

WORKERS WORLD

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Spike Lee, center, at New York march. Los Angeles protest, Feb. 23.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD; PHOTO: SEKOU PARKER

10,000 say 'Organize the South'



By Dante Strobino
Raleigh, N.C.

Thousands of workers, youth, religious leaders and civil rights activists marched through the streets of downtown Raleigh, N.C., on Feb. 14 in the third annual "Historic Thousands on Jones Street" (HKonJ) march.

Almost 10,000 people gathered in Chavis Park before the march, including hundreds of workers wearing yellow gags symbolizing the lack of a voice due to the ban on collective bargaining for public sector workers. Members of the Black Student Movement and Student Action with Workers from the UNC-Chapel Hill campus wore black shirts that read, "We Will Not Be Silent." Other signs listed the HKonJ movement's 14-point Peoples' Agenda.

The HKonJ coalition was organized by the North Carolina Conference of the NAACP and includes over 80 organizations fighting for the People's Agenda. The Agenda includes demands for quality education, a living wage and health care for all; redress of two ugly chapters in the state's racist history; collective bargaining rights for public sector workers; prison reform; immigrants' rights; and more.

Two demands of the Agenda have been realized since the movement's founding: union recognition at the Smithfield pork-processing plant and same-day voter registration. North Carolina is now the only state allowing voters to register on Election Day. The new legislation is credited with helping Barack Obama win the state in November.

A major theme of this year's march to the state Legislature was "don't balance the budget on the backs of the poor." With the state looking at a \$2 billion budget deficit and Gov. Beverly Perdue proposing to cut the state budget by as much as 10 percent, the governor's

Continued on page 4

Black community's righteous anger Protests denounce N.Y. Post's KKKartoon

By Monica Moorehead
New York

The New York Post created a firestorm of righteous anger and spontaneous protest here and around the country when it printed a horrific, racist cartoon Feb. 18 depicting President Barack Obama as a chimpanzee being shot to death by two white policemen. The caption of the cartoon reads, "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill." Days before the cartoon appeared, a 200-pound chimpanzee, which seriously mauled a woman in Stamford, Conn., was shot to death by the police. Despite Obama's becoming the first African-American president of the U.S., this cartoon illustrates that this historic development has not altered the fact that institutionalized racism is still very much alive and thriving in this society. Many see the cartoon as

advocating the assassination of the president, which is a legal violation of Title 18, Section 871 of U.S. Code and punishable with a fine and up to five years in prison.

Once the cartoon hit the newsstands, an emergency protest was organized within 24 hours on Feb. 19 in front of the News Corporation building, the offices of the New York Post, by New York City Councilperson Charles Barron and the Rev. Al Sharpton. Close to 1,000 people, mainly Black, came out for the noontime picket line, demanding that there be a boycott of the New York Post. Some even demanded that the newspaper be shut down. Many protesters were carrying pictures of Obama and his family. There was also trade union representation from Local 100 of the Transport Workers Union, the Service Employees International Union 32BJ and others. A spontaneous boycott of the Post began in Harlem on Feb. 19, where the newspaper was conspicuously absent from newsstands in this rapidly gentrifying

Continued on page 4

A-ROD, STEROIDS & CLASS 2

U.S. Out Of Afghanistan!

EDITORIAL 10

CRISIS DEEPENS 6, 7, 9

- Capitalists find no solutions
- What they mean by nationalization
- For Black people, 'The Silent Depression'

GUADELOUPE & MARTINIQUE

Anticolonial strikes continue 11

CLOSE THE SOA!

Interview with Luis Barrios 3

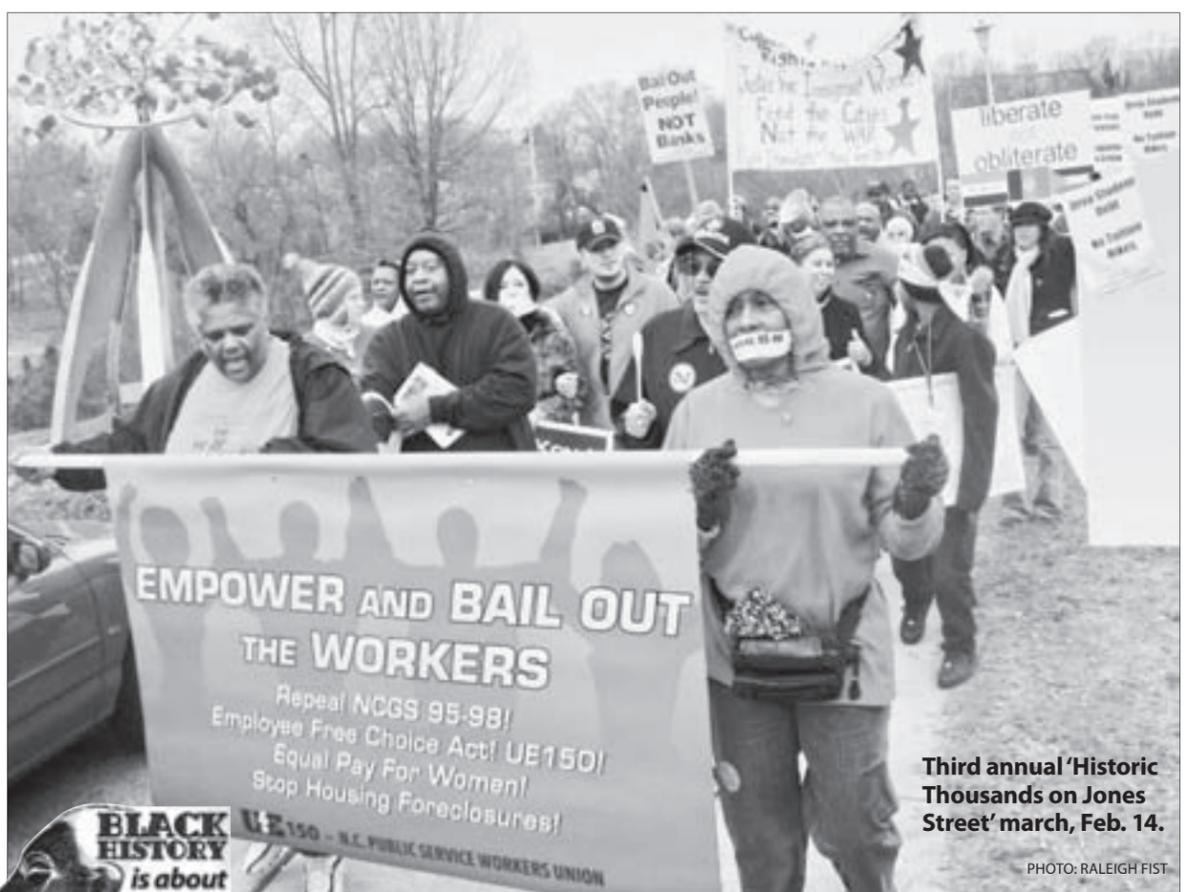
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Third annual 'Historic Thousands on Jones Street' march, Feb. 14.

PHOTO: RALEIGH FIST



Detail from contemporary Zimbabwe sculpture

MAE MALLORY Tribute to a freedom fighter 9

The class character of the steroids issue

By Mike Gimbel

The following excerpted remarks were made at a Feb. 20 Workers World Party meeting in New York City. Gimbel is a former baseball consultant for the Boston Red Sox and Montreal Expos. Go to www.workers.org to read the entire talk.

There is no scientific definition for “performance enhancement.” There is no scientific proof that anabolic steroids improve the performance of baseball players. Steroids are a serious health risk only if they are used by adolescents because adolescent muscles have not yet fully developed.

When the media attacked Alex Rodriguez’s use of steroids, I decided to check my analysis of Rodriguez’s performance during the years from 2001 to 2003 when he was taking steroids to see if Alex’s performance improved during that period. A-Rod’s performance went down each year! If my analysis proved anything at all, it proved that steroids may have hurt, not helped his performance.

Professional sports leagues are huge multibillion dollar industries directly connected to the banks and the entire ruling class. The sports industry must produce surplus value just like every other capitalist industry. The players are high-priced workers performing under contract to some of the richest capitalists in the world. Drug testing is a way for the bosses to put unions on the defensive. Every union tries to fight against drug testing of its members.

The major league teams have training facilities in the Dominican Republic and Venezuela where they can obtain lower-cost talent, as well as scouts looking for talent all over the world.

Major league baseball is a cartel of 30 team franchises that have a complete monopoly on their industry. When Barry Bonds was “blacklisted” by the 30 team owners in 2008, he had nowhere else to go for equivalent employment.

The Major League Baseball Players Association (MLBPA) and the steroids issue date back to the very same year: 1968.

The Olympics are the corporate sports version of the United Nations, with a capitalist structure that is dominated by U.S. imperialism. The steroids issue began to percolate at the 1960 Olympics with insinuations that the Soviet athletes were getting an illegal advantage. As a result—prior to the 1968 Olympics—the International Olympic Committee instituted new anti-doping regulations and dope detection tests. During the 1968 Mexico City Olympics revolutionary tensions came to a boil.

Oct. 2, 1968, ten days before the start of the 1968 Summer Olympics, was the date of the Tlatelolco massacre in Mexico City. In 1968, for the first time, athletes from East and West Germany were members of separate teams, after having been told to compete in a combined German team in 1956, 1960 and 1964.

At the 1968 Olympics, Black Power protests were made by U.S. athletes, most notably Tommie Smith and John Carlos, who, during the playing of the U.S. national anthem, raised their black gloved fists on the winners’ stand, a defiant statement of Black Power which electri-

fied the world in possibly the greatest moment in sports history.

The Soviet athletes again dominated at the 1968 Olympics, but it was the amazing performances of the East German [German Democratic Republic] athletes, as well as others from the other socialist countries in Eastern Europe, that outraged U.S. imperialism.

Do you remember all the attacks in the media leveled against the East German athletes, particularly against the women? The media raised a furor stating that they were cheating by using illegal substances. Never did they mention that illegal drugs were in use at least as much by the U.S. athletes at the 1968 games or that steroids and other drugs were more widely used by professional and amateur U.S. athletes in general, where it is much easier to obtain these drugs. Following the 1968 Olympics, and as a result of the whipped up hysteria against the East

German athletes, steroid use became “controversial.” The MLBPA is a product of that revolutionary period, and it is a product of the civil rights movement. Baseball players had no rights prior to 1968. They could be traded from team to team at will and most players, even many stars, had to work second jobs in the off season.

In 1968, Curt Flood, a proud Black athlete and the star centerfielder for the St. Louis Cardinals, challenged the reserve clause and refused to report to the Philadelphia Phillies, the team he was traded to. While Curt Flood personally lost his challenge to the reserve clause and never played again, the players ended up winning the war as a result of his action because it made the players realize that they had to make a stand against the owners so as to win some control over their lives.

The players united behind the MLBPA and the union immediately entered into battle with the fabulously rich team owners. Over the years, the MLBPA won every strike and the union was often referred to in the big-business media as the most powerful union in the U.S. Being the most powerful union means being the biggest target of corporate revenge! □

The following Run Production Averages (RPA) ratings for Alex Rodriguez, with the best seasons listed first, were calculated by Mike Gimbel.

	YEAR
1.	.206 2000
2.	.205 2007
3.	.190 2005
4.	.189 1996 (A-Rod’s 1 st full season)
5.	.187 2001 (A-Rod’s 1 st season on steroids)
6.	.173 2008
7.	.165 2002 (A-Rod’s 2 nd season on steroids)
8.	.161 2006
9.	.160 2003 (A-Rod’s 3 rd season on steroids)
10.	.159 1998
11.	.156 1999
12.	.152 2004 (A-Rod’s 1 st season after taking steroids)
13.	.140 1997

This week ...



★ In the U.S.

