

WORKERS WORLD

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Oct. 22, 2009 Vol. 51, No. 42 50¢

Solidarity delegation reports

Masses resist Honduran coup

By Leilani Dowell,
member of solidarity delegation

After a week of showing solidarity with the people of Honduras on the streets and gaining insightful information on what has transpired during the 105 days since a right-wing coup, the 12 people composing the U.S. Delegation in Solidarity with the Honduran Resistance returned to the U.S. in the wee hours of Oct. 12.

Delegation members met with members of various sectors—teachers, youth and students, women, human rights organizations, churches, artists and more—that have come together in a united front against the coup and for constitutional reform. Representatives expressed pride and determination to continue in the struggle, while also acknowledging that the situation is grave.

Honduras continues to be in a dangerous crisis—one fueled by the repressive tactics of the de facto regime of Roberto Micheletti, which has used U.S. arms to attack the daily protests that occur throughout the country. The resistance movement there is powerful and organized; at the same time, it faces an increasingly desperate regime that has experienced international condemnation. The life of the legitimate president, Manuel Zelaya, is at high risk.

The situation demands the attention and solidarity of activists around the world. The following are excerpts from daily reports to the delegation's blog (hondurasdelegation.wordpress.com).

DAY ONE

The U.S. Delegation in Solidarity with the Honduran Resistance had a very successful first day in Tegucigalpa, Honduras' capital, culminating in a confrontation with the police and military at the Brazilian embassy. Our spirits are high from our ability to solidarize ourselves with the Honduran people.

Tegucigalpa is one of the many areas where a large resistance movement is fighting back against an illegal, right-wing, de facto government that installed itself after kidnapping democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya on June 28.

Today, 12 activists from the U.S.—including teachers, youth, women, labor delegates, commu-

Continued on page 6



Women at Oct. 8 protest stand behind banner that reads "MUJERES EN RESISTENCIA"—women in resistance. WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

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WW PHOTO: MIKE EILENFELDT

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The role of poverty and racism in The death of Derrion Albert

By Larry Hales

On Sept. 24 in Chicago, 16-year-old honor student Derrion Albert, apparently heading to a school bus to go home, was caught in the middle of a fight between other students.

Albert was killed in a scuffle witnesses say he was trying to avoid. The videoed altercation has been seen around the country and the world, with shock reverberating from the Roseland community on the far South Side of Chicago to inner cities across the U.S.

Four Black youth, Silvonus Shannon, 19; Eugene Riley, 18; Eugene Bailey, 18; and Eric Carson, 16, have been arrested for Albert's death. The mainstream media, Mayor Richard M. Daley and right-wing pundits and

organizations are using the Albert incident to call for a heavy response by law enforcement against "gangs."

There is much that can be said, both specifically and in general regarding this horrible incident, where a young person lost his life and the lives of four other young people hang in the balance. ...

Was this just an isolated incident resulting in the tragic death of a teenager? Or are there looming, larger political and economic issues involved? Read an important commentary, "The role of poverty, racism & repression in/The death of Derrion Albert," written by Larry Hales, a national organizer of the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), at www.workers.org.



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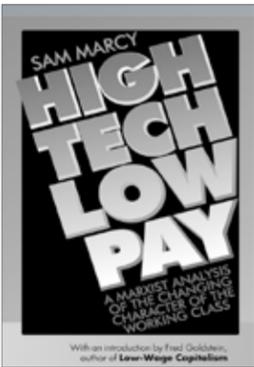
Plan and Discuss

- Fighting for Jobs, A Livable Wage & Income
- Capitalism, Unemployment & the 'Jobless Recovery'
- The Obama Administration, the Banks & the Economic Crisis
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World View Forum has reissued this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder.

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

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

"High Tech, Low Pay," is a must-read for working people—employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized, and activists nationwide.

Books available online at Leftbooks.com and on sale at bookstores around the country.

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Crush of applicants for aid reveals

Detroit workers face desperate situation

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

An estimated 65,000 people snatched up applications for federal assistance on Oct. 6 and 7 in Detroit. They were applying for emergency funds to aid those facing imminent eviction and/or utility shutoffs. They hoped to receive some of the \$15.2 million in federal stimulus money earmarked for Detroit under the Homeless Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program.

Neighborhood city halls ran out of 25,000 applications in less than three hours on Oct. 6. The next day, tens of thousands lined up outside Cobo Hall downtown hoping to receive one of the remaining 5,000 applications.

City officials were unprepared for the tens of thousands of desperate Detroiters who descended on Cobo Hall. Tensions ran high and a near-stampede occurred

when the doors to the convention center were finally opened. Media reports say a half-dozen people fainted and many were conveyed by ambulance to local hospitals. Some 150 cops, including members of the gang squad, were deployed to the scene.

Only about 3,500 people will actually receive any of the stimulus funds, which are designated to help defray the costs of rent and utility bills.

Michigan has the highest official unemployment rate in the country at 15.2 percent. In Detroit, however, the epicenter of the auto industry's downsizing, the official unemployment rate hit 28.9 percent in July. What this means in terms of human suffering is apparent from these figures: Some 45,000 homes in Detroit have had their water shut off. Thousands have either lost their heat and electricity or face imminent shutoffs as the winter cold begins. Eighty thousand homes stand vacant and vandalized.

The median sale price for a home in Detroit is now an incredibly low \$5,000, due to the foreclosure epidemic that is destroying neighborhoods throughout the city.

While even the Detroit Free Press editorialized on Oct. 9 that the outpouring of people seeking emergency assistance reflected the "economic tsunami" that has hit the city, Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm have been conspicuously silent. Their "solutions" to the economic disaster are more cutbacks in social programs and the layoff of more public workers—which will only exacerbate the crisis.

There is an alternative. Organizers with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs announced they are intensifying their two-year campaign to demand the mayor and Granholm exercise their authority under Michigan law to declare

an economic emergency, which would allow them to impose an immediate moratorium to stop foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs.

Activists point out that the governor has the legal, constitutional powers to declare a state of economic emergency. During the 1930s, after such an emergency declaration, the Michigan legislature imposed a five-year moratorium on foreclosures. The mayor can likewise request emergency help, as is done when a tornado or flood occurs. Activists are also demanding that President Barack Obama use his authority to similarly declare a state of economic emergency under federal law.

The coalition is asking all community organizations to join the call to demand the declaration of a state of emergency and the implementation of these emergency measures in Detroit and throughout Michigan. □

Chicago conference calls for fightback against economic crisis

Labor, students and community activists speak on need to escalate struggle

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Chicago

On Oct. 3, more than 200 people attended a conference in Chicago on the deepening economic crisis in the United States. The event, whose theme was "They Say Cut Back, We Say Fight Back," was held at the Teamster City building on the city's West Side.

Endorsers included more than 50 individuals and organizations, including Armando Robles, president of United Electrical Workers Local 1110; Richard Berg, president of Teamsters Local 743; Bryan G. Pfeifer, staff organizer, Union of Part Time Faculty, American Federation of Teachers, Wayne State University; and Gregg Shotwell, United Auto Workers Local 2151, and the founder of Soldiers of Solidarity.

Additional endorsers were the Caucus of Rank and File Educators, Chicago; Christian Hains, president, Office and Professional Employees International Union, Midwest United Local 2009; Rosemary Williams, Minneapolis anti-foreclosure activist; the Minnesota Coalition for a People's Bailout; the Minnesota Welfare Rights Committee; the Bailout the People Movement; and Michigan's Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs.

The call for the conference began, "We are now in the midst of the greatest economic downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s." It addressed the crises of foreclosures, unemployment and massive cutbacks to essential social programs, "as the government tries to balance budgets on our backs," and explained the growing inequality, as "oppressed people—African Americans, Chicanos and Latinos are the last hired and the first to lose their jobs."

Plenary and workshop topics included "Building our fight," "The battle for health care for all," "The fight for the right to an education," "Public sector unions and state budget cuts," "Plant closings, layoffs and the economic crisis," "Economic cri-

sis and the immigrants rights movement," and "Fighting foreclosures and evictions."

Struggle develops to confront crisis

Conference speakers represented many struggles confronting the economic crisis and opposing national oppression, the persecution of immigrants and the attacks against organized labor.

Robles, a leader of the union involved in last year's historic plant occupation at Republic Windows and Doors, discussed that struggle. The workers' action, which won them severance benefits, together with the widespread support for them, drew international attention to the economic crisis' impact on U.S. manufacturing workers.

Robles explained that workers challenged bosses' efforts to close the plant. "Over 200 workers confronted management with demands relating to their legal right to a severance package. Initially, 50 workers occupied the plant and were willing to be arrested. The others picketed outside."

In a plenary session and in a workshop, Rosemary Williams explained the months-long struggle against her family's eviction from their home of more than 40 years. After a 35-day siege, the police stormed the residence and forcefully evicted the occupants and sealed the premises. Williams underlined the importance of reaching out "to churches and community organizations in the fight against foreclosure and eviction."

Stan Willis of the National Conference of Black Lawyers in Chicago discussed being a labor activist while working as a bus driver during a 1968 wildcat strike. "The alliance between labor and the community is essential for winning strikes," he said.

Larry Holmes from the Bail Out the People Movement talked about the significance of the recently held Tent City and National March for Jobs in Pittsburgh that played an important role in the protests against the G-20 Summit.

