

WORKERS WORLD

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Longest economic downturn in 70 years

JOBS PROGRAM NEEDED NOW

By Fred Goldstein

The grim numbers are in. In September, 263,000 more jobs were lost. Official unemployment edged closer to 10 percent, going from 9.7 to 9.8. This was larger than predicted by capitalist economists and is the result of 21 consecutive months of economic downturn, the longest streak in 70 years.

In addition, the percentage of jobs lost, compared to the total work force, is 5.8 percent, the largest since 1946, when military contractors laid off workers en masse after World War II.

But there is more. The official unemployment rate would have been higher than 10 percent—except that 571,000 workers dropped out of the work force and therefore were not counted among the unemployed. In fact, so many workers have stopped looking, after repeatedly finding no jobs, that today 615,000 fewer workers are counted as part of the work force, compared to a year ago. (The statistics cited in this article come from the Economic Policy Institute's Jobs Picture report of Oct. 2, 2009.)

The only way the work force can shrink while the population grows is if massive numbers of workers give up looking for work. In fact, more than one-third of the 15.1 million officially unemployed—some 5.4 million—have been out of work for more than six months. In September alone 450,000 jobless workers reached this category.

Since the downturn started in December 2007, 7.2 million jobs have been officially lost. But the Department of Labor will be revising this figure upward, to 8 million, due to a so-called "benchmark revision." Apparently, the model used to calculate job losses during the 12 months ending in March missed 824,000 layoffs!

The government estimates that, because of population growth, 127,000 new jobs are needed each month just to keep up with the growth of the work force. So in reality this downturn, which is now 21 months old, has resulted in a deficit of 10.7 million jobs.

To get back to pre-recession levels, it would take the creation of an average of 573,000 jobs every month for the next two years. That's the equivalent of opening 200 to 250 brand-new auto plants each month for two years, just to absorb the unemployed.

These figures do not take into account the 9.2 million workers on forced part-time or the 2.2 million officially classified as discouraged workers. Including them would bring the total official unemployment rate to 17 percent—or more than one-sixth of the entire work force.

These numbers are grim for the workers. But for the bosses, the numbers are cheery. Profits are up, especial-

WORKERS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

- Solidarity in Michigan 5
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ly bank profits, and according to testimony by former Federal Reserve System chair Alan Greenspan, the capitalist economy is on a path to grow 3 percent this quarter. (Interview on This Week with George Stephanopoulos, ABC-TV, Oct. 5)

Greenspan: 'This is what a recovery looks like'

Greenspan, architect of the financial bubble and the ensuing housing bubble, declared in the same interview, "The job report was pretty awful, no matter how

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Fired Boston hotel workers greet March for Jobs as it arrives at the Hyatt.

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

With President Zelaya encircled by military U.S. activists embark on a fact-finding trip to Honduras

By John Catalinotto
New York

Oct. 6—Reports from Honduras alternated today between a possible opening of negotiations to resolve the crisis brought about by the June 28 coup and continued repression against the mass resistance movement. Meanwhile, a delegation of human rights activists from the United States was preparing to leave Oct. 7 for a fact-finding mission to Tegucigalpa, the Central American country's capital.

President Manuel Zelaya, from his asylum in the besieged Brazilian embassy in Tegucigalpa, said that the coup regime of Roberto Micheletti must restore civil liberties in Honduras and agree on his return to

the presidency before the negotiations could continue. "I am ready to sit down face-to-face with the dictator [Micheletti] when he decides to sign the Arias plan," Zelaya said, referring to a plan proposed by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica that the coup regime has so far rejected. (AFP, Oct. 5)

The coup regime, which represents the 13-family Honduran oligarchy and rests its power on the bayonets of the Pentagon-trained Honduran army, announced Oct. 5 that it would rescind its decree from a week earlier suspending the Constitution. However, the two local media outlets that broadcast stories reflecting the view of the majority of Hondurans who oppose the coup are still closed down.

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On the anniversary of Peekskill Concert Remembering Paul Robeson

By Brenda Sandburg

Sixty years ago Paul Robeson—fearless civil rights advocate, renowned actor and magnificent singer—came to Peekskill, N.Y., to give a concert. The event became historic in the struggle against racism and fascism when concertgoers were attacked by a racist mob.

On Sept. 4, 1949, about 20,000 people came to Peekskill to hear Robeson sing. People's Artists, a folk group led by Pete Seeger, organized the event. They had first tried to hold the concert two weeks earlier at the Lakeland Picnic Grounds. But as a small group was setting up the event, they were attacked by hundreds of vigilantes armed with clubs, brass knuckles and rocks. When people began showing up for the concert, the police turned them away.

The organizers rescheduled the event. This time they had protection from unions, who organized defense. During the concert, hundreds of volunteers stood in a circle around the concert grounds, blocking the racists from getting in. But when people left, the police forced everyone to take a narrow road where a mob was waiting.

Seeger gave an account of what happened in a video clip posted on YouTube (www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pgyACdTrM). He said 900 police, deputies and state troopers allowed a mob to line up along a four-mile road, the only exit for concertgoers. The mob threw rocks, overturned cars, dragged people out and beat them up. About 140 people were injured, including one trade unionist who lost an eye.

"The police stood by and laughed," said Seeger, whose windshield was smashed in the melee. "Hoodlum gangs went on a night-long reign of terror all through Westchester County to 210th Street and Broadway. Then police moved in to the picnic grounds to beat up trade union guards."

Rod Lugo was among those at the concert. He was 16 at the time and volunteered as a messenger, running between the stage and the outside perimeter. He said he was impressed by the defense the labor unions organized. "Nobody got on that property," he told Workers World.

But after the concert, the police enabled the racists to attack. "It was one of the ugliest things I've ever seen," Lugo said. "People picked up rocks and threw them" and the police started beating the concertgoers.

His brother, Ed Lugo, then 17, was among those guarding the outer perimeter: "Our job was to keep the circle connected all around" the audience. "We went there to assure the concert went on and it did."

He and the other guards were among the last to leave. From his post he could hear the assault begin: "You could smell [and] taste the absolute danger in the air. You could hear screaming and glass breaking as rocks



Concert goers taunted by racists.

hit the cars and buses." He recalled that a Black veteran was among those attacked. People threw rocks at him "and drew a lot of blood."

The violence was a racist, anti-communist assault directed at Robeson, who was beloved by progressives for his fierce commitment to civil rights and support of socialism.

Robeson was one of the most extraordinary people in the 20th century. He first gained recognition as a star football player at Rutgers University (he was posthumously inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame) and was the valedictorian of his graduating class. Robeson obtained a law degree from Columbia Law School in 1932 and then became a renowned actor and famed baritone. He starred in 13 films and was in numerous Broadway productions, including Othello, which holds the record as the longest-running Shakespearean play on Broadway.

Robeson, who spoke 13 languages, was also one of the most prominent voices for social justice. He fought against racism and in support of colonized people in Africa, Latin America and Asia. In 1951 he and fellow African-American activist William Patterson, head of the Civil Rights Congress, presented a petition to the United Nations entitled "We Charge Genocide: The Crime of Government Against the Negro People." The petition stated that in the 85 years since the end of slavery more than 10,000 Blacks had been lynched and documented hundreds of executions.

Robeson became a target of the McCarthyite anti-communist witch-hunt and was viciously persecuted by the FBI and State Department, which revoked his passport in the 1950s. But his commitment to justice for oppressed people was unshakeable. And Peekskill is synonymous with Robeson and the battle against racism and oppression.

Seeger paid tribute to this spirit in a song he wrote shortly after the event: "As we held the line at Peekskill/ We will hold it everywhere... / We will hold the line forever/ Till there's freedom ev'rywhere." □

Swim club outrage

Commission finds 'racial animus'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Charges of racial discrimination by parents of 56 African-American and Latino/a children against an all-white swim club in a Philadelphia suburb were backed up in a report by the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission.

On June 29 several children from Creative Steps day camp reported hearing racist comments after they arrived at the club for a scheduled swim. When the pre-paid contract that allowed the northeast Philadelphia day camp to use the pool was revoked after the children's first visit, the camp director made the story public, eliciting a national outcry.

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TEXAS

Governor tries to cover up execution of innocent man

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Texas Gov. Rick Perry not only executed an innocent Cameron Todd Willingham in 2004, Perry is now scrambling to cover it up until after his bid for reelection.

This scenario is now being put forth in the media, on blogs, in editorials and by lawyers, politicians and death penalty activists. The case has drawn national attention since the release of expert testimony solicited by the Texas Forensic Science Commission, followed by the September publication of a widely cited New Yorker article. The author of the TFSC report found no arson and therefore no murder.

"There can no longer be any doubt that an innocent person has been executed," stated Barry Scheck, co-director of the Innocence Project, on Aug. 31.

But two days before the report by noted arson expert Dr. Craig Beyler was to be discussed at a meeting of the Texas Forensic Science Commission, Perry replaced the commission's chair and two of its members.

The chair was replaced with Williamson

County District Attorney John Bradley, who the Oct. 1. Dallas Morning News calls "one of the most conservative, hard-line prosecutors in Texas." The Sept. 30 Austin American Statesman called Bradley "a tough-on-crime, politically connected conservative."

The new chair's first action was to cancel the hearing scheduled for Oct. 2. There is no indication if the hearing will ever be held, after it commissioned Beyler and spent tens of thousands of dollars on the report.

The timing, according to the Oct. 1 Dallas Morning News, disturbed the replaced chair, Austin lawyer Sam Bassett. "In my view, we should not fail to investigate important forensic issues in cases simply because there might be political ramifications."

Willingham's case was detailed in the Sept. 7 New Yorker article "Trial by Fire." Reporter David Grann leads readers through the case to the conclusion that an innocent man was executed for a crime he did not commit.

Willingham's execution took place under Perry's watch. It is now likely that this will be the first posthumous exoneration of a person put to death in the United States.

Todd Willingham was sent to death row for the murder of his 2-year-old daughter Amber and his 1-year-old twin daughters Kameron and Karmon, who died in a house fire two days before Christmas in 1991 in Corsicana, Texas. He and his daughters were asleep that morning when his wife left to pick up holiday presents for the girls from the Salvation Army.

Before Willingham went to trial, he was offered a plea deal, which he refused. His lawyer, who thought he was guilty, was shocked and pleaded with family members to persuade him to change his mind. Willingham refused: "I ain't gonna plead to something I didn't do, especially killing my own kids." He went on trial in August 1992 and was sent to death row.

For 12 years Willingham tried to figure out how to prove his innocence and find out who had set the fire.

Months before his execution, Willingham's case came to the attention of acclaimed scientist and fire investigator Dr. Gerald Hurst. Dr. Hurst, who is widely credited with setting the scientific standard in forensic arson investigations, reviewed the evidence and determined that the conclusions reached by prosecution experts about the fire's origin were not supported by science.

This renowned scientist shredded the so-called scientific evidence and made it clear that Willingham was innocent. Hurst's report was on Gov. Perry's desk when Perry refused to stop the execution in 2004.



Cameron Todd Willingham and daughter Amber.

