

The Mellons

Tax-free hate & paintings

By Stephen Millies

In 1925 U.S. Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon praised Italian dictator Benito Mussolini as “a strong man with sound ideas and the force to make these ideas effective.” Mellon liked the way Mussolini used fascist thugs to break strikes of Italian workers and to assassinate their leaders. That’s what Pennsylvania millionaires like Mellon had been doing for decades with their Coal and Iron police.

In 1892 Andrew Mellon’s closest friend, Henry Clay Frick, ordered Pinkerton thugs to shoot striking steelworkers in Homestead, Pa. Mellon wasn’t the only rich scoundrel in the U.S. who thought fascism was swell.

Both Henry Ford and IBM head Thomas Watson Sr. were awarded medals by Adolf Hitler. IBM and its German subsidiary supplied the punch cards that helped organize the extermination of Jewish and Roma people.

Another Mellon is currently the biggest sugar daddy for the ultraright in the U.S. By 1999 Richard Mellon Scaife had given \$340 million to outfits like the Committee on the Present Danger, the Heritage Foundation and the Hoover Institution. (Washington Post, May 3, 1999)

All of these hate groups want to turn back the clock on poor and working people’s rights.

Millions more have flowed from Scaife’s fortune to reaction in the past decade. Every cent was ripped off from workers in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the U.S. And almost every cent was tax deductible.

Richard Mellon Scaife was a partner of John Goff, a newspaper publisher. Goff was indicted in 1986 as an unregistered foreign agent of the apartheid regime that oppressed and exploited Black people in South Africa. Scaife and Goff bought the Sacramento Union newspaper.

Scaife currently owns the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review. He also operated Forum World Features, a CIA front that peddled lying stories to 300 newspapers until its exposure in 1975.

Another favorite recipient of Richard Mellon Scaife’s beneficence is the Free Congress Foundation, which published “The Homosexual Agenda,” a vicious attack on LGBT people.

Racism was on the FCF agenda, too. FCR staffer William Lynd wrote in 1999, “The real damage to race relations in the South came not from slavery, but from Reconstruction,” referring to the period after the Civil War when formerly enslaved Black people made the most advances.

Scaife is notorious for spending millions in digging up dirt on Bill and Hillary Clinton. But Scaife’s “Arkansas Project” was forgotten when he saw a Black man running for president.

Just before the Pennsylvania primary in 2008, Richard Mellon Scaife threw his support to Hillary Clinton instead of Barack Obama in his Pittsburgh Tribune-Review.

Scaife continues a family tradition by funding the Competitive Enterprise Institute, one of the biggest Astroturf groups behind the bigots who mobilized for recent town hall meetings on health care reform.

Andrew Mellon helped finance a phony group called the Ex-Servicemen’s Anti-Bonus League in an attempt to derail the efforts of 43,000 World War I veterans and family members who came to Washington, D.C., in 1932 to demand their promised but unreceived bonuses. The vets and their supporters were violently dispersed by U.S. troops led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

Tax-deductible art gallery

Probably the biggest depository of Mellon family wealth today is the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which is worth around \$6 billion. Billionaire families like the Mellons, the DuPonts, the Fords and the Rockefellers use foundations to avoid inheritance taxes. Foundations were established to preserve family fortunes. Charity was an afterthought.

Thomas Mellon, the founder of the family fortune, wasn’t a charitable man. He didn’t even want Pittsburgh to spend money on a library. His son Andrew Mellon refused to lend \$1 million to save the Bank of Pittsburgh in 1931.

As a consequence of this refusal, 17,000 depositors lost everything. But what was more important from the Mellon family point of view was that another Mellon competitor had bitten the dust. By the late 1960s the

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Katrina survivors' struggle for justice

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Four years after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, survivors living in Houston are still fighting to keep a roof over their heads. On Aug. 31, three women spoke at a news conference at the Kensington Club II townhome apartments to expose the owner's corruption and the squalid living conditions he allows.

The news conference was organized by Lenwood Johnson, a housing advocate with the Free Man's Neighborhood Association. Johnson explained that the Kensington Club II owner is accepting Disaster Housing Assistance Program vouchers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency—yet is not crediting all of the renters' accounts as being paid. Kofi Taharka, president of the National Black United Front and a representative of the International Action Center, also spoke.

Then residents Eugenia Brown, Quinna Brown, and Jennifer Whittington addressed reporters.

Whittington, who is severely disabled with arthritis and also has cancer, cannot work. She said she was depending on DHAP to contribute to her rent, but after complaining about conditions she received an eviction notice.

Whittington explained that her two sons had tried to find jobs ever since the family came to Houston, but as soon as they told prospective employers they were from New Orleans, they were told, "We aren't hiring Katrina criminals."

Eugenia Brown, who suffers from asthma, later showed reporters the mold growing in her apartment, as well as leaking ceilings and pipes. Volunteer movers were packing her belongings in a moving van as she spoke. Yet with nowhere to move to, Brown put her things in storage; for now she is staying with various friends.

Quinna Brown also allowed reporters into her apartment—which had mold,



Katrina survivor Eugenia Brown speaks Aug. 31 as other survivors Quinna Brown and Jennifer Whittington look on.

water stains, appliances that did not work, light fixtures falling from the ceiling and leaking pipes. She was in tears as she spoke. "I work at Wendy's and am trying to keep a home for my 11-year-old daughter, yet the Disaster Housing Assistance Program is not paying the money it is receiving from HUD to the apartment owner," she told reporters. Brown was trembling and sobbing as said she was about to totally fall apart over losing her home.

Because these women had complained to the owner about the unsafe conditions, he was evicting them rather than make required repairs.

A week after the news conference, Whittington was looking for a shelter to move to, even though she is still appealing her eviction orders and is in her apartment. "Men with guns keep coming to my apartment and threatening and intimidat-

ing me," she told Johnson. "They are from the constable's office and I am afraid." Lenwood Johnson is helping her find a shelter to move to.

Johnson told Workers World that the owner wants Whittington out because she is fighting to make him make repairs. When these women complained to DHAP that the living conditions were unbearable, DHAP told them they "weren't supposed to watch the apartment owners, but the criminals from New Orleans."

Johnson said: "The struggle continues. We need a full-time watchdog to keep up with the unscrupulous landlords and FEMA. We have contacted the U.S. Justice Department as well as the secretary of Housing and Urban Development and hope they respond. It is criminal the way Katrina survivors are treated."

The writer spoke on behalf of the International Action Center.

Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

G-20 or more G-money

From an Aug. 18 audio column which will be played at the Sept. 20 jobs march and rally for the unemployed in Pittsburgh.



As the G20 gathers again, they assemble amidst the wreckage of their own creation.

Representatives of 20 of the alleged developed economies, they are instead representatives of casino capitalism: the use, misuse and grand theft of public wealth to fund the bonuses of financial pirates that have looted the treasury of billions.

A few months ago, as they gathered in London, the nations' finance ministers talked about tax havens, but few had any real substantial solutions to the economic turmoil roiling in their own countries.

Much has been said about stimulus packages, and even about the enormous amounts of money being allocated for this purpose, but a modest amount has actually been spent, with the lion's share being devoted to boosting the very banks and businesses that created this disaster.

And while banks and billionaires have been rewarded for their insatiable greed, average people, working people, families struggling in the worst economic environment since the 1930s, are on their own. Millions are jobless. Many are homeless. Many more are helpless.

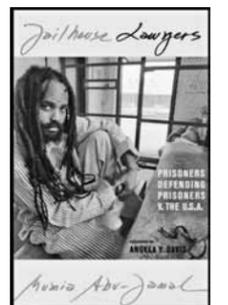
And while they barely survive day after day, big buck bonuses are back on track at Goldman Sachs and other such entities in the City.

Politicians, meanwhile, talk of a "jobless recovery." If there are no jobs, who can really speak of a recovery? Wall Street is recovering—but are you?

Even the French conservative president, Nicolas Sarkozy, said the economic disaster of last fall spelled the end to laissez-faire (French for 'let it be') economic theory. Governments on both sides of the Atlantic are giving various stimulus packages to banks and businesses that look an awful lot like life support.

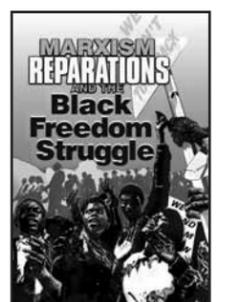
If this is free market, then slavery was free labor. Only a bold, unified people's movement can put the people's interests before that of big finance. It's going to take protests—real protests—to break through this vampire's bite on the wealth of nations. □

Mumia's new book "Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners Defending Prisoners v The U.S.A." is available at www.Leftbooks.com



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World including Larry Holmes, Leilani Dowell, Saladin Muhammad, John Parker, Mumia Abu-Jamal, Larry Hales, Imani Henry and edited by Monica Moorehead. www.Leftbooks.com



The fight against displacement

It was a small group, no more than 50 people, but the chants could be heard up and down the block: "El Barrio unido, jamas sera vencido! El Barrio unido will never be defeated!"

In the spirit of the Zapatistas, the organization Movimiento por Justicia del Barrio (Movement for Justice in El Barrio) continued its fight against gentrification in an Aug. 30 protest at 116th Street and Lexington Avenue, in the heart of El Barrio in New York.

Though Movimiento por Justicia del Barrio's main fight is against gentrification and displacement, they also fight for the liberation of immigrants, women, LGBT people, people of color, and Indigenous populations.

The fight against gentrification is growing as more and more of Harlem's residents are displaced. At this point, merely walking down a main street in West Harlem tells the story of how Columbia University has taken over



and how greedy landlords have replaced working-class people of color with well-off young whites.

East Harlem, however, still stands a chance of maintaining its largely Black

and Latino/a communities. If there is hope to preserve El Barrio, people must all work together, for as the chant says, "El Barrio unido jamas sera vencido!"

—Report and photo by Jennifer Waller

Unionists support Stella D'Oro workers, jobs

By Dee Knight
New York

The workers at Stella D'Oro bakery in the Bronx, who won an 11-month strike in July only to face a vicious threat by the company's hedge fund owners to sell off or shut the plant this October, got a strong show of support at a major union meeting on Aug. 31 in New York City.

Local 375 of District Council 37 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees hosted the solidarity meeting. It was attended by leaders of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 3; Service Employees Local 1199; New York State United Teachers/Nassau County; the Professional Staff Congress of the City

University of New York; the Take Back Our Union caucus of the Transport Workers union; the Million Worker March Movement; and others.

Mike Filippou, Bakery Workers Local 50 chief steward at Stella D'Oro, declared that after "a very hard strike," the Stella D'Oro workers "are not going to accept closing the plant in 90 days." He said "much more support" is needed from the labor movement and the community as the workers fight to keep their jobs and the plant in the Bronx.