Protests denounce N.Y. Post’s KKKartoon 1
 10,000 say: ‘Organize the South’ 1
 The class character of the steroids issue 2
 Interview with Luis Barrios 3
 Witness against Chuck Turner turns on FBI 3
 Boston elite launches attack to resegregate schools 3
 NYC mayor says ‘no’ to food stamp increases 4
 UAW at the crossroads 5
 Calls to ‘nationalize’ banks 6
 Airline industry puts profits before safety 6
 Data on economic crisis show only one solution 7
 Students occupy New York University 8
 Unite to stop school closings 8
 Detroit activists halt eviction of Anthony King 8
 Mae Mallory, freedom fighter 9
 The racial & economic crisis 9

★ Around the world

Economic crisis sinks Latvian regime 10
 More U.S. troops means growing resistance 10
 Guadeloupe, Martinique workers remain defiant 11
 NATO expansion hits a wall 11

★ Editorials

U.S., NATO out of Afghanistan! 10
 Despite Clinton, Korea has rights 10

★ Noticias En Español

El paquete de estímulo 12

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Interview with Luis Barrios

Priest to serve time for protesting U.S. torture, assassin school

By Cheryl LaBash

On Jan. 26, Fr. Luis Barrios declared the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation guilty of training in murder and torture to advance U.S. imperialism's interests in Latin America. At the same time, the U.S. District Court sentenced him to serve two months in federal prison for walking onto the grounds of Fort Benning, home of Whinsec, better known by its former name, School of the Americas.

Fr. Barrios is an Episcopal priest, professor and chair of the Department of Latin American and Latina/o Studies at John Jay College of Criminal Justice—City University of New York, as well as a journalist and well-known anti-war activist.

As Fr. Barrios prepared for what he called his two-month “retreat,” he described to Workers World his reasons for joining the 20,000 protesters at Ft. Benning on Nov. 23 and why he felt it was important for him to cross the line onto the army base.

“As my brother Karl Marx said, this is not a moment to describe what is going on, but to act. I think this is where we need to go. ... It is not that I was doing nothing,

just at this moment I made a decision that I had to do something more drastic.

“First, Ft. Benning is nothing new. We have been working on closing SOA for years. Second, war is not an isolated issue in what is going on in behalf of the U.S. government. For example, we put a lot of energy into bringing the troops back, to stop the stupid wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—or any attempt to go into any other country. We are trying to close Guantánamo, but we need to understand that all these are very unique and particular symptoms of something we understand as U.S. imperialism. Sometimes they get disconnected. I can find myself fighting for one issue but having the capacity to connect that issue with something more, something bigger we need to eradicate.”

In his statement to the court on Jan. 20, Barrios said he carried a photo of assassinated El Salvadoran Archbishop Óscar Romero with him as he crossed the gates of Ft. Benning. Barrios' statement explained that Romero's 1980 “assassination was planned and executed by graduates from the School of the Americas, with the blessings of the U.S. government, following a speech in which he pleaded for the army to stop massacring the Salvadoran people.” (www.soaw.org)

Boston elite launches attack to resegregate schools

By Frank Neisser
Boston

In 1974, Boston became synonymous with racism, as images of white gangs throwing stones at school buses carrying African-American schoolchildren flashed round the world. It took a national civil rights march of 25,000 people with buses from all over, including the Deep South, to turn the tide of racism and defend the right of the African-American community to equal education access by whatever means the community chose.

With schools completely segregated and unequal, Boston's African-American community chose desegregation. And since 1974, United Steelworkers (USW) Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers Union, has been providing safe, reliable transportation to support that choice.

But the racist forces and the business establishment of Boston have never given up the goal of returning to racist, re-segregated “neighborhood” schools where all the resources are reserved for the white neighborhoods.

They tried it in 2004, proposing to replace the existing three-zone system, which allows parents access to a wide range of schools, with plans for much smaller zones limiting access to quality schools. The community organized, fought back and stopped the plan, with leadership from the Black Educators' Alliance of Massachusetts, Work for Quality, City Councilor Chuck Turner, USW Local 8751, the International Action Center and others.

The School Bus Drivers Union gave thousands of leaflets to the children to take home, mobilizing at the 12th Baptist Church in Roxbury a mass outpouring of parents who vented their anger in rejecting the plan. The parents showed

that since 1974, multiple schools in communities of color have been shut down, torn down or converted into condos or private businesses. Consequently there are not adequate seats in the community schools, nor is there adequate access to advanced classes and quality educational programs.

Last year when the mayor declared war on the African-American community by demanding an end to school transportation, the community was again able to beat back the attack.

This time the full weight of the business and political establishment has joined in, using racism to attempt to force the weight of the economic crisis onto the backs of communities of color. The school department is packaging the attack on school transportation as part of a series of budget cuts, including school closings and teacher and other education worker layoffs.

The Boston Globe, the Herald and the Boston Phoenix all released editorials demanding an end to school transportation. They led off with an op-ed by Theodore Landsmark, who was made famous in a 1974 picture depicting an attack on him by an anti-busing racist with an American flag. The Globe reran the picture alongside his article saying it was “time to end” school transportation in support of parent choice. (Jan. 31)

The community is calling for parents to come out to the department's budget hearing on March 10 at English High School, 144 McBride St. in Jamaica Plain to make clear that denying access to equal quality education is not an option.

The issue will also be taken up at the New England Fightback Conference, being held by the Bail Out the People Movement on Feb. 28 at the School Bus Union Hall, 25 Colgate Rd. in Roslindale. □



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

SOA trains Colombian military

The organizing to close SOA/Whinsec is not only for justice in the past. Today, Barrios said, “Colombia is the country with the most graduates from SOA. SOA can't be disconnected from Plan Colombia. [Colombian President Alvaro] Uribe is the number one puppet for U.S. ideology. Because he needs to stay in power, Colombia is number one at SOA and they return to commit atrocities. ...

“Plan Colombia is a military plan. You need to understand it is bigger than Colombia—to get rid of Hugo Chávez, Evo Morales, Rafael Correa, to control the resources of the people, like oil and water. If you take the displacement of people under Plan Colombia—you can understand displacement in Iraq because there is open war—Colombia is second in the world. Nearly four million people have been displaced from land with reserves of oil and water. It is no accident. They say this is where the guerillas are and the biggest plantations of drugs—but that is not true.

“Colombia is already the Israel of Latin America. U.S. money for military equipment is similar. They manage to manufacture a government that will respond to the interests of the U.S.”

Barrios also noted that the academic establishment shapes ideological discussion in favor of capitalism and there is less

talk about class struggle, a topic that along with economic analysis needs to be fully discussed. He said the military isn't the only method used by the U.S. to invade another country. Economic dependency is one of the strongest weapons allowing the U.S. to do whatever it wants to do. Many countries are still controlled by the IMF, World Bank and free trade agreements—CAFTA, NAFTA and others—that are not really free at all. Economic independence with the mechanisms and structures to get there are essential.

Asked about the Bolivarian Alternative of the Americas (ALBA), Barrios said it is going in the direction to challenge the U.S. free trade agreements and for the people, not the corporations. “The biggest issue is the capitalist system,” Barrios stated. “That is what we need to eradicate.”

Barrios plans to speak on the broader issues around closing SOA/Whinsec both in the U.S. and in Latin America.

In addition to Barrios, Theresa Cusimano of Denver, Co.; Kristin Holm of Chicago; Sr. Diane Pinchot, OSU, from Cleveland, Ohio; and Al Simmons from Richmond, Va., were each sentenced to two months in federal prison for their actions at Ft. Benning. Louis Wolf from Washington, D.C., was sentenced to six months house arrest. Fines ranged from \$250 to \$1,000. Go to soaw.org for more information. □

Witness against Chuck Turner turns on FBI

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Ron Wilburn, the FBI's “cooperating witness” in their case against Boston City Councilor Chuck Turner and former Massachusetts state Sen. Dianne Wilkerson, told the Boston Globe he was used and duped by the FBI—not to expose corruption in the Massachusetts political establishment, but to bring down two prominent progressive Black elected officials. No white officials have been charged in the case, which involves alleged corruption around liquor licensing.

In remarks from an interview published by the Globe on Feb. 20, Wilburn announced that he is no longer cooperating in the government's case. He stated that the \$1,000 he is alleged to have given Chuck Turner “could have been a gift or a campaign contribution. ... Chuck is a victim of circumstance.”

He cited the pressure of being known in the community as the FBI's star wit-

ness in its attack on the two Black officials—pressure that is clearly a reflection of the political campaign and offensive by Turner and his supporters. Many assert that the case is a fraudulent attempt by the FBI and U.S. Attorney's office to strip the African-American community of greater Roxbury of their right to the political representation and leadership of their own choosing, and further designed to undercut the most prominent defender of the community's right to equal quality education, which is under attack by Boston's mayor, political establishment and business community.

A rally in support of Turner will be held Feb. 24, on the day of his next court appearance. Supporters are urged to sign on to the campaign's online petition at www.iacoboston.org. The petition demands charges against Turner be dropped and that all politically and racially motivated prosecutions of progressive elected officials during the Bush administration be reversed and investigated. □

While bankers receive city funds

NYC mayor says 'no' to food stamp increases

By Kathy Durkin
New York

Why is billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg so disliked by the workers and poor people who live here? Let us count the ways.

In addition to planning cutbacks in city social programs for the elderly, disabled and children, and layoffs of city workers and decreases in their benefits, now the mayor refuses to expand food stamp eligibility for some adults, even though the newly enacted federal "stimulus package" would fund their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

A "stimulus plan" section overrides a rule in the so-called Welfare Reform Act of 1996, signed by then-president Bill Clinton, which limited adults with no dependents to a three-month maximum

of food stamps over three years, no matter the disastrous economic circumstances they often face. This is often the only government assistance that many low-income adults can obtain.

Even though federal funds would pay for the SNAP benefits for the thousands of people who desperately need it, the anti-poor Bloomberg administration says it does not have to offer food stamp benefits to any adult who is not in the Work Experience Program. This "workfare" system imposes many hours of mandatory "make-work" jobs in often horrific conditions for—in this case—the meager sum of \$176 per month, at most, for food stamps.

That the administration, during a recession, would callously deny food benefits for people who desperately need them, even though they are entitled to them and the federal government would pay for

them, is an outrage.

Two-thirds of New York City's jobless do not even receive unemployment insurance benefits. (fiscalspolicy.org) The city's "official" jobless figure is now 7.4 percent, although the real number of unemployed is much higher. With more job losses expected here in the hundreds of thousands as the recession deepens, and with real wages falling and food prices skyrocketing, more food benefits are vitally needed.

High costs of rent, utility bills, transportation, medical care and everything else, on top of food costs, are causing enormous hardships. Many people have lost their savings, while homelessness is at a peak.

More than 1.3 million city residents are turning to food pantries and soup kitchens for help. But due to decreased funding, 69 percent of facilities are strapped and don't get enough food for everyone who needs it; some turn people away.

If this were a humane system, food would be given away to all who need it and no one would go hungry. But profits come

first under capitalism, no matter how dire the economic situation, deprivation and suffering.

Yet what help does the city administration offer?

The day after the pro-Wall Street mayor said "no" to expanding food stamp coverage to many who need it, Bloomberg declared his preferred beneficiaries of city assistance: \$45 million would be used to "retrain investment bankers, traders and others who have lost jobs on Wall Street" and to provide "seed capital and office space for new businesses these laid-off bankers might create." (New York Times, Feb. 18)

Anger is growing at the mayor's office for its callous mistreatment of those in low-income communities who need social benefits the most, while rewarding—with working people's tax dollars—the privileged financial wheelers and dealers who contributed to the unfolding economic catastrophe.

This is another reason to join in the national march on Wall Street on April 3-4 to demand, "Bail Out the People, not the Banks!" □

Black community's righteous anger

Protests denounce N.Y. Post's KKKartoon

Continued from page 1

community. Barron has called for a boycott of the Post.

Another protest against the Post was called on Feb. 20 during the evening rush hours and again hundreds of people came out, including a large delegation from the NAACP. Again the crowd was majority Black but also included more Latina/os and anti-racist whites. The picket line was led by African-American filmmaker Spike Lee and his son Jackson, along with Barron and Sharpton. Lee reminded the press and the crowd that the Post has had a long, sordid history of offending people of color with racist images and stereotypes.

A Feb. 23 protest against the New York Post was held in Los Angeles in front of Murdoch's corporate headquarters. The initial endorsers of the protest included the International Action Center; Linda Dent, chair of the African American Committee SEIU Local 721; Rosie Martinez, chair of the Latino Committee SEIU Local 721; the Rev. Freda Lanoix, Love at Work—The Exchange; and the Bail Out the People Movement.