From CNN to the New York Times to the Houston Chronicle, Perry is being roundly criticized. But when his office was contacted about the removal of three people from the science commission, his spokesperson said it was "business as usual."

"Executions in Texas are also business as usual, but that doesn't make them acceptable," said Njeri Shakur, an organizer with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement. "Perry's cover-up of the truth in Todd's case is chilling."

"But the cover-up is also bringing more attention to the wrongs of the death penalty so the governor is inadvertently aiding the fight to abolish the death penalty. We have a slogan that says the death penalty system is broken and should be shut down. He is proving our slogan to be so true!"

Todd Willingham's step-mother, Eugenia, and other family members will attend the 10th Annual March to Stop Executions on Oct. 24 at the state capitol in Austin, Texas.

For further information on Willingham's case and the fight against the death penalty, visit www.camerontoddwillingham.com and www.marchforabolition.org. □

Swim club outrage

Continued from page 2

The state's investigation found that "racial animus ... and the racially coded comments" by club members at the Valley Club in Huntingdon Valley, Montgomery County, were the reasons the club revoked Creative Steps' contract. The 33-page report was released Sept. 22 by an attorney representing four of the campers.

After initially allowing the children to swim, the club refunded their money with the following explanation: "Having so many unskilled swimmers at one time represented a safety hazard." The HRC report says that was a lie, noting that large groups had used the club before.

The report examined Valley Club leaders' actions, including members' e-mails, both before and after Creative Steps' trip to the pool. According to the report, after the campers left, one club member threatened to rethink his membership and e-mails circulated about the issue.

In one e-mail board member George Whitehill wrote, "Race is an issue since every e-mail of complaint mentioned race, although stating that race had nothing to do with the complaint. It only takes one out of the 120 parents to make this an issue, and at no cost to them."

Whitehill and Bill Dymowski, another board member, argued against canceling Creative Steps' contract and resigned from the board when club director John Duesler announced he was "pulling the plug on the camp."

One club member, Walt Slowinski, wrote to other members under the racially charged subject line of "bussing" that "when we joined we assumed that this was a private club not a club for hire or some sort of social program."

The report also cited the actions of club member Michelle Flynn, an elementary school teacher, who was heard by one of the campers as saying: "What are all these Black kids doing here?" Commission investigators noted that Flynn and another teacher, Deborah Mindel, who work at

the school where Creative Steps is housed, allegedly told other club members that one of the boys was "a known thief" who had stolen a teacher's cell phone. The state's report noted that none of the campers had ever been "charged, disciplined, suspended, or expelled" for theft at school.

Flynn and Mindel were among several white parents who removed their children from the pool after the Creative Steps campers entered. Flynn wrote in an e-mail sent to another member: "This is not the community where these kids live. ... I don't feel comfortable with my children even going to the bathroom during this time."

After the report was made public, parents demonstrated outside the Carnell Elementary School to demand that the Philadelphia School District fire Flynn and Mindel for their roles in the Valley Club incident. Christine Pembleton, mother of the youth Flynn accused of stealing, expressed her outrage over how her son was treated by his former teacher. "My son is not a thief," Pembleton said, "and I am going to go after them. ... She doesn't deserve to teach." (Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 23)

The Human Relations Commission study said that none of the club's paid members in 2008 or 2009 was African American. It also noted that Valley Club efforts to expand its membership by recruiting through direct mail were "mainly directed at areas with overwhelmingly Caucasian populations." It made no efforts to market to adjacent areas with significant African-American populations.

The Commission ordered Valley Club to pay a \$50,000 civil penalty for their discrimination against one child whose parents filed the complaint with the commission. The club was also ordered to pay other damages, including legal expenses.

Other parents may file cases, so damages against Valley Club could total millions of dollars. The Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice is also investigating the complaints. □

Why we need LGBT equality

The lonely death of Lisa Pond

By Caleb T. Maupin

Like much of the media, the government and other voices of the wealthy ruling class at the top of U.S. society, the Jackson Health System says it does not discriminate against or oppress gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender people. This profiteering enterprise that treats ill people who can afford to pay for it, says that they have "taken great pride in serving everyone who enters ... regardless of race, creed, religious beliefs or sexual orientation." (Miami Herald, Sept. 29)

Like the capitalist-controlled government, the capitalist-owned media, and every other voice that claims that the oppression of the LGBT community does not exist, the Jackson Health System was lying and distorting the truth.

They made this statement after being sued by Janice Langbehn. When Langbehn's partner of 18 years, Lisa Pond, was dying of a brain aneurysm, Langbehn and the couple's three children were not allowed to visit her. Pond died in her hospital bed at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami, alone. Jackson Health Systems was protected by the capitalist courts when they recently dismissed the lawsuit brought against the hospital.

"The hospital took the position that we thought was pretty extreme—that it has no duty, no legal obligation, to allow visitors [of any sort] in the hospital. The court agreed," said Beth Littrell, a staff attorney for Lambda Legal, a national gay-rights group representing Langbehn.

Lisa Pond and Janice Langbehn certainly loved each other just as much as any legally married couple, but in Florida, like in so many other states, this love is considered second-class. The couple did not follow the unwritten rules that capitalist social relations impose on LGBT people in patriarchal society. They did not deny their sexual feelings in order to satisfy the dictates of this profit-based society.

Pond and Langbehn loved each other, and even though they could not legally marry, or even make love in some states until 2003, they did not deny this love. They lived together and were the parents of three children. When Pond was struck with the fatal aneurysm, they were preparing to leave on a vacation cruise exclusively for lesbian and gay couples and their families.

For their rebellion against the established patriarchal family structure, mandated by the system of private property, Pond and Langbehn were punished severely. Pond died alone in her bed. Langbehn lived on, having been unable to spend the last few hours with her loved one before she died.

This case should raise several questions in people's minds. What exactly did Langbehn do to deserve to lose the love of her life in this horrific way? What did Pond do to deserve to die alone in the hospital, away from her partner? What kind of system do we live under that basic human rights and dignity are denied to LGBT people? How many others must die alone? □

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Commentary

PITTSBURGH

Tent City dwellers inspire activists

By Brenda Sandburg

People from across the country set up a Tent City in Pittsburgh dedicated to the millions who are unemployed and homeless. The gathering took place from Sept. 20 to 25 during the week of the G-20 summit when banking and finance officials from 19 countries and the European Union met to discuss how to protect their profits.

Organized by the Bail Out the People Movement and the Rev. Thomas E. Smith of Baptist Monumental Church, the Tent City encampment was located next to the church. It grew to more than 100 people by the end of the week.

Many of those who came had lost their homes and jobs and refused to be silent or invisible any longer. They drew strength from each other and shared ways to push the struggle for jobs and housing forward.

"Here everyone is coming together while at home everyone is separate," said Debbie Kendall of St. Petersburg, Fla. She and her spouse, Jessie Kendall, have been living on the sidewalks of St. Petersburg for the past two months.

Jessie, who has worked as a weld fabricator, bricklayer and construction worker, said it has been hard to get work since Sept. 11, 2001. The couple has gotten small jobs that do not provide enough income to live on. For a while they sold newspapers, making 50 cents per paper.

The Kendalls came to Pittsburgh with two ministerial groups that are part of the



Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. Harry Hoffman, who was also part of the group, was laid off in August and lost his residence the same week. He said they were representing the entire homeless population of St. Petersburg of about 6,000.

Several people came from Picture the Homeless, a group in New York City founded and led by the homeless that is fighting for justice around housing. Others traveled long distances to be there. John Parker, an organizer of the Bail Out the People Movement in Los Angeles, drove across country in a van with several others and Jutta Sundermann, a member of the international group Attac, came all the way from Germany.

Ricardo and Mary Adams came from Rochester, N.Y., with their two daughters, three-year-old Sarah and one-year-old Maya, who added a special spirit to the encampment. The couple met volunteering with a group that drove a bus around the

city providing housing for people who were denied space in homeless shelters. The bus had heaters and cots. The group has disbanded and Mary said she was inspired by Tent City to restart a similar service.

The couple said this was a great experience. "I was blown away by the solidarity of The Hill neighborhood," Ricardo said. Many people donated water and food and came by to talk and participate in workshops.

The political discussions were unique, as people shared their strategies and successes in the fight against evictions and foreclosures. At a workshop on housing Rob Robinson of Picture the Homeless described how his group has occupied empty buildings in New York to provide homes for people. "Talking got us nowhere," he said. "Until you step it up and get radical, shake the foundation, things don't change."

Others have been able to block evictions by rallying the community together.

Rosemary Williams, of the Poor People's Economic Rights Campaign in Minneapolis, said she fought eviction from her home for a year. On Sept. 11, dozens of police blocked the streets and sidewalks around her house. More than a hundred people came out to support her and the police arrested seven. Williams, whose family had lived on the same block for 55 years, said she is not giving up and emphasized how important it is for people to mobilize to fight back.

Jerry Goldberg, an organizer in Detroit with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs, described the battles his group has waged in the courts and in the streets. One 72-year-old woman who had been in her home for 42 years had come up with the money Countrywide had demanded but they wouldn't take it and she was about to be evicted. But after people protested at Bank of America—which owns Countrywide—the mortgage lender backed down.

The Detroit group has also pushed for legislation to impose a moratorium on foreclosures. A bill has been introduced in the state Senate that calls for a two-year moratorium. Goldberg said that in the 1930s, 25 states enacted five-year moratoriums on foreclosures. Detroit is one of the hardest hit cities, with an unemployment rate of 28.9 percent. In the last year one million industrial jobs have been lost

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Feeding the Tent City

'An army runs on its stomach'

By Sharon Eolis
Pittsburgh

The Tent City here—organized by the Bail Out the People Movement during the G-20 summit—fed hundreds of people three meals a day for almost a week.

For many unemployed and homeless people who took part in this effort to demand jobs and housing for all, it was the first time they had enjoyed food security in a long while.

Black and white organizers from cities like Detroit, Baltimore and New York worked with the Rev. Thomas Smith of the Monumental Baptist Church to set up the Tent City on The Hill, a historically Black

community near downtown Pittsburgh.

Preparations started in August with a barbeque where organizers met people from the neighborhood. Barbara Gaston volunteered to coordinate all the meals and help cook for the Tent City. She suggested asking for donations of food from local vendors.

Gwen Ware of Rev. Smith's church helped obtain additional food from the Community Area Food Bank.

The food bank provided large bags of breads, croissants, muffins and rolls—enough for the whole week. Tent City volunteers also picked up crates of tomatoes, boxes of sliced onions, pounds of frozen green beans and other vegetables and

fruits. We also obtained fish, chicken, a case of hamburgers and other meat and eggs. Most of this food had to be used right away to avoid the risk of spoilage.

We still needed milk, cereal, sugar, coffee, tea and water. We got a store card from one of the big local chains and saved a couple hundred dollars. At another discount place, we bought paper goods—one of our most expensive items.

The goal was to serve meals every day, from the March for Jobs on Sunday through Friday morning, the day of the last official protests, but people who arrived early even got breakfast on Saturday.

