor's security team. The audience's enthusiastic response to the moratorium idea forced the mayor to grant the meeting.

In the waiting room at the mayor's office on Oct. 27, the delegation was told that only three people could meet with Ford and the rest had to leave. When Ford failed to show up because he was attending a funeral of a prominent Detroit, the delegation began

a sit-in. Ford eventually called the coalition to say he would meet with organizers at their office the next day.

On Oct. 28 a group of 20 community organizers met with Ford at the coalition's office at Central United Methodist Church in downtown Detroit. People's attorney Jerry Goldberg started the discussion by giving Ford an overview of the coalition's history and the legal research proving the feasibility of declaring a state of economic emergency in Detroit and applying to the governor for a foreclosure moratorium.

Goldberg reminded him that Mayor Coleman A. Young had the political courage in 1982 to side with the people when he declared a state of hunger emergency in the city, which in part resulted in monthly commodity food distributions that lasted for 17 years.

Ford stated: "There's no question that Mayor Cockrel understands the human side of this—he's a family man and all he needs to do is put himself in that position. He recognizes and supports the idea that this is a crisis, and it is one of his priority issues."

Ford explained that it was his job to make a recommendation to the mayor after "forensically examining" the issue of a moratorium. Ford stated he "told the mayor that a foreclosure moratorium is a needed policy for the City," but he "[didn't] agree with the terms or the length" proposed by the coalition.

Ford's other comments showed he was mainly concerned with the moratorium's potential "impact on credit" in the city. He stated that a moratorium could result in "not having the credit resources to build a new city." Coalition activists countered him, boldly demanding the mayor side with the people over the banks and mortgage companies that have already devastated Detroit.

Coalition leader Abayomi Azikiwe told Ford, "Mayor Cockrel and the city administration need to step up and take on the foreclosure crisis as other cities are doing, like San Diego, Cleveland, and Buffalo that have sued the mortgage lenders."

Rev. Ed Rowe, pastor of Central United Methodist Church and coalition co-founder, stated, "We welcome a confron-

tation with the banks and lenders. We're not afraid to have a public discourse on the moratorium issue."

Mary Eady told her painful story. She faces imminent eviction from her southwest Detroit home of over 45 years. The loan she took out from Wells Fargo to make home repairs had an interest rate of 10.5 percent. She went into default, though she continually tried to talk to Wells Fargo to work out a loan modification, which the bank refused.

Eady was able to get a reverse mortgage to pay two-thirds of the arrearage, more than the current value of her home, but the bank said no. In October Wells Fargo received a \$25-billion bailout from the federal government, which the bank said it didn't need.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition agreed with Ford on a Nov. 5 deadline to hear from Mayor Cockrel about declaring a state of emergency and foreclosure moratorium in Detroit. Organizers have announced another demonstration for Nov. 20 at the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center to keep the heat on the mayor. □

**Lynne Abraham, the Philadelphia DA, known as 'the Deadliest DA in the U.S.' is calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence, despite the mounds of evidence of his innocence. If Abraham's filing is granted that would mean EXECUTION for Mumia without even a new hearing or a new trial.**

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For information in Phila. call the **Int'l Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal 215-476-8812** and the **Int'l Action Center 215-724-1618**  
[www.FreeMumia.com](http://www.FreeMumia.com)  
[www.Millions4Mumia.org](http://www.Millions4Mumia.org)

Premiere of new Mumia documentary film,  
**'In Prison My Whole Life'**  
Sundance Channel, Mon., Dec. 8.  
(Check local listings for times.)

# Union, community activists back anti-foreclosure fighter

By WW Los Angeles bureau

The bank foreclosed on June Reyno's home of over 19 years and ordered her eviction last week. Instead of quietly submitting, June has made a heroic decision to chain herself to her home.

Although her decision has brought upon her the wrath of the corporate world, it has also garnered her support from union and community activists.

The San Diego Ad Hoc Committee Against Foreclosures and the Los Angeles based Labor-Community Coalition Against Foreclosures and Evictions mobilized that support at a news conference Oct. 30.

Rosie Martinez, on the Executive Board of SEIU Local 721 and chair of the union's Latino Caucus, who traveled a long distance to the conference, explained the importance of showing solidarity with Reyno. "June's action is heroic and we are calling for a moratorium on all foreclosures," Martinez explained.

Other participants at the press conference were Fernando Fernando of BAYAN-USA; Martha Rojas of the Labor-Community Coalition; Kathy Hughart of the Crown Point Shores Condominium Association; John Parker of International Action Center; and youth activist Eugene Gambol of San Diego Anakbayan.

## 'Not just about me'

Reyno spoke about her motivation: "I believe that after the \$700 billion dollar bailout this home no longer belongs to the banks. It belongs to the American people who paid for that bailout.

"This is not just about me, this is about every person facing foreclosures. ... We cannot let the banks steal our American dream."

Reyno's actions have received wide media coverage. The news conference was no exception, with over seven TV news stations present.

However, given the support generated, undoubtedly the banks are worried about how her message encourages and inspires further militancy of those foreclosed and given an eviction order.

At least this was indicated by the calculated and ruthless attacks from the media, both in their hostile questions during the press conference and the distorted coverage afterwards.



Oct. 30 news conference shows broad support for June Reyno.

WW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

Reyno, who is Filipina, was in the real-estate business. She owned other homes to resell and has defaulted on another loan. Because of this, the corporate media in San Diego have painted her as someone not deserving of help.

Reyno has also been attacked for refinancing to support her business, a practice many working people use to survive or build their small businesses.

The International Action Center in Los Angeles, a member organization of the Labor-Community Coalition, published the following statement in response to the media attacks:

"As could have been predicted, the media decided to side with their corporate supporters and move the issue from the crisis of foreclosure to the actions of an individual, trying to discredit her for defaulting on past loans and having a real estate business.

"We know this is just an attempt to divide and conquer and unfortunately some so-called progressives get duped by this, but we know that any foreclosure is unjustified in this economic climate, with

trillions of dollars of our money used to bail out corrupt banks that are responsible for destroying millions of lives.

"We know the banks and their mouthpieces are going after her because what she's doing right now constitutes a real threat to them that could inspire others being foreclosed to undertake similar militant actions.

"The demand for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions is rooted in history. During the Great Depression era 25 states had a moratorium on foreclosures and though it was challenged by the financial institutions, it was won again in a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

"Part of the strategy to stop evictions back then was to galvanize the community and move furniture back into the homes of those evicted.

"The activists didn't stop to consider who deserved to be defended from eviction. They simply supported their neighbors—all of their neighbors under attack by monopoly bankers. It was unity that made these struggles powerful, compelling and victorious.

"If we are to support a call for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions should we say 'only for those who didn't buy into the idea pushed on every working person to have your own business, sometimes in real estate.' Should we have multiple exceptions and invite divisions amongst ourselves that our enemies will exploit, making our efforts weak and impotent.

"No, if we are to demand a moratorium on foreclosures we must have a united voice and not allow the corporate media to define our debate, nor make us defensive and distrustful of working people who will have the courage to stand up and defy them, no matter what mistakes they may or may not have made in the past.

"As long as the banks are being bailed out to the tune of trillions of dollars and the economic crisis persists, no working or poor person should be foreclosed or evicted—period."

As of this writing, Reyno is still in her home. Let's hope the crooked banks don't become the beneficiaries of orchestrated divisions in this struggle. □

# Despite odds, support grows to free San Francisco 8

By Judy Greenspan  
San Francisco

The government's witch hunt and persecution of the San Francisco 8 continue unabated despite growing public support to drop the charges and release the former Black Panther Party members.

Harold Taylor, one of the SF 8, was convicted on Oct. 23 of what activists believe to be a bogus drug charge, and remains locked up in a Florida jail. According to Randy Montesano, Taylor's attorney in the SF 8 case, "It is clear from the arrest and all surrounding circumstances that the charge against Harold in Florida is totally baseless."

Taylor was swept up in a "sting operation" in a neighborhood where he had gone to thank people who had written letters of support on his behalf. Just days

before his arrest, Taylor had attended a press conference held by the World Council of Churches at Riverside Church announcing international support for the SF 8 launched by a group of Nobel laureates headed by South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

Meanwhile, back in the San Francisco Jail, SF 8 defendants and longtime Black freedom fighters Herman Bell and Jalil Muntaqim have been denied their right to attend their parole hearing in New York state. Both men were targets of COINTELPRO and former leaders of the Black Panther Party in New York City. They have served over 35 years in New York state prisons.

San Francisco Judge Philip Moscone signed an order in May allowing Bell and Muntaqim to return to New York to attend their parole hearings. However, the gov-

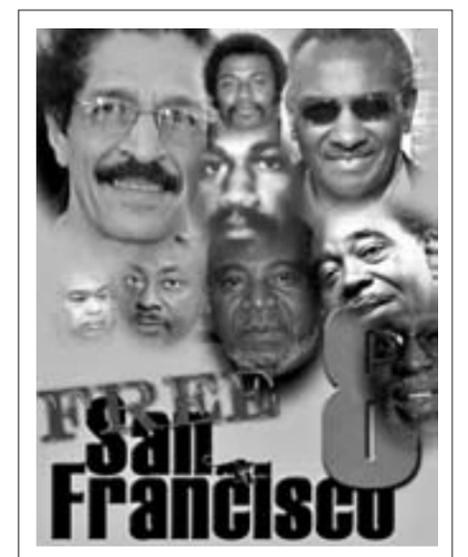
ernors of both New York and California have blocked Moscone's decision, effectively denying their long-awaited parole hearing.