The Grammy-award-winning Black singer John Legend wrote a moving protest letter to the Post on Feb. 19 that reads in part: "I'm personally boycotting your paper and won't do any interviews with any of your reporters, and I encourage all of my colleagues in the entertainment

business to do so as well. I implore your advertisers to seriously reconsider their business relationships with you as well." (www.johnlegend.com)

On Feb. 24, media mogul Rupert Murdoch—the chair of the New Post and Fox News—issued an "apology" for the cartoon. Part of it reads: "Over the past couple of days, I have spoken to a number of people and I now better understand the hurt this cartoon has caused. At the same time, I have had conversations with Post editors about the situation and I can assure you—without a doubt—that the only intent of that cartoon was to mock a badly written piece of legislation. It was not meant to be racist, but unfortunately, it was interpreted by many as such." (New York Times, Feb. 24)

Even though this statement is very defensive in nature, it shows what mass anger can achieve in terms of hurting the image of someone as powerful as Murdoch, along with a drop in sales of the Post, which has the sixth largest circulation in the country. These protests also coincide with the recent resignation of Peter Chernin, News Corporation's president and chief operating officer, due to the rapid economic decline of printed media, which has hit the Post much harder compared to other big business media. Chernin was in charge of operations of the Los Angeles-based 20th Century Fox film studio and Fox broadcast network. □

10,000 say

'Organize the South'

Continued from page 1

office has mandated all state departments cut their services and workforce. In the University of North Carolina system, proposed budget cuts would lay off workers and increase class sizes.

A powerful contingent of students mobilized from dozens of college campuses and high schools. Mohammad Amleh, a Palestinian member of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), carried a sign that read, "From Oakland to Gaza, resistance is justified!" Amleh stated, "In the U.S., the government is supporting the strong banks and the influential figures on the backs of the hardworking people. The same in Palestine, where the U.S. government is helping Israel while the poor and weakened Palestinians are suffering."

A strong workers' contingent was led by UE Local 150 Mental Health Workers, who are fighting for a Mental Health Workers' Bill of Rights. They wore yellow gags and distributed leaflets about the state's scapegoating of workers for patient abuse and neglect within the mental health system. The state Department of Health and Human Services is threatening budget cuts of \$50 million.

Among many other political messages, the marchers chanted: "Workers need power! Organize the South!" Marching in

the UE 150 contingent was Charlotte City Workers member Dwayne Hardin, who stated: "We are marching for collective bargaining rights because it is a human right that we all deserve. Working ... without a [union] contract means city workers will never have wages that meet those of comparable cities around the country, our equipment will ... continue to break down and we will continue to see increased work loads."

Melvin Maclin and Ron Bender of the heroic UE Local 1110 marched alongside their union sisters and brothers. Local 1110's membership includes workers at the Republic Windows and Doors factory in Chicago who successfully occupied their plant and wrestled \$2 million from the banks for pay and vacation time owed them.

At the front of the march was a strong group of union workers from rural Chatham County who have been on a bitter seven-month strike at the Moncure Plywood factory. Moncure Plywood tried to force the workers to sign a contract with 60-hour work weeks, continuation of hazardous work conditions and imposition of a 300 to 400 percent increase in workers' insurance payments. The company has violated many NLRB regulations, remained indifferent to racist threats such as a hanging noose, and hired permanent scabs to replace all workers on strike.

Allen Moore, vice president of Machinists' Local W369 in Moncure, stated: "Today we are marching against foreclosures, for the Employee Free Choice Act and for education, but also to show management that we will not settle for less and that we have lots of support. Many of our issues are covered in the 14 Point Agenda."

Many marchers have been actively participating in people's assemblies throughout the state to organize the unorganized in their communities and work places, and to develop strategies to challenge the corporations, the state and the banks until justice is won and their demands are met. It was repeated throughout the day that marchers understood themselves to be part of "a movement, not a moment." □

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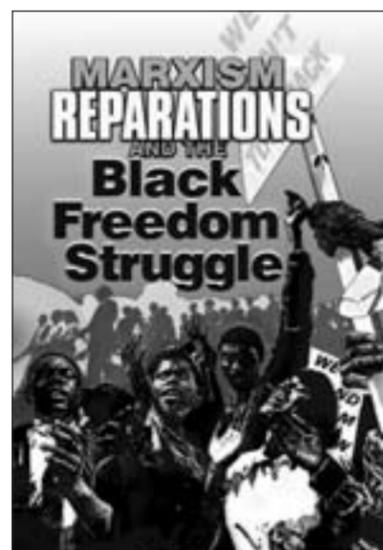
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COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON

UAW at the crossroads

By Martha Grevatt

Last year the U.S. Treasury Department ordered Chrysler and General Motors to reopen their contracts with the United Auto Workers. In order for them to receive \$25 billion in government loans, the two companies would have to show by Feb. 17 that they could get the union to agree to a “competitive” wage and benefit structure. With only hours to spare before the deadline, they submitted their plans for “viability,” along with requests for additional funding.

For workers, the entire scenario raises more questions than it answers. Union workers are being told they must lower their compensation to that of nonunion workers at Honda, Toyota and Nissan plants in the U.S. Doesn't that deny the union a basic legal right, for which many workers gave their lives, which is the right to bargain for a bigger share of the wealth they create?

Nevertheless, the UAW last week reached a tentative agreement on new wage and benefit concessions. If news reports are correct, workers will be asked to give up cost-of-living-allowance raises and annual bonuses, work more than eight hours a day for straight time, and lose all income security after two years of layoff. This is a precedent-setting rollback of 70 years' worth of hard-fought gains.

The fact is that concessions have never saved jobs. As early as 1954, workers at Studebaker were pressured by the company and the UAW leadership to take a pay cut so their company could compete with the Big Three. On the first vote they rejected the cut, but it was narrowly approved in a second vote. What happened? Studebaker merged with Packard in 1954 and ceased producing vehicles altogether in 1966.

Now GM's “viability” plan includes cutting 47,000 jobs worldwide and closing 14 plants. Chrysler called attention to its having eliminated 32,000 positions since 2007, with 3,000 more hourly and 10,000 more salaried jobs on the chopping block. This may or may not satisfy the government's Auto Task Force, led by Treasury secretary Timothy Geithner and National Economic Council chair Lawrence Summers, whose goal is fundamental restructuring.

Meanwhile, union retirees are worried about losing their health care coverage if there are changes in the way the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association is funded. Under the 2007 contract the three automakers were to make a one-time lump sum payment, after which they would be relieved of future obligations for retiree health benefits. The terms of the government loan, through the Troubled Assets Recovery Program, call for half of the payment to be made in company stock. An agreement along those lines was reached Feb. 23 between Ford and the UAW, with the expectation that Chrysler and GM will follow that pattern.

David Tyler, a Ford retiree in Ypsilanti, Mich., told the Detroit Free Press, “It's not good to tie the stock market in the VEBA plan. The volatility of the stock market is not in anybody's control.”

Right now the Treasury's guidelines are mathematically impossible. Initially, GM was to pay \$24.1 billion into the plan, Ford \$13.2 billion and Chrysler \$8.8 billion. Half of GM's obligations would be \$12.05 billion. Yet the company is not even worth one-tenth of that, based on current stock prices which on Feb. 20 hit a 74-year low of \$1.55 a share. How would the stock value of Chrysler, owned by a private equity



On Feb. 16, members of the Canadian Auto Workers union picketed the Toronto Auto Show to oppose any contract concessions to the Detroit Three automakers. GM and Chrysler have asked the Canadian government for financial assistance, which the government and companies are

firm, even be determined?

GM wanted the union to go along with a deal even worse than what the loan terms called for, by not only reducing the VEBA contributions further but also spreading them out over 20 years. No wonder the UAW walked out on negotiations on Feb. 13.

This should dispel all illusions that there can be a united front of the UAW and the automakers to “save the industry.”

UAW bargainers charged Chrysler and GM with trying to shortchange workers while favoring bondholders, with whom the companies are supposed to negotiate debt for equity. The bondholders were refusing to work out an agreement with the automakers until concessions from the UAW are finalized.

These moneylenders remain nameless and faceless, represented only by “a person familiar with the committee representing the bondholders” that is “questioning whether the company's viability plan goes far enough.” (Detroit Free Press, Feb. 19) Any number of high-stakes financial players could be part of this amalgam. Among them might be JPMorgan Chase, Citibank, Goldman Sachs or some other big bank—or perhaps private equity firms such as Cerberus. Jobs, pensions and health benefits are being held hostage by an anonymous “committee.”

Union-haters clamor for bankruptcy

While the terms of the bailout represent a major attack on organized labor, many in the ruling class want to dispense with such democratic niceties as letting workers vote on taking concessions. Their preference is for the automakers to declare Chapter 11 bankruptcy, where a bankruptcy court judge would have the power to scrap union contracts and set terms favorable to the companies. Some even call for a consolidation or liquidation that would reduce the number of Detroit automakers to two.

Those pushing bankruptcy and/or mergers have included Sens. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, Richard Shelby of Alabama and Bob Corker of Tennessee, as well as Thomas Donahue, president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. These sworn enemies of labor have had no trouble getting air time.

The Democratic “friends of labor,” however, aren't rushing to denounce the union-busting-by-bankruptcy scheme. Sen. Christopher Dodd and Congressman Barney Frank, on the Senate and House Banking Committees respectively, have both been friendly to the idea of a GM or Chrysler bankruptcy. The Feb. 23 Wall St. Journal reports that “people involved in talks with senior Obama administration officials said that the administration believes that the option of Chapter 11 fil-



PHOTOS: XPDNC LABOUR DIRECTORY

using to press for concessions from the CAW. “We don't want to lose any more gains that it took 60 years to make,” stated Lindsay Hishelwood, a member of CAW Local 707. “Over in Europe, when there's a problem, they shut it down,” added Armenio Correia, member of CAW Local 1285.

ings by the two automakers needs to be seriously considered.” Treasury officials are reportedly seeking out private lenders should debtor in possession financing be needed.

Can workers tip the scales in their favor?

To autoworkers on the shop floor the situation has reached a most critical point. Everything and everybody—the company, the government, the media, union leaders, even public opinion—seem poised against them. If they reject concessions the government will not loan out any more money and could call up the loans. The company will declare bankruptcy and possibly go out of business. Then again, bankruptcy could be imminent regardless.

Nothing is certain—except that GM, Ford, Chrysler and the elusive bondholders care only for profit. Out of fear, many autoworkers will go along with more give-backs while others reject them as a form of protest.

This was the case at New Process Gear in Syracuse, N.Y. Although workers had taken pay cuts averaging nine dollars an hour, they were told more reductions were necessary to keep the plant open. But with no guarantee that the plant would not close, UAW members voted the concessions down three to one.

UAW rank-and-filers picketed the Detroit Auto Show in January to oppose more concessions. On Feb. 16 Canadian

Auto Workers members did likewise at the Toronto Auto Show.

The primary issue for workers is this: can they stop the restructuring in its tracks? Can they keep their plants open and halt the mass layoffs? How can the militants move their unions from protest to resistance? What can shift the balance of power? A strike now could actually help automakers reduce inventory. Yet not fighting back will only allow business as usual to continue.

There are examples for workers in fighting back, not only from the UAW's proud past, but also the recent occupations of Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago, Waterford Crystal in Ireland and in 2007 the auto supplier Collins and Aikman in Ontario, Canada. Actually seizing company property can, even with a sluggish economy, give the workers leverage against the bosses.

As Sam Marcy wrote in “High Tech, Low Pay,” such action “can change the form of the struggle, take it out of its narrow confines and impart to it a broader perspective. In truth, it brings to the surface a new working-class perspective on the struggle between the workers and the bosses. It says in so many words that we are not tied to a one-dimensional type of struggle with the bosses at a time when they have the levers of political authority in their hands.”

Martha Grevatt is a 21-year member of UAW Local 122 in Twinsburg, Ohio. E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org.

March on Wall Street on the anniversary of the day Martin Luther King gave his life fighting for social and economic justice.

Just as King knew that the struggle for civil rights at home had to also be part of the struggle against war abroad, he understood that no one, regardless of their race, would be free until everyone had the right to a decent paying job or an income for those unable to work.

Partial list of endorsers of the March on Wall Street: Ad Hoc Nat'l Network to Stop Foreclosures & Evictions; Black Workers for Justice, Raleigh, NC; Cynthia McKinney; No. Carolina Public Service Workers Union-UE L. 150; People's Organization for Progress; Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures & Evictions (Mich.); Labor/Community Coalition to Stop Foreclosures & Evictions (Calif.); BAYAN USA; May 1 Coalition For Worker & Immigrant Rights (NYC); Million Worker March Movement East; Chris Silvera, Sec-Treas., Teamster L. 808; Harlem Tenants Council, NY, NY; Private Health Insurance Must Go Coalition, NYC; Charles Barron, member, NYC Council; Queers for Peace & Justice; Women's Fightback Network (Mass.); Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST youth); Int'l Action Center; Action Center For Justice, Charlotte, NC; Queers Without Borders, Hartford, CT; Maine Green Independent Party; Guyanese American Workers United, NY; Pakistan USA Freedom Forum; Troops Out Now Coalition.