"Our efforts were based in the African-American community, which has been hit

hard by the economic crisis," Holmes said. "The African-American community and the immigrant rights struggle must be up front in these efforts because they are the most oppressed within the United States."

Manuel Criollo of the Los Angeles Strategy Center told of the disproportionate representation of African Americans and Latinos/as in the prison industrial complex. He also addressed the growing contradictions in the Obama presidency. "We have continuing militarism, on the one hand, along with [Obama's] statements saying that the U.S. can no longer act as if it is the main economic force determining the world situation."

Gurujiwan Khalsa, a University of California student organizer, reported on the recent protests by thousands of students demonstrating against drastic budget cuts in the state's higher educational institutions.

In the "fighting foreclosures and evictions" workshop, Mick Kelly introduced panelists Sandra Hines of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, David Hungerford of the People's Organization for Progress, Linden Gawboy of the Minnesota Welfare Rights Committee and Rosemary Williams.

Hines drew on the lessons of the 1930s struggles. She stressed that, "We have to organize unemployed councils and tent cities to fight the banks and corporations."

She criticized the utility companies for evicting people by shutting off their heat

and electricity, but said, "At the Highland Towers apartments near Detroit, we were able to force DTE Energy to restore power to the people."

"The most oppressed, those who are most affected by the crisis, must take the lead. If this happens, many others will join the struggle," concluded Hines.

In the workshop on plant closings and layoffs, J. Burger from Teamsters Local 743 explained how the union fought management plans to eliminate 450 jobs at the University of Chicago hospital. The school's endowment fund had lost \$1.4 billion in the stock market meltdown.

The union, which represents workers in the clerical, radiology and food service departments, built alliances with other labor organizations and organized workplace campaigns against the cuts. They won severance packages for the workers. Most of the workers have gotten their jobs back.

Conference resolutions

Many resolutions were passed. One supported the Teamsters Local 743 strike for health care coverage at SK Hand Tools. Another endorsed the Minnesota Welfare Rights Committee's demands for more public services and public assistance. Conference participants endorsed a National Day of Protest on Nov. 10 against the economic crisis and the call for a fightback. □

Low-Wage Capitalism

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

A timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval and the end of working-class compromise and retreat, and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

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

As Brynwood Partners closes Stella D'Oro

Saddened workers march out with raised fists

By Mike Eilenfeldt
New York

Stella D'Oro, owned by the vulture private equity company Brynwood Partners, closed its Bronx, N.Y., biscuit plant and fired 136 workers. Management refused to pay the full amount of severance and other benefits to the workers although their union contract spells it out explicitly. Many of the workers have over 30 years of service.

After the workers had spent a full day baking cookies on Oct. 8, the boss called them in at 3 p.m. and said in so many words, "That's it—you're out." For 15 minutes the workers chanted inside the plant, "The workers united will never be defeated!"

After cleaning out their lockers, groups of workers emerged from the plant to a crowd that cheered them for their heroic long struggle. Some went straight home, but many stayed right in front of the plant with supporters. Periodically chants would erupt.

The workers were sad, but also angry and defiant—and they showed it. The very next day at a rally at the plant more than 50 workers attended, vowing to continue their fight for their benefits.

Brynwood only succeeded in closing the plant because the capitalist government is complicit in ignoring its consistent violations. Months earlier, the National Labor Relations Board issued an order to the company "to bargain in good faith" and "make whole the unit employees [recompense] for any loss of earnings and other benefits suffered as a result of unlawful unilateral implementation." (nlrb.gov)

This NLRB decision followed a bitter 11-month-long strike of Local 50 of the Bakery Workers union, overwhelmingly composed of Latinas and Latinos. According to its own rules, the NLRB could have issued an injunction against the sale and closing of the plant.



Stella D'Oro, Bronx, N.Y., Oct. 8.

WW PHOTOS: MIKE EILENFELDT

Brynwood has always admitted it has no interest in running a bakery. Its management brags how they buy a company, suck the blood of the workers and the company's assets, and then sell it. Giant investors such as Goldman Sachs profit from this too. It's the workers and community that lose.

According to Local 50 President Joyce Alston, Brynwood even turned down four offers to sell the plant to companies that wanted to keep it operating in the Bronx.

This company and many others get huge tax abatements from New York City. These abatements are voted on not by the City Council or residents but by boards the mayor and governor appoint—boards usually dominated by investment bankers and real estate developers. Brynwood got millions in tax abatements under the Industrial and Commercial Tax Abatement Program for new machinery in the Stella D'Oro plant.

Queens City Council member Tony Avela called a City Hall press conference to pressure billionaire Brynwood supporter Mayor Michael Bloomberg to demand that the money be repaid and that the machinery be seized by the city.

Jose Rivera, state assemblyperson from

the Bronx, charged, "Frankel comes from Morgan Stanley. He was appointed by you. He's got the power, Michael Bloomberg. Keep that in mind. We're not going to let those machines from the Bronx go anywhere. We are going to put up a human chain."

Local 50 President Joyce Alston said of her members, "They have shown the courage that has awakened the labor movement." In all of her 30 years of union experience, she said, she had never seen the kind of arrogance displayed by Brynwood in their negotiations.

Stella D'Oro workers, the presidents and officials of nine unions, the Northwest Bronx Community & Clergy Coalition and other coalitions involved in mass struggles addressed the press conference.

Faye Kellerman of Local 375 said, "Thank you so much to the workers of Stella D'Oro. You set our path. It's never ever too late. A hurt to one is a hurt to all of us. When we fight, we win. What a shame. Taking food out of folks' mouths for how long? And then when they came back, 'We're moving'?"

"What a shame. And then they're going to steal my equipment on top of that. What a shame! When we fight, we win!"

Who's got the power?" The crowd shouted in unison, "We got the power." "What kind of power?" Again the crowd responded, "Workers' power!"

After the last speaker, the news came in—the plant was closing. City Council member Avela angrily said, "How disgraceful it is that Mike Bloomberg and the city of New York are allowing this to happen without showing even the littlest concern for the workers. The mayor of the city of

New York has a fiduciary responsibility to protect city property. We bought those machines. We have to call upon Mike Bloomberg to stop this now. Shame on him if he doesn't do it immediately."

The crowd responded with chants of "Shame! Shame!"

Worker spokesperson and strike leader Mike Filippou called upon everyone to go directly to the Stella D'Oro factory at 237th Street and Broadway to stand in solidarity with the workers when the doors were locked down.

At the rally on Oct. 9 one thing was very clear: these workers are not ending the struggle until every penny that's owed them is paid. "Whose machinery? Our machinery!" rang out again and again. The machinery, which belongs to these workers and the community, has been sold to the new company, Lance Foods, to be shipped to Ohio.

Juan Thillet, a Stella D'Oro worker, said at the rally, "This is not over. They think they won but they have made enemies out of us and we will go on to fight here and for workers everywhere in this country."

Eilenfeldt is the NYSUT AFL-CIO Cooper Union delegate to the New York City Central Labor Council and a member of the Bail Out the People Movement. □

CHICAGO

Teamsters on strike to save health insurance

By Dante Strobino
Chicago

Amidst the national debate about health care, a Chicago factory boss has cut workers and their families off from their health insurance coverage. The 70 workers at the SK Hand Tools factory, which is on 47th Street in Chicago, have been on strike since Aug. 25.

That was the date when the company's French owner, Claude Fruger, stopped paying the workers' health insurance premiums, a requirement of their union's collective bargaining agreement.

Many workers found this out the hard way—by going to see their doctors for medical treatment only to be told that their insurance was invalid.

"Right now, these workers have no health insurance for themselves or their families, and it's a tragedy we're trying to rectify," said Richard Berg, president of Teamsters Local 743. "We hope the company will come to their senses and give these people the basic benefits they need." (www.tdu.org)

The factory workers brought the issue to the National Labor Relations Board, citing it as an unfair labor practice. On Sept. 2, the NLRB held a trial on this issue. If the workers prevail at the trial, the owners will be forced to pay them

back for accrued medical expenses and they will have to again bargain with the union.

There are still many major issues that the company hasn't addressed. One crucial issue is that the workers have been working under an expired contract since February. They refuse to accept \$6 an hour in wage cuts or increases in health care costs.

"Management just unilaterally cut off health insurance and has asked for deep concessions. [Fruger has] threatened to cut off their pensions and he wants to turn what was a good job into a job for high school kids from McDonald's," said Berg. (Labor Beat radio)

In the seventh week of the strike, workers are on the picket lines. For many, this is their first strike. They are in high spirits and feel confident in their fight.

Other unions doing business with the factory have honored the picket line. Teamsters in Local 705 who drive the Yellow-Roadway and UPS trucks have refused to deliver or pick up products while the workers are on strike. The factory is idle and the bosses are afraid of threats that major customers will go elsewhere for business.

On Sept. 18, in order to increase corporate pressure on Sears—their factory owner's biggest customer—workers ral-



Chicago picket for health care.

WW PHOTO

lied in front of the Sears department store on Dearborn Street in Chicago's downtown Loop.

Worker and community pressure is increasing. Many community supporters and other workers have joined the SK Hand Tools factory strikers on the picket

lines, and have brought food and gifts for them.