Harold Taylor is scheduled to be sentenced in Panama City, Fla., on Dec. 9. Letters of support can be sent to Harold Taylor, 5600 Nehi State Road, Panama City, FL 32104.

Please contact the governors of New York and California to demand that Herman Bell and Jalil (Anthony Bottom) Muntaqim be returned to New York to attend their parole hearings:

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, State Capitol Building, Sacramento, CA 95814; phone 916-445-2841; fax 916-558-3160; e-mail at [URL.gov.ca.gov/interact#email](mailto:URL.gov.ca.gov/interact#email).

Gov. David Paterson, State Capital, Albany, NY 12224; phone 518-474-8390; e-mail by going to [161.11.121.121/govemail](mailto:161.11.121.121/govemail).



A short court hearing on this case of eight former Black Panther Party members—most of whom are now community activists and organizers—will be held on Nov. 6 at 850 Bryant Street in San Francisco. Unfortunately, the preliminary hearing in this case has been postponed until 2009.

For more information contact the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights at [freethesf8.org](http://freethesf8.org). □

# The 'bailing out bankers is socialism' myth

By Deirdre Griswold

Capitalism is in disrepute these days because of the chaos it is causing everywhere. Since no one wants to go back to feudalism or slavery—the two previous forms of class society that once prevailed in much of the world—the concept of socialism is arousing new interest. So of course the enemies of socialism are trying to sow confusion about it.

In the United States, this has taken the form of labeling the government's recent bailout of the banks and other financial institutions as socialism. It is a ridiculous assertion, since the bailout, which is very unpopular, is in fact a tremendous shift of public funds into the hands of private capitalists—funds that could be used for social programs to help out the mass of the people in these troubled times.

It is generally right-wing demagogues who raise the specter of socialism—the very folks who are quite comfortable with the government spending trillions of dollars on the military, prisons and police so they can repress the workers and poor at home and abroad. That kind of "big government" they welcome.

Nor do they really object to the bailout of the banks. They just want it done without any government regulation or oversight.

But is such government "intervention" into the economy a form of socialism, even if a distorted one?

The answer is no, both in form and in essence.

Even if this bailout contained all kinds of restrictions on the bankers, which it doesn't, and even if it limited their profit-taking, it still would be nothing more than a capitalist effort to strengthen the system of capitalist rule.

There is nothing socialistic in throwing money down the rathole of a capitalist economic crisis to rescue institutions that have been key to the process of exploiting the working class—a process that has brought about an obscene accumulation of society's wealth in the hands of a small class of superrich.

Socialism is, above all, an economic and social system that comes out of the struggle of the working class, in alliance with all the oppressed, against the capitalist exploiters.

There have been many examples of the capitalist class turning to the government for rescue in times of crisis. For instance, there was an earlier and smaller version of the recent bailout of the banks in 1987, during the Reagan administration. The then newly appointed head of the Federal Reserve System, Alan Greenspan, injected "liquidity" into the markets after stocks crashed in October of that year. The Fed bought up the stocks of failing companies and also offered them loans at a discount rate. The bailout led stocks to rally on Wall Street, erasing some of their losses. The big money men engineered and welcomed this government "intervention" and no one accused Reagan, who had built his career largely on anti-communism, of being a secret socialist.

**There is nothing socialistic in throwing money down the rathole of a capitalist economic crisis to rescue institutions that have been key to the process of exploiting the working class**

Government intervention in a capitalist economy, and even the takeover of key industries, like the British Labour Party government's nationalization of the coal mines, railroads and steel industry after World War II, does not constitute socialism or the transfer of power from the hands of one class to another. The British capitalist ruling class remained firmly seated. It was fully compensated—in truth overcompensated—for the nationalized property, which was in poor condition after years of depression and war. It was free to continue to exploit the workers through other avenues.

The function of a government, whether it is elected or not, is to manage the state for a certain period of time. But what is the state? In essence, it is organized force and violence to preserve and promote the interests of the class in power. It is the army, the police, the courts, the many institutions that apply force and pressure both domestically and internationally.

The state appeared fairly recently in human history. In early communal society, before people became divided into classes—into those who owned property and those who didn't—there was no state, no standing army, no jails.

In modern times, especially, the state has had to take on many other functions besides its essential role as enforcer. The day-in, day-out process of exploiting the working class and making profits requires that the capitalist state provide much of the economic infrastructure like roads, bridges, levees and airports. Also, in order to collect taxes from the people without provoking rebellion, the state has to be seen as providing funds for necessary services like education, health care, libraries, parks, medical care, social security and so on.

However, none of these things were instituted just because the capitalists were convinced that would be the rational thing to do in order to protect their own interests. No, every social gain came through sustained and often militant struggles. Eventually, the powers-that-be

yielded a little, often kicking and screaming, to some of the workers' demands in order to pacify them.

Without struggle, there is no progress, as the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass observed. And if the struggle ebbs, gains made by the workers and the oppressed can be taken away under this capitalist system. In recent decades, the proportion of the state's funds allocated to social programs has dwindled down in relation to the enormous expenditures on the military and the repressive state apparatus.

Schools and hospitals are overcrowded and understaffed; public housing has been virtually dismantled; the safety net provided by welfare against abject poverty has been shredded; Social Security and Medicare are in danger even as trillions of dollars are being handed out to the banks and corporations.

This is further proof, if any is needed, that the U.S. government and the state it manages do not stand above classes. They are "of the people, by the people and for the people" only if, by people, one means the ruling capitalist class. Yes, Bill Gates is a person. The Rockefellers are people. So, to avoid confusion, let's be specific and say this is a capitalist government, it serves the interests of the superrich, and it has absolutely nothing in common with socialism.

The objective of revolutionary socialists, of Marxists, is to accelerate the struggle of the working class against the ravages of capitalism, which means not only taking on the bosses in economic struggles but also raising the political level of the workers' movement so as to challenge and disintegrate the capitalist state and replace it with a workers' state.

This is what is necessary to liberate the means of production from the hands of private capital and use them to satisfy the needs of the people and not the bankers. It is what will allow the true reorganization of society and the ultimate dissolving of class differences and antagonisms—so that eventually the state itself will have no further function and can pass into ancient history. □

Colossus with feet of clay

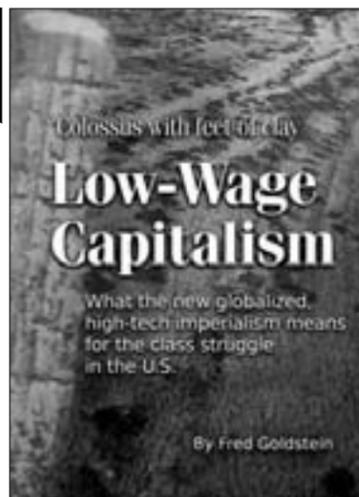
## Low-Wage Capitalism

What the new globalized, high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

Timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval. The analysis rests on three basic developments in the last three decades:

- The world's workforce available to exploitation by transnational capitalist corporations doubled in the wake of the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe.
- The technological revolutions of the digital age, in both production and communications, have allowed transnational corporations to destroy high-wage jobs and simultaneously expand the global workforce to generate a worldwide wage competition.
- The decline in the economic condition of the workers, driven by the laws of capitalism and the capitalist class, is leading to the end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

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## Tuition rises, students fight back

By Caleb T. Maupin

With banks collapsing and the economy in a state of ruin, colleges around the country are not making it any easier for their students to attend at such a difficult time. In fact, tuition is rising all around the country. In state colleges alone, the average increase in tuition is 6.4 percent. (mcclatchydc.com)

Public universities in Iowa will be increasing their tuition by 4.2 percent. The University of Pennsylvania will be cutting \$338 million from its budget, while increasing tuition by 5.9 percent. As U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to be funded, and the banks receive a trillion-dollar bailout, the results for working-class students have been tuition

increases and cutbacks in the quality of their educational experience. (gazetteonline.com)

The socialist youth organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together is calling for free education for all. "If this can be done in other countries around the world, it can be done here," said one FIST member. A mass campaign is being prepared to fight toward making the government spend its money on education, health care and human needs, rather than on unjust wars and bailouts for the rich.

As students writhe in anger at the increasing injustice of their tuition bills, it is unavoidable that many will join in the fight against the system which perpetuates this injustice—capitalism. □

# U.S. 'democracy' disenfranchises many

By Dee Knight

"I have this sense of impending doom. We've had a couple of elections stolen already," said Jon Downs of New Hope, Pa. "The only thing worse than losing is to think that you're going to win and then lose." (New York Times, Oct. 31)

With a possible landslide looming for Obama as the campaign comes to an end, many worries remain. Stolen elections in 2000 and 2004 have caused only part of the fear. History is rife with lessons about the fragility of voting rights and electoral democracy itself.