Due to church activities, the kitchen couldn't be used for cooking until late

Barbara Gaston and Sharon Eolis

WWW PHOTOS: SHARON BLACK



Monday afternoon, so our next project was to prepare a cold supper for Sunday, after the March for Jobs. People were served a variety of pasta salads with different vegetables, as well as a green salad and a tuna salad. Those who left after the Sunday march ate before boarding their buses and cars. Food preparations started around 3 p.m. and finished around 10:30 p.m. in the evening. About 300 people were fed.

Continued on next page

'Capitalism: A Love Story'

Moore illuminates evils of a corrupt system

By Easton Smith

When the words "capitalism" and "socialism" appear in newspapers and magazines in the United States it's a sure bet that we are in the midst of some sort of economic crisis. This crisis, as terrible as its impact is on the people of the world, has made a slight opening in the lasting McCarthyite cage surrounding dialogue about alternative economic systems or the faults in the current one.

Michael Moore's new movie sports a title with that until-recently taboo word: capitalism. Going about as his pranksterish self, Moore attempts to illuminate the evils of a corrupt system, specifically the evils affecting the everyday, all-American family. Moore, being true to his style, focuses on specific instances to exemplify the larger picture.

One could say Moore takes the anti-"Kapital" approach to exposing capitalism's flaws. Where Marx explained the inherent flaws of a self-defeating and evil, yet "perfect" version of capitalism, Moore focuses on the specific instances of failure that plague a corrupted version of capitalism.

Moore interviews a woman whose spouse's death put thousands of dollars in the pocket of his employer through "dead peasant" life insurance. He talks to a family as they clean their own foreclosed home for the very bank that is kicking them out, burning furniture they cannot take with them. He exposes corruption on the highest and lowest levels, from President Ronald Reagan to small town judges.

Moore's explanation for this corruption and greed, however, places the

blame on a series of sleazy politicians and CEO's, on policies that deregulated banks and investing, on the New York Stock Exchange, and on just about everything but the very core values of an inherently evil and self-defeating capitalist system.

His solution, he says, is democracy. However, the movie contains a more specific solution than he openly expresses. It centers on fixing a wayward version of capitalism by way of reform.

Moore's interviews with priests, who perhaps most accurately explain the "immoral, obscene, outrageous" nature of capitalism, are followed by praises for the New Deal and President Franklin Roosevelt's dream of a better society.

Moore tapes off the banks as crime scenes but doesn't get very close to the CEOs on Wall Street when he tries to make a citizen's arrest.

Many critics, and Moore himself, champion "Capitalism: A Love Story" as the final, logical culmination of Moore's previous movies. From "Roger & Me" to "Sicko," Moore brought brutal truths, all of which stem from a capitalist system, to a very broad and comparatively apolitical audience.

Despite his remarkable achievements, Moore's latest film fails to really expose the root of the issues his previous movies covered; there is no thorough explanation about the flawed assumptions of "rational maximizing beings," perfect markets, or the need for constant expansion that truly rotate the wheels of brutal capitalism, and there is no focus on any of the imperialist invasions from that of North America to Vietnam that were sponsored by capitalism.

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The real 'Norma Rae'

Crystal Lee Sutton fought for union rights

By Martha Grevatt

How many feature Hollywood movies can you name with the hero a rank-and-file woman worker who leads a successful union organizing drive against a powerful union-busting corporation?

Perhaps none come to mind, or you automatically think of "Norma Rae." That 1979 drama earned Sally Field an Oscar for her portrayal of a cotton mill worker who stood up to the fictitious O.P. Henley mill owners. O.P. Henley represented the very real and viciously anti-labor J.P. Stevens Corporation.

Norma Rae's character was based on a real working-class hero, Crystal Lee Sutton, who died in September at the age of 68.

Tent City

Continued from page 4

and tens of thousands of homes have been placed in foreclosure.

Participants in the Tent City encampment were strengthened hearing of these battles and of the resolve of so many to continue fighting and bringing more people into the struggle.

"The Jobs March and Tent City was a tremendous achievement," said Dave Welsh, a delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council who came with his spouse, filmmaker Loni Ding. "During this incredible week, union folks like me were able to exchange ideas and experiences with people who are homeless or unemployed and busy organizing their communities to fight."

Welsh noted that in the 1930s there was a mass movement across the U.S. for jobs and to get people back into their homes, and that all the mass pressure resulted in New Deal programs that created a lot of real jobs. The Tent City's global week in solidarity with the unemployed "raised my hopes we can really rebuild this movement just like they did in the 1930s," he said. □

Feeding Tent City

Continued from page 4

About one-third of the folks served were vegetarians; some were vegans who brought some of their own food.

The media started to cover the Tent City. After adults and children were interviewed and asked the public for donations, people in the community responded and brought 40 cases of water plus homemade cakes, pasta dishes, salads and stuffed peppers.

Meantime, community people were attending the discussion programs at the Tent City. Some joined us for meals.

During the week many volunteers peeled large amounts of potatoes, husked bags of corn, and washed dishes and cooking pots. Others served food wearing gloves—a Health Department requirement—and the Tent City passed inspection.

Among the volunteers was an unemployed professional cook from Florida who helped produce several meals. This writer worked each day from breakfast until the last pan was put away at night. It was a wonderful experience. This multinational group of people from various backgrounds came together to make the March for Jobs and the Tent City a success. They showed the world that people in the U.S. are ready to struggle for jobs and health care and to stop foreclosures and evictions.

This small army of unemployed workers set a splendid example for the working class. □

In 1973, after working a variety of jobs, Sutton took a job packing towels at J.P. Stevens' mill complex in Roanoke Rapids, N.C. Conditions were horrible. Illness-inducing cotton dust levels were 12 times higher than the maximum allowed by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Noise levels were 20 times OSHA limits.

Before the 1960s the Southern textile mills refused to hire Black workers. Even when companies like J.P. Stevens were forced to desegregate, they kept Black employees on the worst jobs. Women faced widespread discrimination and sexual harassment.

No wonder the Textile Workers Union targeted Stevens when, in 1963, it began a drive to unionize the Southern textile industry. At that time union mills in the Northeast were closing and moving to the unorganized South. Stevens had bought up numerous mills around the country—closing all of them that had a union—and was the second-largest manufacturer of towels, sheets, table linens and other household textile products in the U.S. Ten years after the drive began, none of Stevens' 41,000 workers had won the right to union representation.

Sutton joins fight for the union

Sutton was immediately drawn to the union cause, signing a card despite her sister's caution that she would get fired. Her spouse at the time objected to her attending a union organizing meeting at a Black church, but she went anyway. The Black workers were solidly behind the union, but Sutton saw she had a lot of work to win over the white workers. The events leading up to her being fired—and arrested—were accurately portrayed in the most famous scene in "Norma Rae."

"The company posted a notice on the bulletin board, and it was, in effect, try-



Sally Field, left, with Crystal Lee Sutton.

ing to scare people. It stated something like it was going to be an all-Black union." TWUA organizer Eli Zivkovich insisted that Sutton copy down the wording of the flagrantly illegal notice and get it to him. (Victoria Byerly, "Hard Times Cotton Mill Girls")

While the company was having a "safety dinner," she went to the bulletin board and copied the posting. Management "took turns coming up to me telling me that I couldn't copy that letter. If I did I'd be fired. Then the big man ... his name was Mason Lee ... told me that if I didn't leave he was going to call the police. ... So I copied the letter and stuck it down in my bra."

Later management took her into a room where she was told she was fired and would have to leave the plant. She insisted on getting her pocketbook first. When she got back to her worksite, she asked to borrow a worker's magic marker.

"I took a piece of pasteboard and I wrote the word UNION on it and, for some reason, I don't know why I did it, I climbed on the table and I just slowly turned the sign around. Everybody was in a state of shock and the machines started shutting down and everything got quiet. ... Then sure enough here comes the chief of police. Then he grabbed me and liter-

ally forced me out of the gate. ... He's the one that shoved me in the cell and locked me up."

Crystal Lee Sutton, like Norma Rae, became a full-time union activist. In 1974 the union won a representation election and was recognized at the Roanoke Rapids complex, but two years later it still didn't have a contract. In 1976 an international boycott—its slogan was "don't sleep with Stevens"—was launched. In 1977 the courts ordered Sutton and some 300 other Black and white workers to be reinstated with \$1.3 million in back wages. Sutton went back to work for two days, then went back to full-time activism.

J.P. Stevens became a symbol of corporate resistance to the right of workers to have a union. The company was guilty of the most violations of the National Labor Relations Act since its passage in 1935.

Union organizer's final battle

In 1980 the workers at J.P. Stevens finally won a contract.

Crystal Lee Sutton never quit fighting for workers' rights. She faced another battle when, after being diagnosed with cancer, it took two months to get the insurance companies to pay for needed medication.

In a 2008 interview, with her cancer advanced, she said, "It is not necessary I be remembered as anything, but I would like to be remembered as a woman who deeply cared for the working poor and the poor people of the U.S. and the world." (Burlington Times News, June 28, 2008)

Now J.P. Stevens has closed all but one of its U.S. mills, shifting production to low-wage countries. However, the union-busting tactics that were its trademark are more widespread than ever. WalMart could be called the 21st-century J.P. Stevens.

Remember Crystal Lee Sutton! Demand the Employee Free Choice Act now! □

Solidarity with Michigan labor struggles

Fired janitors demand justice

Dozens of Service Employees Local 1 members and their allies marched to the historic 27-story Buhl Building in downtown Detroit Sept. 30 to demand that 12 fired workers be reinstated immediately.

On June 12 experienced janitors, some with as many as 30 years' seniority, were let go with only two weeks' notice. Sterling Cleaning Services Inc., the new contractor, is paying non-union replacements poverty wages without access to affordable health insurance.

Despite numerous protests, a petition campaign and the fact that many of the building's tenants—offices, shops, restaurants and a barber—want the union workers back, the Buhl owners refuse to budge.

"This is wrong. The tenants love us. We weren't expecting nothing like this. When they kicked us out, that hit us really hard. It's not right. It's unjust and inhumane to kick us out," said Keith Cullens of Local 1 who worked at the Buhl Building for eight years.

Local 1 is asking supporters to call Peter Conkey, head of Buhl owners' HDC Partners, and tell him that you want the union janitors back now and you won't stand for union busting. Call 312-621-5204.

There will be a rally at HDC Partners' headquarters at 333 W. Wacker Dr. in Chicago on Oct. 9 at 4:30 p.m. to protest

the firing of the Local 1 workers at the Buhl Building. A delegation from Detroit will attend this protest. For more information, call SEIU Local 1 in Detroit at 313-742-0184.

Locked out workers need support

About 70 members of United Steelworkers Local 128934-02 in Bay City, Mich., are picketing a Carquest distribution center after being locked out by the company. Many of the locked out workers are long-term employees.

The company refused to agree to a further extension to contract talks after an initial extension was up at midnight Sept. 24. The contract with parent General Parts International Inc. expired Sept. 1. The union proposed extending the negotiations until Oct. 30 but the company locked them out instead on Sept. 25, when company representatives told the Steelworkers to leave the premises.

On Sept. 28, union members attempted to block six tractor-trailer trucks from leaving the distribution center but were dispersed by state police from the Bay City Post and Motor Carrier division, and Bay City police and sheriff's deputies. With the help of the police, the company is now bringing in scabs from "temporary service agencies."