Mike Gimbel, chair of the Labor-Community Unity Committee of Local 375, introduced the local's president, Claude Fort, who said his local is committed to supporting the Stella D'Oro work-



Marta Marcia one of the Stella D'Oro strike leaders, on left.

WW PHOTO: MIKE EILENFELDT

ers and will "lobby" others in DC 37 to follow suit. Fort also made a strong push for the Sept. 20 national March for Jobs in Pittsburgh, which his union supports. Gimbel explained that the Stella D'Oro workers are waging the key labor struggle in New York City now, and are part of the larger struggle for jobs, for immigrant rights and against racism.

Gimbel, Fort and Gavrielle Gemma, who chaired the meeting, encouraged people to link the struggle to save jobs at Stella D'Oro to the Sept. 20 national March for Jobs in Pittsburgh. Participants were impressed to hear of expanding labor movement support for the March for Jobs. Gemma noted that in addition to support from the Steelworkers union and the United Electrical Workers union, numerous local unions are mobilizing.

Benny Arana, business agent for IBEW Local 3, and Beth Borzone of the New York State Teachers brought greetings from their unions. Maria Kercado, vice presi-

dent of the Service Workers Local 1199, declared that the Stella D'Oro struggle is at the top of the agenda for the citywide labor movement.

Both IBEW Local 3 and SEIU Local 1199 have committed substantial resources to mobilize support for the Stella D'Oro struggle at the New York City Labor Day March on Sept. 12. Lenny Dick of the PSC at CUNY declared that the PSC would bring placards in solidarity with the Stella D'Oro workers to the Labor Day March.

Other notable speakers were John Coombs, president of the Vulcan Society, an association of African-American firefighters who are currently waging a struggle against entrenched racism in the New York City Fire Department; Steve Kindred from the Stella D'Oro Strike Support Committee; and Teresa Gutierrez, coordinator of the May 1 Coalition for Workers and Immigrants Rights.

Gutierrez highlighted Local 375 for including the immigrant workers' coalition in its 2008 Labor Day contingent. She also noted the immigrant workers' achievement in reawakening the tradition of May Day with a gigantic national one-day strike on May 2006, heralding a new spirit together with the new demographics in today's working class. She declared that the May 1 Coalition is solidly behind the Stella D'Oro workers, with the slogan "A victory for one is a victory for all!" □

Strike unites faculty, students, labor

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

American Association of University Professors faculty, students and labor/community supporters took to the picket line at Oakland University in Rochester, Mich., on Sept. 4. There are about 18,000 students at OU, an undergraduate and graduate university 25 miles north of Detroit.

The 600-member AAUP chapter began their job action on Sept. 3, the first day of classes, over the administration's proposals of pay freezes for professors, higher medical insurance costs, an increase in the numbers of non-tenure and/or part-time faculty and on how faculty at the new medical school will fit into the bargaining unit. A main sticking point in contract negotiations, which have been ongoing since May, is the administration's intent to strip the AAUP of its rights to faculty governance. This would mean the union would no longer have any contractually binding input into the curriculum, how classes are taught or other educational matters, setting a grave precedent if accepted by the union.

The AAUP's picket lines were solid the first two days of the job action, with all entrances to the university covered by faculty, students and supporters taking shifts throughout the day. The university cancelled morning classes on the first day

of the job action. The union is receiving strong support from students at OU and elsewhere as well as from other labor unions and the community.

The Teamsters, according to OU AAUP President Joel Russell, have refused to cross the picket line to deliver products to the university. A Sept. 3 rally brought out a diverse, multinational crowd with strong support from students, many hoisting signs reading, "Students Support Our Professors" and "Higher Education Not Higher Profits." After the rally a loud crowd of hundreds marched and chanted around the administration building.

Anger across the OU campus is high particularly due to the administration's admission of making \$14 million in profit last year and the university president receiving a \$100,000 pay raise last year increasing his salary to \$350,000! Students are especially incensed by the fact that their tuition increased 9 percent this year. Negotiations between the AAUP and the OU administration are ongoing. If the administration doesn't come to its senses, the job action will continue the morning of Sept. 8. Supporters can send solidarity messages to the OU's AAUP President Joel Russell at russell@oakland.edu or call 248-370-2005.

Pfeifer is a staff organizer with the Union of Part-Time Faculty-AFT at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Stop utility shutoffs Tenants demand power

Continued from page 1

organizers that they were working with human services agencies to get help for the people, many of whom have serious medical conditions.

Every day that DTE Energy refuses to turn the electricity back on, a worse humanitarian situation is created at Highland Towers. Women with small children, people with disabilities and tenants of all ages with medical problems who require electricity and gas services live in the building.

Stop utility shutoffs!

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition is calling for an immediate halt to utility shutoffs in the metropolitan Detroit area and throughout Michigan. With rising unemployment and poverty rates as well as budget deficits plaguing the cities, counties and the state, it is urgent that Gov. Jennifer Granholm declare an economic state of emergency to avoid further suffering among working people and the poor.

Such a declaration would allow the state government to appeal directly to Washington for federal funds to provide for the needs of the people. The governor would have the authority to impose an immediate moratorium on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs, pending the outcome of the present crisis.

However, the city, county and state governments have failed to take immediate action to protect the lives and health of the millions of people in this region who need help. There must be a mass struggle by the people to fight against the cutbacks and the elimination of essential services.

Members of Moratorium NOW! publicly raised the demand for a company-imposed halt to shutoffs in July after four people died in northwest Detroit.

Unemployment in the city of Detroit is officially almost 30 percent. Hundreds of thousands in the area are under threat of eviction and having their utilities and water shut off. This represents a state of emergency for the millions of residents of the state and should be acted upon immediately. Failure to take corrective action is endangering the health and welfare of people throughout Michigan.

Interim Mayor Dave Bing has demonstrated his total disdain for the working people of Detroit by proposing massive layoffs and service cuts, including a large-scale reduction in bus service. The city layoffs and cuts in transportation will only create more foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs and job losses. Make no mistake about it, Bing is not working for the people of Detroit but for the banks and corporations, whose policies have created the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Only the people organized into a mass movement can mobilize the energy and resources to fight the banks, corporations and their paid agents in government. The thousands who came out to public hearings the week of Aug. 24 to oppose bus service cuts represent the true face of the people of this city. Bing represents the thieves of Wall Street who only wish to push the people back and exploit them even further.

The coalition is calling on the people to come out to an organizing meeting Sept. 12 to demand that Gov. Granholm declare an economic state of emergency in Michigan and consequently impose moratoriums on foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs. The meeting will be held at the Central United Methodist Church, located on Woodward and Adams in downtown Detroit, beginning at 11:00 a.m. □



PHOTO: ANDRE MARTIN

AAUP picket line at Oakland University, Sept. 4. Pfeifer is third from the left.

Bearing the brunt of economic crisis

Women workers are powerful

By **Gavielle Gemma**

Women workers, employed or unemployed, don't need statistics to know how bad things are. The prices of basic necessities—rent, food, utilities, transportation, health care and child care—are way up. Our wages are falling or stagnant. Even small wage increases provided in union contracts don't make up for rising costs. However, we do need to know the statistical big picture to decide what to do about it.

Before that, we need to know our potential power in the U.S. economy. There are 68 million women working, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. These numbers leave out millions of undocumented workers, and those who work in the informal economy or "off the books," where we clean, do laundry, help with family care and do any work we can find.

We continue to earn 20 percent less than men in the overall economy do, with oppressed women earning less than that in disproportionate numbers. Though we work in every industry, we remain concentrated in secretarial, receptionist and other clerical jobs; in health care and teaching jobs; in public employment; and in retail sales. However, we are 150 percent potentially more powerful in our strategic roles in society.

It's easy to find statistics on our wages by industry. Finding out how much wealth our labor creates is very hard. It's clear that the capitalists do not want us to understand that our labor power produces gargantuan profits—and that we could shut the country down!

In 2002, the U.S. Census Bureau reported \$3 trillion in retail sales. Wages were \$302 billion. So that's 10 percent of retail revenue, because a trillion is one thousand billion.

Sales in health care came to \$1.2 trillion. Wages amounted to \$495 billion, or 41 percent of revenue. Without us, there would be no revenue at all. Even counting the cost of facilities, equipment and sup-

plies, it's obvious how badly we're being ripped off.

We cannot leave out our unpaid labor in home production. Unpaid labor is anything you could pay someone else to do like cleaning, shopping and food preparation, taking care of family members, or home construction. The amount of time we spend on this is rapidly growing, as we cannot afford to hire anyone to do the work.

At a Dec. 1, 2005, lecture at the University of Massachusetts, Professor Diane Elson explained that unpaid work is in effect a big subsidy to the profit industries, allowing businesses "to reduce the wage costs of social reproduction" of workers and reduce public programs. According to writer David Bollier, one study estimated that the value of unpaid work in Britain equals 77 percent of the gross domestic product, but it is not counted. (onthecommons.org)

Unemployment is hitting women hard. It rose 76 percent among Latina workers since last year, and increased 52 percent for African-American women. Millions of workers are not even counted in the unemployment or underemployment statistics. Immigrants, domestic workers and those in the informal economy are the hardest hit. In some communities, young people face the disaster of 75 percent unemployment.

Women are more undercounted than men in the unemployment statistics; the rate of women workers who are too discouraged to look for work rose 90 percent in the last year. We are also 10 percent less likely to get benefits. Discrimination against pregnant women, mothers returning to work and lesbian workers is rising rapidly.

Women are imprisoned in ever greater numbers. Some women are entering the military because they can't find any other job during this economic crisis.



Domestic Workers United

WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Poverty is soaring for families where single women head up households. Employed or unemployed, they are hardest hit by foreclosures. That's not because they are single but because they can't live on one income.

With the 1996 Clinton administration destruction of welfare, which was itself a different kind of unemployment benefit, women are getting below minimum wage for forced workfare labor. Time limits and restrictions are keeping newly unemployed women workers from receiving these benefits, which have been cut to the bone. Some women have even been forced to give up their children into the wretched foster care systems.

We say no!

Why should we put up with a \$12 trillion bailout to the banks that are giddy with joy over their rising profits, while we have a jobless, impoverished "recovery" for workers? Why should we put up with an unemployment rate that is rising even faster for women than for men due to cuts in retail, service and public employment?

Why should we stand for 30 million

people being unemployed or underemployed? Or for our jobs being outsourced to countries where our sisters are making pennies in horrendous sweatshops, which then forces many women and children into the global sex market?

Why should we stand for this assault on our lives?

Trillions for the banks, nothing for us. Even if you are still working, your family and communities are engulfed by unemployment.

We shouldn't put up with any of this.

We women workers should stand tall and flex our collective muscles to demand what is rightfully ours. On Sept. 20, thousands will march in Pittsburgh to demand a massive public jobs program preceding the meeting of the G-20, an international group of bankers and finance ministers.