To show support for the striking workers, call Claude Fruger, CEO, SK Hand Tools, at 800-752-7263. Or call Sears at 847-286-2500 to protest its sale of SK products. □

Massive march demands LGBT rights

Over 150,000 strong and overwhelmingly young, the sea of marchers demanded full equality for lesbian, gay, bi and trans people in the National Equality March on Washington, D.C. on Oct. 11. They came from all over the United States and included many people who don't identify as LGBT but were there in solidarity. The key issues for the marchers were same sex marriage, repealing the "Don't ask, don't tell" policy of discrimination in the U.S. Armed Forces, and passage of a federal LGBT rights bill.

Speakers and signs also addressed the high homeless and suicide rates among LGBT youth, the need for LGBT immigrant rights, and the issues of health care, foreclosures, unemployment and racism. There were over four hours of militant, moving speeches by LGBT organizers, activists and performers from many different communities as well as strong support from allies including keynote speaker NAACP chairperson Julian Bond.

—Report and photo by André Powell

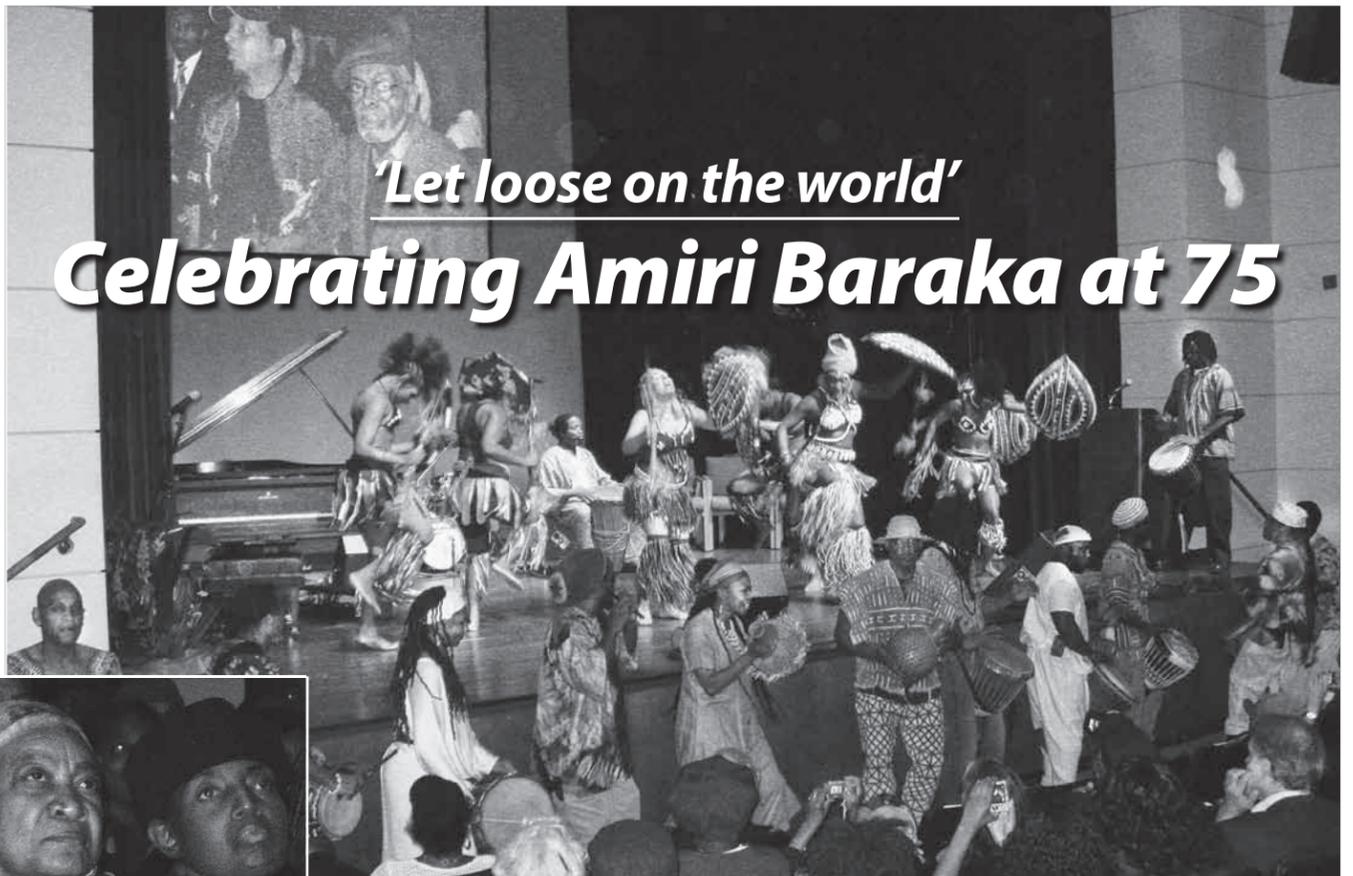


A standing-room-only crowd of close to 500 people packed the Langston Hughes Auditorium at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, N.Y., on Oct. 10 to commemorate the 75th birthday of legendary poet, playwright and activist, Amiri Baraka.

Baraka, aka Leroy Jones, is the former poet laureate of New Jersey and the author of such works as "Blues People," "The Dutchman and the Slave" and "Somebody Blew Up America."

The major influence of Baraka's writings on Black culture, including theater, music, poetry and politics, was reflected throughout the program with African dance and drumming, jazz musicians, activists, visual effects and spoken word artists, young and seasoned. Baraka—accompanied by well-known poet Sonia Sanchez—came on stage to thank the program organizers and audience for the celebration.

—Report and photos by Monica Moorehead



Amiri Baraka and partner, Amini Baraka, Oct. 10.



ADAPT protest 'proud, angry & strong'

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Downtown Atlanta was the backdrop to a demonstration of hundreds of disabled people demanding equality and the freedom to choose to live in their communities instead of nursing homes.

Rallying on Oct. 11 at the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site, through music, banner slogans, chants and speeches, the activist members of ADAPT, a national grassroots disability rights organization, asserted their determination to win full civil and human rights.

ADAPT is holding its national convention in Atlanta with a packed three-day schedule of workshops, strategy sessions and direct actions geared to challenge and change stereotyping and patroniz-

ing policies that rob disabled people of self-determination.

Of special focus is mobilizing for congressional passage of the Community Choice Act, which would redirect Medicaid funds from forced institutional care to community-based housing and home care services.

Ken Collins, who suffered brain damage in a snow mobile accident more than three decades ago and works at the San Juan Center for Independence in Gallup, N.M., explained that the benefits of community-based housing extend beyond the improvement in the quality of life for disabled individuals. The benefits would include helping the individuals' families, provide more jobs for an expanded home care workforce and lead to a more open society.

Twenty years ago, the passage of the



PHOTOS: ADAPT.ORG

Americans with Disabilities Act resulted in curb cuts, ramps, Braille markings in elevators, kneeling buses, and many other changes that improved mobility, communication, and access to housing, education and job opportunities.

The act provided strong evidence that people with a variety of physical and mental disabilities are able to function and contribute to their community when provided with the proper resources and treatment. Nevertheless, the vastly larger proportion of Medicaid funds goes to segre-

gate and confine people to nursing homes, often operated by large for-profit chains. Cost-cutting to increase the corporation's bottom line has led to patient abuse and worker exploitation across the country.

Collins said that his program is able to provide services for three people who stay in their homes for the same cost as institutionalizing one person in a nursing home.

For more information about ADAPT, go to www.adapt.org. □

Solidarity delegation reports

Masses resist Honduran coup

Continued from page 1

nity leaders, Honduran immigrants and religious figures—were warmly greeted by members of the National Resistance Front against the Coup at the airport in Tegucigalpa.

We met with a representative of Cofadeh, an organization formed to support families of the disappeared in the 1980s. Cofadeh has recently been working to bring justice against the atrocities being committed by Micheletti's regime.

We went to the Brazilian embassy, where President Zelaya has been in refuge since he returned to Honduras on Sept. 21. The area was surrounded by police; we were told that it would be impossible to get inside the embassy to meet with him.

A delegation from the Organization of American States had also arrived today, and the police and military forces had been scaled back in order to put a good face on the regime, which has been repressing the people. However, at the hotel, a member of the resistance received a call that heavy repression was going on at the Brazilian embassy; we were advised not to go there.

We learned that Micheletti had supposedly lifted a ban on individual liberties that he had imposed the week before. However, when we asked the police why we were not allowed to exercise our civil liberties, the police laughed and told us that they didn't recognize the lifting of the ban.

Holding our banner, which reads, "U.S. Delegation in Solidarity with the Honduran Resistance—No to the Coup!" we formed a line in front of the police, facing off with them. When they pushed us almost into the street, we turned our backs to them and faced the passing traffic, generating massive honking, thumbs up and fists in the air by drivers passing by. Delegation members were interviewed by the press, and we got out our message of solidarity and demands for respect of



'La abuela de la resistencia'—the grandmother of the resistance—at Oct. 8 protest.

Honduran self-determination.

Our delegation was joined by a truck and car caravan of resistance fighters, including a large number of women with two self-identified resistance fighters, young women aged 8 and 16. Flags waved from the backs of trucks and militant chants could be heard everywhere.

Members of the resistance saw our banner and came over to offer heartfelt thanks. The police faced off with us for hours. Many protesters believed that if a U.S. delegation had not been there, another round of repression would have ensued—attacks with tear gas, beatings and more. In fact, as the crowd was dispersing a truck arrived filled with members of the army; they began to surround protesters, wielding huge batons.