But the union and their allies continue to picket and are appealing for help. Supporters can join them at 508 McGraw St. in Bay City from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday. Supporters coming to the picket line are encouraged to bring solidarity picket signs and provisions such as water, coffee, snacks, etc.

Support messages can be called into the union hall at 989-667-0660 or e-mailed to the local's president, Dan Nadolski, at dnadolski@usw.org. Supporters can also call Carquest's customer care line to demand the company bargain in good faith with the Steelworkers: 1-877-735-2233. Or call the Bay City Carquest at 989-686-3114.

—Bryan G. Pfeifer

Venezuelan president meets with New York unionists

By **Gavrielle Gemma**
New York

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela took advantage of his recent visit to the United Nations to meet a group of workers in New York City on Sept. 23. A large group of labor unionists came, including a five-person delegation representing workers at the Stella D'Oro Co., who have been fighting for their jobs for more than a year.

After spending some time walking around the room and greeting everyone, Chávez made remarks to the group, which were broadcast to many countries via the network Telesur. What follows is an unofficial translation of some of his remarks, noted down at that meeting.

Chávez talked about the current “tumultuous developments in Latin America” as a “hurricane” into which he had been tossed and is trying to navigate.

Washington’s plans in South America have failed, said the Venezuelan president. He told the workers that capitalism has failed and that while the Soviet Union fell apart, it was never a threat. The U.S. and European powers were the threat. “They fought against socialism,” he said and pointed out that since its inception, the Soviet Union had gone through many wars and that “socialism got lost along the way.”

“Imperialism fought against the workers’ dream of building a new world,” he said, “but “the only way to save the world is socialism. Obama talks change, change, change. Tell me how, within the framework of capitalism?”

Once the Soviet Union was gone, Chávez said, “The neoliberals were able to impose themselves.” Neoliberal proposals became stronger and “the free market has messed everything up. What is labor flexibility for them becomes hungry children.”

Why are the imperialists fighting Honduras, Chávez asked. Because, “It was expanding the hurricane in Latin America to further north.” He noted that workers in the United States come from every part of the world. The bosses “want to stop it from coming all the way up here.” Referring to a demonstration that day near the United Nations supporting Manuel Zelaya, the deposed president of Honduras, he said, “I congratulate the protesters. I drove by them.” There was much applause from the assembled workers for this act of solidarity.

He called the U.S. “a great country—the people, not imperialism. We have great hope in the U.S. Latin American workers come here, make it their home. You, the workers here, can save the world. I have great faith.”



President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela

there are two Obamas. One speaks and the other makes decisions that contradict his speeches. He gave a big speech about peace. But there are seven [U.S.] military bases in Colombia. The U.S. Fourth Fleet is in the Caribbean. This is not a fleet of peace. To create peace is to fight hunger.

“[In his U.N. speech] Obama didn’t mention Honduras. Despite this criticism I hope all this will enlighten him to fight for social justice. We want good relations. The extreme right attacks him. Why don’t all the unemployed, who need social security, the poor, make a call and challenge him? Help save the world.

“You fight in your factories, your labor struggles. But you cannot fight just there. It is also political. I believe a united world working class is possible. We must embrace this choice—for socialism, for life to save the world.”

In response to a question on the role of women from Estela Vasquez of 1199 United Healthcare Workers, Chávez said most members of the Venezuelan cabinet are women, as are the chief justice and the president of the assembly. “Women should step forward and take control and not wait,” he added, stressing the importance of making social changes that affect poor women.

Chávez also spoke of an initiative Venezuela was taking while in New York to host a meeting with African leaders.

Eddie Molina, an activist who has organized much labor solidarity with the Stella D'Oro workers, asked if the Venezuelan oil company Citgo could buy the plant and keep it in the Bronx. Chávez responded with great seriousness and very specific questions. He asked the leading representatives of Citgo, who were present, to meet the workers for a feasibility study.

The next day, in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly, Chávez took time to formally ask President Obama’s permission to buy the plant in order to keep it open in the Bronx. □

Conferences strengthen int’l workers’ solidarity

By **Cheryl LaBash**

Ignacio Meneses represented the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange at the Second Nuestra Americas labor conference held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Sept. 22-24. Since 1991 the Labor Exchange has built international ties between working people in the U.S. and workers throughout Latin America, particularly in Cuba.

Workers World spoke to Meneses about the recent Sao Paulo conference.

WW: Tell us about this meeting.

Meneses: The second “Nuestra America” union conference united labor federations from every country in Latin America including large labor federations like the central Brazilian labor federation, representing 7 million members, and the Confederation of Cuban Workers with 3.5 million members. The union leader representatives are actively making changes in their own countries—like Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and others. Guests came from Europe, Vietnam, and Japan.

WW: What was discussed?

Meneses: A very exciting discussion about the global economic crisis. Everyone agreed that it wasn’t just a typical crisis of capitalism, but of the very structure of capitalism. It doesn’t matter that the traditional economists say everything is improving; they don’t know what will happen or what to do.

In this crisis, working people are the most hit, really suffering the most. Lower wages, benefits cut, pensions are up in the air and so many problems. Unemployment is increasing in the world. Close to 60 million are newly unemployed. There is no bright future for young people and capitalism is not giving an answer for them.

WW: Were any solutions discussed?

Meneses: Favorable changes for working people, very important changes,

are moving forward in Latin America—especially the Venezuelan revolution, the changes in Ecuador, Bolivia and other countries, too. These advances are important not only for working people in Latin America, but in the U.S., too. Although hard hit by the crisis, workers in the U.S. don’t have clear leadership on what to do.

The demonstrations in Pittsburgh at the G-20 to mobilize the working people—that is what is needed. That is what is being done in those Latin American countries I mentioned: Mobilize the people.

WW: What other problems were analyzed?

Meneses: The right-wing elements in Latin America together with the U.S. are regrouping, trying to return to governments that completely follow the orders of U.S. imperialism. The election this year in Panama is an example. Another is the coup in Honduras that workers are struggling right now to reverse. U.S. bases in Colombia threaten all of Latin America but especially Venezuela.

In the U.S. we need to be alert. If the advances in health care, education, uplifting of the poor of the ALBA countries are pushed back, it will not only harm Latin America but workers in the U.S.

WW: What is ALBA?

Meneses: In Latin America governments are uniting for independence on many different levels—UNASUR, MERCASUR, for example. But special attention must be paid to the ALBA group—nine countries trying to integrate their economies in solidarity to improve the lives of people in the most essential areas: education, health care, culture and sports, for example. The lives of working families are improved by these very important steps. At Nuestra America II we agreed that the labor movement in Latin America will support and defend those advances.

WW: Was the Honduran labor movement represented?

Meneses: We received daily updates on developments in Honduras focusing a very important spotlight on what we need to do. If the coup government supported by the U.S. wins it will be an important defeat. We are confident that the workers will win, but workers in the U.S. will also gain or lose in this struggle and need to show their support. U.S.-made weapons are used against the workers and peasants of Honduras who are mobilizing to support their elected president, Manuel Zelaya. Zelaya supported benefits for the poorest Honduran people. That is why the coup-plotters kidnapped him. The same “sound cannon” LRAD used in Honduras was used on the streets of Pittsburgh, too.

I had the opportunity to invite the Honduran workers’ movement to come to the Sixth U.S./Cuba/Venezuela/North America Labor conference on Dec. 4-6. Representatives from the major labor federations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean will participate. Working people from the U.S. are invited to join the discussion that will follow up the Nuestra America II in Brazil and Nuestra America I held in Ecuador in May 2008.

The Labor Exchange’s Sixth U.S./Cuba/Venezuela/Latin America Conference convenes at the Palacio Azteca hotel in Tijuana, Mexico, on Dec. 4-6. Register online at laborexchange.blogspot.com.

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

A compilation of articles from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper, shows how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn pre-judice 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

By **Leslie Feinberg**



Boston

Jobs march highlights fired Hyatt workers

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Over 1,000 unionized and laid-off workers came from across New England for a massive march for jobs here on Oct. 1. With unemployment at record levels and no end in sight, organized labor in Massachusetts stirred the local movement for economic justice to a new height.

Organized by the Verizon workers represented by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2222, with assistance from the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, a number of local unions, Jobs With Justice, and the Bail Out the People Movement, over 75 local unions organized delegations to join the march.

Of utmost concern were the vicious firings of house staff at the Hyatt Regency Hotel and the planned elimination of “copperwire” land-line Verizon workers in Massachusetts represented by Local 2222. The march rallied at both of these sites after spirited speeches and a rally at the State House.

In a departure from past practice, Miles Calvey, business agent of Local 2222 and a principal organizer of the march, allowed only laid-off workers to speak at the opening rally. No union officials or politicians were permitted to speak.

In an historic first, Ethan St. Pierre, a laid-off transgender Verizon worker, was one of the speakers. “When I was laid off, I lost my health insurance that I desperately needed for my gender reassignment surgery!” he exclaimed.

Major union contingents came from Local 2222 and six other IBEW locals; Boston School Bus Drivers, United Steelworkers union Local 8751; Operating Engineers union; Harvard Union of Clerical and Technical Workers, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 26; and UNITE-HERE.



WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN
Fired Hyatt workers greet marchers as they arrive at hotel.

Community contingents were organized by the Bail Out the People Movement, the Chinese Progressive Association, the Massachusetts Transgender Political Alliance, Community/Labor United, Women’s Fightback Network and Stonewall Warriors of the International Action Center.

City Councilor Chuck Turner distributed a statement to the demonstrators entitled “It’s Time for Justice for American Workers.” It called for “a movement focused on creating an economy with good jobs for all” and cited the need for a national jobs program like the 1930s’ WPA (Works Progress Administration). Turner is fighting back against the right-wing U.S. Attorney’s attempt to destroy his career through slanderous false charges and trial by media. He recently overcame a smear campaign by winning an absolute majority of votes in his district against four opponents.

Solidarity with Hyatt housekeepers

The marchers ended at the Hyatt Regency, where they joined a hundreds-strong worker picket line, including all

100 room attendants fired by this greedy multinational corporation, which accumulated \$1.2 billion in cash in 2008. In recent months the housekeepers were made to train temporary staff to do their jobs—at half their pay—and were then terminated and immediately ordered out of the hotel by armed guards.

When the workers were fired, they marched to the office of UNITE-HERE Local 26, which represents 6,000 hotel workers in the Boston area. The union and the fired workers organized picket lines and initiated a boycott of the Hyatt.

Just a few days before the jobs march, the laid-off staff unanimously refused a tepid offer by Hyatt to restore a few benefits for a few months. Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick has taken a lot of heat from the right wing for saying that the Hyatt workers should be given their jobs back.

This is turning into a major struggle between the unions and this Wall Street hotel chain. Room attendants are the core

of every hotel and the strength of every hotel union. At UNITE-HERE Local 26 they are the core of the union’s membership and leadership.

Beside firing the workers and drastically lowering the replacements’ pay, the Hyatt is going for the jugular of the union. Hyatt, which is non-union in Boston but unionized in many other cities, is on a national union-busting campaign. In Chicago UNITE-HERE Local 1 has been without a contract for a year and has had many sit-ins and demonstrations of up to 1,000 workers.