For more endorsers, or to endorse go to www.bailoutpeople.org

* For identification purposes only

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FRI & SAT April 3 & 4 1pm

Intersection Wall St. & Broad (NY Stock Exchange) Both days

Capitalist economists intensify calls to 'nationalize' banks

By Jaimeson Champion

As the staggering bank losses continue to mount, representatives of the U.S. ruling class are coming to the forced realization that many of the largest financial institutions in the U.S. are insolvent.

The big banks are the heart of the modern capitalist system. The credit that the banks pump out is the system's lifeblood. Many capitalists fear that if banks as big as Citigroup and Bank of America collapse, it could trigger a heart attack that could potentially prove fatal for the capitalist system. This fear is why a growing chorus of capitalist politicians, economists and pundits are calling for the government to take over the big banks. They want the state to perform an emergency bypass surgery in the collective interest of the capitalist class.

In a recent television interview, the very conservative Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said, "This idea of nationalizing banks is not comfortable. But I think we've got so many toxic assets spread throughout the banking and financial community that we're going to have to do something that no one ever envisioned a year ago. ... If nationalization is what works, then we should do it." (ABC-TV, Feb. 15)

Senate Banking Committee Chair Chris Dodd said recently, "I don't welcome it at all, but I could see how it's possible it may happen. ... I'm concerned that we may end up having to do that." (Bloomberg, Feb. 20)

And, in a refutation of his own theo-

ries, former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan, who confidently declared in 2005, "The use of a growing array of derivatives and more-sophisticated approaches to managing risk are key factors underpinning the greater resilience of our largest financial institutions," is also calling for the nationalization of the big banks because of ever growing losses on derivatives, securities and other "sophisticated" approaches to managing risk.

What it means for workers and oppressed

An editorial in the New York Times recently opined, "Americans have a visceral horror of the word nationalization. So call it restructuring or majority ownership. ... We increasingly believe it is the least bad solution to a truly desperate situation." (New York Times, Feb. 22)

Whatever the bourgeoisie chooses to call it—nationalization, restructuring, conservatorship, etc.—there is no doubt what it would mean for the working class. The state under capitalism is the representative of the collective interests of the capitalist class. If the capitalist state intervenes in the market, it does so in the interest of the capitalist class as a whole, with the objective of ensuring the survival of the capitalist system.

Frederick Engels, in his 1890 book, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," forecast that the ever growing intensity of the regularly occurring capitalist crises would eventually compel the capitalist state to take increasing control of pro-

duction and finance.

Engels wrote, "But the transformation into state-ownership does not do away with the capitalistic nature of the productive forces. The modern state, no matter what its form, is essentially a capitalist machine—the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is, rather, brought to a head."

What is the alternative?

The capitalist mode of production is inherently crisis prone. Because of the anarchy of production under capitalism, where each capitalist is compelled by competition with others to continually expand production irrespective of the limits of the markets, crises of overproduction are inevitable. As the capitalist mode of production continues to spread to nearly every corner of the globe, the tendency is for each crisis of overproduction to become more universal and therefore worse than the preceding one.

Crises of overproduction stand as clear indictments of the capitalists' inability to control modern-day productive forces. Increasing state control of these productive forces further confirms how truly superfluous is the capitalist class.

The capitalist class in the U.S. would

like workers to believe that by nationalizing the banks, the current crisis can be brought under control. They assert that "better regulations" can ensure that a crisis like this does not occur again.

But as Engels wrote, "State-ownership of the productive forces is not the solution of the conflict. ... This solution can only consist in the practical recognition of the social nature of the modern forces of production, and therefore in the harmonizing with the socialized character of the means of production. And this can only come about by society openly and directly taking possession of the productive forces. ... By this act, the proletariat frees the means of production from the character of capital they have thus far borne. ... Socialized production upon a predetermined plan becomes henceforth possible. ... In proportion as anarchy in social production vanishes, the political authority of the State dies out. ... When, at last, it becomes the real representative of the whole of society, the State renders itself unnecessary. As soon as class rule, and the individual struggle for existence based upon our present anarchy in production, with the collisions and excesses arising from these, are removed, nothing more remains to be repressed, and a special repressive force, a State, is no longer necessary."

To accomplish this tall task is the historic mission of the proletariat. With the growth of working-class consciousness, unity and solidarity, this mission becomes more feasible by the day. □

Deadly Buffalo crash

Airline industry puts profits before safety

By Bev Hiestand and Ellie Dorritie
Buffalo, N.Y.

The crash of a turboprop commuter plane near Buffalo, N.Y., on Feb. 12 killed all 49 people on board and one on the ground. The plane, operated by Pinnacle Airlines for Continental Airlines, went down while approaching the Buffalo airport in icy conditions. All sources immediately suggested that icing played a role in the crash.

The Buffalo newspaper reported that two airlines, American Eagle and Comair, had stopped flying turboprop planes in icy conditions, partly out of safety concerns, after deadly crashes similar to the one near Buffalo. For most airlines, however, turboprops mean fuel efficiency savings for short flights, and they continue using them.

Information about this type of aircraft's history of mechanical problems began to appear in the news media, and there were suggestions that a deadly combination of problems might have doomed the plane.

The National Transportation Safety Board has been calling for the Federal Aviation Administration to use current research to evaluate the effects of freezing rain on all the systems of existing turboprop planes. The NTSB has been pressing for changes in the certification of these planes for more than 12 years.

For much of that time, the Buffalo News reports, the FAA did not address those urgent issues, but simply left the recommendations in the hands of its advisory committee composed mainly of airline industry representatives.

Even when the airline companies began producing experts who speculated that "pilot error" might have been a factor in the recent crash, their claims were buried under revelations that the NTSB had issued recommendations for pilot procedures in icing conditions that were sharply different from current FAA regulations.

While the NTSB investigation will likely take at least a year to determine whether icing from freezing rain had anything to do with this crash, aviation experts say the safety board has been pushing for years, with no results, for new rules for flying in such conditions.

The former head of the NTSB, Jim Hall, stated in a Feb. 17 op-ed article in the Buffalo News: "More tragic, this crash was foreseeable and likely preventable, if not for the preference of profit over safety in some of the aviation industry and for the lax oversight of the [FAA] in its failure to adequately

address known safety risks related to icing.

"[A]n airworthiness directive published by the FAA in 1996 notes that the earlier, 40-seat model of [this] aircraft had an unsafe condition which could result in loss of control of the aircraft when flaps were extended during icing conditions—as they were in [this] crash—and further that the autopilot should not be engaged in 'severe icing conditions,' a vaguely defined term.

"But because the FAA basically ignored the NTSB's recommendation to adequately test aircraft in these conditions before declaring them airworthy, the certification of this new version of the DHC-8 went along without a hitch. The most substantial change to the new model was not related to safety: the aircraft was stretched to allow 78 passengers to be carried by the aircraft. In short, even in light of the [American Eagle and Comair] accidents, safety was compromised so that these aircraft would be

allowed to fly more people at cheaper cost.

"In this instance, the FAA and the airline industry clearly placed a higher value on profit than on their passengers' safety."

According to the FAA, the first thing it does when considering the safety recommendations of the NTSB is to do an economic evaluation of the proposed changes. Often that's also the only task undertaken, as modifications that would prove too expensive for the industry are shelved for lengthy study.

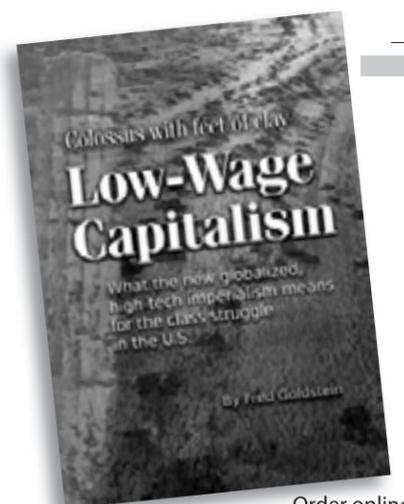
"Cozy" is the word used to describe the FAA's relationship with the airline industry, as stated in testimony by FAA inspectors before a House committee early in 2008. Several inspectors admitted that violations they reported were often suppressed.

The FAA, like other regulatory agencies, demonstrates that its first duty is to protect the profits of the industry it's supposed to regulate. □

Low-Wage Capitalism

A 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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With forces of capitalist recovery exhausted

Data on economic crisis show only one solution

By Fred Goldstein

It is becoming clearer every day that the capitalist class has no solution to the present crisis, either short term or long term. The short-term stimulus will not work and the long-term forces that have in the past pushed capitalism forward are exhausted.

It is clear from this that the multinational working class, through independent mass action, is the only force that can intervene to stop the layoffs, foreclosures and evictions and that the workers must do so in order to save themselves from being driven deeper into poverty.

Right now the mood of the capitalist class and its advisers and commentators has gone from panic and shock to gloom and despair.

Just as in the Great Depression, the financial system—the heart of capitalism, which pumps money through its arteries—has seized up in bankruptcy. When it is working normally, this heart pumps money into the system of industry, services and commerce to finance the exploitation of the workers and the sale of the products of their labor. From this exploitation profits flow back in the form of money into the treasuries of finance capital, and from there the money recirculates in order to finance more exploitation and bring in more profits.

The crisis of overproduction has slowed the normal circulation of profits back to the financial heart, leaving the system in desperate need of sustenance to keep functioning. To make matters worse, not only has this normal flow of the profits from exploitation back into the coffers of the banks dwindled, but their arteries are clogged with undetermined trillions of dollars of bad debts acquired in wildly excessive lending and secured by fictitious paper assets—fictitious because they have no underlying real value.

The financial authorities have tried with all their might to get this heart running again through bailouts—injections of money, loan guarantees, forced mergers—but the vital organ of banking still shows only a faint sign of life.

Why 'nationalization' is on the table

Both major schools of capitalist economic practitioners and advisers, including liberal neo-Keynesians like Paul Krugman and reactionary, supply-side Milton Friedmanites like Alan Greenspan, are now converging, under the pressure of the crisis, toward concluding that there is a need to "nationalize" the biggest banks, which everyone knows are insolvent.

Nationalization, in the version being proposed, amounts to the seizure of the banks by the government, the nationalization of their bad debts, and then the return of the debt-free banks back to the hands of the parasitic financial swindlers.

But even if this could be agreed upon and carried out, the ruling class fears, correctly, that lending during a capitalist depression is like "pushing on a string." Lending to companies that have no markets for their products brings no profit. Lending to workers who have lost their jobs or are surviving on low pay brings no profit. Lending to students who won't have a job when they graduate will bring no profit. So the "nationalization" of the banks is an attempt to treat a financial symptom when the disease itself is overproduction as a result of the system of production for profit.

It is beginning to dawn on the bankers, brokers and bosses that they are staring into the void of an economic crisis in which, more and more each day, the protracted forces of economic downturn seem to completely overwhelm the prospects for recovery. Each economic stimulus or bailout measure announced by the Obama administration seems to be immediately dwarfed by announcements on the growing magnitude of the crisis.

Can't find an engine for recovery

Pessimism is mounting because none of the experts can discern an engine for a recovery, even three or four years in the future. By April, this will be the longest continuous downturn since the Great Depression, surpassing the recessions of 1973 to 1975 and 1980 to 1982, and there is no real end in sight.

Those who predict that growth will return at a given time—say the end of 2010 or the end of 2011—are whistling in the dark and they know it. They have had to change their predictions downward over and over again since the crisis started in December 2007. They cannot see into the next quarter, let alone two years hence.

This is because the system of private property is anarchic and unplanned, based on corporate secrecy and the unbridled rivalry for profits.

The ruling class, government officials and bourgeois economic "experts" have endured so many sudden catastrophic drops in the stock market, so many mortgage company failures, so many reports of the biggest banks asking for and getting untold sums of money, so many profit declines, so many grave unemployment reports, so many foreclosure reports, etc., that they seem to alternate between panic over what's happening at the moment and a state of long-term gloom and despair over the future.

Take this article in the Washington Post datelined Feb. 18:

"Markets around the world plunged Tuesday as evidence mounted that the global economic crisis is worsening.

"Japan is suffering its worst downturn in 35 years. The British economy is facing its sharpest decline in almost 30 years. Germany is slumping at its worst pace in nearly 20 years. Meanwhile the job market in the United States, at the epicenter of the global downturn, is the worst in decades. And emerging economies are contracting at a pace few had predicted just months ago. ...