Get on the bus or contact the March for Jobs to see what you can do. Call 212-633-6646 in New York City or 412-780-3813 in Pittsburgh.

Gemma is a member of the Women's Fightback Network in New York City.

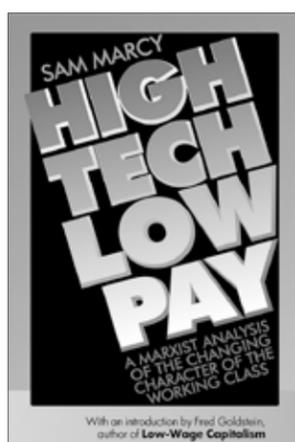
Sources: National Women's Law Center and the Institute for Women's Policy Research

WW Commentary

WW top 10 list

Why the ruling class doesn't want A JOBS PROGRAM

1. Unemployment among the super-rich is VERY high and we don't seem to mind.
2. Bernie Madoff tried working and look where he ended up.
3. People may think they have a right to a job, when they ONLY have the right to look for a job.
4. If more people just stopped looking for work, we wouldn't have to count them and unemployment could go down that way.
5. We've made so many billions doing absolutely nothing useful, why hire more workers to actually DO something useful?
6. We already have a jobs program—the U.S. Army.
7. Putting people to work building roads and bridges just isn't as profitable as not doing it. Otherwise we'd do it.
8. If more people just watched Fox news, maybe unemployment wouldn't be seen as such a problem.
9. As Marie Antoinette said, "Let them eat cake." Wait ... maybe that isn't such a good idea.
10. Hello? This IS capitalism, remember?



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World View Forum has just reissued this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder.

The book rings as true today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution was destroying high-paying jobs while changing the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

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Low-Wage Capitalism

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

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 end of working-class compromise and retreat and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

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AS UNEMPLOYMENT RISES

Momentum grows for national jobs march in Pittsburgh

By Kris Hamel

With the Sept. 4 announcement that unemployment in the U.S. has hit an official high of 9.7 percent, organizing for the National March for Jobs on Sept. 20 in Pittsburgh and the Tent City in Solidarity with the Unemployed has reached a critical stage. Unemployed workers and their allies will be in Pittsburgh at the same time the G-20 Group of major capitalist countries will be holding their summit in that city.

"We've seen 20 consecutive months of job losses," said Larry Holmes, a national organizer with the Bail Out the People Movement. "That's more than any other time since the last Great Depression, and the official number doesn't count those who are underemployed, incarcerated, or who have just given up looking for work."

"The unemployed, the homeless, the hungry and the poor must no longer be invisible and silent. On Sunday, Sept. 20, a National March for Jobs will step off from the historic Hill District in Pittsburgh just prior to the G-20 summit demand a real jobs program. Community activists from across the country are organizing buses, vans and caravans to come to Pittsburgh," said Holmes.

Below is a sampling of some of the organizing being done around the U.S. to bring poor and working people, including the unemployed, to Pittsburgh for the jobs march and tent city.

CALIFORNIA

California activists are busy organizing a bus to Pittsburgh for the Sept. 20 jobs march and tent city.

"Why am I organizing a bus to Pittsburgh? Because we have no choice. It's a matter of survival," said one of the many activists building California's participation in the jobs march at the G-20 Summit. Because California is now reeling from the fourth largest unemployment rate in the country while legislators continue to cut basic services, this enthusiasm and determination is widespread.

In **San Francisco**, a resolution supporting the demonstration was unanimously passed by the San Francisco Labor Council, as well as by the S.F. Letter Carrier's union Local 214 and Local 10 of the International Longshore and Warehouse union.

Dave Welsh, a retired letter carrier and organizer for the jobs march, spoke about the sentiments of autoworkers in the northern California town of Fremont. He was at a protest outside a Toyota plant threatened with closure. "We went there with leaflets about the jobs march. There were about 1,000 people out there and this seemed to be the only leaflet being passed out. It got a very good response. People would look and point to it and say, 'Right on!'" said Welsh.

In **Los Angeles** organizers are receiving calls from Riverside to **San Diego** asking about the bus to Pittsburgh. John Parker, an organizer with the Bail Out the People Movement, stated: "Although providing transportation to go across the country, especially for unemployed workers, is an expensive venture, we must make it happen. We want to have a delegation of participants who travel great lengths and make stops along the way to

highlight California's growing jobless and homeless plight.

"This is very important since the worsening trend in California's economy has become a crystal ball showing the bleak future for working people in the entire country and an example of how politicians refuse to address the needs of working and poor people and instead cater to the needs of the superrich monopoly banks and corporations."

For information about the bus from California to Pittsburgh call 323-306-6240.

OHIO

Activists in the Ohio cities of **Cleveland, Akron, Warren** and **Youngstown** are organizing to send a strong delegation to the Sept. 20 March for Jobs. Geographically they are less than a three-hour drive away. Economically they have seen the same devastation wrought by almost three decades of restructuring in steel, auto, rubber and other manufacturing industries. In all of these cities a disproportionate share of the hardship is being borne by the African-American community and all communities of color.

Recently a number of key activists came to meetings organized by the Cleveland Bail Out the People Movement chapter that featured Sharon Black, the national labor outreach coordinator for the jobs march. Attending the meetings were representatives of the New Black Panther Party, the American Friends Service Committee, Cleveland FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and the Family Connection Center, which advocates for women receiving or losing public assistance. Joining these student and community organizers were members of the Teamsters, the United Auto Workers, the Amalgamated Transit union and the American Federation of Government Employees.

The meetings generated tremendous excitement for the march—excitement that proved contagious when Cleveland BOPM distributed leaflets at the annual Labor Day parade sponsored by the AFL-CIO. Contingents of airline workers indicated that they were already aware of the march and members of the United Steelworkers said they had started organizing transportation from Cleveland to Pittsburgh. A Cleveland high school marching band expressed interest in being part of the march.

DETROIT

Organizers with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs have been in the streets and neighborhoods getting out the word about the Sept. 20 jobs march. Activists distributed thousands of leaflets at the African World Festival in downtown **Detroit**, at citywide protests against cuts in bus services, and at the annual Labor Day parade. Organizers report that interest was high at the Labor Day event, with many unionists expressing interest and enthusiasm. Detroit FIST activists have also been doing outreach to youth and students.



The Pittsburgh Now program interviewed Rev. Thomas Smith of Monumental Baptist Church and Sharon Black from the Bail Out the People Movement on Aug. 27. Both are organizers for the Sept. 20 March for Jobs to revive Dr. Martin Luther King's last campaign to win living wages and decent jobs for all.

Report & photos by Cheryl LaBash

NEW ENGLAND

Organizing is going strong in the greater **Boston** area and in Massachusetts in general and **Rhode Island**. Buses to the Sept. 20 jobs march in Pittsburgh are being organized from Boston, western Massachusetts and Rhode Island. A strong labor/community coalition is being built. Steelworkers Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers union, is a member of the coalition and is subsidizing bus seats for members.

Members of the No Layoffs Campaign at Harvard University, including members of UNITE-HERE Local 26 and the Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, are participating and organizing. Community organizers from local neighborhood health centers and youth programs are also taking part. The Women's Fightback Network and Boston FIST are playing a strong role.

ATLANTA

A convergence of events has led to a decision to set up a tent city in solidarity with Pittsburgh on Sept. 20 on the grounds of the city hall complex in **Atlanta**. The Task Force for the Homeless, which has been under an escalating siege by the city administration and major downtown developers and corporations, is bringing a lawsuit against certain officials and business groups, charging them with "tortuous interference" in the financial support for their homeless shelter. Loss of funds has caused the Task Force to have its water cut off and to be on the brink of bankruptcy.

As a result of this lawsuit, they have gotten lots of documentation of collaboration between members of the mayor's staff and Chamber of Commerce-types about planting false stories in the press, having direct contact with funders to strongly suggest they sever ties with the Task Force, etc. The lawsuit will reveal the behind-the-scenes operations of the power structure that controls Atlanta. The opening day of the lawsuit is Sept. 21.

The Task Force is initiating a tent city

to be set up at noon on Sept. 20 in solidarity with the jobs march and tent city in Pittsburgh. It will include an evening cultural event and rally and a march from the tent city to the courthouse the next day for the hearing.

NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY

The Peoples Organization for Progress recently hosted a delegation in **Newark, N.J.**, from the Bail Out the People Movement that included Brenda Stokely and Sara Flounders. Names were gathered of POP members that plan to go to Pittsburgh.

The enthusiasm in Newark reflects the growing interest in the region. Because of this, another bus has been ordered. **New York** groups building for Pittsburgh or new endorsers include Picture the Homeless, the Rebel Diaz hip-hop group, Katrina/Rita survivors, the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Workers and the Iglesia San Romero in the Washington Heights area.

A leader of the Stella D'Oro strike in the Bronx, Mike Filippou, also became a convener of the jobs march and agreed to provide a speaker. Stella D'Oro workers went out on strike in August 2008 and stayed on strike until July 7, when the National Labor Relations Board voted favorably. Now the owners of Stella D'Oro, Brynwood Partners, are threatening to close the plant and move it elsewhere.

Organizers of the Pittsburgh march for jobs hope to elevate the Stella D'Oro struggle to a national level by inviting the workers to participate at events around the G-20.

Dozens of BOPM volunteers blitzed Caribbean Day in Brooklyn to get the word out for Sept. 20. Paste-ups and other visibility activities are going strong. Organizers from BOPM will join the Stella D'Oro contingent on Labor Day in New York City on Sept. 12, when thousands of leaflets will be distributed.

Bill Bateman, Martha Grevatt, Teresa Gutierrez, Dianne Mathiowetz, Frank Neisser and John Parker contributed to this article.

Sickness & struggle

Cuban socialism builds model health system

By David Hoskins

The 1959 Cuban Revolution overturned the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The revolution ended Cuba's status as a U.S. neocolony and made possible a complete overhaul and rebuilding of the medical system in that country along socialist lines.

In 1960 revolutionary physician Che Guevara formally addressed the Cuban Militia. His speech has since been published as an essay titled "On Revolutionary Medicine," which outlines the socialist view of the relationship between revolution, private property and medicine:

"For one to be a revolutionary doctor or to be a revolutionary at all, there must first be a revolution. Isolated individual endeavor, for all its purity of ideals, is of no use, and the desire to sacrifice an entire lifetime to the noblest of ideals serves no purpose if one works alone. ... The life of a single human being is worth a million times more than all the property of the richest man on earth. ... Far more important than a good remuneration is the pride of serving one's neighbor. Much more definitive and much more lasting than all the gold that one can accumulate is the gratitude of a people."