There will be protests all week. The OAS delegation is supposed to be here for another day; many are wondering whether the repression will increase once they have left.

DAY TWO

Urgent: We just heard there is an emergency occurring at the Brazilian embassy. Tonight two scaffolds were erected with additional police and army snipers. The repressive forces have set up speakers and

are sending out commands and terrifying the people. The National Resistance Front has sent out an emergency e-mail notice.

...

Early on day two, we traveled to the bottlers' union's offices; it has become somewhat of a resistance movement headquarters. This morning, members of the many varied yet unified sectors of the resistance—Indigenous, campesinos (farmers), labor unions, women, religious figures, artists, writers, doctors, engineers, youth and more—were meeting to

be debriefed about the political situation and to plan next steps.

The level of organization was impressive and exciting. Reports were given on negotiations with the Organization of American States, where the resistance movement has a seat at the table; on widespread state-inflicted injuries around the country; and other pertinent information.

Today's protest was a march from the pedagogical university to the Clarion Hotel, where the OAS delegation was staying. The situation quickly became tense, with trucks of heavily armed, face-masked police and army forces arriving to surround protesters. We attended the march and carried our banner, which identified us as being from the U.S. Protestors stopped and clapped for us as we arrived; one woman directed members of the press to us.

Once again, we saw women on the frontlines of the struggle; one diminutive but clearly fierce woman was introduced to us as "la abuela de la resistencia"—the grandmother of the resistance.

With the presence of international media, a U.S. delegation, and the OAS representatives, the government's armed forces once again held off from attacking the crowd. However, whether or not the

attacks occur, it is clear that the resistance has no intention of backing off. One main chant is "Nos tienen miedos porque no tenemos miedos" (They fear us because we are not afraid).

We returned to the bottlers' union for a meeting with anti-coup religious leaders. The large churches, and particularly the Catholic church, have been supportive of the illegal Micheletti regime. But smaller churches have taken up the mantle of liberation theology and dedicated themselves, as one sister said, not just to theory, but to practice—in the streets with the people.

We met with Carlos H. Reyes, who was an independent presidential candidate before the coup d'état. He explained the nuances of the street struggle to us—how the struggle is increasingly a struggle between the classes and how the masses are rapidly becoming politicized in the midst of this situation.

We have decided that tomorrow we will visit the U.S. embassy, even though they dodged our calls all day.

The resistance here is amazing, and inspiring, and most of all, unstoppable.

DAY THREE

We met today with students and youth and the international committee of the National Resistance Front. We also met with a Los Angeles delegation, and discussed coordinating future efforts. Some in our delegation got into the U.S. embassy and met with a representative to present our evidence and demands.

The police and military have resumed their repressive tactics against protesters. People who demonstrated today showed us the injuries they had sustained at the hands of these forces. One man had a large bruise across his upper arm, where he had been hit with a baton. Another had a large rash from an allergic reaction to the gas. One protester had collected dozens of tear gas canisters and rubber bullets in just one day.

We learned that there was a kidnapping attempt on a leader of one of the student organizations today. A friend helped her escape, but the student leader's hand was fractured in the process.

Indigenous peoples demand respect

By John Catalinotto

From Alaska to southern Chile, Indigenous people all over the Western Hemisphere demonstrated in protest on Oct. 12—the anniversary of the day Christopher Columbus' ships landed on a Caribbean island and began to introduce all the evils of European early capitalist colonial society to this half of the world.

In Colombia, more than 25,000 members of Indigenous communities went into the streets to protest against the injury to their rights and to demand respect for the cultural traditions of their peoples. The demonstrations, which were to continue until the next weekend, called for the "freeing of Mother Earth" from capitalist plundering and an end to the war in Colombia. A dialog has begun between Indigenous peoples and guerrillas of the



Panama

Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to avoid having the Indigenous people caught between the lines in the war.

Indigenous peoples by the thousands took to the streets in many other countries of the continent. More than 7,500 Mapuche demonstrated in Santiago, Chile. While official ceremonies will take place next year for the 200th anniversary



Ecuador

of Chile's independence from Spain, the Mapuche say, "200 years of repression—we have nothing to celebrate."

On Alcatraz Island near San Francisco people gathered to commemorate 517 years of Indigenous Peoples' resistance to the colonization of the Americas as well as the 40th anniversary of the

takeover of Alcatraz by American Indian activists from California and across Turtle Island—a Native name for North America. The protesters honored those who lost their lives in the struggle to protect sacred places and Mother Earth, defend human rights, and achieve justice for Leonard Peltier and all human rights defenders. □

Members of our delegation spoke by phone to Xiomara Zelaya, spouse of President Manuel Zelaya, who is also seeking refuge at the Brazilian embassy.

Things remain tense; however, the movement remains strong, organized and dedicated. As the repression intensifies, it seems that the movement becomes more sophisticated and organized. Students and workers are talking about how to take the struggle forward. Everybody talks about how class consciousness has been raised since the day Zelaya was kidnapped—a qualitative shift in the minds of the people.

Something big is happening in Honduras.



WWW PHOTOS: LEILANI DOWELL

U.S. delegation and Honduran resistance members, Oct. 7. Banner reads 'We demand liberty for peasants, political prisoners of this dictatorship'

DAY FOUR

Tonight, our last night in Honduras, as a World Cup qualifying game is taking place here between Honduras and the U.S., another alert has been raised. We've received reports that more scaffolding has been put up around the embassy tonight, with more snipers.

Today's news reports another Micheletti regime decree stating, "The frequencies of radio or television stations may be canceled if they transmit messages that incite national hate and the destruction of public property." It allows officials to monitor and control broadcasts that "attack national security." (Associated Press, Oct. 10)

The two main resistance stations, Canal 36 and Radio Globo, were shut down by the Micheletti regime when President Zelaya returned to the country; this new decree is yet another attempt to silence the resistance movement.

We had a number of inspiring meetings today: with feminists and other women in the resistance movement; with young students at a school for revolutionary theory; and with Juan Barahona, the National Resistance Front representative at the OAS negotiations.

The day's highlight was the protest we attended in one of the barrios just outside of

Tegucigalpa. The protest was smaller than those in Tegucigalpa but no less militant. The police showed up in massive numbers, with their large shields, gas masks and batons. However, the ultimate form of defiance to the police occurred when the music was cranked up, and people sang, laughed and danced in the streets.

When we gave our hugs goodbye, it was with love and sadness that we had to leave our new comrades in the struggle.

It's clear that the resistance movement is highly organized, politically nuanced and united. The struggle in Honduras is for more than the restitution of President

Zelaya; it's for a new society, one that provides for all and not just the few.

While nobody predicted which way the struggle will go, the feeling of confidence that they would succeed was overwhelming. In a situation that many described as a laboratory, a practice ground for the U.S. and the corporations to commit coups against other left-leaning Latin America governments, the price of failure is far too great.

The Honduran people need and deserve the support of people in the U.S. and around the world.

¡Viva la resistencia hondureña! □



Protesters are surrounded by police in front of Clarion Hotel, which housed the OAS delegation. Police water tank, Oct. 8.



MUNDO OBRERO

Activistas de EEUU van hacia Honduras

Continúa de página 12

se pueden encontrar en www.iacenter.org.

Solidaridad con la resistencia

Según declaraciones de portavoces de la delegación, el grupo no sólo va a obtener información de la resistencia, sino también a expresar su solidaridad con el pueblo y la resistencia hondureña. Esta resistencia se ha mantenido desde hace más de 100 días desde el golpe del 28 de junio y está previsto que salga a las calles de nuevo hoy 6 de octubre.

El 30 de septiembre, el portavoz del Frente Nacional Juan Barahona, le dijo en entrevista al activista y periodista brasileño Pedro Fuentes, que "El Frente

Nacional de la Resistencia ha aglutinado la mayoría del pueblo". En los días de la lucha desde el golpe de estado, Barahona agregó, "Honduras cambió completamente, y nos va a quedar un resultado muy positivo de todo esto; una organización y una gran experiencia. En estos días de luchas el nivel de conciencia se elevó mucho más que en cien aulas sobre la lucha de clases".

Barahona agregó que el Frente Nacional está "a favor de la participación en las negociaciones, pero al mismo tiempo les decimos a los golpistas que no vamos a dejar de pelear, estaremos en las calles hasta el último día en que estén en el poder". □



Graffiti reads, 'Out coup-plotters; yes to the constitution.'

WW interviews PFLP leaders

'Right of return' still key demand after 61 years in Lebanon

By Joyce Chediak

When cameras are running, Washington officials sometimes express "concern" for the plight of the Palestinian people. But even this phony caring doesn't extend to the 4.5 million Palestinians who for 61 years have remained stateless, without official nationality, stranded in Arab countries.

The right to return has never been raised in the so-called Palestinian-Israeli peace talks that Washington brokers. The U.S. government sidesteps the right of Palestinians to return to their original towns and villages because it opposes this right.

Workers World recently visited five Palestinian camps in Lebanon as a guest of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Marxist organization with a long history in the Palestinian struggle. The situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon underscores why the right of return is so important, and why all progressives concerned with the Palestinian question must actively support it and never let it be dropped.

Slow war against Palestinians in Lebanon

For the 400,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the civil war did not end in 1990. Right-wing forces in and outside of the Lebanese government are still waging a slow war against them.

In Lebanon today, Palestinians are not allowed to live outside the refugee camps. They cannot own property. They cannot be citizens and can't vote. They are not entitled to any social services. They cannot work in most jobs.