In the beginning, under the U.S. Constitution, ordinary citizens could not vote for president. White men with property could vote for electors, who in turn chose the president. Today, the Electoral College actually chooses the president. The only change is that the electors are chosen by the popular vote.

Black men could not vote until 1870 after the long and bloody Civil War freed the slaves and the 14th amendment to the Constitution was passed. Then poll taxes, literacy tests and pure terror waged against Black people by the Ku Klux Klan as well as police, courts, employers and "white citizens' councils" prevented many Black people from voting. It took the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s to win the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Women finally won the vote after World War I. Young people aged 18 to 20 got voting rights in 1971—after tens of thousands had lost their lives in Vietnam, and millions had demonstrated against that illegal war.

Massive voter registration drives this year showed how passionate people are about voting. But George Bush is very passionate about preventing voting—so much that in 2002 he signed the Help America Vote Act. The HAVA empowered aggressive efforts to disenfranchise voters. As a result, in 2004 over three million votes were cast and not counted, according to Greg Palast, author of "Steal Back Your Vote!" sponsored by Voto Latino, Operation Rainbow/PUSH, Change to Win and others. ([www.stealbackyourvote.org](http://www.stealbackyourvote.org))

On top of uncounted votes in 2004, there were hundreds of thousands of disqualified voters, especially in Ohio, which helped Bush win in that decisive state. Bush appointed an Elections Assistance Commission before the 2004 election. It found that Black voters' ballots were nine times more likely than those of white voters to be lost or disqualified. Latin@ votes were five times more likely to be lost than Anglo votes. Bush fired the experts who submitted the report, says Palast.

Bush empowered secretaries of state across the U.S. to challenge people's voting credentials. But the U.S. Supreme Court dealt him a setback in mid-October. It overturned a lower court order that would have forced the Ohio Secretary of State to provide information about new voters that did not match their informa-

tion in state databases.

These types of mismatch—typographical errors, missing middle initials, address changes, changed marital status—are at the core of the deceitful "voter fraud" campaign launched by Bush's devious mastermind Karl Rove and trumpeted by McCain in the last TV debate. McCain made it seem that the national grassroots organization ACORN was killing democracy by reporting some of its volunteers' mistakes on voter registration forms.

In Florida voter registration groups were fined \$5,000 for every voter form submitted with any type of error. Florida's Secretary of State rejected 85,000 voters, most of them African Americans. Colorado's Secretary of State eliminated one in five voters from the voter rolls this year. Bush later appointed her chair of the U.S. Elections Assistance Commission.

California's former Secretary of State blocked 42 percent of new registrations. Those rejected were "Latino, Vietnamese, Chinese, Muslim-surnamed citizens" and the poor in general, according to new Secretary of State Debra Bowen. ([stealbackyourvote.org](http://stealbackyourvote.org))

During this year's primary in Indiana, according to brand-new rules, about 145,000 voters were turned away because they didn't have acceptable identification.

Those rejected were disproportionately African American, according to data from the University of Washington. Thousands of elderly voters who had voted many times and thought they knew the rules were disenfranchised.

Many college students have been discouraged from voting this year due to lies propagated by Republicans that they must live with their parents or face losing financial aid. Long lines for early voting and absentee voting are also prohibiting many, mostly poor and disproportionately African-American people, from voting.

Not everyone has the economic or physical ability to wait in line for six or eight hours. Jobs and children are just two factors that impact this situation. These difficulties are felt disproportionately by poorer people, those with two jobs, those who can't just inform their boss they need extra time to vote. Many polling places are totally unprepared for the record turnout expected on Election Day.

Palast advised people not to accept provisional ballots and urged people to become poll watchers. That's something Obama's field organizers and volunteers plan to do in the thousands.

The Obama campaign's massive field operation proved the rule: if you're not rich, you'd better get lots of money behind

you. The hundreds of millions of dollars Obama raised enabled him to make history as the first Black presidential candidate to win a major party nomination. A large part of that money was in small contributions, which showed his huge popular base. But a big chunk came from Wall Street, Silicon Valley and other traditional sources with traditional strings attached.

Ancient Greece gave us the word democracy, but then it was restricted to male citizens who weren't slaves. When democracy came to American shores, white men could vote as long as they owned property. When George Bush talks about democracy, he seems to mean what happens in corporate boardrooms and exclusive country clubs: as long as you're an insider, you can vote.

In other times and places democracy has meant poor people taking over land kept from them by absentee landlords. Or Indigenous people reclaiming their country after centuries of colonial enslavement. Or workers striking, walking picket lines and taking over plants—or whole cities. This type of democracy depends less on ballots than on the disenfranchised banding together with determination to change the system that locks them out. That's a more dependable and durable democracy. □

## Thousands march for same-sex rights



Responding to an ultra-right mobilization earlier on Nov. 1 urging passage of Proposition 8, which would amend the California Constitution to make same-sex marriage illegal, thousands poured into the streets of San Diego's Hillcrest neighborhood chanting, "No

on 8!" A high point of the evening event came when a huge and noisy youth contingent took over several whole blocks of the mid-city neighborhood.

—Report and photo by Bob McCubbin

## Millions in streets seal Obama victory

Continued from page 1

### A victory despite the odds

Obama's win reflects a movement of people throughout the country who fought right-wing attacks against voters of color and who repudiated both the outright racism of the McCain-Palin campaign and the barely concealed racism of Sen. Hillary Clinton's primary campaign. It also reflects a desire to end the policies of endless war at home and abroad—despite how Obama himself stands on the issues. That so many felt the compulsion to be in the streets for that victory is a testament to the legacy of slavery and continuing oppression and repression faced by the

Black community—and the tenacity of that community to survive and resist.

According to exit polls listed at [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), 95 percent of the Black vote, 66 percent of the Latin@ vote, 62 percent of the Asian vote and a remarkable 43 percent of the white vote went to Obama. Sixty-six percent of voters aged 18 to 29 and 69 percent of first-time voters chose Obama as well. Sixty-two percent of voters said the economy was the most pressing issue in the election.

Even a multifaceted onslaught of voter disenfranchisement throughout the country—including the purging of voters from the registration rolls; threatening and/

or misleading phone calls, text messages and leaflets; legal action to prevent polling places from staying open longer; and a serious attempt to prevent students from voting from their campuses—couldn't prevent the sweeping number of votes in Obama's favor. Determined voters lined up for hours throughout the country. Lawyers and legal observers traveled across the country to assist the process. Many people voted days in advance in an attempt to ensure that their vote wasn't stolen as it was in the last two presidential elections.

The election also reflects a response to eight disastrous years of the Bush admin-

**DAY of MOURNING**  
**NOV. 27**

The 39th Annual Day of Mourning will be held on "Thanksgiving" Thursday, Nov. 27 at 12 noon on Cole's Hill in Plymouth, Mass. A dinner/social will follow a march and rally. The event is being sponsored by United American Indians of New England. For more updates, go to [www.uaine.org](http://www.uaine.org). For New York transportation, call the International Action Center at 212-633-6646

## Record number of absentee ballots

# Black Detroiters want vote to count

By Cheryl LaBash

Michigan doesn't have "early voting" but absentee ballots can be requested by mail, or picked up at the Elections Commission and even filled out on the spot. On Oct. 27, a city worker went to pick up his ballot but was unable to do so because of a three-hour wait.

A week earlier my friend went to pick up his ballot and reported that instead of people coming to the front counter as has been the practice experienced by me in previ-

ous elections, the Elections Commission had opened up a garage area to serve the huge number of voters who were coming in to vote absentee.

On Oct. 30, I went to pick up my absentee ballot; it took two hours. There was a line out the front of the building where people picked up the application to vote absentee and a pen, then they went into the next room where they took a number from a machine, then stood outside the entry to a large garage room until there was seating space.

## Wilkerson: FBI targets Black politician

By Frank Neisser  
Boston

People in Massachusetts were shocked on Oct. 28 to see pictures of state Sen. Dianne Wilkerson being led away in handcuffs, arrested on alleged corruption. The only African American in the Massachusetts Senate, Wilkerson has represented the African-American community in the state Senate for 15 years.

Sen. Wilkerson has been a staunch fighter for the community and for many progressive causes. She was a leader in the struggle for same-sex marriage rights, heading the successful effort to repeal a 1913 law preventing out-of-state couples from marrying in Massachusetts "if the marriage would not be legal in their home state."

The arrest and undercover operation against Wilkerson is a racist, sexist attack and an attack on all progressive African-American legislators and public officials. Michael Sullivan, U.S. attorney for the District of Massachusetts, claimed that the timing of the dramatic high-profile arrest one week before Election Day was "coincidental" even though the investigation had been going on for more than 18 months. There has been no indictment or presentation to a grand jury. Sullivan is a Republican who is known to activists here for having prosecuted the Plymouth 25 after the police assault on United American Indians of New England and

their supporters in 1997.

FBI investigators also presented subpoenas to African-American City Councilor Chuck Turner and his staff, without any evidence of a connection between the allegations of wrongdoing and Councilor Turner or his staff. This must be seen as politically motivated harassment.