Pre-revolution statistics on the health and well-being of the Cuban people are scarce, as the average person's welfare was not a priority for the dictatorship. The little bit that can be gleaned from Batist-era government records was communicated by former Cuban President Fidel Castro at a 1989 rally at Havana's Plaza of

the Revolution commemorating the 30th anniversary of the revolution.

At the time of the revolution Cuba's infant mortality rate exceeded 60 deaths per 1,000 live births. Twelve mothers died during delivery for every 10,000 births. There were 6,000 doctors in the entire country, almost all of whom were concentrated in the capital. Life expectancy was below 60 years of age. Public health services were nonexistent in the countryside, where more than half the population lived.

Since that time Cuba's health care system, which is 100 percent publicly owned, has developed into a pinnacle of achievement in socialist medicine. Article 50 of Cuba's Constitution guarantees the right to health protection and care. The constitution provides for free medical and hospital care through a system of rural medical service networks, polyclinics, hospitals and treatment centers for preventative and specialized medicine. Free dental care, health education, regular medical examinations and general vaccinations are also guaranteed.

Cuba's socialist system has made great advances in improving health quality. According to World Health Organization statistics published in 2009, Cuban life expectancy has increased to 78 years—18 years longer than the average Cuban could expect to live prior to the revolution and two years longer than the regional average for the Americas.

Cuba's infant mortality rate has been reduced by more than 90 percent, to just five deaths per 1,000 live births. The aver-

age regional infant mortality rate is 16 deaths per 1,000. The maternal mortality rate has dropped to just over four deaths per 10,000 births. The decline in delivery-related deaths can be attributed to the fact that 100 percent of Cuban births are attended by skilled health workers. Today Cuba boasts more than 66,000 physicians and is able to send thousands of its own doctors to provide medical care to the world's poor and oppressed.

"¡Salud!" a 2007 film highlighting Cuba's health care accomplishments, estimates that this small country has approximately 28,000 health professionals now providing care in 68 countries. Cuban doctors and nurses serve the poorest of the poor in countries like Honduras, Haiti and Guatemala.

Tens of thousands of international students are studying free of charge in Cuba's medical schools—on the condition that after graduation they provide care to underserved populations in their countries of origin.

These accomplishments fulfill the principles of socialist health care as laid out by Che in 1960. Much of Cuba's success is a result of the socialist system's integrated approach to care, which emphasizes health education, affordable housing, proper diet and other preventative measures designed to improve and prolong life.

Cuba is a developing country that has struggled with the loss of its biggest trading partner—the Soviet Union. The former socialist bloc, through the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, had accounted for 85 percent of Cuban trade.

More than 90 percent of Cuban energy needs had been met with Soviet oil and oil byproducts provided at subsidized prices.

With the 1991 defeat of the Soviet Union, the U.S. government saw an opening to attempt to strangle Cuba's socialist system. In 1992 the U.S. Congress passed the so-called Cuban Democracy Act. The act is a vicious attack on Cuba's health care system, which the World Health Organization had praised in 1989 as "a model for the world."

A 1997 American Association of World Health report titled "Denial of Food and Medicine: The Impact of the U.S. Embargo on the Health and Nutrition in Cuba" outlines the difficulties deliberately imposed by the U.S. on Cuba's health system.

The act imposed a ban on subsidiary trade with Cuba, severely constraining Cuba's ability to import medicine and equipment from third-country sources. Shippers are discouraged from delivering medical equipment to Cuba by a provision in the act that prohibits ships from loading or unloading cargo in U.S. ports for 180 days after delivering cargo of any type to Cuba. Licensing and other restrictions restrain even charitable contributions to Cuba.

Despite the severe double blow dealt to the Cuban economy by the Soviet Union's defeat and the punitive economic blockade by the U.S., Cuba has managed to protect the integrity of its health care system in a way that clearly illustrates the superiority of socialist health care.

Next: Clinton plan and right-wing scare tactics

Masses in New Caledonia strike against French colonizers

By G. Dunkel

Since the beginning of August, the struggle of oppressed workers and youth in New Caledonia has brought tensions to heights not seen since this South Pacific island had an armed rebellion against France in the late 1980s.

Marches and street sit-ins have brought protesters into direct conflict with the police. At least two cops have been shot, and RFI reported Aug. 6 that 30 had been wounded. The left-wing union leading the struggle is the USTKE, the Union of Kanak Workers and the Exploited (Union syndicale des travailleurs kanaks et des exploités).

Kanak is the official name of the Indigenous people of the island.

New Caledonia is in reality a colony of France, with some special privileges due

to a sharp struggle in the 1980s. Its economy, based on the production of nickel, has done very well recently. Growth was 5 percent a year between 2004 and 2008, and Nouméa, its capital, has set a French record for the most luxury cars per person. (Le Monde, Aug. 23)

The economic stakes for France in New Caledonia are high. It is the world's fifth largest producer of nickel, a vital ingredient for stainless steel, and has the world's second largest reserves. Wages in the nickel industry are high. This is why 800 to 1,200 Europeans—mainly from France—move to the island each month.

The Kanaks, especially the youth, leave school early and live on what the French call "small jobs," or temporary work at low wages, and on what they can grow in their gardens. They are shoved into ghettos with tiny houses or buildings that need

Mellon's tax-free hate & paintings

Continued from page 2

Mellon National Bank had 52 percent of the commercial bank deposits in the Pittsburgh area.

The Mellons' real charity was themselves. East of Pittsburgh they own the 12,000-acre Rolling Rock Club, which they use for fox hunting and golfing.

Andrew Mellon was so hated during the Great Depression that he started the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., to get off charges of income tax evasion. By donating his collection of paintings, Mellon also saved \$32 million in taxes.

This didn't help any living artists, 50,000

of whom were only temporarily employed at the time by the Works Progress Administration and other government programs.

Andrew Mellon's son Paul spent his entire life collecting art and horses. His autobiography is appropriately called "Reflections in a Silver Spoon."

All of the Mellons put together don't hold a candle to baseball player Roberto Clemente regarding charity. Born in Puerto Rico, the great Pittsburgh Pirates outfielder died in a plane crash on Dec. 31, 1972, trying to deliver aid to victims of the Managua, Nicaragua earthquake.

Next: Deindustrializing Pittsburgh

Source: "Mellon's Millions" by Harvey O'Connor



USTKE members setting up a roadblock.

USTKE strikers in the street confronting the police.

renovation, far from the better neighborhoods, and lack the education and skills needed for better-paying, full-time jobs.

USTKE has community organizers who travel around to these neighborhoods, especially to help families of those arrested in the protests. (Le Monde, Aug. 23) USTKE rejects charges that it has manipulated the youth into protest and points to "colonial police repression" as the cause of the violence New Caledonia has suffered during August.

The spark for the current conflict was the firing of an airline worker, a member of USTKE, for "incompetence." The union vigorously defended him with marches, protests and runway blockades.

In the course of the struggle, Gérard Jodar, the leader of USTKE, and some of his comrades invaded Nouméa's airport runway and took refuge in planes where they were attacked by the cops. His swift sentence of a year in prison took into

account what the court called his "previous acts of vandalism and blockades." (Le Figaro, Aug. 25)

Jodar's sentence was recently confirmed, but he and a number of comrades have an appeal hearing scheduled on Sept. 15. The USTKE called a demonstration Aug. 22 to not only demand their leader's freedom but also to protest the high cost of living and the "colonialism" the French state is exhibiting in Nouméa.

A demonstration was held in Paris on Aug. 24 where the French left expressed solidarity with USTKE. Corrine Perron, a representative of USTKE in France, told the protest, "We gather together to denounce the colonial justice in Nouméa and the unjustifiable condemnation of union militants in New Caledonia. It is necessary to alert the public that New Caledonia not only faces the threat of swine flu but also the threat of police and judicial repression." (Libération, Aug. 24) □

Eyewitness Lebanon

Waad Project restores people's hope

By Paul Wilcox and Joyce Chediak
Dahia, Lebanon

Dahia was the area hardest hit by Israel in 2006. It suffered 934 bombing raids, according to the Lebanese army. Much of the neighborhood was reduced to rubble.

Three years later we saw none of that. In the hardest hit areas of Dahia we saw endless reconstruction, new, modern apartment buildings, bustling neighborhoods and new hospitals. We saw a vibrant and alive community rebuilding itself.

Before Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, this tightly packed Shiia neighborhood was called the "Belt of Misery." The Dahia, or southern suburb of Beirut, was long the city's most disenfranchised area. There were no social services until Hezbollah began providing them. Now once again, after the bombing raids by Israel, the neighborhood is on the move.

We felt the enthusiasm and experienced the friendliness and openness of a people who had overcome a man-made disaster and were coming out on top.

When Israel bombed this poor neighborhood, it followed the infamous policy of all occupiers: carry out collective punishment of the population to turn the people against the resistance movement. This massive retaliation against the population was even named by Israel as its "Dahia Doctrine," defined by Israeli Chief of Staff Dan Halutz as a plan to "use disproportionate force and cause great damage and destruction" in order to "turn the clock back 20 years." (www.electronicintifada.net)

What Israel and its backers in Washington did not count on, however, was the response of Hezbollah, the leading resistance group in Lebanon. Hezbollah announced the Waad Project, a recon-

struction plan for the complete restoration of this neighborhood.

Dahia becoming a showpiece

In fact, Hezbollah is building the hardest-hit areas of Dahia into a showcase, with new workers' housing much improved from what it was before the Israeli bombing. Far from being turned against the resistance, Hezbollah has drawn the people of Dahia even closer with its response.

The Lebanese government is providing an average of \$53,000 in compensation for families who lost their homes in the war. Most agree this is far from being enough to buy an adequate apartment in Beirut. The Waad Project gave people a choice: rebuild your own apartments with the compensation funds or give the Project the money and let it assume responsibility for reconstruction. Hezbollah promised to

cover whatever extra was needed to build higher standard housing.

Each building held a vote—the overwhelming majority voted to put their trust in Hezbollah and its project. The Waad pledged to rebuild about 280 destroyed and damaged buildings in Dahia and make them even better than before. From everything we saw, the Waad is making good on its promise. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2009.

According to the Project's design, the newly rebuilt areas have "more lighting and open spaces, traffic reduction through improved roads, new parking lots, and gardens to give the streets and buildings a greater sense of place and character." People are even being given a choice of countertops and other variables for their new apartments! This is happening in an area that was once the poorest and most run down in all of Beirut.

We witnessed the fruits of this commitment. In addition to spanking new apartments under construction, we saw shops, offices, warehouses and schools. There was a cardiac-specialty hospital donated by Iran. We were shown a large restaurant which served traditional Lebanese food at low prices for working families. "Come to Dahia if you want to shop," we were told, "things are cheaper here."

People's struggle defeats 'Dahia Doctrine'

Hezbollah and the people of Dahia have turned around this U.S.-Israeli "Dahia Doctrine" of destruction and despair into its very opposite—a victory for the people and their liberation struggle. The U.S. and Israeli policy of collective punishment has backfired here, as it has backfired throughout history—in Vietnam, in Algeria, in occupied Europe and elsewhere.