They are scapegoated by Lebanon's right wing for many of the social and political ills, and must worry constantly about their safety from attacks by paramilitary militias and from the Lebanese Army.

From 1970 to 1982 the Palestine Liberation Organization and its fighters were based in Lebanon. During the Civil War of 1975-90, poor and disenfranchised Lebanese united with the Palestinian resistance to wage a struggle for the liberation of all. Though the struggle was defeated by Arab reaction and by Israel, backed and armed by the U.S., Lebanon's reactionary rulers will never forget or forgive the role that the Palestinian struggle played. This is why Lebanon's rulers are



Palestinians in Lebanon are allowed to live only in overcrowded refugee camps, with no rights to social services. Here, children of the Bourj al Barejneh camp in Beirut have only sewage-lined streets in which to play.

slowly squeezing the Palestinians from every direction. Until they can return to Palestine, however, the Palestinians in Lebanon, have nowhere to go.

"In Lebanon Palestinians have the right of free speech, but not economic or social rights," Abu Ali Hassan, a national PFLP leader in Lebanon explained. "In other Arab countries Palestinians have a higher standard of living, but cannot speak out. Palestinians in Lebanon are the worst off economically.

"Most Palestinians in Lebanon want the right to return" to Palestine, he continued, "but to do this they need support in the form of social rights, the right to work, the right to buy a flat [apartment], and the right to live outside the camps."

'Living situation worse than Gaza'

Abu Jabad is the PFLP leader responsible for political activities in Lebanon. His home is in Nahar al Bared camp, which was destroyed by the Lebanese Army two years ago. He said: "The living situation for Palestinians in Lebanon is worse than in Gaza and the occupied land. Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank have a university. Palestinians in Lebanon don't. In fact, because Palestinians are considered foreigners, education here is more costly."

Lebanese government decrees passed in 1964 and 1995 bar Palestinian refugees from working in more than 70 professions.

"Palestinians work as farm workers and as construction laborers. This is seasonal work. There are no benefits," said Hassan. "Palestinians must work outside Lebanon. Many go to Europe illegally or as refugees, assisted by [the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East]."

Fuad, a PFLP leader in the Bourj al Barejneh camp, said, "All families here have people who work in the Gulf and in Europe." He added, "There is just one UNRWA high school for the Palestinians in all of Beirut. There are 600-700 students there."

Raafat El Najjar is the medical director of a clinic in Bidawi camp in Tripoli. He said Palestinian doctors "are not allowed to work outside the camps. A Lebanese [doctor] gets \$40 per patient. I get \$3 per patient. Sanitation workers, people who repair cars outside make more money than the professionals in the camp."

Cannot own property

Meanwhile, a 2002 amendment to Lebanon's national property law forbids "non-Lebanese persons, who do not possess citizenship issued by a state recognized by Lebanon, to inherit or buy property." This prohibits Palestinians from owning land or even an apartment outside the refugee camps. If they already own property, they cannot pass it to their children.

Dependant on U.N. for basic services

Because they cannot work in Lebanon and have no access to social services, Palestinians in Lebanon must rely on the very limited resources of UNRWA as the main provider of basic services—education, health, relief and social services.

This relationship has a dual character, Hassan pointed out: "The United Nations accepts the state of Israel. However, it also passed Resolution Number 194, which supports the Palestinian right to return, and to get financial compensation for what they have gone through."

There are 422,188 Palestinian refugees registered with UNRWA, making up 10 percent of Lebanon's population. According to UNRWA, "The Lebanon

Field has the highest percentage of Palestine refugees who are living in abject poverty and who are registered with the Agency's 'special hardship' program."

Fear daily for their safety

Hassan explained that two of the 13 camps in Lebanon were destroyed outright and never replaced. Israel destroyed Nabatiyah camp, near the Israeli border. Lebanese fascists destroyed Tel Al Zaatar in Beirut, and massacred the population. In 1982, the Israelis and Lebanese fascists massacred the inhabitants of the Sabra and Shatila camps. In 2007, the Lebanese Army bombed and destroyed Nahr al Bared. Its residents are still displaced.

Abu Jabad, the PFLP leader responsible for political activities in Lebanon, explained that the Palestinians living in these camps were killed, deported or made to flee to other camps, increasing the already severe overcrowding. "The situation is very dangerous. Palestinian lives are threatened," he added. "It's not over, as can be seen by destruction of Nahar al Bared two years ago."

"There is no certain future, and always fear of war," Dr. El Najjar said. "Some Palestinians in Badawi camp who lost proper ID cards can't go outside the camp. Others are afraid to leave the camps."

'Where is justice?'

Imad Audeh, the PFLP leader responsible for north Lebanon, added: "People are not living the way they are supposed to live. Where is justice? There is a U.N. resolution to return, but we are still waiting for 61 years to return.

"The Lebanese government says, 'You are going back? Why should we give you citizenship?' This is an excuse. While they are living here, at least give the Palestinians some rights, like the Lebanese." The government "doesn't want to nationalize Palestinians because it would upset the balance."

Audeh referred to Lebanon's archaic, religion-based political system, which awards great authority to ruling cliques in the Maronite Christian and Sunni Muslim communities, based on an obsolete census conducted more than 75 years ago. "Palestinians don't have religious discrimination," he said. "Palestinians will be with anyone who supports them."

What do Palestinians in Lebanon want?

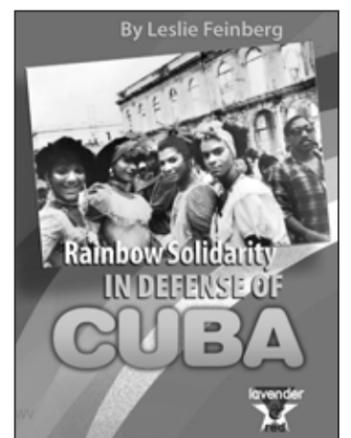
"We want the human rights we need to go on living here, and the implementation of U.N. decision 194," Abu Jabad said. "We have the right to return to our homeland. The U.S. government must play a role in this and not against Palestinian rights."

Despite the difficult conditions, the spark of struggle lives. Imad Audeh spoke for all the Palestinians interviewed on this visit when he said, "We are sure that we will take back Palestine." □

Workers World's top 10 Reasons Big Oil and the rest of the U.S. ruling class hate Iran

1. Incredibly, the Iranian government acts as if Iranian oil actually belongs to Iran.
2. We still really, really miss the shah, who acted differently.
3. For some reason, the Iranian government says that the Holocaust of World War II happened in Nazi-occupied Europe, not in Palestine or any other Arab or Muslim country.
4. We are unfamiliar with the term "peaceful purposes."
5. Since the Pentagon has thousands of nuclear weapons, it seems only fair that Iran should have none.
6. They seem to be preparing to defend themselves against the attack we are always threatening.
7. Just because the election in Iran wasn't fixed, doesn't mean we can't say it was. Hello?
8. It seems highly unlikely that the Iranian government plans to buy real estate securities from Wall St.
9. If U.S. workers blame Iran for all their problems, the downside is what?
10. Iran's solidarity with Lebanon and Palestine gives us the heebie-jeebies.

—Paul Wilcox



U.N. report condemns Israel but Palestinians outraged when Abbas drops war crimes inquiry

By Joyce Chediak

Outrage swept through the Palestinian communities worldwide following Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas' decision Oct. 8 not to pursue the Goldstone Report, which accuses Israel of committing war crimes when it waged war on Gaza in January. Abbas made this decision at the urging of Hillary Clinton. (aljazeera.net)

Criticism of Abbas has come from virtually every Palestinian political group and civil organization, including Abbas' own group, Fatah, for caving in to U.S. and Israeli pressure and "acting against Palestinian national interests." On Oct. 6, some 500 people demonstrated in Ramallah to demand an explanation from Abbas for postponing the report. (Palestine Monitor, Oct. 6) Lawyers in Gaza held a sit-in protest against delaying the report.

Adding fuel to the flames of Palestinian anger, in Jerusalem on Sept. 27 Israeli forces used stun grenades against Palestinian youth trying to stop a group of right-wing Jewish extremists from entering the Haram al-Sharif compound, site of the al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques. Right-wingers aided by the Israeli government have long been trying to take over these important Palestinian and Moslem sites.

Findings of the Goldstone Report

The Goldstone Report is the findings of a United Nations fact-finding mission into the Gaza war. The report cites attacks on "the only remaining flour producing

factory, the destruction of a large part of Gaza egg production, the bulldozing of huge tracts of agricultural land, and the bombing of some two hundred industrial facilities." It found that Israeli attacks on Gaza's civilian infrastructure "amounted to reprisals and collective punishment and constitute war crimes."

The report also condemns the Israeli army's use of white phosphorous and other anti-personnel weapons for causing "unacceptable and unnecessary human suffering as well as environmental damage—not only in Gaza but probably also in southern Israel."

The report recommends that the matter be referred to the U.N. Security Council for further investigation, and if no action is taken, then be referred to the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.

The Goldstone Report also accuses "Palestinian armed groups" of committing "crimes" by firing missiles into Israel and hitting civilians. Certainly the defensive actions taken by the people of Gaza with home-made missiles are not the same as a murderous assault by one of the most heavily armed governments in the world. The Palestinian community, however, feels that the most important thing about the U.N. report was that it targeted Israel.