The bankers, brokers and bosses are beginning to realize that they are staring into the void of a crisis in which the protracted forces of economic downturn completely overwhelm the prospects for recovery. Each economic stimulus or bailout measure announced by the government seems to be immediately dwarfed by the growing magnitude of the crisis.

"The sharpness of the global slowdown has alarmed economists, who see no obvious engine for recovery." Absolutely nothing to drive a recovery!

Paul Krugman's column published Feb. 19 in the New York Times was tellingly entitled "Who'll Stop the Pain?" Referring to the minutes of a recent meeting of the Federal Reserve Board, he wrote that his eye was caught "by the following chilling passage. ... 'All participants anticipated that unemployment would remain substantially above its longer-run sustainable rate at the end of 2011, even absent further economic shocks; a few indicated that more than five to six years would be needed for the economy to converge to a longer-run path characterized by sustainable rates of output growth and unemployment.'"

Krugman is a Nobel Prize winner in economics and a neo-Keynesian advocate of even greater government stimulus spending and nationalization of the banks. He said he has been obsessing lately over "What's supposed to end this slump? No doubt this too will pass—but how, when?"

To find a model that he hoped would eventually work to get U.S. capitalism out of the crisis, Krugman had to go back to the recovery from the crash of 1873. That was in the era of competitive capitalism, before the dominance of monopoly and finance capital.

Another comment in the Federal Reserve minutes that bears noting is that once the economy starts expanding again, it will be an "unusually gradual and prolonged" recovery.

This gloom is based upon the mounting figures surrounding the crisis. The International Labor Organization based in Geneva said that if unemployment continues at its present rate of growth, 18 million to 30 million workers worldwide could lose their jobs in 2009. But if the situation deteriorates, the number could rise to 50 million. The IMF has predicted that world output will fall in 2009 for the first time since World War II.

The ruling class concern over the economic crisis has nothing to do with sympathy for the workers and oppressed who suffer the pain. A protracted depression means a decline in production, which means a decline in profits, a rise in unemployment and the prospect of eventual working-class rebellion. This is the double nightmare that haunts them about the future.

Comparisons to Great Depression

Many comparisons are made with the Great Depression. The pundits console themselves with the drastic number of 25 percent unemployed at the depths of the depression in 1933 and an average of 17 percent for the decade. Compared to those

numbers, they say, we are a long way from the Great Depression.

But a numerical comparison cannot be made at this point. The major financial authorities, including the Federal Reserve Board, the IMF and, recently, the attendees at the elite World Economic Forum in Davos, are coming to agree that this is still the early stage of the crisis.

Another comparison can be made that comes closer to the essence of the present crisis and the prospects for recovery.

The Great Depression came three decades after U.S. capitalism had first entered a period of crisis, inaugurated by the depression of 1893 to 1897. Long-term growth factors consisting of the building of the railroads, the brutal removal of the Native people in order to expropriate the land, the annexation of half of Mexico and the conquest of the so-called "frontier," among other things, had exhausted themselves. Capitalism was unable to regenerate through the normal cycle of boom-bust-recovery. It took the rise of U.S. imperialism, signified by the Spanish-American War, to rescue the system.

The war brought a surge in the export of capital and in imperialist superprofits extracted from the superexploited people in the colonies: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Central and Latin America, the Philippines, Guam, Samoa, Hawaii, China and elsewhere. Imperialist expansion was the underlying factor that gave U.S. capitalism restored profitability and the material basis for recovery. This is what allowed a new surge in the development of technology and the productive forces.

The development of the assembly line, standardization and interchangeability of parts, and further electrification of the country gave rise to mass production industries. Automobiles, radios, refrigerators and other appliances were produced in the U.S. alongside a growing export of capital.

World War I and U.S. loans to Europe after the war brought in profits. A postwar slowdown was overcome by the brief but wild prosperity of 1923 to 1929, fostered by credit and speculation in land and stocks. But the long-term factors of development were exhausted when the worldwide crisis of overproduction finally brought the system down in 1929. The ruling class was never able to mount a sustainable capitalist recovery.

The bourgeoisie now senses, although they cannot precisely articulate it, that the present crisis resembles the Great Depression not just in the growing unemployment, the financial crisis of the banks and the bursting of the speculative bubbles, but in the fact that both crises came as all the driving forces of capitalist recovery had exhausted themselves. Therein lies the fundamental similarity.

Next: *The Great Depression and World War II.*

"We need to get this book into the hands of every worker. It clearly explains the capitalist economic threat to our jobs, our pensions and our homes. But, even more importantly, it shows us how we can fight back and win!"

— David Sole,
President UAW Local 2334,
Detroit, Michigan

Campus struggles heat up as

Students occupy New York University

By Larry Hales
New York

On Feb. 18, New York University students, along with students from other colleges and universities throughout the metropolitan area, began occupying the cafeteria in the Kimmel Center on NYU's campus.

The occupation had been planned over a number of months and followed the occupation of the New School University last fall and one at the University of Rochester this winter. Students from both these universities extended solidarity to the occupiers inside the Kimmel Center.

The NYU students issued twelve demands to be negotiated before ending the occupation, including a freeze on tuition hikes. NYU is one of the most expensive private universities in the country. A 6 percent tuition increase is slated, which will push tuition plus room and board to over \$50,000 a year. Over the past 10 years tuition at NYU has increased 65 percent.

Another demand calls for full endowment disclosure and disclosure of the NYU budget and investments. NYU had a \$2.5 billion dollar endowment last year. According to the National Association of College and University Business Officers, NYU's endowment places it 31st out of 785 institutions that were part of the survey.

NYU is one of the largest real estate holders in the city, owning 9.3 million square feet of space and over 60 buildings. The school has taken over Greenwich Village and has been primarily responsible for driving up rents in the area.

The student occupation movement has taken on new momentum in the wake of atrocities committed by the Zionist Israeli settler state against the Palestinian people in Gaza. NYU is very secretive about its investments, but it has long been thought that the university invests in companies that do business in Israel.

The students are demanding that scholarships be given to 13 Palestinian students and that NYU contribute excess supplies as aid to the people of Gaza.

The students are also demanding an investigation into war profiteers and lifting of the Coca-Cola ban that students won years ago; compensation to all workers affected by the occupation; a fair contract for all NYU workers; student representation on the Board of Trustees; making the Bobst Library open to the public; and collective bargaining for student workers, including teacher's assistants.

Graduate student workers who won unionization in 2000 as the Graduate Student Organizing Committee, United Auto Workers Local 2110 still have yet to win a second contract with NYU. They

struck for six months in 2005 following the NYU administration's attempts at union busting and its decision not to negotiate with the GSOC.

NYU deceives while cops attack

The occupation officially began around 9:30 p.m. on Feb. 18 as what was announced as a dance quickly became an occupation. Over 50 students and supporters were inside the cafeteria when the occupation began.

The students barricaded the doors with tables, trash bins and chairs after cafeteria workers shut the gates. Security had amassed before the occupation began, but once the barricades were set they seemed confused about what to do.

Soon the New York Police Department arrived but remained on the outside. After awhile the cops placed barricades in front of the entrances, essentially closing off the building. A rally of more than 100 people chanted in support of the students.

The number of occupiers fluctuated throughout the next day. The administration gave no word of negotiations. Students rallied in support and counter-protesters jeered the brave occupiers.

Although an NYU representative had denied the students use of the balcony, along with other demands, the occupiers were able to gain access to it so they

staged a rally and led chants from there.

The number of supporters swelled to well over 500 late in the evening as expectations grew that NYU security and cops would attempt to expel the students from the building. The students remained, most of them chanting from the balcony, as dozens of NYPD cops set up barricades and scuffled with protesters, pepper-spraying into the crowd several times and using batons on a few. One student was arrested.

On Feb. 20, close to the 40th hour of occupation, the students were told that Lynne Brown, vice president of student affairs, would negotiate with them. Five students were lured over the barricades and into a room where they were told there would be no negotiations and they were suspended.

Four of the remaining students in the cafeteria barricaded themselves on the balcony as security guards dragged the rest from the dining area. The students on the balcony were eventually dragged out as well.

Since the occupation ended, the students living in dorms have been notified that they will be evicted and that 18 students in total are suspended pending investigation.

A fight is still looming as the students struggle to be reinstated, to stay in their dorms and to force NYU to heed their progressive and righteous demands. □

Teachers, parents & students fight to stop school closings

By Judy Greenspan
Richmond, Calif.

While some parents got some good news on Feb. 11, most of the over 800 parents and children who attended the school closure meeting of the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) did not. The school board voted to close four schools this year and four schools next year. Parents, teachers and students are outraged.

A protest to stop school closings organized by the United Teachers of Richmond (a local union of the California Teachers Association) ended with more than 800 community members marching into the Richmond Civic Auditorium chanting, "Save our schools!"

An hour-long public comment period brought up speaker after speaker who



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

demanding that no schools be closed. Otheree Christian, president of the Iron Triangle Neighborhood Council, summed up the sentiment in the room when he said, "We don't want any of our schools to close." Christian urged the audience to "make some noise if you want a better

future for our kids!"

Jovanka Beckles, a concerned resident of Richmond, challenged the school board when she said, "You cannot balance the budget on the backs of our children."

Many of the speakers called on the school board to join the struggle to bail out the schools. One speaker, Lisa Salinas, called upon the board to tell Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, "We won't take it anymore."

Christy Thomas from the UTR asked, "If you close our neighborhood schools, where will the children go? You say that teachers won't lose their jobs, but we know they will."

A promise of funding from the city of Richmond took several Richmond schools off the chopping block about a week before the school board meeting. The city is contributing \$3 million over two years to keep three other schools open. Shannon

Elementary School in Pinole was removed from next year's closure list after the mayor of that city promised to come up with some funding.

However, the reprieve is only for two years. Dr. Bruce Harter, WCCUSD superintendent, is pessimistic about schools like Kennedy High School remaining open past the 2009-2010 school year. Kennedy has a well-deserved reputation of sending more African-American students to four-year universities than any other high school in the Bay Area.

The Feb. 11 school closure meeting was the culmination of over two months of public hearings, school board meetings and community gatherings. The United Teachers of Richmond, concerned parents, students and community activists let the board know that they will continue to fight the school closings.

This writer is a teacher in the West Contra Costa Unified School District.

Detroit activists stall eviction of Anthony King

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions has launched a struggle to keep Anthony King in his home.

King, age 42, has lived in his Detroit home for 41 years. Now he faces imminent eviction after his home was foreclosed by Wells Fargo Bank and sold at a sheriff's sale to U.S. Bancorp. Both banks have received billions of dollars in the taxpayer-funded federal bailout of financial institutions.

On Feb. 16, after receiving a ride home from a coalition meeting, King discovered a dumpster in front of his house. "I knew they were coming the next day, that I was on the edge of being thrown out," King told Workers World.

On Feb. 17, coalition members along

with activists from the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, Call 'Em Out and the Detroit Green Party gathered at King's home to prevent the bailiff from carrying out the eviction. When the bailiff's team arrived in the early afternoon, the dumpster was in front of an empty lot several hundred feet from King's home. Apparently it had not been secured properly and rolled down the street.

While activists challenged the right of the bailiff to evict King, word came in by cell phone that the writ of restitution (court order to evict) was improperly obtained. The bailiff was forced to back off and King's eviction was temporarily stopped.

A coalition leaflet stated: "In Wayne County, Sheriff Warren Evans recently ordered a halt to the sheriff's sales of foreclosed homes. Evans cited a federal law, known as TARP, which states that fore-

closures must be minimized and families maintained in their homes. He stated, however, that

his office does not have the resources to determine if the banks have followed this federal law. Another law, known as HERA, states that loan modifications should consider the value of the home in foreclosure

when determining the modified loan principal. We know that the banks are not following this law."

A rally on Feb. 18 in front of King's home brought out dozens of people who want

News conference and rally in front of Anthony King's home, Feb. 18.

WW PHOTOS: ALAN POLLOCK





By Jeanette Merrill
and Rosemary Neidenberg

Mae Mallory was a leading figure in the movement for Black liberation in the 1960s and militant advocate of the right of Black people to armed self-defense.

Of all her life's battles before her death in 2007, the hardest one established Mallory's political role. It began with her support and fundraising for Rob Williams, a leading advocate of armed self-defense for Black people in the fight against violent racism.