The witch hunt atmosphere against Sen. Wilkerson has continued with a unanimous resolution by the entire Massachusetts Senate, supported by Gov. Deval Patrick, demanding that she resign. Never before in its history has the Senate made such a request of a senator who has not been convicted of any crime. It is also completely hypocritical, as all of these senators do what Wilkerson is accused of, on a far larger scale, as a matter of routine. The notorious multimillion-dollar corruption surrounding Boston's "big dig" project is just one example. (See Workers World, Aug 24, 2006)

Corruption by politicians occurs throughout the country with near-impunity. Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin abused her office to get a relative fired, yet is still a candidate for vice president. Alaskan Sen. Ted Stephens has been convicted of corruption and continues to be supported by the Republican Party.

This FBI entrapment operation must be seen as an effort by the far right to use law enforcement agencies as political weapons in the elections. □

At least 100 people filled the chairs quietly waiting for their number to be called to go to a bank of clerks at laptop computers on one side of the garage where they were asked for ID and received their ballots. There was a break about 1:30 when there was no longer a line outside, but the chairs were refilled by a steady stream of voters coming in.

So for at least two weeks hundreds of voters have voted absentee every day—this is in addition to people who requested that absentee ballots be mailed to their homes. I wish I had taken a picture. One man waiting said he brought his son, a young voter, because the younger man might not have had the patience to wait and he wanted to make sure his son voted. Detroit Elections Director Daniel Baxter

told the Detroit Press that over 77,000 people have asked for absentee ballots, compared with 68,000 in 2004.

This week I spoke with a contractor who is a white Kucinich liberal. He told the story of his brother and sister-in-law, who were working on the Obama campaign in Ann Arbor, where there wasn't a lot of work to do. The brother told of approaching his wife saying he had a "crazy idea" and he hoped she would talk him out of it. He wanted to go to Indiana for three days, on the weekend and Monday, to campaign for Obama. She told him she had been trying to figure out how to tell him that she had the same idea. So they were going to Indiana to campaign.

LaBash is a retired Detroit city worker.

## 'History is being made'

# Cleveland masses turn out for Obama

*The following report was written by Susan Schnur, an anti-racist white bus driver who is on the local board of the Paratransit District, ATU #268, as a special representative. Schnur attended a mass rally on Nov. 2 in Cleveland that featured Barack Obama and Michelle Obama.*

The crowd was huge! I have no idea of the numbers but all of the downtown area called the Mall was filled. We got downtown two hours early. The line to get in [to hear Obama speak] was at least a mile long. At the front were African Americans of all ages. They must have been there since early in the morning.

The crowd was very multinational and very respectful of one another. Everyone we talked to said they were there because history is being made. There were lots of kids! There were a lot of LGBT people. People had a sense of purpose about them.

On the way downtown we passed the Board of Elections where they were open for Sunday voting. The lines of people wound around the city block. It was most-

ly African-American but not exclusively.

There were lots of women. We saw "Women for Obama" buttons; another button said "Another old lady for Obama." There were "Obama Pride" buttons.

The Obama rally had many white people—very working class with lots of union jackets and caps as well as sweatshirts with factory names. One thing that has been perpetrated by the media is that all of the white working class is a bunch of bigots, especially the men. Having a rally with Bruce Springsteen brought out many white working-class men. He really speaks to the sorrow and desperation of plant closings and unemployment. Springsteen sang a song about Youngstown addressing the loss of the steel mills. Of course all his fight back is about voting Democrat.

The huge crowd I think also reflected the economic desperation of Cleveland and northeast Ohio. And the worst is yet to come. People want "change" and people here need material support—unemployment compensation, food stamps, and of course the housing and eviction situation here is truly an emergency. □



WW PHOTO

Harlem, N.Y., rally Nov. 4. LeiLani Dowell first on left.

istration—disastrous not only for working people, but also for U.S. imperialism and its relations with the rest of the world.

As of this writing, Obama has won 349 electoral votes, versus McCain's 162. For the first time in 44 years, Virginia and Indiana ceded victory to the Democratic candidate. Of the five battleground states—Florida, Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina and Ohio—Obama took Florida, Indiana and Ohio and is in the lead in North Carolina, while McCain is leading in Missouri.

### Solidarity in struggle

Such an outpouring of the masses, particularly oppressed people of color, warrants the full solidarity of the movement. The Democratic Party is a party of the capitalist imperialist system, and Obama

is now its main spokesperson. Despite this many see hope in his election—not that Obama will create an end to war, poverty and oppression so desperately needed in this country and the world, but that the people who fought so hard for him to be elected will be increasingly motivated to act. As all working-class victories come from the movement of working and oppressed people fighting for their rights, this is a tangible ambition.

At the same time, the racist, reactionary forces that supported Republican presidential candidate John McCain, and particularly vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, still exist and can be called into play. Their actions will likely take the form of racist attacks on Obama during his tenure as president. Revolutionaries



One million rally in Chicago.

should be aware of this and prepared to intervene against racism. In this time of increased economic crisis, the attempt by bigoted demagogues to divide working people along lines of race, gender and sexuality—the classic "blame the victim" tactic—must be attacked head-on.

In the end, only the complete destruction of the capitalist system will ultimately create the real change needed in society. However, the election of the first Black



Rally surrounding the White House.

president, and a movement of the masses to accomplish it, is a historical moment that cannot and should not be ignored.

Further analysis of the U.S. 2008 elections will appear at workers.org and in the next issue of WW newspaper.

## U.S. admits big banks launder \$100 billion annually

# Phony mechanism to be set up to regulate

*Workers World is in its 50th year of publication. Below is an article by Sam Marcy, founding leader of Workers World Party, that appeared in the WW issue of Oct. 26, 1989.*

By Sam Marcy

The [George H.W.] Bush administration publicly admitted on Oct. 4 [1989] that over \$100 billion in drug money is laundered by U.S. banks each year. Thus far there have been no criminal prosecutions.

Civil penalties were levied against some of the biggest domestic banks in 1986 for failing to report large cash transactions.

### Treasury official admits banks are raking in drug money

The extraordinary admission came in the form of a carefully crafted announcement made by Salvatore R. Martoche, assistant Treasury secretary for enforcement, in testimony before the Senate Subcommittee on Terrorism, Narcotics and International Operations.

The "good news," according to Martoche, is that the government will open a financial crimes center next month in Arlington, Va., which will monitor the banks. Says Martoche, "It represents a substantial stride in the area of money laundering both domestically and internationally."

But the bad news is that the banks, especially the big ones, are raking in billions of dollars a year in profits as a result of the illegal transmission of drug money. This windfall, which flows into their coffers at breakneck speed, is now estimated at \$110 billion a year! (New York Times, Oct. 5, 1989)

How much of this drug money has

been involved in the feverish speculation which is the symptom of every economic collapse?

It is not clear why the Treasury made this announcement so suddenly, or what events led up to this extremely significant admission, except that the amount of drug money transferred through the banks is so staggering that the Bush administration and its so-called enforcement agencies cannot maintain silence any longer. Such an acknowledgment is of course especially damaging to Bush's "drug czar," William Bennett.

The government to this day has not explained why its chief financial officers, who deal with the banks on an everyday basis, have not been called by the Senate or the House of Representatives to testify on the specifics, the when, where and who of drug money laundering. Nor have they been required to explain why the civil penalties enacted many years ago have been applied in only a few cases.

Why, for instance, has the government never made public the number of banks found guilty of civil violations for failure to file reports on their cash transactions over \$10,000?

The administration says that electronic money transfers as a whole by U.S. banks amount to more than a trillion dollars a day. Martoche didn't explain how his agency arrived at the figure \$110 billion in drug funds laundered each year. All of this leads to the conclusion that the situation between the government and the banks, which are so closely interrelated, may be reaching an explosion point.

The federal agencies responsible for dealing with the banks and the currency are the Treasury Department, headed by Secretary Nicholas F. Brady; the Currency,

under Comptroller Robert L. Clarke; and the Federal Reserve Bank, headed by Chairman Alan Greenspan. While they all have made innumerable appearances before the House and Senate banking committees, no testimony has been elicited from them on this explosive issue, nor has it been volunteered.

### Banks complain of paperwork

The subcommittee that heard testimony from Martoche is headed by John F. Kerry, Democrat of Massachusetts and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Thus far, this subcommittee seems to be so solicitous of the banks that instead of asking the principal federal agents named above any questions about money laundering, it instead is concerning itself with the proposed enforcement agency, which seems far up in the stratosphere.

The banks have come before the subcommittee to complain of how onerous it is to compile data on deposits because of the tremendous "backlog" of paperwork. No one has been called to testify about the backlog of arrests of thousands of youth who are regularly imprisoned precisely because the drug industry is flourishing on funds laundered by the banks, in secret alliance with the government.

The government's alibi for allowing all this to go on is that it is too difficult to monitor the electronic transmission of such gargantuan sums of money. This is pure fiction. The U.S. government has the world's biggest electronic establishment. In addition, it has technological and economic ties to every part of the capitalist world. It can avail itself of their technology and expertise as well.