What has been the response? The U. S. government has labeled not only Hezbollah a "terrorist" organization but also the reconstruction project. It has frozen any assets held by the Waad Project that are under U.S. jurisdiction and U.S. citizens are barred from having any transactions with Waad.

Backed by the U.S., Israel has also threatened new terrors against Lebanon if Hezbollah takes part in the Lebanese government which is now being formed. Don't the Lebanese people have the right to defend their homes?

In Dahia we saw a population teeming with new confidence and pride in their organization, Hezbollah, and in themselves for what they have accomplished. The people of Dahia are hopeful for the future and confident that they can successfully defend its hard-won gains and sparkling new neighborhoods. □



Beirut Cardiac Hospital in Dahia, built with funds from Iran.

WWW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Lebanon rebuilds, New Orleans still waits

Two disasters. One a natural disaster, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in 2005. The other a human-made disaster, the carpet bombing of Lebanon in 2006. Both inflicted widespread death and destruction.

In the U.S, the richest country in the world, Washington is coordinating the recovery effort. In Lebanon, a tiny poor and war-torn nation, Hezbollah, a grassroots resistance movement that Washington called "terrorist," organizes most of the reconstruction. Hezbollah receives substantial aid in this effort from Syria and especially Iran, countries Washington also calls "terrorist."

What is the situation several years later? Which group would you trust to rebuild if you lost your home?

In New Orleans, according to the Center for Constitutional Rights, federal funds have gone to large businesses. Renters and elderly homeowners, 60 percent of the population, got none of the \$10 billion allocated to repair homes; 37,000 families are eligible for the government's Road Home program but have not been given the money.

In Lebanon, Hezbollah prioritized meeting the needs of the poorest Shiite areas. Immediately after the war, Hezbollah gave each displaced family \$12,000 U.S. in cash, a very large sum. Some \$2,000 was for a year's rent, while their homes were rebuilt, and \$10,000 was for furniture.

Today, indigent residents of New Orleans are still scattered around the country. They are being pushed out of hotels, shelters and housing assistance programs, with nowhere to go. In New Orleans, thousands of good public housing units have been demolished, and one-third of the houses are vacant. Homelessness is high. Charity Hospital is still inaccessible to most of the poor.

In Lebanon, within a year most families were back in their villages or neighborhoods, some still waiting for new housing. A huge construction effort is under way to rebuild the hundreds of villages and neighborhoods, shops, offices, warehouses, hospitals and schools that the Israeli attack demolished. Construction should be completed by December 2009.



Doors remain closed at Charity Hospital in New Orleans.

Today, New Orleans' mostly African-American Lower Ninth Ward "looks like an oversized graveyard." (New York Times, Aug. 31)

Dahia, a Beirut ghetto of a million poor people and the area hardest hit by the Israeli bombing, is filled with high-rise housing under construction. It is being rebuilt much better than before. (See accompanying article). According to the builders, it will have "more lighting and open spaces, traffic reduction through improving roads, new parking lots, and gardens to give the streets and buildings a greater sense of

place and character." People will have a choice of countertops and other variables for their new apartments.

In New Orleans, many public hospitals and schools remain closed. Rents have doubled or tripled.

Dahia boasts a new cardiac specialty hospital donated by Iran. Hospitals there provide free health care. A large restaurant serves traditional Lebanese food at low prices for working families. Clothing, food and other necessities are cheaper in Dahia than in other parts of Beirut.

—Joyce Chediak & Paul Wilcox



HONDURAS

Pres. Zelaya speaks with activists in U.S.

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

It was an unprecedented event for a head of state. While he was in Washington, D.C., Honduran legitimate President Mel Zelaya spoke on the evening of Sept. 2 with 26 anti-coup activists based in the United States.

Roberto Quesada, writer and counselor to the Honduran Mission at the United Nations and Tito Mesa, coordinator of the Proyecto Hondureño in Massachusetts, had organized the call to show support for the struggle in Honduras and have a direct exchange between the president and activists in the U.S.

Besides Zelaya and Quesada, representing the government, the Zelaya-nominated ambassador to the U.S., Eduardo Enrique Reina, was on the call. The U.S.-based activists—mostly Honduran—joined the conversation from Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, California, New Orleans and Florida. Among the non-Honduran, Latino/a and Caribbean activists invited were Teresa Gutiérrez, co-director of the International Action Center, and this writer.

Excerpts from President Zelaya's opening remarks

After the president finished his conversation with resistance leaders in Honduras, he began warmly and without ceremony, "Good evening, this is Mel Zelaya." At his request, participants all introduced themselves and briefly spoke on their activities and efforts inside the

U.S. on behalf of the Honduran people. Each speaker wished the president success and a speedy return to his country and office. In return, Zelaya told us how moved and grateful he was for this important call and the activists' efforts.

"I am determined to struggle tirelessly for this cause. ... My destiny is tied to the people of Honduras," he began.

Mentioning the Bible story of David and Goliath, he said, "We are facing a monster that is torturing the Honduran people and wants to even humiliate the international community. ... They dare to challenge the world to say that they will win over us through the power of their weapons.

"Mr. Micheletti and his gorillas, of which he is one, could not hold out for a couple of hours in the Presidential House if tomorrow he would say that he will give away his weapons to the Red Cross and let the people be the ones who decide who should be in the Presidential House. The people would kick him out of the Presidential House, and it would allow me to return peacefully if he would lay down his arms.

"The people are determined to risk death in the struggle and not allow an abuser to impose his rule. ... I am determined to return and take on whatever risks are necessary. Today I am exhausting the diplomatic route. I hope that tomorrow God illuminates Mrs. Clinton. I think that the prestige of the U.S. and the government of President Obama is at stake. They recommended the Arias Plan and it is impossible that they don't now defend it. If they do not defend it, Latin America

will be critical of President Obama.

"We have a mission as Hondurans, with the support of friends of other nationalities, to return to Honduras, to take back Honduras. We are going to get the golpistas [the military coup plotters] out of the Presidential House. We have to establish an era of peace, prosperity and justice in our country; so that future generations remember you and remember us as those who struggled and put their lives and blood on the line, so that future generations will never again have to endure a regime directed by gorillettis [a Spanish pejorative for Micheletti and his cronies]."

Zelaya began his response to a question on how people living in the U.S. can help by noting that today large and voracious economic sectors are squeezing the rest ever more. "We have one mission, to fight against arms buildup, against militarism in our societies. We should struggle against those who promote war, violence and must proclaim for ourselves a new international order that will allow the value of human beings over that of commodities.

"The struggle should be against all those who try to create those problems in society. ... The world can be a much better place if we defend those principles of peace and equality that our society needs. ... I am totally convinced that if we are able to defeat the golpistas, nobody else in Latin America will dare to force a coup d'état in America."

He concluded by inviting the 26 activists to the Presidential House in Tegucigalpa to celebrate democracy and

freedom upon his return.

Washington bends to international pressure

The following day President Zelaya met with U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to discuss measures to increase pressure on the de facto and illegal government of Roberto Micheletti and the adoption of the six-point Arias Plan, which would allow the safe return of Zelaya to office.

On Sept. 3, State Department spokesperson Ian Kelly wrote: "The Secretary of State has made the decision, consistent with U.S. legislation, recognizing the need for strong measures in light of the continued resistance to the adoption of the San Jose Accord by the de facto regime and continuing failure to restore democratic, constitutional rule to Honduras."

Though the statement stopped short of calling the takeover a military coup, Zelaya and the Honduran resistance welcomed the measures. They cut more than \$30 million in aid to Honduras, including \$9.4 million from the Agency for International Development, \$8.96 million in funds for weapons and military training from the State Department, \$1.7 million in funds for assistance in security, and \$11 million from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The measures also include not recognizing the outcome of the November elections if they are held under the de facto government and the revocation of U.S. visas of some of the coup leaders and supporters.

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An open letter to Caster Semenya

Mokgadi Caster Semenya is a South African runner who won the women's 800-meter gold medal at the 2009 World Championships. She was subsequently challenged by competitors to prove her gender and subjected to sex tests by the International Association of Athletics Federations. Below are excerpts from a commentary by South African gender and political analyst Nomboniso Gasa that first appeared in the Cape Times Daily Star News, Aug. 27. Read the entire commentary at www.workers.org.

First, congratulations on your success; it is no mean achievement. I have been at a loss for words, have felt rage and above all an incredible sadness at what you have been forced to experience.

Looking at your photograph, with the South African flag draped over your shoulders, I was drawn to your grace, dignity and composure. You deserve the accolades, recognition that honor and affirm your discipline and hard work.

I have also been disturbed by the manner in which even those who defend you have taken it upon themselves to define what your struggle is and how best it must be articulated.

Looking at the voices of protest against your treatment, I have felt a rather ambiguous pride that South Africans, in particular, have refused to let this go and took up the battle. I am proud that in our country we have people who are ready to say, "This treatment is not fair. This is humiliating and we shall share the pain and battle together with the person who is the primary target." I said I have ambiguous pride; why is that?

How best can we support you in this struggle? How have you coped with these battles before? It seems from that experience of handling these situations we can



perhaps learn the strategies and coping mechanisms you have deployed. In our own minds we will move from the tendency to see you as a victim and see you as the tenacious warrior you are.

I have also wondered at the dominance of race over gender in the public discourse and wondered whether this is how you would self-represent. In this case as it often is race and gender are inextricably linked. To emphasize one over the other is in itself another form of erasure and imposition of what identity is most important to you.

The tendency to conflate racism and sexism in your case also plays itself out in the dialogue that often refuses to see Black women as having specific struggles which sometimes may be common and at times different from those of Black men. To reduce your experience to a racist incident only, is to silence and erase the historical experience of international competitive sports as generally sexist.

Women from Russia and other European countries have been probed on so-called gender grounds. There belies an assumption based not only on physicality but also on what women can or cannot achieve. Your finishing speed attests to this. One wonders whether had you not achieved such a fine finish, whether the

noise would have been at so high a volume about your gender as it has been.

Sadly, some of the people who have had to shield you from this intrusive exposure have also shown a lack of understanding of the complexity of gender. We know, and many scientists will agree, that there are so many grey areas that even the tests themselves can never fully prove this question. So, let's say one has XX chromosomes, does that make one undoubtedly female? What if in fact the test shows XY chromosomes and yet is female in every other respect? What will have been proven?

Gender and sex are often confused and used interchangeably in ways that are insidious. As in so many other areas of life, one's right for self-identification is in fact the most central aspect of being a free person. The tendency to impose an identity from outside is a result of a patriarchal construction of what gender is. In your case, despite all evidence that your womanhood is beyond doubt for yourself, other signifiers are introduced. How fast can a woman run? How strong can she be?