Williams had come home to Klan-infested Monroe from the U.S. Marines. He recruited Black WW II veterans into a working-class chapter of the NAACP. They fought to desegregate the local swimming pool, carrying arms to defend themselves from racists, and withdrew only when the city closed the pool.

Faced with increasing threats and deadly violence, Williams and his self-defense guards protected the resisting Black community. In the newsletter named "The Crusader," which Williams printed on a mimeograph machine, Williams called on all Black communities to do the same.

When 17 Freedom Riders came to Monroe to support Williams, a dramatic debate developed between the ideologies of passive resistance—which the Freedom Riders supported—and Williams' armed self-defense position. Williams warned the brave young idealists to expect racist attack.

In "Negroes with Guns," a pamphlet published originally by Workers World Party, Williams described the Monroe racists' brutal beatings and shooting attacks on the nonviolent Freedom Riders. With armed racists facing armed Black freedom fighters, in August 1961, Williams offered an elderly white couple driving through the tense neighborhood shelter in his home, where he, Mabel Williams and Mae Mallory were preparing food for the Freedom Riders.

The couple left after two hours, but later testified that they had been held against their will. The state brought indictments of kidnapping against Mallory and Williams and charges of complicity against three others.

Facing racist injustice and a possible lynching, Rob Williams and Mabel Williams escaped to young socialist Cuba.

Mae Mallory went to Cleveland, where from October 1961 to January 1964 she fought extradition to North Carolina and was out on bail only a few months when WWP members Frances Dostal and Ted

MAE MALLORY

Unforgettable freedom fighter promoted self-defense



Dostal used their house for collateral. When appeals ran out, Mallory was extradited to Monroe.

The Monroe Defense Committee

Meanwhile, Mallory's 1961 call from jail to WWP resulted in the establishing of Monroe Defense Committee offices in Harlem and Cleveland. MDC Chairperson Clarence Seniors, Vera Spruill, Ruth Stone, Audrey Proctor Seniors, Frances Dostal and others kept the office open. They organized demonstration after demonstration, large and small, always loud, always imaginative, and built national and worldwide support, winning backing from Bertrand Russell, James Baldwin, James Forman, Julian Mayfield, Dick Gregory, Ruby Dee and Ossie Davis, among others.

Mae Mallory's prison writings bristle with rebellion and condemnations of the racist system and the top-of-the-heap racists. Even from prison, her unquenchable spirit and voice lifted those campaigning for her own freedom and that of the other defendants.

A Monroe Defense Committee undated leaflet commented on the hard-fought

campaign to keep Mallory out of Monroe, where her life was at risk: "On many occasions she was offered all kinds of deals if she would renounce her militant approach and disassociate herself from Rob Williams. ... She and the other collaborators with Williams refused. ... It was Mrs. Mallory's passionate advocacy of these ideas in her writings, letters and speeches over two-and-a-half years which made [the extradition] inevitable."

On trial in Monroe

A racist, segregated white jury found Mallory guilty in February 1964 and sentenced her to 16-20 years, with lesser charges for three other defendants. The MDC raised \$10,000 cash bail by March and Mallory was back in action in New York, where she supported a subway stall-in to protest racism at the 1964 World's Fair and, with other U.S. activists, met with Che Guevara, who was representing Cuba at the United Nations.

On Jan. 29, 1965, the Supreme Court of North Carolina threw out the Monroe court's verdict based on the segregated jury list.

After this victory, she was to address thousands of people in many cities and at many colleges, always advocating for armed defense as practiced by Rob Williams and the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense.

On Feb. 21, 1965, Mallory witnessed the assassination of Malcolm X from a front row in the Audubon Ballroom. Later, speaking in Buffalo, N.Y., she said, "A Black hand pulled the trigger but it had a white CIA brain behind it."

Her view was international. In April 1965, she played a key role in a protest in Times Square in New York of the U.S. military intervention in the Dominican Republic. On Aug. 8, 1966, speaking before tens of thousands at an anti-Vietnam War rally, Mallory said, "We are inspired by and salute the great People's Republic of China."

Mallory always had a great love for and interest in Africa. When she told a comrade that she was going to Tanzania—where she remained for five years in the 1970s—she said, "I'm going home."

Read full report at www.workers.org.

State of the Dream reports reveals

The racial & economic crisis

By Dolores Cox

Barack Obama is the first African-American president in the U.S. However, the more things change, the more they remain the same, for there is another dimension of Black history we need to be aware of.

Since the 17th century, African Americans have been at the bottom of the economic ladder. In the U.S., race has always been a strong determinant of one's social and economic status. The longstanding legacy of racial segregation and discrimination has resulted in disparities in employment, income, medical care, housing and education for Blacks to this day.

The persistence and tenacity of white supremacist ideology permeating U.S. culture prevents economic justice and equality for Black people. It stifles any public discourse on the matter as well as implementation of solutions.

Additionally, throughout the African Diaspora, U.S. imperialist policies have

contributed greatly to the problem of global poverty. Countries are made poor by the theft of their land and natural resources, most often by military might, by unfair, so-called free-market trade, debt repayment and unjust taxes on labor and consumption. These global injustices and human rights violations have both created and deepened poverty.

The State of the Dream 2009 report (the reference is to Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech at the historic 1963 march), released this past January by United for a Fair Economy titled "The Silent Depression," highlights the disproportionate suffering of Blacks in the U.S. (www.faireconomy.org)

The report reveals that due to enduring institutionalized racist policies, Blacks have been in an economic recession for nearly five years and have entered into a depression in terms of unemployment which equals or exceeds that of the Great Depression of 1929.

The report states that the unemployment rate for Blacks is nearly 12 percent and is expected to increase to almost 20 percent by 2010. The median or middle household income of Blacks is reported to be \$38,269, while that of whites is \$61,280. Blacks have poverty rates of 24 percent compared to 10 percent poverty rate for whites.

With regard to wealth and assets, the report states that nearly 30 percent of Black people have zero or negative worth versus 15 percent of white people. Only 18 percent of people of color have retirement accounts compared to 43.3 percent of their white counterparts. On average, people of color have only eight cents for every dollar of white wealth. The report says that living in poverty creates barriers to both economic and educational mobility. Blacks are twice as likely to live in poverty-stricken areas as are whites.

Because these statistics pertain to African Americans, they are not getting the attention they should get because of

the long-standing tradition of ignoring such matters. As such, there is no discussion of any bailout packages to rectify this unacceptable economic situation.

There are two quotes from Martin Luther King Jr. in this report. The first is: "The Constitution assured the right to vote, but there is no assurance of the right of adequate housing, or the right to an adequate income. And yet in a nation which has a gross national product of 750 million dollars a year, it is morally right to insist that every person has an adequate education and enough money to provide basic necessities for one's family." ("Non-Violence: the Road to Freedom," 1966)

The other is: "It is a trite yet urgently true observation that if America is to remain a first-class nation, it cannot have second-class citizens." ("The Rising Tide of Racial Consciousness," 1960)

In terms of solutions, the report states that any economic stimulus program must be geared toward investing in the working class and the poor. It must provide for job creation, affordable housing, quality education, affordable health care and an end to the wars in the Middle East. Government policies, at all levels, need to be fairer; and tax shelters and deductions for the rich must end. Specifically, an economic burden should not be borne by the working class, people of color or the poor.

The consequences of systemic racism must be combated by a commitment to institute and sustain affirmative action programs and policies that repair these injustices. Such social reforms will lead to economic reform and the closing of economic racial gaps, says the report.

It's time to end the crisis of silence about the true state of Dr. King's dream. In his 1967 speech, "Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break the Silence," he said, "A true revolution of values will soon look uneasily on the glaring contrast of poverty and wealth." Capitalist greed is now revealing itself in a big way. It's time for this revolution to take place. □



secondhand retail store but needs a full time job.

"I'm doing the best I can to keep this struggle alive and to pay my utility bills," said King. "I see all the stripped and vacant homes and it brings tears to my eyes that so many people are being foreclosed and losing their homes."

The bailiff is expected to return soon to King's home to enforce the eviction. Activists are on high alert and plan to be there in order to stop the eviction by direct resistance.

To get involved in the struggle to save King's home and to stop all foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs, call the Moratorium NOW! Coalition at 313-887-4344 or e-mail moratorium@moratorium-mi.org. □

to stop this illegal eviction. Among them were people from King's neighborhood. "I really appreciate the strong support from my neighbors," said King.

Like so many Detroiters, King has recently gone through periods of unemployment and underemployment. He works part time for minimum wage at a



Despite Clinton, Korea has rights

It is impossible to find objective reporting about the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in the U.S. corporate media. When Secretary of State Hillary Clinton went to Japan and China recently for her first official visit to Asia, she did what no diplomat is ever supposed to do: launched into a wildly speculative and personal attack on DPRK leader Kim Jong Il. Instead of chastising her for poisoning the atmosphere and precluding the "openness" in foreign relations promised by the new administration, the media gleefully egged her on.

Next came a media frenzy over the DPRK's plans to launch a communications satellite. The U.S., which constantly rattles its huge arsenal of nuclear and conventional weapons at this besieged small socialist country, has the gall to label the Koreans' scientific and technological achievements as "the greatest threat to peace in Asia."

Of course, it is the imperialist U.S., not north Korea, that has been waging wars and killing millions all over Asia since it first grabbed the Philippines in 1898. And while freaking out over the DPRK having missiles on its own soil, it is the Pentagon that is pushing hard to expand its missiles to Eastern Europe, against the will of the peoples there.

The DPRK has the right to develop its own technologies, just like the rest of the world. It will not bow down to the dictates of the imperialists, who want to deny development and the right to defend itself to any country they can't control.

Since there's little chance our readers will find anywhere else in the U.S. press the Koreans' view of this issue, we reprint here in its entirety the Feb. 24 state-

ment of the Korean Committee of Space Technology:

"Outer space is an asset common to mankind and its use for peaceful purposes has become a global trend.

"The DPRK has steadily pushed ahead with researches and development for putting satellites into orbit by its own efforts and technology since the 1980s, pursuant to its government's policy for the development of space and its peaceful use.

"In this course, scientists and technicians of the DPRK registered such great success as putting its first experimental satellite Kwangmyongsong-1 into orbit at one try in August 1998.

"Over the past decade since then a dynamic struggle has been waged to put the nation's space science and technology on a higher level, bringing about signal progress in the field of satellite launch.

"The DPRK envisages launching practical satellites for communications, prospecting of natural resources and weather forecast, etc. essential for the economic development of the country in a few years to come and putting their operation on a normal footing at the first phase of the state long-term plan for space development.

"The preparations for launching experimental communications satellite Kwangmyongsong-2 by means of delivery rocket Unha-2 are now making brisk headway at Tonghae Satellite Launching Ground in Hwadae County, North Hamgyong Province.

"When this satellite launch proves successful, the nation's space science and technology will make another giant stride forward in building an economic power." □

U.S., NATO out of Afghanistan!

Sending 17,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan to reinforce that country's occupation will just add another chapter to the nightmare caused by 30 years of U.S. imperialist intervention in that country.

Let's quickly review those 30 years, as the U.S. intervention appears to be escalating once more. It was under the Jimmy Carter administration in 1979—before the Afghans invited the USSR in—that the U.S. began to destabilize a progressive Afghan government. During Ronald Reagan's 1980s the CIA poured billions of dollars worth of weapons into supporting reactionary groupings that fought that progressive regime and its Soviet allies.

After more than a decade of slaughter, U.S.-backed counterrevolutionaries smashed the progressive government. Following a few years of instability, the Taliban came into power in 1996, backed by the then-military regime in Pakistan, with the blessing of Bill Clinton's Washington.

Unbelievable? Under their reactionary rule, the Taliban managed to curtail opium production. It was only after they held off from signing a deal to transport oil from the Caspian Sea through a U.S.-controlled pipeline to Pakistan that the Taliban fell from favor in Washington.

By 2001, the Bush administration seized on the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks to justify ordering a U.S. invasion intent on overthrowing the Taliban, occupying Afghanistan and projecting Pentagon power throughout Central Asia. Of course, the ruling Taliban had nothing to do with the attacks in the U.S. The Bush-Cheney gang considered the occupation a quick and easy victory and immediately began plotting the fraudulent and

criminal U.S.-British invasion of Iraq.

Seven years later, the Afghan resistance that seemed nonexistent in 2002 and 2003 has now grown and flourished. Apparently this is under Taliban leadership, but with the participation of many other Afghan groups that want a country where foreigners don't boss them around, jail and torture them and murder civilians from the skies. Yes, the NATO command always claims they are killing "insurgents," but when anyone takes a closer look, 85 percent of those killed are civilians.