Even if the government itself can't monitor the situation, which is doubtful, it can always hire consulting firms to do an

independent study. But in this case, such a recourse is not even discussed.

The Kerry subcommittee, according to the Boston Globe of Oct. 1 [1989], is trying to steer the investigation toward the involvement of banks in Canada and some European countries, which are said to be receiving large transfers of laundered money from U.S. banks. But this line of inquiry is a way of diverting attention from the big U.S. banks—the Bank of Boston, for instance, in Kerry's home state, which had been cited earlier for concealing cash transactions from the government (as we detailed in our previous articles [of Sept. 7 and Sept. 21, 1989]).

### Gov't could seize banks' assets

There are numerous statutory provisions that require filing by the banks. The government has not addressed this with criminal penalties.

All of these statutory provisions under the banking laws and the federal criminal code can be invoked against the banks. Even under the old common law, on which the relevant statutory criminal provisions are based, it is a crime "to receive, hold or transfer stolen goods or money," which is what drug money is.

The U.S. government has the authority to seize these assets. Wouldn't that go a long way toward financing the social programs that are being cut so mercilessly? Certainly the government has wider authority to take such a step than to arrest individuals beyond its jurisdiction, or to kidnap them, as it has been trying to do with [Panamanian President Manuel] Noriega in an attempt to overthrow the Panamanian government under false pretenses.

However, it is not merely a question of the law. It's a question of the intimate, symbiotic relationship of the banks and

# Afghanistan: the wrong war at any time

By G. Dunkel

For months now Afghanistan has been deadlier for U.S. troops than Iraq, even though there are 32,000 U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan and 160,000 in Iraq.

A total of 1,004 foreign soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan since 2001. Some 625 of the casualties were from the United States. Forty percent of them occurred in the past two years. (icasualties.org)

A handful of U.S. special forces in coalition with warlords from the north of the country overthrew the Taliban government in 2001. The Revolutionary Association of Women in Afghanistan sums up the event this way: "The U.S. 'war on terrorism' removed the Taliban regime in October 2001, but it has not removed religious fundamentalism which is the main cause of all our miseries. In fact, by reinstalling the warlords in power in Afghanistan, the U.S. administration is replacing one fundamentalist regime with another." (rawa.org)

Currently NATO supplies the troops for the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force. About 18,000 U.S. troops operate under ISAF control.

Most of the casualties from violence in Afghanistan are civilians. A very rough and incomplete count from January 2008 by the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission counted 900 civilian deaths, many of them from attacks on wedding parties and funerals or chil-

dren at play. An estimate from the Xinhua News Agency gives civilian deaths as 1,415. (Sept. 28)

The AIHRC, which was set up by a UN General Assembly mandate and is funded from a levy on donations flowing through the UN, asserts that 98 percent of civilian casualties caused by coalition forces in Afghanistan are "intentional."

The head of the AIHRC, Lal Gul, said in a Sept. 2 report, "The actions of the coalition forces, especially the American forces, are not only against the human rights laws, but are considered war crimes."

In addition to the deaths caused by the violence raging throughout the country, Afghanistan is facing the threat of famine this winter due to three years of failed crops. The Afghan Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock estimates that the country needs two million tons of basic food—wheat, flour and rice—in the next six months to feed people in isolated areas.

Even if the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization and other donor organizations can get tons of food to Afghanistan's major cities, they will encounter extreme problems with moving it to the isolated communities where most of the country's poor live.

Not only have 40 years of war destroyed Afghanistan's roads, but the Afghan resistance attacks supply lines to keep materiel from reaching the U.S. and NATO outposts that are far from the capital. These two factors have driven up the cost of moving a truckload of food or goods from

Kabul to Khandahar, the two largest cities in Afghanistan, from \$1,800 in the spring to almost 10 times as much currently. The price increase implies a large increase in risk to the truckers. (Der Spiegel, Oct. 17)

According to Asian Times Pakistan bureau head Syed Saleem Shahzad, the Taliban have such accurate intelligence on U.S./NATO shipments to Afghanistan through the Pakistani port of Karachi that the ISAF made a deal to move non-military cargo through Russia. (Le Monde Diplomatique, Oct. 2008)

Even though foreign donors—mainly the U.S. and its imperialist European allies like Britain, Germany and France—have supplied Afghanistan with \$35 billion in "aid" since 2001, around 20 million people out of a population of 26 million are living under the poverty line based on official statistics. (BBC, Oct. 17)

According to the FAO, being poor in Afghanistan means living on less than two U.S. dollars a day. Adult literacy is only 29 percent. In some regions, less than one percent of the population is literate. One in five children dies before the age of five.

While the living standards of the Afghan people as a whole are deteriorating rapidly as the war intensifies between the client government of Hamid Karzai, propped up by ISAF and the U.S., and its opposition, led by the Taliban, the Kabul government is also attacking the conditions of women.

"We have the same ideas as the Taliban," says parliamentarian Qazi Naseer Ahmad.

"We want sharia [Islamic] law in our country. Women must ask permission from their husbands before they leave the home, and they must not wear clothes that are against Islam." (Christian Science Monitor, April 21)

The Monitor also wrote that some members of parliament proposed legislation in April that would ban T-shirts, loud music, women and men mingling in public, billiards, video games, playing with pigeons and kites, and more. This proposal would reinstate the regulations from the Taliban era that the U.S. corporate media publicized in order to justify removing the Taliban with the 2001 invasion.

Gen. David Petraeus took the helm at Central Command Oct. 31, a step which puts him in charge of the U.S. military in both Iraq and Afghanistan. In Iraq he was the architect of the surge. He is expected to promote a similar "surge" in Afghanistan, with a twist that underlines the weak U.S. position in that country.

Petraeus is open to negotiations with the "moderate" elements of the Taliban. He recognizes that the U.S. and its allies can't win militarily.

The colonial occupation of Afghanistan by the United States and its imperialist allies has been a disaster for the Afghan people. Progressives outside Afghanistan must demand an end to the entire occupation and not allow an increase of U.S. and NATO troops, even one that accompanies negotiations. □

# the banks

# The menace behind the U.S. attack on Syria

the capitalist government. Sooner or later the lid is bound to blow off, as the drug profits grow larger and larger.

The vigorous intervention of the progressive, civil rights and working class movements can force the Bush administration to change its focus, which now is to throw money at the police, the military, the dozens of enforcement agencies and phony drug centers which are not controlled by the communities.

At the present time the target of the administration is the poor of the inner cities. Hundreds of arrests of innocent young people are made daily. The tremendous media attention focused on drugs and the inner cities causes racism to run amok.

The only way to effectively combat the drug profiteers and the bankers is for a nationwide, class-wide movement of the workers and all of the oppressed people against the drug-money banks and the government, which refuses to prosecute them and in fact protects and defends them. □

By Sara Flounders

Four U.S. Black Hawk helicopters swept across the Iraqi-Syrian border Oct. 26 to the al-Sukkariah family farm in the town of Abu Kama. U.S. Special Forces landed and killed eight civilians, including three children, according to the Syrian government. It was the first attack of this scale by U.S. military forces against Syria.

Washington first refused to admit its role in the attack, and then U.S. officials defended Washington's "right" to violate Syrian sovereignty as part of a provocative strategy to cross the border of any country to attack "terrorists." (McClatchy Newspapers, Oct. 27)

Regardless of any Pentagon justification, such an attack is considered an "act of war."

It is a violation of international law, the UN Charter, and U.S. law, specifically the War Powers Act.

Tens of thousands of Syrians responded on Oct. 30 with a massive demonstration outside the U.S. Embassy in Damascus that condemned the attack as an act of aggression, a flagrant violation of international laws and a form of systematic terrorism exercised by the Bush administration on the Arab region. A favorite slogan: "No to American terrorism." (Agence France-Presse, Oct. 30) The Arab Youth Organization at the 5th General Conference of Arab Youth Union taking place in Damascus condemned the attack.

Syria demanded a formal apology in the United Nations, cut off diplomatic ties with Iraq and suspended the work of the joint security committee to draw down the number of Syrian troops deployed on their common borders.

Throughout the world people and governments have greeted this U.S. war doctrine with the hostility it deserves. Russia, China and Iran condemned the attack for violating Syrian sovereignty. Even U.S. client states and allies had to dissociate themselves from the attack. This included the pro-U.S. Prime Minister Fouad Siniora of Lebanon, the U.S. client regime in Egypt, the Arab League and the rightist French government of Sarkozy. Even the puppet Iraqi regime criticized the attack.

According to Washington, Syria is "not doing enough" to secure its porous, 300-mile border with Iraq. Washington claims that Syria has allowed "foreign forces" to sneak into Iraq. (Guardian, Oct. 30)

But the U.S. has no right to be on either side of the border—in Iraq or in Syria.

The U.S. invasion and its five-year occupation of Iraq are both criminal and illegal. The real foreign terrorists in the region are the 160,000 U.S. troops and the more than 100,000 U.S.-paid mercenaries.

## Syria—long a U.S. target

As an Arab state attempting to keep free of imperialist domination, Syria has been a target of both Israel and the U.S. for decades. Washington has spent years calling for "regime change" in Damascus.