Why use the word androgynous to defend someone who self-identifies as a woman? Androgynous means somebody who is in fact genderless, to choose a less problematic definition. This is in itself a category of identification deeply embedded in a specific social construction of gender not as neutral as the word may suggest. In your case, you are a woman and self-identify as such, this being an identity with which you were not only born but have also continued to use in the face of humiliating experiences. That should be the end of it.

I have been struck by the resemblance with your grandmother and to some extent your mother. I wonder whether they too at some stage have [had] some of these undermining questions and gazes direct-



ed towards their physical appearance. For those of us who try to think this through, why have we not taken such resemblance as an indication that like in many families, your looks are part of your family traits and heritage—something to be proud of? Why have we needed more explanation than that? Perhaps the answer lies in a much more powerful understanding of what gender actually means.

Perhaps, another major contribution you have made is one that requires a serious leap of imagination—to simply understand that human beings, men and women come in different shades, shapes and sizes.

When one gives narratives of a childhood filled with girl-child chores and being comfortable with playing with boys, in the eye of a storm about one's gender, there is something incredibly defiant and subversive there. In not explaining or justifying yourself, you have asked for no sympathy or understanding. And why should you? There is none to be asked for or given. All we have to give is that which we all require for ourselves—respect for the dignity of another human.

Go then, daughter of the soil, go ahead and achieve much more. Go, knowing that you are in the footsteps of your forebears who rose against their most humble origins and defied all odds. □

Another reason **TO ABOLISH** the death penalty

The death penalty in the United States should be abolished because it functions as a potent agent of racism and class oppression. African Americans and Latino/as represent the majority of those on death row. And executions are reserved almost exclusively for the poor. Ninety percent of those awaiting execution could not afford to hire a trial attorney.

In addition, death penalty abolitionists have known for decades that many of those executed are also innocent. Now the corporate media has finally covered one such case in which recent evidence reveals that another innocent person was executed—and where else but in the state of Texas.

Craig Beyler, a nationally recognized arson expert, wrote in an August report for the Texas Forensic Science Commission that a 1991 fire which killed Todd Willingham's three young daughters was not arson. Willingham was executed for their murder in 2004.

As he lay on the gurney in Huntsville, Willingham had said, "I am an innocent man, convicted of a crime I did not commit. I have been persecuted for 12 years for something I did not do."

Todd Willingham was innocent and there's a simple reason for his 2004 execution: He was poor.

We are taught in school that justice is blind, but in no civics book does it say how expensive it is.

His stepmother, Eugenia Willingham, who raised Todd from the age of 13 months, spoke to hundreds in Austin, Texas, in 2006 at the Seventh Annual March to Abolish the Death Penalty. The marchers had left a letter at the gates to the Governor's Mansion for Gov. Rick Perry, asking him to investigate the case and stop all pending executions so that no other innocent person would be put to death.

Today, Texas may become the first state in the modern era forced to acknowledge that it executed a legally and factually innocent person.

Death penalty activists know the names of many other innocent people who have been executed: Shaka Sankofa, Frances Newton, Carlos de Luna, Joseph Nichols, Ruben Cantu and Carlos Santana, to name but a few.

More than a few innocent people set to be executed are still living on death row and should be exonerated before they, too, are killed by the state: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Troy Davis, Howard Guidry, Cesar Fierro, Jeff Wood, Rodney Reed, Max Soffar, Darlie Routier, Anthony Graves and many more.

Modern legal lynchings

The U.S. was founded on the theft of Native land. It developed riches through the super-exploitation of enslaved Africans. From Reconstruction until the gains made by the Civil Rights Movement, Black people were frequent victims of vicious lynch mobs.

Today's executions are modern-day lynchings—and almost 90 percent of executions take place in former Confederate states.

An innocent Black man in Conroe, Texas, Clarence Brandley, was picked up by cops along with an equally innocent elderly white man in the late summer of 1981 to be questioned about the rape and murder of a white teenager. The sheriff was under pressure to find the perpetrator of this awful crime before school started.

He looked at Brandley and said, "You're the n—er, so you're elected." Brandley spent nine years on death row before being exonerated.

As Shaka Sankofa lay strapped on the gurney in Huntsville on June 22, 2000, he said, "They know I'm innocent. They've got the facts to prove it. ... But they cannot acknowledge my innocence, because to do so would be to publicly admit their guilt."

Sankofa continued, "Slavery couldn't stop us. The lynchings in the South couldn't stop us. This lynching will not stop us tonight. We will go forward. ... It's state-sanctioned lynching, right here in America and right here tonight. Our destiny in this country is freedom and liberation. We will gain it by any means necessary. We must avenge this murder and continue to move forward to stop all executions of the poor and of Black people."

We must put Shaka Sankofa's words into action and abolish the racist and anti-poor death penalty. □

Join us in the fight for a socialist future

Workers World Party

50 Years of Struggle

Save this date—Nov. 14-15
national conference in New York City

Details to come.

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg



A compilation of 25 articles from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper, shows how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love inherited from the colonial and imperial eras. The book shows the Cuban Revolution's trajectory of progress in hard facts. It's a must-read to understand the revolutionary process required to uproot prejudice.

www.Leftbooks.org

A victim of U.S. torture

Free Aafia Siddiqui

By Sara Flounders
New York

Now that the documents recording the systematic torture of thousands of prisoners in secret U.S. prisons have been released to the world media in U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder's Aug. 24 report, the secret documents on the imprisonment and torture of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui must also be released.

Days before Siddiqui, a woman weighing less than 90 pounds, was again forcibly brought into United States District Court in Manhattan on contradictory charges of trying to murder FBI agents in Afghanistan, these documents of what the FBI and CIA are really doing in Afghanistan and in secret prisons around the world were referenced in major news stories for all to read.

Siddiqui has been held in secret detention since she was kidnapped in Pakistan at the age of 30. The now 36-year-old, U.S.-educated, Pakistani neuroscientist continues in court to say that she has been tortured. She has refused to accept visits even from appointed defense lawyers because the brutal and humiliating strip searches that she is subjected to are so personally and culturally degrading and excruciatingly painful.

Siddiqui has wounds and scars from her sternum to her lower abdomen after being shot by U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan. Her charges of being tortured for years are hardly groundless. These acts are documented again and again on every page of the newly-released documents.

Tens of thousands of pages confirm in the most graphic details that CIA interrogators threatened to kill the children of detainees; threatened sexual assaults; threatened bound prisoners with guns and an electric drill; used water boarding against one prisoner 183 times; used shocking into unconsciousness, brutal strip searches, mock executions, confinement in a tiny box and continued slamming of the head.

Holder announced on Aug. 29 the appointment of a special federal prosecutor to investigate the interrogation practices of the CIA. These new documents represent the largest release of information about the Bush administration's once-secret system of capturing terrorism suspects and interrogating them in undisclosed locations around the world.

An ACLU lawsuit compelled the release of the CIA's own 2004 Inspector General's internal report on stomach-turning interrogations. These documents of "enhanced interrogation" tactics were heavily 'redacted' or censored with whole pages blocked out for "security reasons."

This 2004 report shows that the CIA kept detailed observational records on thousands of prisoners and the impact of their torture techniques on the human psyche. They made systematic measurements of the prisoners' reactions to torture. From the censored documents it is clear that medical doctors and psychologists betrayed their professions by monitoring calibrated, incremental increases of torture to bring about excruciating pain, terror, humiliation and shame. The documents make it clear that all tortures were designed to create a systematic emotional and psychological breakdown in the interrogated prisoners.

Held in secret prisons

Aafia Siddiqui is a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and holds a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Brandeis University. She is a deeply devout Muslim, who had been supportive of Muslim charities in Boston. On March 30, 2003, during a trip home to Karachi to visit her mother, she was kidnapped and "disappeared," along with her three children.

Human rights organizations had long

demanding that U.S. and Pakistani intelligence agencies account for her disappearance. Human Rights Watch, a year before she was shot and flown to the U.S., considered her among those held at a "CIA black site"—a secret prison.

U.S. officials denied any knowledge of her for five years. But as far back as April 2003, the Press Trust of India reported that she had been arrested in Karachi and was being questioned by the FBI. U.S. intelligence sources at that time confirmed that Siddiqui was "essentially in the hands of the FBI now."

Siddiqui's family retained U.S. attorney Elaine Whitfield Sharp of Massachusetts to try to discover her location and to serve as their spokeswoman to the media. She had been filing cases seeking information in U.S. courts ever since Siddiqui's disappearance.

Millions of people in Pakistan and throughout the Muslim world, along with many human rights groups, always believed that the U.S. government forces and the Inter Services Intelligence of Pakistan had captured and tortured her and were holding her in secret prisons in Pakistan or Afghanistan. Many believe that she was the prisoner described as the Grey Lady of Bagram Prison at the U.S. Air Base in Afghanistan. Prisoners released from secret detention at Bagram described hearing the continuing howls of a woman prisoner being repeatedly raped and tortured. According to The Daily Times of Pakistan, "The cries of this helpless woman echoed with such torment in the jail that it prompted prisoners to go on hunger strike." (July 7, 2008)

A growing number of media in the region began reporting that Siddiqui had been in Bagram for the last five years, and calls for her release were escalating.

Contradictory charges

On Aug. 4, 2008, the U.S. government suddenly announced that Siddiqui had been arrested on July 17 and charged with attempted murder and assault of U.S. officers and employees. She was then flown to the U.S. in the custody of FBI agents.

Attorney Sharp told the New York Times, "We believe Aafia has been in U.S. custody ever since she disappeared." (Aug. 5, 2008)

In another interview with Action in Solidarity with Asia and the Pacific, she said: "We do know she was at Bagram for a long time. According to my client she was there for years and she was held in American custody; her treatment was horrendous." (www.asia-pacific-action.org, Aug. 7)

A series of contrary reports claimed that U.S. soldiers, trying to take her from Afghan police who had arrested her in Ghazni, a city in central Afghanistan, had shot her after she managed to grab an M-4 rifle and shoot at two FBI agents. Neither agent was wounded.

How this 90-pound prisoner surrounded by both U.S. soldiers and Afghan police accomplished this was never explained. Other reports were that she was shot in the abdomen because U.S. soldiers feared she was a suicide bomber.

Neither the Afghan nor U.S. reports of how, when or even where Siddiqui was captured correspond with each other. The U.S. version claims she had maps of New York City targets in her handbag. Afghan officials claim the maps were of Afghan targets. What is known is that Siddiqui has been horribly brutalized and has been held in total isolation now for a year in U.S. prisons with terrible, life-threatening injuries.

The case has generated outrage all over the Muslim world. Dr. Siddiqui has become a symbol of the thousands of those who have "disappeared" and been tortured by expanding U.S. wars in the region.