As the march approached the 400 workers and supporters picketing the hotel, it ignited the determination of both the hotel workers and the union marchers, and downtown shoppers and commuters responded as well. The chants of “Boycott Hyatt!” initiated by the Chinese, Latino/and Black workers blared through downtown for blocks and made it clear that the workers deeply feel this struggle against the venomous union-busting undertaken by the Hyatt owners.

This jobs march is a harbinger of the awakening workers’ struggle in New England. □

Struggle forces bank to negotiate mortgage

By Kris Hamel
Grosse Pointe Woods, Mich.

Some 50 supporters of homeowner Belva Davis demonstrated outside Wells Fargo/Wachovia Bank in this tony Detroit suburb on Sept. 29. The lunch-time action was called by Jobs with Justice; the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs; and the Detroit Metropolitan Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues.

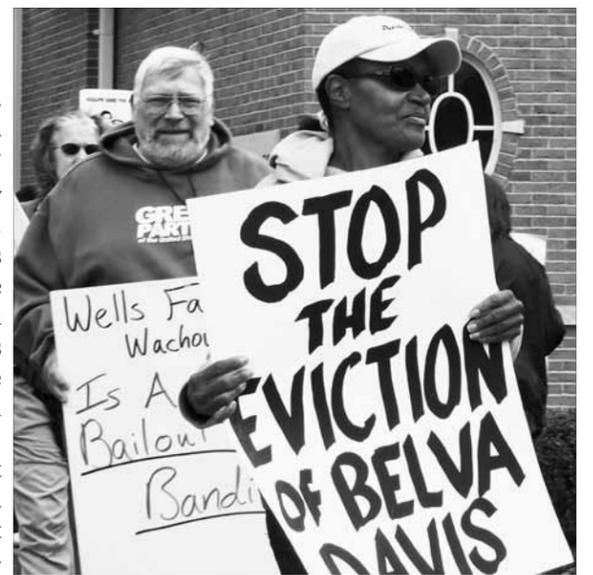
A Wall Street investment fund run by Wells Fargo rushed to foreclose on Davis’ home last December. Neighbors and supporters braved snow and frigid weather to come out and show support as Davis began a long struggle to save her home.

Like so many others, Davis had fallen behind on her mortgage due to unemployment. When she found a decent-paying job and tried to reinstate her mortgage payments, the bank and its loan servicer, Ocwen Financial, wouldn’t hear of it. They demanded \$19,000 up front before they would consider modifying the loan.

Chanting, “The crooks are in the bank! Belva’s here to stay!” demonstrators strung yellow crime scene tape across the front of the building as bank officials hurriedly locked the doors. Literature distributed stated that Wells Fargo/Wachovia was “wanted” for crimes against the people, including, “deceiving taxpayers, attempting to evict good neighbors like Davis, and lobbying to defeat bank regulation and labor reform” like the Employee Free Choice Act.

Demonstrators demanded the bank return the \$2.8 billion it got from the federal government to modify mortgages or do what the program calls for: restructure mortgages.

In late August and early September a concerted campaign bombarded Ocwen



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

president, Ronald Faris, with phone calls and e-mails demanding Davis’ loan be modified as required by the federal Home Affordable Modification Program. Obviously frustrated and on the defensive, Faris began replying to many of the e-mails.

A protest on Sept. 12 brought 100 activists, neighbors and politicians to Davis’ eastside Detroit home for a rally demanding justice for the homeowner.

The Sept. 29 action was significant because of the involvement of organized labor and union officials, as well as rank-and-file union workers from many sectors, including skilled trades. Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Sandra Williams was in attendance along with Secretary-Treasurer Dave Ivers. Williams pledged support in stopping the many illegal foreclosures and evictions taking place throughout southeast Michigan.

Later that afternoon after the demonstration, Ocwen finally agreed to begin negotiations to modify Davis’ loan, according to her attorney Jerry Goldberg. “The struggle played no small part in getting the bank to come to the table,” Goldberg told Workers World. □

Convention passes progressive resolutions

400 people whose composition reflected the resolution.

Because workers under 34 years of age now account for 25 percent of union membership, a resolution was passed to promote recruitment, training and leadership opportunities for young workers. The election of 39-year-old Liz Shuler, as both the first woman and youngest-ever secretary-treasurer of the AFL-CIO, was cited as proof that this was a top priority.

A resolution offered by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, the California Nurses Association, the Alameda County (Calif.) Labor Council and the National Nurses Organizing Committee called for passage of the health care for all, single-payer HR 676 bill currently in the House of Representatives, rather than any watered-down bill under discussion in the Senate.

All told, 67 central labor councils, seven state federations and five international unions independently submitted single-payer resolutions. This is the most on one issue in the history of the AFL-CIO. No wonder the final single-payer resolution was passed unanimously.

This issue got a real boost when Michael Moore, the creator of “Capitalism: A Love Story,” decided to hold the U.S. premiere of the film during the convention. Delegates marched from the convention site to the theater chanting, “Health care is a right!”

and “Single-payer now!”

Another resolution called for an end to targeting immigrants and proposed an alternative, humane immigration policy that provides a path to citizenship for undocumented workers. Farm Labor Organizing Committee president, Baldemar Velásquez, received sustained applause when he proposed that the labor movement offer solidarity to immigrant labor as an alternative to widespread racist demonization.

In addition to an anti-war resolution condemning the U.S. military occupation of Iraq, the convention passed a resolution in solidarity with Iraqi unions, union leaders and activists and called for an end to the repression against them.

The convention elected a new slate of executive officers—Richard Trumka and Arlen Holt Baker as president and executive vice president, respectively, along with Shuler. But a real highpoint came on the last day when President John Wilhelm of UNITE HERE announced that the 265,000-member union was rejoining the AFL-CIO.

To put those resolutions into action—in deeds instead of just words—the AFL-CIO needs to activate its members. Calling for job marches on the same day in cities all over the country would be a great beginning. □

Nkrumah and Ghana's independence struggle

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

Part 1 examined the contributions of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, born 100 years ago, through independence in 1957 and his presidency until 1960.

Internal struggles in Nkrumah's Convention Peoples Party broke into the open, once even resulting in an August 1962 attempt to assassinate the president with a bomb attack.

By 1964 the First Republic of Ghana had held an election that mandated the adoption of the one-party state form of government. During this period, the CPP was attempting to restructure the country's economy from dependence on trade with and investment by the capitalist world. This proved to be a formidable task due to the legacy of colonialism in the country and the relative weakness of the Soviet Bloc and China, which limited their ability to provide economic assistance to newly independent African states.

Nkrumah in 1963 identified neocolonialism as the major impediment to the genuine liberation of Africa. At the founding meeting of the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, he released his book entitled "Africa Must Unite," which provided a proposal for the adoption of a continental union government as the only means of countering the development of the new form of colonialism on the continent.

At the OAU conference in Egypt during July 1964, Nkrumah pleaded for the

adoption of a United States of Africa by the heads of state. This proposal was not accepted despite apparent problems associated with the legacy of colonialism on the continent. The Congo crisis and the economic stagnation of many of the newly independent states illustrated that these nations were not viable as economic and political entities.

At the October 1965 OAU Summit held in Accra, many of the heads of state from other nations did not attend because they opposed the CPP government's foreign policy. At this conference, Nkrumah issued his book entitled "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism," which condemned the United States as the principal imperialist power behind the new form of hegemonic rule, which was designed to maintain Western control over the newly independent states in Africa and throughout the so-called developing world.

This book so infuriated the U.S. government that its Undersecretary of State for African Affairs G.M. Williams wrote a memorandum of protest to Ghana's Embassy in Washington, D.C., saying that Nkrumah was working in contravention to the interests of the U.S. government in Africa.

Just four months after the release of his book on neo-colonialism, Nkrumah was overthrown on Feb. 24, 1966, by a coup d'état led by lower-level military officers and police in Ghana. Since they perceived Nkrumah's policies as a threat to the economic and political interests of the Western powers, the U.S. government and the imperialist world united behind

the coup.

At the time Nkrumah was in China en route to North Vietnam. He was on a mission to bring about a peace settlement in the U.S. war against the peoples of Southeast Asia when Chinese officials informed him of the events in Ghana.

Aborting his mission to Vietnam, he returned via the Soviet Union to Africa, traveling to Egypt and eventually settling in Guinea-Conakry. Nkrumah remained in Guinea until he was flown to Romania to undergo treatment for cancer in 1971. During the period following the coup from 1966 to 1971, he continued to write on the history of Africa and the revolutionary movement for Pan-Africanism and world socialism.

THE LEGACY OF KWAME NKUMAH

Despite the coup, Nkrumah's legacy in Africa and throughout the African world continues. His view on the necessity of coordinated guerrilla warfare to liberate Africa was realized in the subcontinent during the 1970s and 1980s when the settler-colonial regimes of Rhodesia and eventually South Africa were defeated. Cuba's role in the liberation and security of Angola was clearly in line with Nkrumah's ideas, which argued that until settler colonialism was destroyed, the entire continent of Africa would not be secure.

Though the realization of a United States of Africa is still far away, this issue continues to be discussed broadly on the continent and in the Diaspora. The Organization of African Unity was trans-

formed into the African Union in 2002 in order to increase efforts aimed at the unification of the continent. A Pan-African Parliament was formed and is now housed in the Republic of South Africa.

The current chairman of the African Union, Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, has continued to stress the necessity of forming a continental government along the lines Nkrumah advocated during the 1950s and 1960s.

In Ghana Nkrumah's legacy was utilized in both a positive and a negative manner by the successive regimes that took power after his departure. These regimes are compelled to use his image and legacy, despite their refusal to adopt the CPP program in its totality.

In the United States and throughout the Diaspora, increasing identification with Africa has occurred over the last forty years. The African community in America and the Caribbean played an instrumental role in the solidarity struggle with the national liberation movements in southern Africa during the 1980s and 1990s. Nkrumah's views on the necessity of African unity have been prophetic in light of the continuing underdevelopment of the continent and the phenomena of domestic neocolonialism in the United States and the Caribbean. Consequently, the legacy of Nkrumah is still relevant to the present-day struggle of African and other oppressed peoples around the world.

A greater understanding of Nkrumah's ideas and activities can only benefit the present efforts to create a world that is genuinely independent and self-determined.

See panafricannews.blogspot.com

'Rethink Afghanistan'

A tool for anti-war organizers

By **John Catalinotto**

"Rethink Afghanistan," a documentary directed by Robert Greenwald, is available as a DVD or online in six parts at rethinkafghanistan.com. It opened Oct. 1 in a limited number of U.S. theaters.

Afghan toddlers made internal refugees by U.S. bombing raids standing barefoot in cold mud, eventually to die from malnutrition and exposure; Afghan women in political protest calling their fate worse now in war than under Taliban rule; Afghan women keening over their lost children, brothers and spouses; relatives, neighbors, homes and domestic animals blown apart. These pictures bring the reality of war for the Afghan people home to U.S. audiences.