The Bush regime branded Syria a "terrorist" state for its historic support for the Palestinian struggle, its early opposition to the invasion of Iraq and its role in Lebanon in opposition to Israeli occupation, invasion and continuing threats.

Israel still occupies a significant piece of

Syria—the Golan. Last year Israel bombed a site that Israel and the U.S. claimed was a potential nuclear plant, even though Syria should have the right that every other country has of developing nuclear energy. In 2004 Bush imposed harsh economic sanctions on Syria claiming that Syria was "destabilizing" U.S. efforts to "stabilize" Iraq.

Syria has absorbed more than 1.5 million Iraqi refugees since 2003, more than any of Iraq's other neighbors. Providing essential housing, food and education to this large destitute refugee population is an enormous expenditure for a developing country. The U.S. invasion of Iraq has uprooted almost a fifth of Iraq's population of 28 million, including 2.4 million who sought refuge in surrounding countries.

## U.S. puppets fearful

The raid complicated negotiations on a Status of Forces Agreement with U.S. puppet Iraqi authorities, which Washington protects in the Green Zone. But even this regime fears signing a SOFA agreement that allows U.S. forces to keep operating in Iraq after the United Nations mandate expires at the end of 2008.

The talks on the SOFA have been bogged down, and a persistent Iraqi demand has been that Iraqi soil not be used as a launching pad for attacks on other countries.

The government led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki tried to distance itself from the attack by claiming that it would open an investigation into the incident. A government spokesperson, Ali al-Dabbagh, said on Oct. 28, "Iraq's constitution does not allow its land to be a base for launching attacks on neighboring countries." (Los Angeles Times, Oct. 29)

Some commentators have asked if the U.S. raid on the Syrian village is aimed at setting a very dangerous precedent for the entire Middle East, and could be followed by the oft-predicted attack on Iran?

Regardless of the reasons for the U.S. attack, it cannot reverse U.S. fortunes in the region. The deteriorating U.S. military position in both Iraq and Afghanistan is obvious to all.

It is essential that international opponents of U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan raise their voices against imperialist efforts to widen the war.

*Flounders is a co-director of the International Action Center, which is promoting a petition protesting the U.S. attack on Syria (iacenter.org).*

## U.S. steps up raids inside Pakistan

The Pakistani government warned Gen. David Petraeus, now head of the U.S. Central Command running the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, that frequent missile strikes on its territory risk inflaming anti-American sentiment. (AP, Nov. 3)

There is no evidence Washington will listen. On Oct. 26, the same day U.S. Special Forces attacked Syria, the Pentagon bombed a village in Pakistan from an aircraft drone. The attack killed 20 civilians.

In a further insult to Pakistan's sovereignty on Nov. 2, the U.S. military staged two more attacks, killing 29 civilians in two Pakistani villages in the province of Waziristan, close to the Afghan border. The same day Petraeus arrived in Pakistan for talks with government and military officials.

This was the 17th U.S. bombing attack on Pakistan in the last three months. National outrage at the increased frequency of the strikes has badly strained the U.S. alliance with the corrupt Pakistani regime.

Pakistan's economy is hit hard by the global capitalist crisis. The government has been forced to accept onerous International Monetary Fund conditions that will cut essential subsidies and services in order to pay for past foreign loans that enriched only a small ruling clique and the top generals. The government is wracked by division and instability and faces growing ferment from below.

The justification of pursuing "terrorists" was used for the attacks in Pakistan. However, the government has not strongly protested this obvious assault on Pakistani national sovereignty, a sign of its collaboration.

But U.S. imperialist forces have no right to be on either side of the Afghan-Pakistan border. In both countries, U.S. intervention has brought only underdevelopment and growing poverty.

Now the U.S. is frantically trying to blame neighboring countries for the storm of mass opposition that the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan have unleashed.

— Sara Flounders



## Pakistanis protest in NYC

Pakistani residents of the New York metropolitan area and their supporters and friends demonstrated outside that country's consulate in Manhattan Nov. 3 on the one-year anniversary of the arrest of Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Iftikhar Chaudhry and his sixty fellow judges of the Pakistani Superior Courts. That day, the dictator of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, imposed the equivalent of martial law and awoke a response from lawyers and judges that spread to the mass of the people and eventually led to Musharraf's removal. The protestors, from the Pakistan-U.S. Freedom Fund, criticize the new president, Asif Zardari, for not fulfilling his promise to reinstate Chief Justice Chaudhry and all the other judges, and because he has not provided basic needs to the people of Pakistan. The organization also wants the U.S. to stop air strikes on Pakistani territory. Similar protests were called in other major world cities with significant Pakistani communities.

—Report and photo by Sara Flounders

## The ballot & the streets

While attention in this election was focused on the presidential race and the capitalist economic crisis, other issues of great importance to millions were raised in statewide referenda and propositions. In other election years these issues played a key role. They may be at the center of the struggle once again.

There were referenda votes in 36 states, but two issues in particular deserve the focus of the progressive movement.

Reactionary forces in South Dakota again placed a referendum on the ballot outlawing abortion, after losing an almost equivalent referendum in 2006. In Colorado a referendum sought to establish “personhood” at conception, thus nullifying the right to abortion. Other reactionary groups put big money and hyperbole behind California Proposition 8, which outlaws same-sex marriage.

These ballot measures to some extent tested the political consciousness of the voting public. They’re a gauge as to how much the population has been able to break away from reactionary ideology. But like all voting measures in this capitalist society, they also reflect the money put into the effort on both sides, as well as the level of organization and the commitment of the forces.

The 2006 anti-abortion, anti-woman referendum in South Dakota was defeated in great measure because the women’s movement mobilized and focused on

that struggle. Now the right-wing rerun has again been rejected, along with the one in Colorado. Both referenda were strongly defeated. Yet the battle must continue to win the right for all women to have access to legal, safe abortions, if they so choose, along with the medical personnel and facilities to make that a reality.

In California, lesbian, gay, bi and trans activists and their supporters have already shown they won’t let a temporary setback at the polls—should it occur—go by without a struggle. When the right wing mobilized behind Prop 8 in the week before the election, the LGBT community response was to take to the streets in militant defense of its rights. And they weren’t alone. (See report, page 6)

As of this writing, Prop 8 is still up in the air. If this restriction of LGBT rights goes through, it will immediately arouse another street response that will get support from other progressive forces. And it will deserve that support.

Neither the right to abortion nor that of universal marriage rights was handed down from on high. The women’s struggle of the 1960s and 1970s won the Roe v. Wade decision from a less-than-progressive Supreme Court. LGBT struggles opened the door to same-sex marriage demanded by the community. If a well-funded, right-wing campaign succeeds in denying this right, we should all join with those who mobilize to take the struggle back to the streets. □

## Activists say:

### ‘Stop racist voter suppression’

The International Action Center sent out the following petition to thousands of activists. Go to [www.iacenter.org](http://www.iacenter.org) for more information. As of Nov. 3, tens of thousands of responses have been generated by those adding their names to the petition.

To President Bush, Senator John McCain, Governor Sarah Palin, Attorney General Michael Mukasey, Governors of Key States, Congressional and Republican Party leaders and members of the media:

In the days leading up to a historic election, there has been a massive, illegal attempt to suppress votes, particularly among the poor, communities of color, and students. These tactics include:

- In Ohio, the Republicans attempted to illegally challenge the registrations of 200,000 new voters.
- Voters in West Virginia counties have reported that electronic voting machines visibly changed their vote to John McCain when they tried to cast their vote for Barack Obama.
- Students in Colorado, Virginia and South Carolina were told that they would lose their scholarships and that their parents could no longer claim them as dependents on their tax returns if the students voted in their college towns.
- In Georgia more than 50,000 voters were improperly purged from the voting

rolls, a clear violation of federal laws that prohibit massive purging within 90 days of an election. Approximately 4,500 of them have been wrongly identified as “non-citizens.”

- In Indiana, Republican officials filed a lawsuit to close down voting sites early in three key Indiana cities—Hammond, Gary and East Chicago. Indiana’s population is only eight percent Black, but Black voters are heavily concentrated in the three cities targeted by the lawsuit.
- In Florida, Ohio, Nevada, Virginia and Wisconsin, right-wingers are using the Jim-Crow practice of “caging,” where they send out mass mailings to low-income neighborhoods. If the letters come back unopened, then those voters are challenged at the polling place.

These are just a few of the tactics that have come to light in the recent period which are part of an ongoing pattern of racist disenfranchisement—an illegal campaign to deliberately deprive people of the hard-won right to vote.

I demand:

- Stop police intimidation of voters.
- Keep polls open until everyone has the opportunity to vote.
- Full emergency staffing of polling places to meet the widely-expected massive turnout.
- STOP all voter suppression—count all ballots. □

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## Worldwide meeting decides: Only future is with socialism

John Catalinotto, a spokesperson for the International Action Center and a managing editor of Workers World newspaper since 1982, participated in discussions in Caracas, Venezuela, in mid-October of two groups: the VIII Meeting of Intellectuals and Artists in Defense of Humanity, based in Venezuela, and the Assembly of the World Forum of Alternatives, which has members around the world, mainly in Asia, Africa and Latin America, including all the Middle East. Of the 170 participants, Catalinotto was one of only two from the United States. He was interviewed by WW Editor Deirdre Griswold.