According to the Palestine Monitor, the report "has been a source of great encouragement for Palestinians. Never before has an official report been so scathing of Israeli policy, raising the prospect of international sanctions and criminal prosecutions." It was widely expected that the report would be put before the Security Council.

But Abbas and the Palestinian Authority, under pressure from the U.S. and Israel, decided to defer Security Council consideration of the report, which delays adopting the report until at least March 2010, giving Israel and its imperialist backers in the U.S. and Europe time to bury the findings.

Widespread condemnation of delay

"We were shocked," was the reaction of Khaled Meshaal, the political chief of Hamas. He called Abbas' action "a shame." Mushir al-Masri, a Hamas legislator, said the postponement "represents a betrayal of the Palestinian cause and confirms the extent of the collaboration between Abbas and his aides with the Zionist enemy, against the Palestinian people."

A member of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine told the Monitor, "This decision only serves the interest of the U.S. and Israel."

Omar Barghouti, founder of the BDS (Boycott, Divest, Sanctions) Movement, said, "This collusion undermines the great efforts by human rights organizations and many activists to bring justice to the Palestinian victims of Israel's latest massacre in Gaza."

Mustafa Barghouti, secretary general of the Palestinian National Initiative, described the postponement as "a grave mistake, which shows weakness of leadership and the need for a unified decision making body."

The Islamic Jihad called postponing the report "against Palestinian interests" and

underlined "the Palestinian Authority's defeatism, lack of will and inability to shoulder responsibility towards the suffering of our people."

The Political Bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine called the postponement "a crime against our martyrs, wounded and victims of our people" and condemned "the entire political approach by the Palestinian Authority that is the source of this betrayal—adaptation and conciliation to American and Israeli dictates."

The PFLP also said the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to President Barack Obama "while he presides over two wars and occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, threatens a new war against Iran, and continues to unreservedly support the occupation, subjugation and aggression against the Palestinian people, is a slap in the face to the people of the world struggling to throw off the chains of U.S. imperialism." Obama, this group said, "represents the same policies and interests as former U.S. President George W. Bush."

Demonstrations around the Arab world have protested Abbas' action and supported al-Aqsa. Actions will also be held in the U.S. in solidarity with al-Aqsa and demanding an end to Zionist terror against Moslem religious sites in Jerusalem.

These protests will also demand that the Goldstone Report not be suppressed, that Israeli war criminals be punished, that war crimes against the people of Gaza be stopped, and that sanctions be imposed upon Israel. □

2003 kidnapping in the Sahara

U.S.-Algerian plot aimed to open up Africa

By G. Dunkel

The conspiracy that Jeremy Keenan's book "The Dark Sahara" examines grew out of the kidnapping of 32 European tourists in seven separate parties in early 2003, a few weeks before the United States invaded Iraq. The tourists, all German speaking, vanished in an area of southern Algeria called the "Graveyard Trail," a well-known tourist destination in the German-speaking world. Keenan shows U.S. collusion in the conspiracy with the goal of opening Africa to further U.S. intervention.

It is easy to make the charge that this or that event is the result of a vast conspiracy, especially given the pervasive cynicism in capitalist societies. This cynicism is based on the difference between what governments and politicians say and what they do. Take the occupation of Iraq, which the U.S. government claimed was part of the "global war on terror," or the invasion of

Afghanistan, called "Operation Enduring Freedom," as two recent examples.

When the conspiracy unfolds in the midst of the Sahara, that vast desert roughly the size of the entire United States, stretching across Africa from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea, the conspirators could hope to remain unmasked. Charges might be made but those behind the plot would maintain plausible deniability.

Keenan, a social anthropologist who is a professor at the University of Bristol and a recognized academic expert with a number of books on the central Sahara, told Democracy Now Aug. 10 that "by a thousand-to-one chance, million-to-one chance, I was ... there in the region for two or three years, more or less continuously, before this incident took place. I was there for much of the time while it happened and afterwards."

This wasn't the first time Keenan had been in this part of southern Algeria. He lived in the area for three years begin-

ning in 1964, speaks the local language Tamahak, and has a wide network of friends and children of friends among the Tuareg nomads who call this part of the Sahara home.

Keenan's doubts regarding the official explanation that these kidnappings were the work of the armed Islamic organization called the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat were reinforced by the local people, mainly Tuareg, who saw the hand of the "dirty tricks" department of the Algerian secret police in this affair.

Keenan spent the next few years investigating the kidnappings, interviewing hostages after they were released, obtaining documents from the Algerian police, reviewing press accounts and consulting with friends and contacts throughout the Sahara, Algeria, and in Germany and France. His book "The Dark Sahara: America's war on Terror in Africa" (Pluto Press, 2009) summarizes and documents his main points, and puts them into context, in particular the context of Algeria's recent political history.

He establishes that the United States participated in this kidnapping by supplying intelligence and political cover to Algerian secret police operatives. Washington's motive was to fabricate a terrorist incident in the empty spaces of the Sahara in order to enable its military expansion into Africa in pursuit of African oil and the vast mineral resources on the continent, particularly in the Sahara.

The Algerian government cooper-

ated because it needed modern military equipment to end the armed struggle that grew out of the coup designed to keep the Islamic Salvation Front from winning a decisive parliamentary victory in early 1992. Washington rewarded the Algerians with these weapons.

Salima Mellah, an Algerian journalist living in Berlin, and his collaborators in Algeria-Watch have published a series of articles in *Le Monde Diplomatique* and *Politis* essentially supporting Keenan's conclusions. Inter-imperialist rivalry in Africa between French and U.S. imperialism creates an atmosphere in France that is conducive to anti-U.S. revelations. Monthlies like *Le Monde Diplomatique* and *Politis*, however, expose U.S. imperialism from a progressive perspective.

The Algerian secret police had experience fabricating "terrorist" incidents.

Mellah and Keenan describe how the Algerian army, pretending to be Islamic militants during its civil war, carried out bloody massacres in which hundreds of civilians were killed. This depiction of Algerian police tactics, documented in books by Nesroulah Yous, Habib Souaïdia and Mohammed Samraoui, was upheld by a French court which dismissed defamation charges brought by the Algerian minister of defense.

"The Dark Sahara" is a book rich in lessons about the role of the United States in Africa, how it uses agents provocateurs and fabricated "terrorist" incidents. It is well worth reading. □

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

By Leslie Feinberg



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

www.leftbooks.com

Health rip-off

The U.S. remains one of only two developed countries in the world today that do not provide health insurance for all their residents. More than 45,000 deaths in the U.S. each year are due to lack of health insurance. Now the insurance industry giants are doing everything in their power to prevent any genuine health care reform.

The health care plan proposed by President Barack Obama and the Democratic Party has been watered down by so many concessions to the insurance and pharmaceutical industries and to right-wing Republicans that, in addition to being completely inadequate, it will actually result in a transfer of money from the working class to the health care industry.

The plan revealed by Senate Finance Committee chair Max Baucus would mandate the purchase of health insurance without any control over premiums, while taking seven years to reduce the number of uninsured individuals to 17 million. Currently an estimated 50 million people are uninsured in the U.S. and an additional 25 million underinsured.

The Baucus plan delivers what the insurance industry really wants—a captive market. Should the bill pass in its present form, those who stand to gain the most are the insurance companies and pharmaceuticals. The huge profits these companies rake in guarantee that the cost of health care in the U.S. remains by far the highest in the world.

In addition, the plan leaves millions of undocumented workers specifically excluded from whatever health care provisions are finally decided on, a racist maneuver that is harmful to everyone.

The health insurance industry has spent millions of these ill-gained dollars making sure things go their way. Congressional disclosures reveal that health care firms and their lobbyists spent at the phenomenal rate of \$1.4 million a day from January to March of this year and continued to pour in more during the second quarter—all to guarantee that health care “reform” would be to their benefit.

Six U.S. senators, including leading members of the Senate Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over health care reform, received more than a million dollars each from the industry. Baucus alone received more than \$3 million. Sen. Arlen Specter, who

first supported health care reform and then opposed it, received more than \$4 million.

Joe Wilson, the racist South Carolina representative who gained notoriety for his disruption of President Obama’s Sept. 9 speech to Congress, has pocketed hundreds of thousands in insurance and health industry contributions.

Millions more went to finance health industry public relations campaigns. The lobbying group America’s Health Insurance Plans, which represents 1,300 member companies, sent thousands of its employees to town-hall meetings on health care reform. Insurance industry contributions helped fuel the “grass-roots” front groups that disrupted these meetings.

There is a lot at stake for the major insurance companies. The top five—United Health Group, WellPoint, Aetna, Humana and Cigna—raked in profits averaging more than \$1.56 billion in 2008. The CEOs of these companies got salaries and benefits ranging from \$3 million to \$24 million in 2008. It should be clear that they will stand in the way of any reform that threatens their loot. After all, under capitalism it is profits, not providing health care, which really drive the industry.

For any real health care reform under a U.S. capitalist administration, organized labor and health care advocates have to stand up to the industry. They can’t rely on the Democratic Party, not even the “liberal” Democrats in the House of Representatives.

A resolution supporting single-payer health care was passed at the AFL-CIO convention in Pittsburgh in September. To make this a reality, the unions need to activate their members with at least as much intensity as they have devoted to supporting capitalist political candidates.