This compelling documentary's strongest feature is that it allows the Afghans to speak for themselves to an audience in the United States. Afghanistan is a poor, mostly rural country. Today its intelligent and capable spokespeople engaged in political struggle reflect Afghanistan's thousand-year tradition of refusing to bow to foreign rulers.

The movie also uses testimony from the heads of think tanks, former U.S. officials, including ex-CIA operatives, spokespeople for nongovernmental organizations, and a few honest reporters to expose the complete disconnect among the U.S. government's pretexts for occupying Afghanistan—stopping "terrorism," helping women's rights, helping Afghanistan develop—and the results of that occupation.

It makes these arguments just as

the Obama administration's debate over Afghanistan policies is reaching a crossroads.

The Brave New Foundation and director Robert Greenwald ("Walmart: The High Cost of Low Price," "Outfoxed" and "Iraq for Sale") have made this documentary easily available to anyone opposing the occupation or escalation of the war in Afghanistan. While "Rethink Afghanistan" is unlikely to break into the country's movie complexes, its producers open every Internet door to encourage use of the movie at low or no cost. Through YouTube, blogs, organized screenings of the DVDs, followed by discussions, activists are free to take advantage of the movie.

Brave New Foundation urges spreading the facts and analysis shown in "Rethink Afghanistan" to a broad sector of the population, who they encourage to petition the Obama administration and Congress with enough force to halt further escalation of—and perhaps to end—the assault on Afghanistan.

The director makes listening to a succession of "talking heads" more palatable by mixing them with images of Afghanistan and by cutting back and forth to the different analysts and experts, so the movie has more the appearance of a snappy question and answer session or even a debate than a lecture.

With a few exceptions like Pakistani Marxist Tarik Ali, those interviewed started—or appeared to start—from the premise that the U.S. went into Afghanistan with honest intentions—to eliminate al-Qaeda and remove the Taliban from government with the objective of "stopping terrorism," even of "extending democra-

cy" or "improving women's rights."

Most then show how the U.S. occupation has operated against achieving any of these goals, that the Taliban has nothing to do with al-Qaeda, and that the invasion, occupation and expansion of the war is a tragic and fabulously costly mistake that is leading to disaster for the Afghans, for the Obama administration and for the people of the United States.

Since only a small portion of the U.S. population is consciously anti-imperialist, this approach probably makes the documentary more accessible to most viewers.

On the other hand, anti-imperialists cannot count on the movie to expose the following central truth: U.S. intervention in Afghanistan is based on expanding U.S. imperialism's geopolitical interests. Anti-imperialist activists must themselves expose the role of U.S.-based giant capitalist banks and multinational corporations on a world scale, along with the narrower interests of the military-industrial complex that thrives on war.

Those with high-speed Internet access at home or at the library can see this documentary for free in six parts. Individuals or organizations can buy the DVD at a moderate price, and may use it to organize meetings and discussions. Greenwald and the Brave New Foundation should be congratulated for making the film accessible.

Those who understand the class basis of the war and the war drive of imperialism will have to add their own analysis. They can expose the reality that this disaster is not simply a tragic "mistake" but the consequence of the capitalist drive for profits worldwide. □

With President Zelaya encircled by military

Activists

Continued from page 1

Commenting on the cancellation of the state of siege, Rafael Alegría of the National Front for Resistance against the Coup called it "a triumph for the people and the popular resistance." (EFE, Oct. 6)

Delegation from U.S. to Honduras

At the offices of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York, an Oct. 5 news conference announced that a 12-person delegation would arrive Oct. 7 in Tegucigalpa for a fact-finding mission. The delegation includes political and religious activists, community organizers, labor unionists, students and youths.

The delegation had planned to attend the First International Conference Against the Coup and for the Constituent National Assembly in Honduras, which was scheduled to take place Oct. 8-10. However, given the tense political and social crisis in the country and the increased repression from the coup regime, the conference has been postponed.

The U.S. delegation, coordinated by the International Action Center, will, nevertheless, continue its trip to Honduras Oct. 7-11. The group plans to look into reports that the Micheletti coup government has consistently attacked the Brazilian embassy, dropping chemical gas, shutting off the water and electricity, and using Long-Range Acoustic Devices that can result in permanent hearing loss.

IAC co-director Teresa Gutiérrez told



Western New York denounces Honduras coup



An emergency demonstration supporting the Honduran people's resistance and the reinstatement of illegally deposed President Manuel Zelaya was held in

Buffalo, N.Y., on Sept. 29. Called by the Peace, Justice and Anti-War Coalition, the action was attended by activists from the Buffalo/Western New York International

Action Center, the Latin American Solidarity Committee of the Western New York Peace Center, and Workers World Party. Several students stopped to ask

about events in Honduras, which have been largely absent from the media here.

—Report and photo by Ellie Dorritie

Emergency solidarity resolution with workers & people of Honduras

The following resolution was adopted by the delegates meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO) on Sept. 28.

Whereas the San Francisco Labor Council supports the immediate and unconditional return of President Manuel Zelaya to his position as head of state of Honduras and supports the restoration of all democratic rights there, while demanding that those responsible for the coup be brought to justice and that the U.S. government suspend all aid until Zelaya is restored to his position;

Whereas the AFL-CIO at the Convention in Pittsburgh, Pa., passed a resolution calling for the reinstatement of President Zelaya, the restoration of all labor and democratic rights, and an immediate halt to U.S. aid to the coup government;

Whereas the San Francisco Labor

Council sent a representative to Honduras to help build solidarity with the labor movement and with the National Front Against the Coup;

Whereas the situation in Honduras today—in the aftermath of Zelaya's return to Honduras, where he has been holed up in the Brazilian Embassy—has been marked by increased repression against the resistance movement, in particular against the labor movement;

Whereas the Portland Central American Solidarity Committee and Cross-Border Labor Organizing Council (PCASC) is organizing a West Coast Honduras Labor Solidarity Tour in November 2009 with Israel Salinas, Secretary General of the Confederación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras (CUTH), one of the major trade union federations of Honduras;

Therefore be it resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council urge its affili-

ates to participate in the regular demonstrations organized in San Francisco in solidarity with the resistance movement of the workers and people of Honduras.

Be it further resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council urge the national AFL-CIO leadership to actively and visibly express their solidarity with the resistance movement in Honduras, through press conferences and a public call on the Obama administration to break all diplomatic and economic ties with the coup government in Honduras.

Therefore be it finally resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council invite and host the visit of Brother Israel Salinas to the Bay Area in mid-November, and, if possible, coordinate and/or include the participation of other greater Bay Area Labor Councils in this speaking tour of Brother Salinas, all in order to help build a campaign of solidarity to help defeat the coup. □

embark on a fact-finding trip to Honduras

Workers World the group “also plans to meet with students, labor, women, youth, representatives of the National Front of Resistance against the Coup and others to find out the truth about the situation in Honduras and to bring it back to the United States.”

Vanessa Ramos, president of the American Association of Jurists and a member of the National Lawyers Guild, helped organize a delegation to Honduras in late August. Ramos told organizers that the presence of a delegation from the U.S. is critical at this time and that she supports the efforts of the Oct. 7-11 fact-finding delegation.

The report of the NLG trip—which was written by members of the AAJ, the NLG and the International Association of Democratic Lawyers as well as the International Association Against Torture—confirms that the June 28 events in Honduras constitute a genuine military coup. The report further states that the military overthrow “was a clear violation of Honduras' 1982 Political Constitution.”

In light of the tense and fluid situation in Honduras, the Oct. 7-11 delegation has posted a petition calling on elected officials, members of Congress and representatives of the press to assure the success and safety of the U.S. delegation by aggressively declaring the illegitimacy of the Micheletti government, by condemning the repression of the Honduran people and by demanding the immediate restoration of Honduras' democratically

elected President Manuel Zelaya. The IAC has also begun a Twitter feed to enable instantaneous communication from Honduras during the trip. These links can be found at www.iacenter.org.

Solidarity with resistance

According to statements from delegation spokespeople, the group will not only gather facts from the resistance, but also express its solidarity with the people and resistance of Honduras. This resistance

has persisted now for over 100 days since the June 28 coup and is set to go out into the streets again today, Oct. 6.

A leading spokesperson for the National Front, Juan Barahona, said in a Sept. 30 interview with Brazilian activist-journalist Pedro Fuentes that “The National Front of the Resistance has gathered in the majority of the people.” In the days of struggle since the coup, Barahona added, “Honduras changed completely, and a very positive result

will remain from all this—an organization and a great experience. In these days of struggles the level of consciousness rose much more than in 100 forums discussing the class struggle.”

Barahona added that the National Front is “in favor of participating in the negotiations but at the same time we say to the golpistas [coup perpetrators] that we won't stop fighting; we will be in the streets until the last day they are in power.” □

NWFN STATEMENT: Solidarity with Honduran women in struggle

The following statement was issued to the women of Honduras who are organizing against the illegal military coup and for the restoration of President Manuel Zelaya. The statement was signed by women activists and leaders from around the U.S.

The National Women's Fightback Network stands in solidarity with all of our Honduran sisters who are in the resistance movement in opposition to the illegal Micheletti government.

We support all of the courageous women who are opposing the criminal military coup d'etat, with special recognition to all of you who are playing a prominent role in the leadership of the resistance movement.

Your strength, bravery and determination are an inspiration to women worldwide.

The National Women's Fightback Network wholly backs all of those who are fighting for a new society in Honduras and a Constitution that puts people's needs first, and who are demanding the reinstatement of the democratically elected government of President Manuel Zelaya.

We join with progressive forces around the world who are speaking out to deplore the coup government's political repression, its illegal decrees against your democratic rights to organize, march and speak out, and all of its attempts to suppress the strong and resolute people's movement.

The National Women's Fightback

Network is in solidarity with all of your demands for women's rights, which have been put forward by Women in Resistance and other popular women's organizations and activists.

We are with you in the fight for a true People's Constitution which guarantees women's social, political and economic rights; this includes guaranteed access to employment, land, territory, health, education and much more. It also insures women's participation in the new Constitutional Assembly—an absolute necessity.

We know that women in struggle throughout the world are with you at this crucial time. You have our utmost solidarity and heartfelt sisterhood. □



Afghanistan? Out now!

The week of Oct. 4 two events kept Afghanistan on the front pages.

Resistance forces attacked a U.S. military outpost and engaged in a full-fledged battle. Ten U.S. troops died.

President Barack Obama ordered a last-minute meeting with his Afghanistan commanding general, Stanley McChrystal, on Air Force One in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Someone in the Pentagon had “leaked” McChrystal’s demand for 40,000 more U.S. troops. This put right-wing pressure on the Obama administration to quickly accede to the generals. Obama stated clearly he has no intention of ordering U.S. troops out of Afghanistan. But he wants time to examine his other options.

Any organization that hopes to represent the working class—including the unemployed and all the oppressed peoples—in the U.S. cannot be indifferent to a conflict

between a civilian, elected representative and the appointed, professional killers in the upper reaches of the Pentagon.

But it would be foolish to believe that either side in this internal ruling-class debate represents the interests of working and poor people, either here in the U.S. or in Afghanistan. What the two sides are discussing, debating and might wind up in a sharp conflict about, is how to promote U.S. imperialist interests in Central Asia.