**WW:** What was the main accomplishment of this weeklong meeting?

**JC:** The large majority of participants came from the former colonial countries, what today is called “the South.” About an equal number were from Asia and Africa; more came from Latin America, since there was a large Cuban and Venezuelan participation. There were both East and West Europeans.

What made the meeting additionally important was that it took place in the midst of a financial crisis in world capitalism. That meant that the first point in almost every discussion was the impact of this crisis on the world struggle. Whether the report came from a workshop on the working class, the world political order, the question of land reform or the world economy itself, it began by referring to the economic crisis.

What came out of these discussions was a general consensus that, far from history being over and socialism buried, as capitalist ideologues claimed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is capitalism that is in a severe structural crisis that goes far beyond being a financial crisis caused by speculation.

The final statement concluded by saying that “the participants in this meeting ratify its conviction that socialism is the only alternative that could resolve the collection of economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and governmental problems of humanity and make the hopes of the peoples into a reality.”

**WW:** How were the discussions organized?

**JC:** We each could participate in two of the eight workshops that discussed a program for different aspects of the world struggle. I was in a workshop on Unity on the Labor Front and another on the International World Order—Political. Instead of presenting papers, as is done at many international conferences, we held more informal meetings over two days—four sessions of about three hours each, first to share ideas and then to try to hammer out a coherent analysis.

Naturally, there was not complete agreement. Some of us, for example, considered the collapse of the USSR to be among the greatest tragedies of the 20th century. Others didn’t consider this a tragedy.

Among the economists, while all saw



John Catalinotto

PHOTO: JEAN SALEM

the crisis as severe, some saw preparation for a struggle for socialism as the only road while others proposed reforms of a Keynesian type, sort of a “New Deal” on a worldwide scale.

In the labor workshop, there was agreement that what we consider the working class today goes far beyond the old industrial proletariat and includes all people who sell their labor, plus their families, the unemployed and “precarious” workers who now seem to be a large number, especially in the global South. There was unanimous sentiment that the interests of immigrant workers had to be put at the top of the list for all workers.

A few participants shared the experience that the current labor leadership in their countries is inadequate to the demands of the new situation. I was hoping there would be greater experience of cross-border cooperation among unions, something that the new organization of global production calls out for. There was some, but it was still limited.

In the International World Order—Political workshop, there was a general consensus that “Capitalism has shown itself to be an unsustainable and predatory system” and that the U.S. is “the principal promoter of state violence.”

The workshop decided to promote participation in ongoing struggles and concluded: “We have agreed to join the anti-militarist struggle begun by the Campaign for the Demilitarization of the Americas and by the Coalition No U.S. Bases. Also to promote a boycott of the states of Israel and Colombia. And to oppose free trade agreements with Israel. We denounce this apartheid state that now exists in Israel. We will participate in the anti-militarist campaign on the 60th anniversary of NATO in April of 2009.”

**WW:** Were there activities beyond the workshop discussions?

**JC:** In the evenings and on the final day there was an exchange with the Venezuelans. A few participants from each of the different world regions presented talks on the political situation in their area to an audience mainly from the Venezuelan public. At the same time in another venue, Venezuelan speakers described aspects of the ongoing changes in their country to the international participants. One day we visited a center in

Continued on page 11



Dr. Carmen Bohórquez (Venezuela) and Langa Zita (South Africa) at Africa forum in Caracas.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

## Colonialists plot return

# E.U. ministers signal troop deployment to Congo

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

There have been calls by the European Union for greater United Nations "peace-keeping" involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) since the collapse of government control in Goma, a strategic city located in the eastern region of the country.

On Oct. 30, the Congolese army command in Goma broke down, causing chaos within the city and prompting the evacuation of tens of thousands of civilians, who sought refuge in nearby towns and villages. After the abandonment of Goma by the Congolese army, the United Nations Mission to the Congo (MONUC) sent reinforcements to surround the city.

Some 800 U.N. troops attempted to block entry into the city by the rebel Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), headed by renegade general Laurent Nkunda. On Oct. 31, the CNDP declared a unilateral ceasefire and offered to negotiate with the central government of President Joseph Kabila, based in the capital of Kinshasa.

These developments in and around Goma have drawn an immediate response from the European nations of Britain and France. Reports surfaced that both these imperialist states were willing to commit troops to eastern DRC under the auspices of the European Union, purportedly to stabilize the region.

There has been a flurry of diplomatic maneuvering from Britain, the European Union and the United States. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner visited Goma on Nov. 1 to offer "assistance" in any negotiations aimed at ending the conflict.

Britain's Minister for African Affairs, Mark Malloch-Brown, announced that his country was prepared to deploy military forces as part of an E.U. mission to the DRC. "We have certainly got to have it as an option," Brown told the BBC on Nov. 2.

Not to be outdone, the U.S. State Department, through Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer, lent its voice to the chorus of imperialist nations calling for more military forces in the eastern DRC.

Louis Michel, the E.U. Humanitarian Aid Commissioner, has proposed a U.N.-organized summit involving the DRC, Rwanda and other neighboring states in the region. Michel advanced the notion that such a summit could create the conditions for a "permanent solution" to the ongoing conflict in the eastern DRC.

The escalation in fighting in eastern DRC has exacerbated the humanitarian crisis in the area. Tens of thousands of people are currently on the move, fleeing the fighting.

### Economic interests of imperialist states

Despite their claims of humanitarian concern, the E.U., Britain and the United States all have considerable economic interests in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In previous articles, we have pointed out that the DRC contains vast reservoirs of strategic minerals that are vitally important to various transnational mining firms.

With its weak state and military forces, the DRC remains quite vulnerable to rebel incursions as well as intervention by neighboring states.

The U.S.-backed regime in Rwanda has intervened on numerous occasions in the DRC. There have been repeated reports that the CNDP rebels are acting on behalf of the Rwandan government. Nkunda fought with the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) when it seized power in Kigali in 1994.

A report on Oct. 29 indicated that the Rwandan military was heavily involved in attacks on the Congolese army. The South African Press Association (SAPA) and the Associated Press wrote that "Bombs, rockets and mortar shells exploded in eastern Congo on Wednesday, and the Congolese army claimed it came under attack by troops from neighboring Rwanda."

### Another Rwanda?

European leaders have sought to draw parallels between the current situation in eastern DRC and the genocidal violence that swept Rwanda during 1994. British Prime Minister Gordon Brown

told the British public that the country could not stand by and allow another "Rwanda" to take place inside the eastern DRC. Yet it has been reported that it is the Rwandan government that has supplied arms and logistical support to the CNDP rebels of Laurent Nkunda.

The nations of Rwanda and Burundi were colonized by Germany and later Belgium during the course of the late 19th and early to mid-20th centuries. The Hutu and Tutsi nationalities were divided and pitted against each other by the colonial powers.

At the time of independence in Rwanda, the colonial policy of divide-and-rule was reflected in the class divisions within society. The Tutsi were heavily represented in the civil service and other professional sectors of society. The Hutu, who made up the vast majority, were relegated to agricultural labor and military service.

The Belgians and French both had troops inside Rwanda during the genocide of 1994, under the banner of the United Nations. Yet there was no effort by either of these two military forces to intervene to stop the bloodletting that lasted for several months.

The United States and Britain financed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which took control of the country in August of 1994. The U.S. has continued to provide military assistance and encouraged the Rwandans, along with Uganda, to invade the DRC in 1998, a decision that led to a five-year regional war that resulted in the reported deaths of millions of Congolese between 1998 and 2003.

This war (1998-2003) brought in the progressive states of Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia on the side of the Congolese government of Laurent Kabila. Rwanda, Uganda and to a lesser degree Burundi, whose military is dominated by the Tutsi, were on the side of the rebel Congolese Democratic Rally (RCD), which was really a front for U.S.-backed interests.

**Despite their claims of humanitarian concern, the E.U., Britain and the United States all have considerable economic interests in the Democratic Republic of Congo.**

### What role for anti-imperialists?

The legacy of colonialism and the continuing imperialist intervention have fueled the current divisions inside the eastern region of the DRC. Anti-imperialist forces throughout Africa and the world must closely examine the real motivations behind Western threats of military intervention in the DRC.

The African Union, the continental organization that embodies representation from all independent states, must be encouraged to take the lead in resolving the current crisis inside the eastern region of the DRC. Any British, French, U.S. and even United Nations involvement will only serve as a mechanism to maintain the strategic interests of the transnational mining firms that make billions every year extracting resources from the DRC.

In early October, the Pentagon formally launched its Africa Command (AFRICOM). It has been met with widespread skepticism and rejection on the continent. As a result of this negative perception of U.S. motivations in Africa, the European Union member states appear to be taking the lead in the proposed broader intervention in the eastern DRC.

However, any E.U. military deployment under the guise of boosting the effectiveness of MONUC will surely take into consideration the strategic interests of the U.S. ruling class. If the E.U. is not able to make a firm decision about the character of its diplomatic and military involvement inside the DRC, the U.S. imperialists may take a more direct role in maintaining their economic interests in this mineral-rich African nation.