To add to the horrors and risk of a new catastrophe in the region, the Pentagon has sent 70 "advisers" into Pakistan to train Pakistani troops as U.S. drone planes fire rockets, killing Pakistani civilians.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan's puppet President Hamid Karzai, who has begun complaining publicly that NATO forces are killing too many Afghan civilians, has so little popular support that he is jokingly called the "mayor of Kabul." But Kabul too is under attack. And after seven years of U.S. occupation, opium is once again Afghanistan's major export crop.

The main problem, though, is not that Washington's occupation of Afghanistan has failed. The problem is in even thinking—no matter which capitalist party is in office in Washington—that U.S. imperialist occupation can improve life for the Afghan people or make the U.S. population safer. Not only should the U.S. refrain from sending 17,000 new troops, not only should it halt the attacks on neighboring Pakistan, it should withdraw the troops who are already in both countries.

No more attacks on Pakistani territory!
U.S., NATO out of Afghanistan and Pakistan! □

Economic crisis sinks Latvian regime

By G. Dunkel

With the Latvian economy in free fall and the population angry and in motion, the Latvian government, a four-party, center-right coalition, resigned Feb. 20.

In January, thousands of people surrounded government buildings for hours and fought with the cops. In early February, farmers blockaded the capital in protest over a sharp decline in their income. At that time, the agricultural minister resigned and the government managed to survive a no confidence vote.

But since then, the economy has worsened. Even an optimistic projection from the Central Bank has the Latvian economy contracting by 12 percent in 2009, with unemployment reaching double digits. The Latvian central statistics office has figures showing that nearly 10 percent of Latvia's "economically active population" are looking for jobs. (Baltic News Service).

A whole host of economic indica-

tors—including cargo loadings, railroad passengers, freight movement, gasoline sales and construction permits—show sharp declines. The new task of handling shipments for the U.S. troops in Afghanistan will only generate an income of \$15 million a year and support a few hundred jobs. (BNS)

Given the popular mood and the galloping economic decline, two of the parties in the coalition—the Peoples Party, the largest, and the Union of Greens and Farmers—pulled the plug and told the prime minister to resign.

This is the first government in the EU to fall because of the economic crisis. Iceland, whose government also fell a few months ago, is not an EU member.

While Latvia is the worst off, the other former "Baltic tigers"—Lithuania and Estonia—are also reeling.

The fallout from an economic collapse in the Baltic area is likely to affect other EU countries. Austrian banks have lent over \$300 billion, much of it to the Baltic states, and are sitting on nearly \$200 billion worth of losses at least. □

AFGHANISTAN

More U.S. troops means growing resistance

By G. Dunkel

The current U.S. administration is still reviewing what strategy to follow in Afghanistan, but its main thrust is moving toward expanding the war there.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates admitted on Feb. 20 in Krakow, Poland, that the best the U.S. could hope for from its NATO allies was a few hundred additional troops. This was after the U.S. had announced it was sending 17,000 additional troops, bringing the total to 55,000.

Gates asked for enough available force so that the U.S. can claim that the upcoming provincial and national elections in Afghanistan are secure and fair. Under occupation, however, no elections can be considered legal, let alone secure and fair.

While Gates was in Krakow, a few hundred protesters, mainly youth, gathered to denounce NATO as an "expansionist, not defensive" alliance, carrying signs reading "Stop war, Stop NATO." Major protests are scheduled for Strasbourg, France, in early April when NATO heads of state gather to celebrate the U.S.-dominated alliance's 60th anniversary.

The U.S. occupation of Afghanistan has expanded so definitively into Pakistan that some media like the Financial Times have renamed it the "AfPak conflict." Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi announced Feb. 22 that he is heading for a major conference called in Washington where he will discuss options for settling the AfPak conflict with Afghan Foreign Minister Rangeen Dadfar Spanta, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, special envoy Richard Holbrooke and other top U.S. officials. (Press Trust of India)

Even though Washington invited them to participate, India's government announced it would not attend this conference. (Xinhua, Feb. 21) The Indian government has pledged \$1.2 billion for reconstruction projects in Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee

recently expressed concern over the "peace deal" between the Pakistan government and the resistance movement in the portion of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas called the Swat in northwest Pakistan.

The details of the "peace deal," even the length of time it is supposed to last, are murky.

The big-business media and the officials who comment on the situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan are quick to call the resistance in those countries "terrorists," "Taliban" and "Islamic fundamentalists." Yet they are very slow to criticize the CIA drone attacks, such as the one Feb. 20 on one faction of the resistance.

The media presented the drone attack as showing increasing cooperation between the CIA and the Pakistani government, which supplied the intelligence the CIA acted on. But they failed to mention the civilian casualties and increased anger toward the government that these attacks sparked.

Because its supply lines through Pakistan are becoming untenable, the Pentagon is currently exploring supplying its troops in Afghanistan with supplies off-loaded in Latvia on the Baltic and then carried by train through Russia to northern Afghanistan.

This supply route may not be feasible. It is definitely much more costly. According to the Daily Times of Lahore (Pakistan), the U.S. military has asked for an additional \$83 billion for the next fiscal year for its wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. (Feb. 22)

In a time of growing financial crisis, adding \$83 billion will arouse more opposition inside the U.S. to the Afghan occupation. Even the Pentagon strategists won't promise a quick victory with an Afghan "surge." For the Afghan people, increased U.S. military spending and more troops in Afghanistan mean more vicious attacks, more suffering and, in the long run, even greater popular resistance. □

Continuing general strike

Guadeloupe and Martinique workers remain defiant

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

Guadeloupean trade unionist Jacques Bino was eulogized on Feb. 21 in Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, as a general strike continued in this French-controlled territory in the Caribbean. Bino was shot dead on Feb. 16 when French riot police opened fire on strikers who have been engaged in a struggle on the islands for more than a month.

French authorities have blamed Bino's death on strike supporters, who have defended themselves against the repressive actions of the riot police. The Collective against Exploitation (LKP) has denied the allegations of the French authorities and accused them of using state violence to break the strike.

In the aftermath of Bino's murder, rebellions erupted in several parts of the country, where workers and youth set fire to French-owned businesses, automobiles and government offices. Workers set up barricades to control the flow of traffic and monitor the activities of French riot police, who were deployed to Guadeloupe in an attempt to break the strike.

French authorities resumed negotiations on Feb. 19 with the LKP, a united front of 47 unions and political associations that have effectively shut down the islands since late January. However, the LKP demands were not met and negotiations were suspended on Feb. 20 for the weekend. Talks resumed on Feb. 23.

LKP leader Elie Domota has described the negotiating posture of the business owners, who are largely descendants of the French colonial elite that has controlled Guadeloupe since the days of slavery, as insufficient. The workers are demanding a 200 euros monthly pay increase. However, the employers are only offering 50 to 70 euros.

A large crowd of strike supporters stood in the square at the Pointe-à-Pitre port authority where negotiations were taking place on Feb. 20. The general mood was defiant, as workers chanted slogans in support of the strike and against the continuing colonial rule of France.

In an interview with Radio France International on Feb. 21, Domota exemplified the mood of the workers: "Concerning the strike movement, it continues, obviously,

We are still on strike." (RFI, Feb. 21)

Robert Fabert, former deputy secretary general of the General Federation of Trade Unions, wrote in a statement, "Discussions are moving very slowly because the proposals put forward by the French government appear to be more like assistance to the poorest families rather than an across-the-board wage increase."

French response to the crisis

In response to the general strike in Guadeloupe and Martinique, in addition to a work stoppage in France in January, the Conservative government of Nicolas Sarkozy has adopted a series of measures supposedly aimed at lessening the impact of growing unemployment resulting from the global financial meltdown.

Finance Minister Christine Lagarde reported in early February that the country's gross domestic product decreased by 1.2 percent in the final quarter of 2008.

President Sarkozy on Feb. 18 announced a package which included tax breaks and social service benefits valued at 2.65 billion euros (\$3.3 billion). This effort will provide aid directly to laid-off workers as well as retraining for idle employees. Just last year, the Conservative government set aside 50 million euros (\$64 million) to assist businesses.

Sarkozy on Feb. 21 declared that the worst of the social unrest in Guadeloupe and Martinique was over. "Negotiations are under way. I hope they will be completed and that everyone understands that demands are not satisfied through violence but rather through calm, dialogue and serenity," the president told the French Press Agency (AFP).

Nonetheless, LKP leaders have strongly disagreed with the assessment and proposals offered by the French government. "At the moment, the proposals seem particularly vague to us," Domota said after meeting with the island's prefect, Nicolas Desforges, and two French government envoys dispatched to negotiate a settlement. (AFP, Feb. 20)

The strikes in Guadeloupe and Martinique are not just about economic demands centered on wage increases and opportunities in education and employment. The continuing social legacy of slavery in the French-controlled Caribbean lies at the root of the unrest.



Demonstration Feb. 16, where a confrontation between French riot police and strikers occurred. Seventy were arrested, and one striker was badly injured. All were released a few hours later by the mass pressure of thousands of people who assembled in front of the Pointe-à-Pitre police station.

The fact that these territories still remain departments of France in the 21st century is a source of resentment and growing militancy among the majority of the African populations, which number approximately 400,000 in both Guadeloupe and Martinique.

"They've got the money, they've got the power, they've got Guadeloupe," said protester Lollia Nailly. "This is not a race thing. It is a money thing and it is a power thing." (Medicine Hat News, Feb. 22)

The French elites known as "bekes" control most of the businesses in both territories and work in close collaboration with the colonial state based in Paris. In Martinique, where a general strike has continued since early February, the demonstrators have chanted, "Martinique is ours, not theirs!"

There are pronounced economic and social differences between France and the islands. In Guadeloupe, unemployment is officially reported at 23 percent, in comparison to 8 percent in mainland France. Twelve percent of the population in Guadeloupe is classified as poor, whereas only 6 percent is designated poor in France.

In Martinique, workers and employers have agreed to lower prices on 100 commodities by 20 percent. Nonetheless, strike leaders are still demanding that the price of housing, gasoline, water and electricity also be reduced.

Serge Romana, president of the association that organizes commemorations of the 19th-century abolition of slavery, said that French President Sarkozy "must

absolutely abolish all traces of neocolonialism and vestiges of slavery in the overseas regions." (Medicine Hat News, Feb. 22)

Martinican intellectual and artist Victor Permal called the French proposals "general and blurry." He condemned the French decision to send 450 riot police to suppress the strike. "The people are starting to gain a clear notion of what belongs to them. So they become conscious that it is not France who should define their path and needs," he stated. (Medicine Hat News, Feb. 22)

Meanwhile in France, there have been increasing mass actions of solidarity with the workers in Guadeloupe and Martinique. On Feb. 20, French leftist politician Olivier Besancenot attended the rally outside the port authority in Pointe-à-Pitre. He expressed support for the LKP in their negotiations with the employers and the French Conservative government.

On Feb. 19, 30,000 people demonstrated in Paris to show their solidarity. Well-known personalities, including socialist politician Harlem Desir and Guadeloupe actress Firmine Richard, were present.

"The government has to bring clear solutions to the table when negotiations begin again," Desir told AFP. The protesters in Paris alternated between chants in the creole language, raising their fists and shouting, "Down with colonization!" "200 euros, yes we can!" and "Life is dear under those coconut trees!"

Demonstrations were held in France on Feb. 21 in solidarity with the LKP demands and in sympathy with the murdered Jacques Bino. □

NATO expansion hits a wall during capitalist crisis

By **Heather Cottin**

Amidst the cataclysmic capitalist crisis, the U.S. and Western European governments are pressing for an expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Instead of dissolving after the Warsaw Pact ended, it became the tool of imperialism to break up Yugoslavia, the last socialist economy in Europe. NATO was reorganized to promote and protect capitalist "neoliberal" expansion into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

But capitalist experimentation in Eastern Europe and the former USSR has failed. Latvia's economy has crashed, forcing its right-wing government to resign on Feb. 20. Ukraine is on the verge of bankruptcy. People losing social services and jobs realize that NATO military spending is expensive and accounts for nearly 70 percent of the world's military spending. (CIA World Fact Book, 2008)

When the Soviet bloc existed, jobs, free education and health care were guaranteed. Now they are not. Capitalist governments in these former socialist countries are dealing with high youth unemployment by making deals with U.S. imperialism to send their young men to the war in Afghanistan.