Imperialist interests are the very opposite of the best interests of the Afghan peasants and working people as well as those of the workers, unemployed and oppressed in the U.S. The only acceptable strategy to serve those popular interests is to get the U.S. and all NATO troops out of Afghanistan, now.

The anti-war movement here is hitting the streets this October to oppose this war. Join those protests! □

SAVE THE DATE:

Workers World Party Conference Nov. 14-15

For more information including pre-registration, go to www.workersworld.net

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Deirdre Griswold

Polanski, rape & justice

By Kathy Durkin

The renowned film director Roman Polanski is being held in a Swiss jail, awaiting possible extradition to the United States. He was arrested on a 31-year-old warrant while traveling to the Zurich Film Festival to receive an award. He faces charges for sexually assaulting a child in 1977 in Los Angeles.

While the director has garnered support among some celebrities in Europe and Hollywood, women’s rights activists and many in the progressive movement are appalled. They assert that to let Polanski off the hook trivializes child sexual abuse, sends the message that rape is OK, and maintains that those who are rich, famous and talented need not be held accountable for their actions.

It is clear from the grand jury testimony given by victim Samantha Geimer in 1977 that when she was 13-years-old, Polanski drugged and raped her. She protested and said “no” repeatedly throughout the ordeal, but he ignored her. She feared him and insisted on going home.

Although Polanski was indicted on several molestation charges, he pleaded guilty only to having “unlawful sex with a minor” under a plea bargain. A year later, prior to sentencing, when the judge inferred that he might jail Polanski, the director fled to Europe. There, he built a multi-million-dollar career and lived the “good life.” Hollywood studios continued to finance his films.

Kenneth F. Face, Polanski’s probation officer in 1977, recommended probation without jail time. The New York Times said that officials then treated Polanski’s behavior as “bad judgment” and not a “vicious assault,” the “usual” way that sexual attacks by Hollywood celebrities were viewed. (Oct. 2)

Face blamed Geimer and her mother for Polanski’s behavior. Face excused Polanski, citing his European background and past tragedies, which were held up by his defenders then and are being repeated now.

However, it was Polanski’s actions stemming from his sense of entitlement, power and privilege that were to blame—along with male superiority. That this terrible act occurred in a sexist culture, in which disrespect and devaluation of women and girls are reinforced every day, is not unexpected.

Another double standard

Polanski’s celebrity friends are calling his arrest “horrifying.” They say the director should be absolved of blame and allowed to put this “messy business” behind him, as if he didn’t pay traffic fines. They infer that being a “great artist” exempts him from acting with basic human decency.

More than 100 Hollywood notables have signed petitions calling for Polanski’s release. Movie producer Harvey Weinstein, characterizing Polanski’s assault as a “so-called crime,” said the director “has served his time.” Others say he has “suffered enough” and “atoned for the sins of his young years”—he was 43!

What about Samantha Geimer’s suffering and her decades of coping with the memory of the abuse? What about the media now subjecting her and her family to sensational coverage of every detail of the assault? No wonder she wants the case dismissed.

Why aren’t celebrities circulating a petition supporting Geimer and all survivors of sexual abuse and condemning Polanski and his defenders? In fact, why not call for a women’s tribunal—made up of survivors of sexual assault—to decide his fate?

If Polanski is a poor or unknown artist, would these celebrities call for his release? Could his lawyer have even made a plea bargain? Would he have been able to travel freely for decades, build a successful career, and enjoy a life of privilege? Would he be called a “martyr” to art whose “art” outweighs his deeds?

Two systems of ‘justice’

There are two systems of justice in this country. One is for the wealthy, famous, powerful and privileged, especially if they are white and male. The other is for working and poor people, members of oppressed communities and women. Hundreds of thousands of poor people are in jails nationwide for lesser offenses.

World-famous performers and athletes who are African American and members of other oppressed communities are prosecuted, persecuted, scrutinized and demonized for minor offenses, even driving infractions, or for no reason at all.

Prosecutors said actor Wesley Snipes should be “made an example of because of his fame” for failing to file income tax returns. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg called for prosecution of Plaxico Burress to the “fullest extent of the law.” The football champion is serving a two-year prison sentence for accidentally shooting himself at a club. Olympic-winning athlete Marion Jones was jailed for six months because she didn’t “tell the truth” to federal investigators about her alleged steroid use.

Where is the “justice” when Jones—the mother of two young children, who pleaded for leniency and who did nothing to harm another person—was cruelly jailed and demonized in the press, when Polanski, who preyed upon a child, whose probation officer recommended no jail time, was then allowed to evade arrest for 31 years and become a “cause célèbre”?

Where were the celebrity petitions calling for Jones’ release?

Women’s inequality and oppression, along with national, LGBT and economic oppressions, are intrinsic to capitalism. During this economic crisis, as women face workplace discrimination, right-wing attacks on their basic rights in courts and legislatures, and defunding of vital programs, including for facilities for sexual abuse and domestic violence survivors, they are also being malignd in the reactionary media.

It is only through the struggles of women—Black, Latina, Asian, Native, Arab and white—and their fightback organizations that progress is made and women’s rights gained, while acceptance of sexist ideology and behavior are pushed back. □

Moore: Evils of a corrupt system

Continued from page 4

Moore’s film, in part due to the timing, and in part due to his small scope style, feels more like a movie about Wall Street, AIG or foreclosures than about capitalism. It is perhaps the logical next step for Moore to begin questioning the overriding system through the context of the current economic crises, but “Capitalism” is far from a culmination. It makes one wonder how the film, begun before last September, would have turned out if the economy had not collapsed.

To be sure, and to be fair, this movie will inspire people to think more critically about the economic system that has come to eclipse democracy in this country and around the world. This movie will inspire investigation and doubt. Perhaps Moore’s avoidance of capitalist fundamentals was conscious, because he believes the U.S. is not ready for revolution, or because he believes in reform. Perhaps it was unconscious. Either way, his comical and informative movie was entertaining and educational, even if its title is misleading.

Smith is an activist in the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.

Two continents strengthen ties as

Chávez hosts Africa-South America Summit

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

A summit of African and South American leaders convened on the Venezuelan-Caribbean island of Margarita Sept. 26-27. The gathering was a follow-up to the first Africa-South America Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria, in November 2006.

Heads of state representing 61 countries—49 from Africa and 12 from South America—participated under the theme of “closing gaps, opening up opportunities” and pledged to continue their cooperation in the political, economic, sports, technological and cultural spheres.

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela welcomed the group, saying, “This is the beginning of the salvation of our people.” Chávez emphasized that the summit will help break the dependence of countries of the South on the industrialized capitalist states.

“The 21st century won’t be a bipolar world. It won’t be unipolar. It will be multipolar. Africa will be an important geographic, economic and social pole. And South America will be, too,” Chávez said. (Reuters, Sept. 27)

Libyan leader and chair of the African Union, Muammar Gaddafi, also spoke to the need for greater cooperation among developing regions. He echoed his comments made to the U.N. General Assembly demanding that Africa, Latin America and other geopolitical regions be given permanent seats on the Security Council.

“The world isn’t the five countries on

the U.N. Security Council,” Gaddafi said. “The world’s powers want to continue to hold on to their power. When they had a chance to help us, they treated us like animals, destroying our land. Now we have to fight to build our own power.” (Reuters)

From political power to economic liberation

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe stressed that political independence without economic power can potentially breed conflict, both domestic and international. Mugabe traced the history of British colonialism in Zimbabwe and the significance of the land reform process begun in 2000.

British farmers—heirs to the colonial system that took over in the late 19th century and ousted Africans from their homes—had controlled the best land in Zimbabwe. After Zimbabwe took this land back, the Western capitalist states imposed economic sanctions against the ZANU-PF government. Recently, the ruling ZANU-PF party formed an inclusive government with opposition MDC factions, yet the imperialists have maintained their sanctions.

“Political freedom or political power is absolutely hollow without the input of economic power, and economic power derives naturally from your natural resources. ... [I]t is here that our liberation struggle, perhaps, did not go to fruition ... because we left the very [colonizing] countries with their very paraphernalia in control of our countries. So we had the economy still in the hands of Britain, in

our country, and this was also the phenomenon in other countries, although the powers might not have been British all the time.

“We continue to look at ways and means of associating with our neighbors in the economic field, trying to get their help. And so when Africa associates with Latin America, and we are part of that association, we do hope that association will yield benefits on a reciprocal basis.” (Zimbabwe Herald, Sept. 27)

The summit participants signed a document on the final day urging the U.N. and the World Bank to provide for developing countries to have greater decision-making power within these international bodies. President Chávez announced that a number of Latin American countries had pledged to start a regional development bank, Banco del Sur, with \$20 billion.

Outcomes of the summit

Agreements made at the Africa-South America Summit include the founding of a Radio of the South that would encompass a network of stations anchored to Venezuelan National Radio. The mission of the proposed network would be “to bring the revolutionary struggles of the people of the South to the forefront, and to promote the union of peoples of the South through information exchange and cross-national collaboration.” (21st Century Socialism, Oct. 5)

The network will initially be heard by 40 percent of the people in Venezuela. It will also share programs with radio sta-

tions in Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay, as well as Algeria, Benin, Gambia, Equatorial Guinea and the U.S.

The proposed Bank of the South will be headed by Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay and Venezuela. “It will be our bank, to bring back the reserves that we have up there in the North that they use to give credits to us,” President Chávez said.

The summit passed a resolution condemning the coup in Honduras and the siege against the Brazilian Embassy there. It demanded the immediate reinstatement of ousted President Manuel Zelaya.

President Chávez proposed a secretariat of the Africa-South America Summit, based on Margarita Island, to ensure the implementation of plans and projects outlined by the summit.

Over the two-day period, memoranda of understanding for the establishment of joint mining ventures were signed between the Venezuelan government and several African states, including Sierra Leone, Mali, Namibia, Niger and Mauritania.

Coming on the heels of the General Assembly and the G-20, this summit provided the developing countries in Africa and South America a forum to clearly define their political and economic positions within the global system and to chart a course aimed at genuine independence and development. □

Jobs program needed NOW

Continued from page 1

you looked at it. Indeed, not only did unemployment go up, but I was particularly concerned about the number of Americans who have been unemployed for six months or longer.

“My own suspicion is that we’re going to penetrate the 10-percent barrier and stay there for a while before we start down,” he said.

Greenspan then hastened to look on the bright side, with typical understated heartlessness. “It is true, the last couple of weeks, some of the numbers coming in have been a little bit soft,” he said. “But,” he added, “this is what a recovery looks like.”

Of course, Greenspan did not clarify that the “we” who are going to “penetrate the 10-percent barrier” are the proletariat, the wage slaves of capital. It is capital that is going to make more and more profit by forcing the workers to “penetrate” the barrier through laying them off.

Nor did Greenspan specify what he meant by the workers staying in a state of mass unemployment “for a while,” or when the “start down” will be.

This mealy-mouthed acknowledgment of the contradictions of the present capitalist crisis that Greenspan was forced to admit in front of a Sunday morning television audience actually tells a lot that the workers need to take to heart.