*Abayomi Azikiwe has been closely following the current situation inside the Democratic Republic of Congo. Previous articles can be read on the workers.org*

Continued on page 10

one of the Caracas communities. Another day President Hugo Chávez spoke to us and answered questions for four hours.

One evening it was the turn of Europe and North America to present. I was chosen to speak regarding the U.S. To illustrate U.S. intervention, I used a PowerPoint slide show to show some of the protests we held in the U.S. opposing imperialist intervention. Since the International Action Center has opposed nearly every U.S. aggressive move, it was simple to put the slide show together.

This included mass protests against the war on Iraq and symbolic protests, for example, against the U.S. role in the country of Georgia last summer. People really appreciated seeing that right in the heart of the U.S. there was an active political opposition to the aggressive policies of the government.

They also saw the leaflet calling for a demonstration on Wall Street and pictures of workers' protests in the U.S. They could see something new was happening, right in the center of world imperialism. □

*Karl Marx was correct!*

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### ¿Cuál es el estado amenazador?

¿Qué se obtiene cuando se mezcla un estado amenazador con una súper potencia? Los Estados Unidos.

Ese mensaje se escuchó bien claro esta semana cuando el Pentágono envió una unidad de las Fuerzas Especiales a cruzar la frontera entre Irak y Siria para asesinar a ocho civiles, incluyendo a tres niños. Al principio el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos rehusó contestar preguntas sobre el ataque, pero luego explicó que forma parte de una nueva estrategia.

La estrategia es: las fuerzas militares de Estados Unidos pueden atacar a través de cualquier frontera si piensan que esto les puede dar alguna ventaja militar. O sea, Washington es la capital de un estado amenazador. Ataca cuando quiere y por cualquier razón que se le ocurra. Es difícil imaginar un estado más perverso y amenazador que este.

Como para subrayar este punto, el Pentágono también llevó a cabo un ataque cruzando la frontera al oriente de su zona ocupada en Afganistán. En este ataque, un avión sin piloto de la fallida ocupación estadounidense en Afganistán, disparó un proyectil hacia Pakistán. Como resultado murieron 20 pakistaníes.

Luego, respecto a la agresión contra Siria, el Pentágono alegó que había matado y removido a un supuesto agente de Al-Qaeda en Irak. No hay manera de confirmar independientemente esta información. Los voceros del Pentágono han mentido constantemente sobre todo lo que tiene que ver con Irak. Siempre aducen que han localizado y matado a “terroristas” de Al-Qaeda o del Talibán. De algún modo en Siria, l@s pescador@s y l@s campesin@s con sus hij@s están incluidos en esta lista de “terroristas” al igual que las fiestas de bodas en Pakistán.

En este caso, también se puede apostar a que la pandilla de Bush y los oficiales del Pentágono están mintiendo de nuevo. Usan esto como cubierta para justificar sus agresiones despiadadas. Suponen que el pueblo de los Estados Unidos creará estas mentiras, como pasó con “las armas de destrucción masiva” y los falsos “lazos entre al-Qaeda y Saddam Hussein”.

Fuera de los Estados Unidos, nadie les cree. Ni siquiera sus aliados. No solo Rusia, China e Irán han condenado el ataque, sino también hasta el Primer Ministro del Líbano quien es pro-EEUU, Egipto con su régimen cliente estadounidense, la Liga Árabe y el gobierno derechista francés de Sarkozy.

Los medios de comunicación británicos —que fueron cómplices de las preparaciones para la guerra contra Irak en 2002— esta vez consideraron que tal vez había motivos reales detrás del ataque. Un reportaje de la BBC señaló que “El momento [del ataque] es curioso, ocurriendo justamente al final del período presidencial de la administración de Bush y en el momento cuando muchos de los aliados europeos de América —como Bretaña y Francia— están intentando ampliar sus relaciones con Damasco”. Otros medios noticieros tanto en Bretaña como en otras partes, especularon que el ataque de los EEUU fue la “sorpresa de octubre” con la meta de influenciar las elecciones a beneficio de John McCain.

Hasta voceros oficiales iraquíes criticaron el ataque y lo consideraron como otro obstáculo para la aprobación del Acuerdo Sobre el Estatus de Fuerzas con Washington (vea el otro editorial de este número). Las 50 bases militares permanentes de los EEUU en Irak serán consideradas como una constante amenaza de nuevas guerras contra los vecinos de Irak. Desde Londres, el canciller de Siria advirtió que si ocurre otra agresión, las fuerzas sirias estarían completamente justificadas al defenderse.

Un artículo en el Asia Times (27 de octubre) reporta que a algunos iraníes les preocupa que EEUU utilice una artimaña similar para atacar a ese país de 70 millones de personas, y que esto pueda resultar en un combate más amplio.

La pandilla de Bush condujo al imperialismo estadounidense hacia una serie de guerras de agresión durante los últimos ocho años. Desde el 2001 hasta por lo menos finales del 2003, la administración tuvo el apoyo abrumador de la mayoría de la clase dominante de los EEUU, incluyendo a sus políticos, medios de comunicación y estrategias, mientras se preparaba para conquistar a Afganistán e Irak. Ahora, Bush está aislado. Encabeza una administración que ya carece de influencia pero que aún es agresiva. Y ninguno de los dos candidatos capitalistas ha rechazado esta nueva política de agresión.

No somos nosotr@s l@s únic@s que vemos a la administración de Bush como gánsteres al timón del estado más poderoso y villano en la historia del mundo. Pero lo decimos con claridad. E insistimos en la necesidad de que se active un movimiento de masas para condenar la invasión de Siria y prevenir más aventuras bélicas. □

## ¿2011?

### ¡Que las tropas salgan ahora!

El fracaso total de Washington en su intento de imponer un llamado Acuerdo Sobre el Estatus de Fuerzas que gobierne la presencia de tropas estadounidenses en Irak después de más de cinco años y medio de guerra y ocupación, comprueba sin duda alguna que lo que es decisivo no es el poderío militar sino la voluntad de un pueblo que resiste la subyugación extranjera.

Parece que el acuerdo está predestinado al fracaso luego de ocho meses de “negociaciones” entre Washington y el régimen títere instalado por los Estados Unidos en Bagdad. Cientos de miles de iraquíes de todas las ideologías políticas y creencias religiosas — incluyendo a líderes y personal militar iraquí — recientemente han participado en manifestaciones en las calles para denunciar el acuerdo. Este acuerdo estipula la retirada de las tropas estadounidenses para finales del año 2011, la permanencia de docenas de bases militares estadounidenses en Irak y el control occidental — principalmente estadounidense — sobre la mayor parte de las reservas de petróleo iraquí.

Ni siquiera el Primer Ministro Nuri al-Maliki puede respaldar públicamente este acuerdo, el cual confina a Irak a una condición colonial permanente bajo la hegemonía estadounidense. Nasser al-Rubaie, miembro del parlamento iraquí del grupo de Moqtada al-Sadr lo dijo claramente: “Éste es un acuerdo que lleva a Irak de la ocupación directa al colonialismo con el apoyo del gobierno de Irak. Solo sirve al ocupante.” (London Sunday Times, 26 de octubre) Una reciente encuesta no oficial de miembros del parlamento, indicó que el acuerdo no va a tener el apoyo de la mayoría. □

El pueblo iraquí sabe muy bien lo que la dominación estadounidense de su país ha significado: un millón de iraquíes muert@s, cientos de miles herid@s y mutilad@s y cinco millones refugiad@s dentro de Irak y en los países vecinos de Jordania y Siria. Pobreza abyecta, 60 a 70 por ciento de desemplead@s, propagación de enfermedades, falta de agua potable y tratamiento médico, infraestructura destruida y peleas sectarias — han sido “el regalo de liberación” de Washington al pueblo iraquí.

Sin el Acuerdo Sobre el Estatus de Fuerzas, las 154.000 tropas estadounidenses no tendrán una “base legal” para quedarse en Irak después del 31 de diciembre cuando expire el “mandato” de guerra de las Naciones Unidas (ONU). El fracaso del imperialismo estadounidense en persuadir a su régimen títere firmar este acuerdo, demuestra que la política de guerra de Washington está tan arruinada como su política económica.

Casi 4.200 soldados estadounidenses han muerto en esta guerra, decenas de miles más han quedado horriblemente mutilad@s y casi un billón de dólares — dinero necesitado urgentemente por la gente aquí en los Estados Unidos para empleos, servicios sociales, educación, cuidado de salud y vivienda — ha sido quemado en esta sangrienta aventura imperialista.

La heroica resistencia del pueblo iraquí al poder militar más poderoso en la historia del mundo debe alentar al movimiento estadounidense contra la guerra a tomar más acción. Es hora de que todas las fuerzas progresistas aquí intensifiquen sus esfuerzos para demandar el fin inmediato de la guerra y la ocupación estadounidense, el retiro de las tropas ahora, e insistir en la autodeterminación del pueblo iraquí. □

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## El porqué el capitalismo debe terminar

CARLOS MARX  
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