Dr. Siddiqui has been brought into court in a wheelchair. This writer heard her tell the

NATO's mass slaughter of Afghan civilians puts war in the headlines

By John Catalinotto

As the decision day for escalating the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan grows closer, a mass slaughter of Afghans in northern Kunduz province has put the war on center stage worldwide and sharpened popular opposition within the NATO countries, including inside the U.S. itself.

The events threaten another major challenge for the administration of President Barack Obama, which in the coming weeks will have to reach a decision regarding Gen. Stanley McChrystal's expected request for as many as 20,000-40,000 additional combat troops plus thousands of "contractors" to provide logistical support. McChrystal commands NATO forces in Afghanistan.

If the reports in the media regarding the mass slaughter are accurate, events unfolded as follows.

Fighting units from the Afghan resistance seized two NATO fuel-supply tanker trucks. Unable to move the trucks across a river, the resistance left the trucks on a small island. Civilians and resistance fighters were then unloading the fuel in small containers.

A U.S. plane doing reconnaissance spotted the trucks and the people around them. A NATO unit's commander in the region said later he considered the fuel a threat to the safety of his unit. Without knowing who was around the truck, he requested a strike on the trucks.

Then, early on Sept. 4, U.S. warplanes hit each truck with a 500-pound bomb. The fuel exploded and burned quickly, killing or wounding hundreds of people

anywhere on the island. Many were civilians, some of them children, who had come to siphon off fuel.

According to a Sept. 7 report on BBC news, the Taliban, which is the leading force in the resistance, said that 150 people were killed, and demanded a United Nations and human rights investigation into the air strike.

For the Afghan people, this was another in a long series of tragedies that U.S. intervention has imposed on them over the last 30 years. It began with the Carter administration's subversion of the pro-socialist government in Kabul in 1979, followed by over a decade of CIA support for the most backward and reactionary forces in the country. It has reached a new peak since the 2001 U.S. invasion.

This tragic event, however, also illustrates the current political situation and will have broad political consequences.

The German commander of the NATO unit involved defended his decision to call in the bombing raid. He said he needed to protect the German occupation soldiers in his command. German Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung has backed up the commander, saying that the Taliban is targeting German troops because of the upcoming national election in Germany.

The bombing confronts the conservative-led incumbent regime of Chancellor Angela Merkel with a new problem just when she had hoped to keep the Afghan question on the back burner. The risk stems not from Merkel's partner Social Democrats, who also quietly support German military participation in the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan, but from

other more progressive parties and from the German population.

The relatively new party called "The Left," which did well enough in recent local elections to possibly form two state governments, has opened a struggle against the Afghan war in the Bundestag (Parliament). It has also called anti-war demonstrations at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate and in other cities.

In Germany and in many of the other European NATO member states, as well as in Canada, there is growing opposition to the Afghan adventure. The massive deaths from the bombing will likely set off a new wave of protests.

Role of McChrystal and the U.S.

The mass slaughter of civilians has put Gen. McChrystal on the defensive. McChrystal had issued orders to avoid attacks from a distance that could alienate the Afghans. The general made a point of risking a trip to the bombing site. He then publicly expressed concern for the victims.

This doesn't mean that Gen. McChrystal is kinder and gentler than the German commander. It's simply that McChrystal's vision of counter-insurgency war comes from his experience in Iraq: The brutality must be hands-on and more discriminating in choosing its targets.

According to an article by Tom Hayden in the March 13 issue of *The Nation*, McChrystal ran a program in Iraq where operatives from units like the so-called Delta Force or Navy Seals went on secret missions at night to slit the throats of resistance leaders. The general considers this approach more cost-effective than carpet-bombing an entire village.

A recent action by units of the U.S. 10th Mountain Division—they raided a Swedish-run hospital in Shaniz in Wardak Province in east-central Afghanistan, tied up the staff and sought out guerrilla fighters among the wounded—fits into McChrystal's vision. He may not be as quick to apologize for this U.S. war crime as he was to express concern over the air strike the German commander called in.

On Labor Day the Obama administration's focus was on its health-care initia-

tive. But Afghanistan keeps pressing itself into the headlines and the op-ed columns. Unlike his critical position toward the Iraq intervention, President Obama has called the Afghan intervention "necessary" and tried to justify it politically.

Militarists, Pentagon generals and the Republican right wing who attack Obama for everything else stand behind him regarding Afghanistan—as long as he holds to his position that the war is necessary and escalates the U.S. military intervention. In contrast, the popular mood, especially among Democrats and Obama voters, is that the U.S. should find a way out of the war. This means the administration must either escalate the war and alienate its supporters or refuse to escalate and become the scapegoat for the "loss" of Afghanistan to the Afghans.

Those opposing the war from outside the administration must debunk the main myths used to justify the war.

First of all, the 9/11 attack is repeatedly used as a pretext for the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. The truth is, no Taliban fighters and no Afghans were among those alleged to have carried out that action.

The second major pretext is that U.S. and European intervention is somehow improving the horrible conditions faced by women in Afghanistan. The truth is that Afghanistan's occupation government has passed laws reducing the already meager protections for women, making them virtual slaves of their husbands under the law. The only real advances for women came during the 1978-1992 pro-socialist and secular government, which the CIA did everything in its power to overthrow and finally succeeded.

The third pretext is that the world's "democracies" are bringing democracy to Afghanistan. The blatantly fraudulent election, held under occupation, is currently debunking that myth.

In the U.S., a series of demonstrations has been called for early and mid-October protesting the continued U.S. and NATO presence in Afghanistan. For progressive people in this country, these actions are the places to be.

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Continued from page 10

court in her weak voice that she was tortured, kept in extreme isolation and forced to listen to threats on the lives of her children. She was shown a picture of her son lying in a pool of his own blood.

Siddiqui's 12-year-old son has recently been released to her family. Her 11-year-old daughter is still unaccounted for. It is believed that her youngest, an infant at the time of Siddiqui's disappearance, died in custody.

Court hearings on Siddiqui's sanity ruled that she was fit to stand trial, although she was found to be delusional and depressed. U.S. attorney William Ruskin stated to the court that information about where she was for five years is "not relevant to these proceedings."

Pakistan's parliament unanimously passed a resolution that demanded immediate information on the whereabouts of Siddiqui's three children and demanded her immediate repatriation to Pakistan. A parliamentary delegation came to visit her. Facing growing mass outrage in Pakistan, the government allocated \$2 million for U.S. lawyers to aid in her defense.

At a Sept. 3 court appearance, Siddiqui's trial date was set for Nov. 2. The courtroom was full of Pakistani and other Muslim supporters. Activists from the Pakistan USA Freedom Forum and other organizations have mobilized on days when Dr. Siddiqui is brought into court.

In addition to Elaine Sharp, the lawyer hired by the family, the lawyers hired by the Pakistani government are Linda Moreno and Charles Swift. Another lawyer, Chad Hadgar, will assist the team, as will the court-appointed defense attorney, Dawn Cardi. Moreno was a lawyer for Dr. Sami al-Arian, a Palestinian unjustly imprisoned in the U.S.

The legal team was appointed over

Siddiqui's rejection of all lawyers. Linda Moreno said in a Sept. 3 press briefing that she felt that the legal team would have to earn Dr. Siddiqui's trust because: "After what she has been through she has no trust for the whole system. What has been done to Dr. Siddiqui is disgusting, degrading and humiliating. This is a Guantánamo case outside of Guantánamo. ... Dr. Siddiqui has been treated worse than the detainees at Guantánamo. ... We are confident that the evidence in this case will show that Dr. Siddiqui harmed no one. To the contrary, this 90-pound mother of three was shot and wounded herself, the alleged circumstances of which are not supported by evidence. Dr. Siddiqui harmed no one. She is innocent of these charges."

This is a case that must be taken up in full solidarity by the entire progressive movement, including the women's movement, the movement for immigrant rights and the broad movement against U.S. racism and war.

The demand for Siddiqui's freedom must be combined with the demand for the release of all the secret documents on Siddiqui's long imprisonment. The 130,000 pages of documents released by Holder confirm that the most detailed records were kept, with Nazi-like meticulousness, on the wrenching torture and racist abuse of countless prisoners held in U.S. secret prisons.

The case of Dr. Aafia Siddiqui exposes the whole sordid torturous role of the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan and the widening war in Pakistan. Support for her freedom and return to her family in Pakistan is a basic demand for human rights and justice for a woman who has been horrendously abused.

A rally to support Siddiqui is planned for Nov. 2 in front of U.S. District Court, 500 Pearl Street in Manhattan. □

LESLIE FEINBERG

New book, birthday celebrated



PHOTOS: ALEJANDRO GARCIA

Buffalo Workers World members pay tribute to Leslie Feinberg, shown speaking.

The 60th birthday of Workers World newspaper's managing editor, Leslie Feinberg, was celebrated at an event on Sept. 5 in Syracuse, N.Y., that also served to launch Feinberg's latest book, "Rainbow Solidarity in Defense of Cuba" (available at leftbooks.com). The internationally-known transgender activist and author's latest work challenges imperialist propaganda against socialist Cuba by showing the trajectory of progress in LGBT liberation since the island nation's 1959 revolution.

The well-attended event held at the ArtRage Gallery, dubbed a celebration of "a life of love and struggle," honored the many years of Feinberg's unwavering participation in the fight for LGBT liberation, in solidarity with Palestine and people's struggles around the world, and in defense of socialism. Go to <http://www.transgenderwarrior.org/>.

—LeiLani Dowell

Recuperación sin empleos: El único remedio es la lucha obrera

Por Fred Goldstein

¿Adivinen qué? Ha habido una pequeña alza en las ganancias de algunas corporaciones. A las corporaciones y a los bancos más grandes les está yendo un poco mejor. Así que los expertos ven una "recuperación".

Sin embargo, esto no es una gran sorpresa.

El gobierno dio a los bancos y a la industria automovilística billones de dólares en rescate. No es de extrañar que estén mejorando.

Si Washington le diera \$1,2 billones (millon millones) de dólares en efectivo a un programa genuino de empleos, en vez de dárselos a la AIG, Citigroup, Bank of America, Wells Fargo y al resto de los ladrones, los 30 millones de trabajadores/as que ahora se encuentran sin empleos o sub empleados/as, también estarían mucho mejor.

Si el gobierno gastara \$10 o \$12 billones de dólares para pagar las deudas impagables de los/as trabajadores/as y garantizara sus préstamos de la misma manera en que ha hecho para Wall Street, los/as trabajadores/as aún seguirían explotados/as y mal pagados/as, pero las cosas no estarían tan malas.

En cambio, hay 30 millones de trabajadores/as desempleados/as o sub empleados/as, con una tasa de desempleo a niveles de depresión en las comunidades africana-americanas y latinas, y las cosas continúan poniéndose peor, no mejor, para ellos/as y sus familias.