‘Horrendous amounts’ of productivity

The truth is that close to 30 million workers are unemployed and underemployed. They cannot be put back to work because capitalism has no jobs for them and will not be able to create anywhere

near enough jobs.

The bosses have done everything in their power to find ways to intensify the exploitation of labor—that is, to increase productivity. Their goal is to get workers to produce more and more in less and less time for lower and lower wages.

In other words, each capitalist tries to get along with fewer and fewer workers by laying them off. Those workers who remain are speeded up through technology, or just plain driven harder. According to MarketWatch, reporting on the Stephanopoulos interview:

“Pointing to the fact that businesses laid off ‘a very substantial number of people’ when the financial markets collapsed last year, Greenspan said the country got productivity gains ‘of horrendous amounts,’ which cannot continue.”

Technology in the hands of the bosses spells long-term mass unemployment for millions and millions of workers.

The capitalist economy, even while growing at 3 percent, still shed 263,000 jobs in the month of September. And, more importantly, the bosses are not hiring.

That means the fortunes of the exploiting classes are looking up while the fortunes of the exploited sink further into the depths of unemployment, poverty, foreclosures and homelessness.

Mobilize for a real jobs program

The only way out in the short run is for the workers, the unemployed and employed alike, to demand a real jobs program. The workers’ movement as a whole, and especially the trade union movement, must demand that the trillions handed over to the banks be taken and used to make real jobs. These jobs

must be given directly to workers—not to some capitalist who might hand out a few jobs, but only after taking the profits off the top and after all the government officials and politicians get their cut.

No “market mechanism,” no automatic process of capitalism, and no government gift to the bosses and bankers is going to turn the situation around. This is rooted in the nature of the capitalist profit system itself.

No one should be plunged into poverty because the breadwinner or breadwinners are unemployed. Every worker must be guaranteed an income on which to live a decent life—including affordable, quality health care through a single payer or by whatever means.

Jobs, income, housing and health care must become political demands of the working class. But those demands must be backed up by mass mobilization and militant struggle. This is the only language the bosses understand.

The reason Greenspan is “particu-

larly concerned” with growing long-term unemployment, and the reason he came out for extending unemployment benefits in the midst of this crisis, is not out of any sympathy for the workers. He has spent his entire life trying to help the bosses and bankers fleece the workers.

He is worried about a rebellion of the workers and the oppressed against capitalism itself.

While an immediate struggle for jobs is the priority of the moment, in the long run workers need to fight to overturn capitalism altogether and its system of exploitation, which puts profits above the lives of the masses of people. The workers need to take back what they have built and develop a planned economic system—socialism—that does away with the profit motive and restructures the economy to satisfy human needs.

Fred Goldstein is author of “Low-Wage Capitalism,” a book that analyzes the effect of globalization on the working class.

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M★NDO OBRERO

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

Las potencias del G-20 hablan de reforma mientras obreros/as pierden trabajos

Por Fred Goldstein

Los/as líderes de las grandes potencias imperialistas se reunieron en Pittsburgh en septiembre para hablar sobre cómo proteger el capital. No presentaron ni una propuesta creíble de cómo resolver la crisis de cientos de millones de desempleados/as y subempleados/as en todo el mundo.

En la cumbre del G-20, países como China, Brasil, India y África del Sur entre otros, lucharon por incrementar la influencia de los pueblos en vías de desarrollo—o sea, la mayoría del mundo que ha sido artificialmente mantenida lejos del desarrollo por la influencia opresiva del colonialismo y el neocolonialismo.

Pero para los países imperialistas, representados por los jefes/as de estado de EEUU, Alemania, Francia, Bretaña, Japón e Italia, entre otros, los temas calientes fueron puntos como los requisitos para el capital de los bancos, el límite de los ingresos de los ejecutivos, la regulación de los mercados financieros, los derivados y demás. Prometieron incluso dejar que los gobiernos revisen sus políticas entre ellos.

Todos estos puntos tienen que ver con poner límites al grado en que los bancos capitalistas y otras instituciones financieras puedan defraudarse entre sí en el futuro, de la forma en que lo hicieron para llegar a la crisis financiera presente. Bancos, corporaciones e inversionistas de todo tipo todavía están tratando de recobrar de la masiva súper especulación y las tramas fraudulentas de las hipotecas por las cuales se robaban entre sí hasta llegar a la crisis financiera. Todas sus agencias reguladoras han sido cómplices en permitir las tramas especulativas.

Los líderes del capital financiero están respirando con alivio porque el sistema capitalista ha escapado de una depresión global. Los G-20 se reunieron en abril de este año y prometieron un billón (mil millones) de dólares en subsidios gubernamentales para los ricos como un mecanismo para bregar con su crisis.

Ahora se están felicitando entre sí por haber evitado una crisis con la inyección de cantidades masivas de dinero a los bancos y corporaciones para mantenerlos y no permitir que se hundieran en la crisis que éstos mismos habían creado.

Quienes buscan empleos superan el número de trabajos disponibles, seis a uno

El porcentaje de desempleo en la Unión Europea es ahora el más alto en 10 años, 9,5 por ciento, y se espera que continúe subiendo. Este porcentaje se ha manteni-



FOTO: G DUNKEL

do a fuerza del dinero del estímulo gubernamental, el cual se espera que acabe antes de finales de este año.

El desempleo en Alemania se ha mantenido en el 8,3 por ciento debido al programa “efectivo por chatarras” y por las subvenciones del gobierno para evitar que las empresas despidan a los/as trabajadores/as, poniéndoles en cambio en horarios reducidos. Existen programas similares en otros países europeos.

Mientras los/as líderes del G-20 iban camino a sus países, el Departamento de Trabajo de los EEUU publicó una estadística que muestra que el número oficial de personas que buscan trabajo aquí era seis veces el número de ofertas de trabajo—la peor proporción desde que el gobierno comenzó a darle seguimiento en el año 2000.

Esto demuestra que la crisis del sistema capitalista se está profundizando en este período. Durante la última recesión en 2001, el número de personas sin empleo era un poco más del doble del número total de ofertas de trabajo a tiempo completo. A principios de este año, el número de solicitantes había aumentado a cuatro veces el número de puestos de trabajo. Ahora, es de seis a uno.

En un artículo de primera página del 27 de septiembre, el New York Times escribió sobre la falta de voluntad de las empresas para contratar a pesar de que la desaceleración de negocios parece que se está moderando, al menos temporalmente. “Incluso después de que las empresas recuperen una tendencia a ampliar, probablemente no van a contratar empleados/as pronto. Los expertos dicen que tantas empresas han recortado el horario de trabajo para las personas en sus nóminas a la vez que han eliminado a los/as trabajadores/as temporeros/as, que muchas de ellas pueden aumentar la producción simplemente aumentando el volumen de trabajo de los/as empleados/as existentes”.

El Times citó a Heidi Shierholz del Instituto de Política Económica (Economic



FOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

La lucha de clase en la fábrica de Stella D'Oro, en el Bronx, es una lucha para mantener empleos. A la izquierda, obrero Oscar Hernandez de Stella D'Oro habla en la asamblea en Pittsburgh de la Marcha para Empleos. Arriba, el Día del Trabajo, en Nueva York.

Policy Institute) diciendo: “Ellos tienen mucha posibilidad de aumentar el trabajo sin tener que contratar una sola persona. Para las personas que no tienen trabajo, no vemos signos positivos al final del túnel”. Las ofertas de empleo se han reducido drásticamente en todos los ámbitos, desde la fabricación hasta la construcción, el comercio al por menor, en el gobierno e incluso en la educación y la salud.

El Times cita el caso de una trabajadora en Chicago, Vicki Redican que ha estado desempleada durante dos años desde que perdió su trabajo con un salario de \$75.000 al año como gerente de ventas y mercadeo en una empresa de plásticos. Teniendo un grado universitario, la Sra. Redican al principio buscó otro trabajo gerencial. Más recientemente, ha intentado y fracasado en obtener la posición de cajera en una tienda de comestibles y un puesto como vendedora en una cafetería de Starbucks”.

Hay oficialmente unos 15 millones de desempleados/as. Unos 5 millones han estado sin trabajo durante más de 26 semanas, cifra récord. Además, hay cerca de otros 15 millones que trabajan a tiempo parcial forzosamente o que han abandonado el mercado de trabajo y ya no están buscando empleo. Esto no cuenta el número incalculable que está sobreviviendo con pequeños trabajos diversos.

Dada las condiciones actuales de empleo, está claro que el sistema capitalista no tiene nada que ofrecer a la clase trabajadora excepto un desempleo enorme y de larga duración—a menos y hasta que los/as trabajadores/as se movilicen para luchar por empleos, lo cual se vio en forma embrionaria en Pittsburgh, en la reciente Marcha por Empleos.

Detrás de la crisis capitalista hay principios fundamentales, no irregularidades

La premisa básica del G-20—que la crisis mundial se debió a irregularidades financieras—es falsa hasta la médula. La crisis empezó con un colapso financiero, pero el motivo subyacente es el capitalismo en sí—su sistema de ganancias.

Cuando los expertos en economía de la burguesía hablan entre sí sobre la llamada “recuperación”, todos dicen que no

quedarán convencidos hasta que no vean que los gastos de los/as consumidores/as empiecen a crecer lo suficiente para que los/as dueños/as comiencen a invertir sus ganancias de forma masiva. Ninguno de ellos afirmará con seguridad que el capitalismo está verdaderamente en camino a la recuperación.

El argumento que dice que los gastos de los/as consumidores/as sacará al capitalismo del fuego conduciéndolo a un incremento repentino en inversiones y a la restitución de empleos para decenas de millones de trabajadores/as no tiene una base real. Los/as trabajadores/as no están comprando porque no tienen dinero. La creación de un régimen del capitalismo con sueldos bajos se ha profundizado en los últimos 30 años y es el trasfondo de esta crisis actual. Ahora los/as trabajadores/as siguen siendo despedidos/as o sus sueldos siguen siendo disminuidos aún más mientras los dueños tratan de recuperar sus ganancias.

Fábricas, tiendas y agencias gubernamentales están cerrando sus puertas o reduciendo su tamaño por todo el mundo capitalista porque los dueños no pueden producir ganancias al vender sus productos o servicios creados por las/as trabajadoras/as. Estos productos y servicios pertenecen al capital, no a los/as trabajadores/as que los crearon. Si los dueños no pueden venderlos obteniendo ganancias, entonces despiden a los/as trabajadores/as. Así, los capitalistas están destruyendo el mercado que necesitan para revivir la producción. Esta es una contradicción creciente que surge de la producción con el fin de obtener ganancias.

Ésta es una contradicción que no pueden superar los dueños. Solamente lo puede vencer el eliminar totalmente el capitalismo. ¿Qué lo puede remplazar? Un sistema en el que los/as trabajadores/as no dependan de ningún dueño que espere obtener ganancias antes de que ellos/as tengan un trabajo; un sistema basado en la planificación de la producción para satisfacer las necesidades humanas, no la codicia individual. Ese sistema es el socialismo.

Goldstein es el autor del libro recientemente publicado, “El capitalismo de sueldos bajos”.

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