In the past quarter, Slovak industrial output fell by 17 percent and Ukraine's by 33 percent. While the USSR had zero unemployment, the number of jobless in Russia is now 6 million. In Bosnia, and parts of Serbia, unemployment is over 40 percent. (Associated Press, Feb. 3)

While the imperialist powers are after the oil, natural gas and human resources of Eurasia, "the global economy is decelerating at the fastest pace on record. Forty percent of global wealth has been wiped out." (Counterpunch, Feb. 17)

The NATO drive east is foundering. Opposition to NATO threatens U.S.

satraps in Georgia and the Ukraine. (McClatchy Newspapers, Feb. 15)

Opposition grows in Europe

Thousands of Czech and Polish citizens oppose the U.S. and NATO interceptor missile systems designed for their countries. Seventy percent of Czechs oppose U.S. missile defense emplacements. (Russia Today, Feb. 19) On Jan. 31, about 1,000 protesters marched in Prague against the planned U.S. radar site in the Czech Republic. Organized by Czech communists, the protest included 130 mayors and citizens of towns located near the base. (Ohmy News, Korea, Feb. 6)

That same weekend, at a Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament conference in London, activists from Great Britain, Poland, the Czech Republic, France and Germany met to oppose the U.S. missile defense systems. (Mouvement de la Paix)

On Feb. 19, over 100 Czech mayors testified at NATO headquarters in Brussels against the missile shield installation.

That same day, the Kyrgyzstan parliament voted to terminate the U.S. military's lease of the Manas air base, a logistical hub for U.S. forces in Afghanistan. (New York Times, Feb. 19)

In Krakow, as NATO ministers discussed expansion, hundreds rallied in opposition to the anti-missile system the U.S. wants to install in Poland. (krakowpost.com) "We're against NATO's politics, and we demand pulling out forces from Afghanistan and a halt to the arms race," said protester Katarzyna Puzon. "We find it equally absurd to be spending public money in times of crisis." (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, Feb. 19)

The world economy will be even worse when anti-NATO protesters in Europe gather in Strasbourg, France, to protest the 60th anniversary of NATO in April. □

El paquete de estímulo—por qué l@s obrer@s necesitan mucho más

Por Fred Goldstein

Las protestas masivas en contra de la crisis económica global están propagándose.

Las protestas recientemente han derrocado al gobierno de Islandia. Ha habido protestas militantes contra el desempleo en Grecia, Chile, Latvia y Bulgaria. Una huelga general en Francia el 29 de enero forzó al gobierno a darle dinero al fabricante de automóviles Citroën a cambio de la promesa de no despedir a l@s trabajador@s.

Mientras la crisis se profundiza en Estados Unidos, la clase obrera multinacional, los sindicatos, las organizaciones comunitarias, estudiantes y jóvenes no deben esperar inactiv@s por el paquete de estímulo de \$787 mil millones firmado el 17 de febrero.

Es comprensible que las millones de personas que votaron por Barack Obama estén ansiosamente esperanzadas de que la legislación les traiga alguna asistencia y alguna ayuda para las terribles circunstancias económicas que enfrentan. Algunas están desempleadas y se les están terminando los beneficios públicos. Otras, en particular l@s trabajador@s públicos, están en peligro de perder sus empleos y los beneficios de salud.

Además de l@s millones de obrer@s desempleados y de las personas que han perdido sus hogares, hay millones más que ya estaban empobrecidas aún antes de la crisis y que tienen la esperanza de que el paquete de estímulo les ayude.

Lo que l@s trabajador@s reciben directamente

Muchas características del paquete están dirigidas a ayudar inmediatamente. Estas son las mismas medidas en que l@s republican@s se han concentrado para tratar de recortar, despertando la furia de l@s trabajador@s y de todas las personas progresistas.

Entre otras provisiones, la ley final estipula que \$40 mil millones sean para la extensión de beneficios por desempleo hasta el 31 de diciembre del 2009. Aumenta los beneficios por \$25 dólares a la semana y financia entrenamiento para empleos. Da \$20 mil millones para aumentar los beneficios de cupones de alimentos en un 14 por ciento. Esto incluye \$3 mil millones en pagos temporales de beneficios públicos y \$14 mil millones para un pago una sola vez de \$250 dólares a l@s beneficiari@s del Seguro Social y las personas bajo el programa de Seguridad de Ingreso Suplementario y a l@s veteran@s que reciben beneficios de discapacidad y jubilación. (USAToday.com)

Hay ayuda para estudiantes, trabajador@s que hayan perdido sus beneficios de salud, para que los estados del país mantengan sus presupuestos al corri-

ente, y otras medidas que en conjunto están supuestas a crear 3,5 millones de empleos.

La ley está diseñada para persuadir a los estados a que extiendan sus beneficios por desempleo e incluir a l@s trabajador@s de tiempo parcial, a l@s trabajador@s que han sido forzad@s a dejar sus empleos por razones familiares y a l@s trabajador@s que están en entrenamiento.

Mejor que nada—pero aún una miseria

Por supuesto que cualquier aumento de los beneficios para l@s trabajador@s es mejor que no recibir nada. Cuando se está desemplead@ o llegando a la pobreza, cada dólar es necesario. L@s trabajador@s están desesperad@s con muchas necesidades y deben tomar todo lo que se les de.

Pero considerando que la clase obrera ha creado toda la riqueza en esta sociedad en productos y servicios y que ahora está viviendo un gran déficit, l@s trabajador@s tienen el derecho a mucho más que a la mísera suma de la que se está hablando.

Según las estadísticas del gobierno, la tasa de desempleo subió a un 7,6 por ciento en enero. Se espera que continúe aumentando ahora y seguramente por el resto del 2009 y hasta el 2010.

Un índice de 7,6 por ciento significa 11,5 trabajador@s sin empleo. Asumamos que el salario anual de est@s trabajador@s era \$40.000, que es un poco menos del salario promedio y representa no más que sobrevivencia para una familia de cuatro personas.

Si el índice de desempleo permanece al nivel actual por más de un año, l@s desemplead@s oficialmente habrán perdido \$460 mil millones en salarios. Esto no incluye a l@s millones de desemplead@s que no están contad@s oficialmente porque se han dado por vencid@ en conseguir un trabajo. Si les añadimos, la cifra sube a \$500 mil millones.

Es importante observar que el “desempleo total”, una cifra oficial del gobierno que también incluye a l@s que estima se han retirado de la fuerza laboral desalentad@s por no encontrar empleo, y aquell@s forzad@s a trabajar a tiempo parcial, es en realidad un 13,9 por ciento. En tal situación, más de 20 millones de personas están desempleadas o subempleadas. De estas, solo 4,8 millones están recibiendo beneficios del estado por desempleo y 1,7 millones están recibiendo beneficios especiales suplementarios federales.

Esto significa que 14 millones de desemplead@s o subemplead@s no reciben ninguna forma de seguro por desempleo.

Los bancos se llevan la mayor parte

La situación solo va a empeorar. El número de desemplead@s sobrepasa por

mucho los limitados planes para crear trabajos. Por primera vez desde 1939, el número de desemplead@s ha crecido por más de medio millón al mes durante tres meses consecutivos. Mientras que el paquete de estímulo está supuesto a crear 3,5 millones de empleos durante los próximos dos años, 3,6 millones de trabajos se han perdido desde que comenzó la crisis en diciembre de 2007.

Agravando la cuestión, el plan del gobierno de rescatar a los bancos tiene la intención de malgastar \$2,5 billones, tres veces la cifra total del plan de estímulo. El pretexto de este fondo es para “aflojar los mercados de crédito”.

El hecho de que el gobierno haya otorgado a los bancos billones de dólares en efectivo y préstamos garantizados, seguramente le da a Washington el derecho de decirle a los bancos: “hagan préstamos, o si no”. Pero todo el mundo sabe que los bancos no van a prestar dinero en una economía que se va a la quiebra. No hay ganancias prestando en una economía que se reduce y eso es lo que hacen los bancos: obtener ganancias.

Entonces, ¿por qué regalar billones de dólares a los codiciosos banqueros para “ayudar” la economía? Ellos son más que inútiles y lo han comprobado por la especulación frenética y fraudulenta que ha resultado en un desastre.

Ese dinero está siendo sustraído del paquete de estímulo. Está siendo sustraído de los fondos necesarios para mantener la gente en sus casas. Debe ser utilizado para crear un programa real de empleos. La clase trabajadora multinacional necesita un programa de empleos directo. El seguro por desempleo, si se tiene la suerte de recibirlo, tiene un límite de tiempo y no es suficiente para sobrevivir. Lo que l@s trabajador@s necesitan más ahora son trabajos con un salario decente y una vivienda a precios accesibles.

Eso es para lo que se debe dedicar cada centavo del paquete de rescate de \$2,5 billones.

Rescatar l@s trabajador@s, no las ganancias

La verdad escondida que nadie en el gobierno se atreve a decir en voz alta es que la mayoría de estos grandes bancos ya están insolventes. Debían haber sido declarados en quiebra hace mucho porque las deudas en sus cuentas solo valen unos centavos. El rescate es para evitar que estos ladrones se hundan.

Estos millonarios y multimillonarios se preocupan porque su dinero se ha reducido a sus últimos \$100 millones. A la misma vez, millones de trabajador@s están preocupándose sobre cómo pagar el alquiler, la hipoteca, las cuentas para la comida, el cuidado de salud, las tarjetas de crédito, el préstamo del automóvil, los préstamos estudiantiles, y muchos otros gastos más.

Solo después de décadas de ataques económicos contra la clase trabajadora multinacional el gobierno capitalista está apresuradamente adelantando una mísera asistencia. Estas migajas no tienen nada que ver con la preocupación por l@s trabajador@s. Están ofrecidas para salvar el sistema capitalista de ganancias.

La asistencia que ofrece el gobierno es una miseria en comparación a lo que en realidad necesitan l@s trabajador@s.

L@s trabajador@s y sus comunidades deben formar alianzas para luchar.

¡Esto es una emergencia!

El gobierno federal y cada gobierno estatal y local tienen provisiones en sus cartas o constituciones que mandan a las autoridades a proveer asistencia a l@s residentes de un estado o localidad en tiempos de emergencia. La clase capitalista adicta a las ganancias, ha creado emergencias por todos lados — de desempleo, de pobreza, de falta de vivienda, de crisis de salud y de hambre.

Un ejemplo sobresaliente de lucha es la Campaña ¡Mortoria Ahora! en Detroit. L@s organizador@s han llevado a cabo una campaña de grandes manifestaciones y agitación popular para forzar al gobierno a que pase legislación para declarar una emergencia y detener los procedimientos ejecutivos hipotecarios y los desahucios. La campaña ha influido el ambiente político en Michigan hasta el punto que el aguacil de la policía del Condado Wayne encontró recientemente un motivo legal bajo las provisiones del Programa de Alivio de Bienes en Problemas (Troubled Asset Relief Program) para rehusar ejecutar más procedimientos de evicción.

Los despidos masivos en tiempo de desempleo crean una amenaza para la supervivencia, una verdadera emergencia para l@s trabajador@s, sus familias y las comunidades que dependen de sus ingresos.

Los gobiernos estatales y locales han dado cientos de miles de millones de dólares en exención de impuestos, infraestructura y otros beneficios para persuadir a las corporaciones a que construyan en sus regiones para promover la creación de trabajos y estimular la actividad económica. Cada una de estas compañías que cierra o recorta turnos está en violación de ese acuerdo. La comunidad y l@s trabajador@s tienen todo derecho de hacer cumplir el acuerdo exigiendo que las fábricas permanezcan abiertas y que se mantengan los puestos de trabajo.

En general, el derecho a tener trabajo debe ser reconocido como un derecho de tod@s l@s trabajador@s. Cada obrer@ que ha trabajado para un patrono ha contribuido a la riqueza del empresario@ y a la creación de la empresa. L@s trabajador@s tienen derechos de propiedad a su trabajo puesto que han creado la propiedad a través de su labor.

Inseparablemente unido a este derecho está el derecho de ocupar el sitio de trabajo, en la manera que lo hicieron l@s trabajador@s de Republic Windows and Doors en Chicago y la forma en que lo hicieron l@s trabajador@s de Waterford-Crystal en Kilbarry, Irlanda.

Hay innumerables maneras legales de sostener los derechos del@s trabajador@s. Pero la única manera para hacer que esos derechos sean legalmente cumplidos es que haya organización y lucha masiva para hacer que los empresarios y el gobierno cumplan con las obligaciones que tienen para con el pueblo. □

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