1.000 solicitudes para 30 empleos

Una prueba de cuán difícil es para los/as obreros/as encontrar empleos, especialmente para los/as trabajadores/as africano-americanos/as, fue revelada en un artículo sobre el desempleo en Uniontown de Alabama, cuyo condado que lo rodea, Perry County, es muy pobre y casi el 70 por ciento es población negra. A Uniontown se le había pagado \$3 millones de dólares para verter miles de toneladas de cenizas que se derramaron en un sitio al oriente de Tennessee el pasado mes de diciembre.

En un anuncio se dijo que este contrato crearía 30 empleos en un condado cuya tasa de desempleo es del 17 por ciento. La compañía Arrowhead Landfill dejó de tomar solicitudes después de que mil personas se presentaran. (New York Times, 29 de agosto)

La situación en Perry County es como la situación en Michigan, Ohio, Rhode Island, California, Carolina del Norte, Nevada y condados y ciudades por todo el país. Un estimado conservador es que por todo el país hay seis personas desempleadas por cada empleo disponible y las cosas se están poniendo peor.

Aumentan las ganancias cortando empleos

Son los despidos masivos de trabajadores/as por los capitalistas lo que está detrás de la leve y temporal alza en las ganancias de las empresas y no una renovada actividad en las ventas.

"El mercado subió este verano y está en su máximo del año", publicó el periódico Wall Street Journal el 31 de agosto, "estimulado en gran parte por ganancias del segundo trimestre mayores de lo que se esperaba. Pero el motor significativo de la buena noticia fue el recorte en los costos. Muchas compañías tuvieron ven-

tas decepcionantes".

Los empresarios se están enfrentando a una contradicción: "Uno no puede simplemente reducir los costos para siempre para poder tener ganancias sostenibles", dijo un estratega de la firma de investigaciones de inversiones, Zack Investment Research. "Se necesitan ingresos para crecer [en ganancias]".

Los empresarios cuentan con las ventas para obtener ganancias. Hacen dinero del sudor y sangre de los/as trabajadores/as, vendiendo lo que los/as trabajadores/as producen. Pero para aumentar las ganancias, los patronos han recortado los salarios, reducido la fuerza laboral, disminuido las horas de trabajo y los beneficios. Mientras cada compañía trata de aumentar sus ganancias recortando la mano de obra, esta tendencia inevitablemente profundiza y amplía la pobreza y las dificultades.

"La reducción del costo" es una palabra en clave que significa despidos, congelación de salarios, recortes de salarios y de horas de trabajo. Temiendo bajas en las ventas, los empresarios también recortan los inventarios, lo que resulta en menos órdenes. A su vez, menos órdenes significa más desempleo o sub empleo.

Incrementan ejecuciones hipotecarias, se propagan ciudades de tiendas de campaña

A pesar de que se habla de recuperación y la reactivación del mercado inmobiliario, las ejecuciones hipotecarias están aumentando y empeorando al profundizarse la crisis en el desempleo. Hubo 360.000 ejecuciones de hipotecas en julio, un aumento del 7 por ciento del de junio y 32 por ciento más que el año anterior. Una cifra récord de 13,6 por ciento de los hogares, se encuentra en ejecución hipotecaria o retrasada en sus pagos de hipoteca. Cada vez más las ejecuciones hipotecarias son en hipotecas seguras de trabajadores/as que han perdido su empleo.

Al perder los/as trabajadores/as sus empleos, aumentan los/as sin techo y ciudades de tiendas de campaña están surgiendo por todo el país. Ante el temor de una rebelión de masas, muchos municipios están legalizando estas ciudades. Ejemplo de ello son Nashville en Tennessee, Ontario (cerca de Los Ángeles), Ventura y Sacramento en California; Lacy en Washington y Champaign en Illinois. Estas son algunas de las muchas localidades que ya proveen servicios a las personas sin hogar o permiten que las instituciones de beneficencia lo hagan.

La Ciudad de Nueva York y Seattle por otro lado, han tratado de reprimir el creciente movimiento de gente sin techo.

En Nashville, en una noche cualquiera hay 4.000 personas sin hogar, según las autoridades de la ciudad, y sólo 785 camas en albergues. En la actualidad hay por lo menos 30 campamentos de tiendas en Nashville.

David Olson, de 47 años de edad, es típico de la nueva población sin hogar. Él y su esposa terminaron viviendo bajo un puente de carretera en Nashville después de que perdió su empleo en una fábrica de tubos de cemento en Iowa. Vinieron a Nashville para un trabajo inexistente de construcción. "Tengo cinco años de experiencia en carpintería y 10 años construyendo techos y no puedo encontrar un trabajo". (Wall Street Journal, 11 de agosto) La ciudad y las organizaciones sin fines de

lucro encontraron viviendas para 25 personas. David Olson no era uno de ellas.

Esta es la respuesta para las personas sin techo en el país capitalista más rico del mundo. Deja que las masas desalojadas vivan en tiendas de campaña en lugar de proporcionar viviendas, lo que debe ser un derecho fundamental de todas las personas.

El desempleo lleva a hipotecas fallidas. Es indicativo del resto de la crisis inmobiliaria y del endeudamiento excesivo de todo tipo que 84 bancos ya hayan fracasado este año. Además, hay 416 bancos, con activos de \$299 miles de millones de dólares, en la lista de la Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation en peligro de fracasar. La FDIC tiene sólo \$10 miles de millones restantes en su fondo para hacer frente a los bancos insolventes.

En lugar de ayudar a pagar a las personas con problemas hipotecarios, lo que mantendría a los bancos solventes, la FDIC ha gastado \$40 mil millones tomando bancos insolventes y fusionando muchos de éstos con otros bancos.

La FDIC ha creado "acciones de pérdidas" en la que dejan que los bancos más fuertes asuman el control de otros más débiles y garantizan desde el 80 hasta un máximo del 95 por ciento de las pérdidas potenciales de los préstamos malos de bienes raíces. Sería la medida más directa y eficiente el usar las decenas de miles de millones de dólares para garantizar el pago de los/as hipotecas a los/as propietarios/as de viviendas, mantenerles en sus hogares, evitar que los precios de la vivienda caigan y mantener los vecindarios sin que se deterioren. Pero la FDIC está manipulando el proceso para que los tiburones bancarios se vuelvan más fuertes al devorar los bancos más débiles.

'La madre de todas las recuperaciones sin empleos'

En lo que se refiere a la clase obrera, bajo la crisis económica está la crisis de desempleo. Cada vez está más claro que el sistema capitalista, en su estado actual de desarrollo, no puede resolver la creciente crisis masiva de desempleo.

Un artículo de Prensa Asociada informó el 24 de agosto: "Tantos empleos se han perdido, casi siete millones desde que comenzó la recesión en diciembre de 2007, que la tasa de desempleo seguirá estando elevada mucho después de que la economía comience a recuperarse".

"Muchos/as estadounidenses desempleados/as han perdido el seguro por desempleo y beneficios por cesantía y están agotando sus reservas de ahorros. Otros/as están ahorrando más y gastando menos, todavía preocupados/as por la peor crisis económica desde la Gran Depresión".

El comunicado citó a Alan Sinai, un respetado analista burgués quien dijo: "Ésta será la madre de todas las recuperaciones sin empleos".

La gran mayoría de los despidos durante la presente crisis han sido despidos permanentes. Lo que significa que de los siete millones de empleo destruidos hasta ahora, la mayoría no se recuperará. El promedio de la deuda en cada hogar es alrededor de \$10.000. El desempleo sigue subiendo. Los sueldos y beneficios disminuyen. Las quebras personales están aumentando.

Las compañías de seguros de salud, las compañías farmacéuticas y los hospitales privados que funcionan para sacar ganancias, están desgastando los beneficios de

cuidado de salud de las 250 millones de personas que están cubiertas por planes de seguros. El número de personas sin seguro de salud está constantemente subiendo al crecer el desempleo y ahora está cerca de 50 millones de personas.

En total, no hay probabilidad de una restauración capitalista verdadera, una donde los/as trabajadores/as regresen al trabajo; donde se acabe la ansiedad e inseguridad impuestas por el miedo a los despidos y cierres de fábricas y donde cesen las demandas por concesiones; donde los salarios suban a un nivel que sostenga una vida sin penurias y donde los trabajos estén seguros.

El sueldo anual promedio del 80 por ciento de la clase trabajadora ha disminuido a \$33.000 al año, esto es uno y medio el nivel oficial de pobreza (Business Week, 27 de agosto). Si no hay resistencia mientras los/as trabajadores/as están forzados/as a competir cada vez más uno/a con el/la otro/a en pos de empleos, los sueldos disminuirán, los sindicatos se debilitarán, y la fuerza colectiva de la clase trabajadora se debilitará.

La lucha de clases independiente y unida es la única forma de superar esto

La única manera de superar esta crisis es que se unan en la lucha la clase trabajadora y todos/as los/as oprimidos/as. El tiempo de esperar por el liderazgo del Partido Demócrata para revertir el destino de los/as trabajadores/as debe terminar. El tiempo de esperar que el capitalismo se restaure y vuelva en auge ha terminado.

El movimiento sindicalista debe unirse a las comunidades; los/as que están organizados/as en uniones deben unirse con los/as no organizados/as; los/as que tienen trabajo deben unirse con los/as desempleados/as. Los/as trabajadores/as nacidos/as en los Estados Unidos deben unirse a los/as inmigrantes, incluyendo a los/as indocumentados/as. Los/as trabajadores/as blancos/as deben rechazar el racismo y las divisiones. Esta es la única forma de construir un movimiento poderoso capaz de cambiar el estado de cosas.

Éste es exactamente el objetivo del Movimiento Pro Rescate del Pueblo (Bail Out the People Movement) y decenas de organizaciones auspiciadoras que están construyendo una movilización masiva para una Marcha para Empleos en Pittsburgh el 20 de septiembre para protestar la reunión de los G-20, los veinte gobiernos ricos que se van a reunir para tratar de reforzar el sistema de ganancias que desangra a los/as trabajadores/as del mundo.

Habrá un militante Campamento de Tiendas de campaña que estará en solidaridad con los/as desempleados/as a partir del fin de semana de 19 y 20 de septiembre culminando en la Marcha para Empleos el 20 de septiembre.

Las buenas noticias son que a fines de agosto los sindicatos de Trabajadores/as del Acero (Steelworkers) y el sindicato Eléctricos Unidos/as (United Electrical), que tienen sus oficinas centrales en Pittsburgh, han respaldado formalmente la Marcha para Empleos, la cual ya está también encontrando apoyo en la comunidad africana-americana de Pittsburgh.

Vayan ustedes. Declaren que un trabajo o un ingreso es un derecho. Si tiene empleo, luche para retenerlo. Si no tiene trabajo, luche para conseguir uno. □