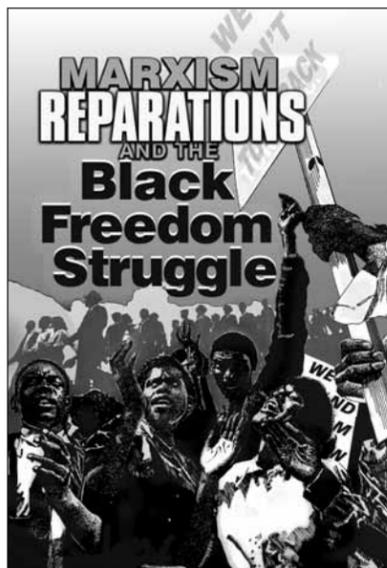
Rather than looking to congressional Democrats, organized labor needs to support the efforts of genuine grassroots organizations like Healthcare-NOW! and other single-payer advocacy groups that are directly challenging the health care industry as they fight for universal coverage under H.R. 676.

“Medicare for all” is an appropriate demand for this period and the right thing to fight for now, but in the long term only socialism can provide for workers’ health care needs. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead. Includes:

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- Black labor from chattel slavery to wage slavery
- Black youth: repression & resistance
- Black & Brown unity: A pillar of struggle for human rights & global justice!
- Are conditions ripe again today? 40th anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion
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While appealing for increased U.S. assistance

Somali president visits Midwest communities

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

After a major address before the Columbus Council on World Affairs, the U.S.-backed president of the Transitional Federal Government of Somalia, Sheikh Sherif Sheikh Ahmed, told journalists that his fragile regime could not prevent the seizure of power by the two main resistance groups in the Horn of Africa nation. Ahmed was in the United States to appeal for continued aid from the Obama administration and to speak before the Somali expatriate communities in Columbus, Ohio; Chicago; and Minneapolis.

Ahmed was installed as leader of the TFG in January after the withdrawal of Ethiopian troops from Somalia. The Ethiopian military had intervened in December 2006 to disperse members and supporters of the Union of Islamic Courts, which had taken control of large sections of the country.

As a result of a split within the UIC, with which Ahmed was previously associated, a new TFG was established which excluded members of al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam. Both these groups have demanded the total withdrawal of African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) military forces from the country and the establishment of an Islamic state.

Regarding the continued resistance to the TFG, Ahmed told reporters in Columbus: “Doing something together about it is necessary. My government does not have the capacity to act alone and do that work.” (Associated Press, Oct. 7)

“We believe that if the Somali government [and] the United States government ... cooperate, we can bring stability to Somalia,” said Ahmed, who complimented the Obama administration for its support and said that a meeting held with the U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, “was an indication of a level of interest in East Africa.” (The Lantern, Oct. 8)

Accusations of terrorism by the U.S.

The U.S. government has targeted the Somali community claiming that it is the focus of recruitment for al-Shabaab and Hizbul Islam, groups which intelligence agencies say are affiliated with al-Qaeda. A U.S. military airstrike in southern Somalia in September resulted in the reported death of Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, who had been accused of involvement in a car bombing of a resort area in Kenya in 2002.

According to the Associated Press: “Authorities say as many as 20 Somali men in Minneapolis, possibly intent on holy war, returned to the impoverished nation during the last two years. At least three of them have died in Somalia, including one believed to be the first American suicide bomber. Three others have pleaded guilty in the U.S. to terror-related charges.” (Oct. 7)

In his address to the Minneapolis Somali community, Ahmed warned his audience to reject efforts aimed at opposing his government through military force. Some 80,000 Somalis live in the Minneapolis area.

The escalation in immigration over the last two decades has been in response to the collapse of the U.S.-backed Somali government of Mohammed Siad Barre during 1991 and the successive failed efforts to establish a stable representa-

tive state. The U.S. intervened directly in Somalia from 1992 to 1994 but withdrew after the resistance of the people resulted in casualties inflicted upon the Marines that occupied the country.

Accusations of “terrorism” have even affected the distribution of humanitarian aid to the people inside Somalia. Since large sections of the country are under the control of the Hizbul Islam and al-Shabaab, the U.S. had placed restrictions on which organizations can provide assistance.

In 2008 the U.S. reportedly provided \$274 million in humanitarian assistance and food aid. In 2009, the Obama administration has allocated \$189 million in similar aid.

“USAID will continue to review its policies and procedures for the provision of humanitarian assistance in Somalia, and this review will include ensuring compliance with U.S. laws designed to prevent potential support to terrorists,” stated Russell Brooks, a press officer at the State Department. (IRIN, Oct. 6)

Since the U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion in December 2006, Somalia has faced its worse humanitarian crisis since the collapse of the Barre regime. About 3.8 million people, almost half the population, are in need of assistance. The number of displaced persons is estimated at 1.5 million.

Reports of another Ethiopian incursion

Reports emanating from central Somalia on Oct. 11 indicate that hundreds of Ethiopian troops have entered the country, arresting dozens of people accused of being affiliated with the resistance movements. The Ethiopian troops, along with pro-government Somali militias, entered three villages west of Beledweyn, approximately 186 miles north of the capital of Mogadishu.

Husein Farah Gomey, an elder from the area, said he “saw dozens of armed vehicles belonging to the Ethiopian army with some Somali militias, they entered Wagada village and detained several people before getting out of the village this morning.” (AFP, Oct. 11)

According to a Hizbul Islam official, Sheikh Abdurahman Sheikh Mohamoud, “It is not the first time [Ethiopian military forces] have carried out such raids inside of Somalia taking innocent civilians with them, but we tell them that such provocation will only breed bloodshed.”

Some of the residents of the area told the AFP that the Ethiopian military crossed into the area in pursuit of a rebel group fighting the government in the Ogaden region. A similar report in August also claimed that Ethiopian troops entered the area and temporarily displaced the resistance movements that were in control of the territory.

With the Obama administration, U.S. policy towards Somalia and the Horn of Africa has remained essentially unchanged. The AMISOM forces and the TFG government headed by Ahmed are largely being propped up by the U.S.

Flotillas of U.S. and other warships are patrolling the waters off the coast of Somalia in the Gulf of Aden as well as in the Indian Ocean under the guise of fighting piracy. The U.S. maintains a military base in neighboring Djibouti and has pledged to continue its backing of the Kenyan government. □

Afghanistan and the U.S. empire

Class context for the current debate

This article is based on a portion of a speech by Fred Goldstein to a Workers World Party public forum in New York on Oct. 9.

Let's put the fierce debate taking place over the war in Afghanistan in the proper historical and class context—from a Marxist point of view, a Leninist, anti-imperialist point of view.

If you listen to the public debate, it seems that the present crisis had its origins in 9/11. Now, there is no doubt that the ruling class in the U.S. was traumatized by the catastrophic events of Sept. 11, 2001—as were much of the U.S. population. And it is certainly true that the rulers would like to eliminate the forces responsible.

But this struggle is taking place in a larger context—particularly in the context of the U.S. trying to re-colonize the world in the wake of the collapse of the USSR. For 74 years—from the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 until the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1991—the U.S. empire and other imperialist empires were being driven back by socialist revolutions and national liberation struggles in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

The war to make Afghanistan a U.S. satellite in Central Asia, just like the war against Iraq and the threats to Iran, is part of an historic effort to re-conquer that part of the world.

Washington and the Pentagon would undoubtedly not have chosen Afghanistan as a primary battlefield in this struggle. But it was thrust upon them by the Sept. 11 attacks. Soon the George W. Bush administration, thinking it had annihilated the Taliban and all other resistance by the massive bombing of Afghanistan, quickly shifted its focus to the more lucrative, oil-rich territory of Iraq. It put Iran and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on notice that they were also on the regime-change list.

The Pentagon started a war they thought would be over quickly. But the resistance proved far more resilient than they had ever dreamed of. The opponents of the Bush administration, including Barack Obama himself, say that Bush should have kept his eye on the ball and gone in to get Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. Then the U.S. would not be having all these problems, they said.

Getting bin Laden wouldn't eliminate resistance

It is important to take exception to this reasoning. It hides the nature of the struggle in Afghanistan. The Pentagon might very well have gotten Osama bin Laden, but that would in no way have eliminated the resistance of the Taliban and other fighters who want to get the occupiers out. This resistance is driven by U.S. occupation and would have developed regardless of whether bin Laden was captured or not.

The simple truth is that the Pentagon does not want to lose any wars. They will not stop until they are defeated. They never have. They left Vietnam in defeat. They left North Korea in defeat. They left Somalia in defeat.

They persisted in Iraq and virtually destroyed the country in order to avoid defeat. And let's note that the question of the destiny of Iraq is yet to be decided. More than 130,000 U.S. troops are still there and the Pentagon is not rushing them home.

But in addition to not wanting to lose a war, the Pentagon cannot afford to

lose this war. It is part and parcel of the effort to reassert U.S. domination of an area from Pakistan to Syria. They want to threaten Pakistan and Iran; they want oil pipelines to flow from Central Asia to the Arabian Gulf; they want to have a strategic position vis-à-vis China and Russia as well as Central Asia. They want to "pacify" the country and set up permanent bases the way they are attempting to do in Iraq.

They have 70,000 troops there and dragged their NATO imperialist subordinates into the theater of war kicking and screaming—and it wasn't just to stop al-Qaeda. Of course, that is one immediate objective. But it is part of a much larger imperialist objective. That is what all the heat is about between the Obama administration and the McChrystal-Petraeus faction of the military, which represents a significant part of the high command. The issue between the factions is how best to accomplish the goal of domination of this region.

The commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, as well as much of the acting high command, are trying to depict this as a critical moment, a turning point in the war. McChrystal has forced the discussion by an act of rank insubordination and defiance. His faction made an open challenge to the Obama administration by leaking to the Washington Post McChrystal's so-called evaluation of the battlefield situation, demanding that Obama order 40,000 more troops to the field or "risk failure."

Gen. David Petraeus, head of the U.S. Central Command, and Admiral Michael Mullen, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, supposedly endorse this evaluation.

By saying that the U.S. forces face failure if they do not get 40,000 more troops, this faction is setting Obama up for accusations of treachery and betrayal. And they know it. What McChrystal did is grounds for immediate dismissal.

McCain attack on Obama

John McCain, a craven mouthpiece of the right wing of the military, made a coordinated attack on Obama. He also showed the arrogance of the military. His outburst on Oct. 6 at a meeting of congressional and senatorial leaders with Obama was glossed over by the capitalist press.

There is supposed to be a protocol of politeness and respect when the president

invites members of Congress to consult on matters. The so-called respect for the office dominates these sessions and the Congress members invariably couch their queries and remarks to the president in a manner that befits cautious, if not obsequious, subordinates.

But at this meeting McCain blurted out a lecture and a threat to Obama that echoes McChrystal's leak. He told Obama that time was important and he had better make a decision soon, "not in a leisurely fashion," according to McCain aide Brooke Buchanan. Translation: you had better hurry up and give the Petraeus-McChrystal faction the 40,000 troops before we lose the war.

Now, this was not as outrageous as the "You lie!" comment shouted out by Rep. Joe Wilson of South Carolina during Obama's speech to a joint session of Congress. But it was of the same variety and it represents the aggressiveness of sections of the military—which is racist and chauvinist, notwithstanding the large number of African-American and Latino/a troops.

Right now forces around Obama, presumably represented by Vice President Joseph Biden and Obama's national security adviser, retired Marine Gen. James Jones, are pushing back against the Petraeus-McChrystal group. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, however, is said to lean toward McChrystal.

Obama called McChrystal from the field to meet with him in Copenhagen in an effort to show both presidential authority and some sort of unity after McChrystal made an alarmist speech in London. Furthermore, Obama told McChrystal to stay home, don't come to Washington to participate in the Afghanistan talks in person, and instead speak over video conferencing.

The Petraeus-McChrystal faction is expressing the adventurous nature of the Pentagon and U.S. imperialism. The Biden-Jones faction, the so-called moderate group, is fearful of an adventure. It may all end up in some sort of compromise. But neither faction has a solution to the problem of U.S. imperialism in Afghanistan.

They both rely on the hopelessly corrupt puppet regime of Hamid Karzai, who worked with the CIA during the U.S.-sponsored war that lasted from 1979 to 1992 and employed so-called "mujahede-

en" to overthrow a progressive secular government in Afghanistan. Today the Karzai regime is not sovereign even in the capital of Kabul and has as its only domestic social base a host of ruthless warlords.

In any case, this is a debate between two imperialist factions. The Obama administration is reportedly trying to steer away from a big escalation. But it has made clear that it will not take any of its 68,000 troops out of Afghanistan. This means that, counting Afghanistan and Iraq, Washington will continue to have a minimum of 200,000 troops in the region.

More suffering in Asia and U.S.

This debate is about the degree of escalation and not about the war itself. Whatever its outcome, the war will continue to bring more suffering and hardship to the people of Afghanistan and Pakistan. And it will affect the working class in the U.S., who may not be able to pay enough attention right now because the economic crisis, health care and other domestic concerns are paramount in their minds. But just because the war is not on their minds does not mean it will not affect them profoundly.

The war is aggravating the economic crisis of the masses. Hundreds of billions of dollars, which should be used to alleviate the results of the crisis, will be poured into the coffers of the military-industrial complex instead of into jobs programs, income support, health care, housing, education and so on. Neighborhoods will further deteriorate because the money needed to renovate them is spent on the battlefields of Afghanistan in order to further the imperialist interests of the very bankers and bosses who are getting rich in spite of the economic crisis.

The war is bound to arouse resistance in the U.S. among militants who are disgusted by the crimes of U.S. capitalism and imperialism. It is already starting. Youth have been arrested protesting on the eighth anniversary of the war. More will awaken.

Revolutionaries must be in the thick of the struggle against the war and try to bring the anti-war struggle and the working class struggle together to fight capitalism. This is the natural course for Marxists to pursue in the present situation.

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

British workers fight for 'green jobs'

By Martha Grevatt

Since July, when 600 workers at a wind turbine plant on the Isle of Wight in Britain were laid off, their ongoing struggle has united labor and environmental activists in a movement to save so-called "green jobs."

After learning that Vestas—a Danish firm that brags of being "number one in modern energy"—was closing their plant, a small group of workers occupied the factory on July 21. The occupation ended on Aug. 7 after a court-ordered eviction. A 24-hour encampment outside the plant, set up originally to support the workers inside, continued to attract supporters.

Later in August, a second encampment was erected at the dock where the turbine blades remaining inside the plant were to be shipped to the U.S. On Sept. 15 four courageous supporters climbed on top of cranes that were positioned to move the

blades. Within hours they were arrested and charged with aggravated trespass.

The solidarity of the defiant Vestas workers and climate change activists was temporarily able to halt the loading of the gigantic blades onto barges. On Sept. 22 at 6 a.m. 120 Isle police woke up the campers, ordered them to disperse immediately, and confiscated some of their belongings as "evidence." One supporter was arrested and charged with aggravated trespass and "going equipped to cause criminal damage."

After three months of living in tents, the original encampment outside the plant continues to function. Recent enhancements include a solar-powered cell phone/laptop charging station and solar showers.

While the struggle has suffered setbacks, solidarity actions with the Vestas workers continue. Support committees around Britain hold regular meetings. At a conference on Oct. 11 of the Workers

Climate Action, one workshop was held on "building a class-struggle, environmental movement after the experience of Vestas."

The day before the police action against the encampment at the dock, one of the plant occupiers summed up the lessons of his experience. "We have been clear," he wrote on the Save Vestas blog, "in our words and our actions, that this is our factory and our blades. There is no financial or rhetorical substitute for direct action on the Isle of Wight and elsewhere around the country. This is a live fight, with its front line in Newport. ... Our banner then said, 'Our Blades, Our Power.' It is still true.

"What has been most inspiring about this campaign, exemplified by the occupation of management's offices by a group of dedicated workers—is that it is through our direct action that we will take back control of the world we live in, in order to save it." □

Mientras el Presidente Zelaya está rodeado por el ejército Activistas de EEUU van hacia Honduras en un viaje de investigación

Por John Catalinotto

Oct. 6. Los reportes sobre Honduras hoy se alternan entre una posible apertura de las negociaciones para resolver la crisis comenzada por el golpe de estado el 28 de junio y la continua represión en contra del masivo movimiento de resistencia. Mientras tanto una delegación de activistas de Estados Unidos por los derechos humanos se preparaba para salir el 7 de octubre en un viaje de investigación hacia Tegucigalpa, la capital del país centroamericano.

El Presidente Manuel Zelaya, desde su asilo en la cercada embajada brasileña en Tegucigalpa, dijo que el régimen de Roberto Micheletti debe restaurar las libertades civiles en Honduras y estar de acuerdo con su retorno a la presidencia antes de que las negociaciones continúen. “Yo estoy listo para sentarme frente a frente con el dictador, [Micheletti], cuando él decida firmar el plan Arias”, dijo Zelaya, refiriéndose a un plan propuesto por el Presidente Oscar Arias de Costa Rica que el régimen golpista hasta ahora ha rechazado. (AFP, Oct. 5)

El régimen golpista, que representa a las 13 familias de la oligarquía hondureña y basa su poder en las bayonetas

del ejército hondureño entrenado por el Pentágono, anunció el 5 de octubre que rescindiría su decreto anterior que suspendía los derechos constitucionales. Sin embargo, las dos voces noticieras que difunden los acontecimientos reflejando la opinión de la mayoría de los/as hondureños/as que se oponen al golpe, todavía están cerrados.

Comentando sobre la cancelación del estado de sitio, Rafael Alegria del Frente Nacional de Resistencia en contra del golpe le llamó “un triunfo para el pueblo y la resistencia popular”.

Delegación de EEUU hacia Honduras

En una conferencia de prensa en las oficinas del Centro para los Derechos Constitucionales en Nueva York el 5 de octubre se anunció que una delegación de 12 personas llegaría el 7 de octubre a Tegucigalpa en una misión investigativa. La delegación incluye a activistas políticos y religiosos, organizadores comunitarios, sindicalistas laborales, estudiantes y jóvenes.

La delegación había planeado asistir al la Primera Conferencia Internacional Contra el Golpe y por la Asamblea Nacional Constituyente en Honduras, la

cual estaba programada para el 8 al 10 de octubre. Sin embargo, dada la crisis social-política en el país y el incremento en la represión por el régimen golpista, la conferencia ha sido pospuesta.

La delegación estadounidense, coordinada por el Centro de Acción Internacional, sin embargo continuará su viaje hacia Honduras del 7 al 11 de octubre. El grupo planea investigar los reportes de que el gobierno golpista de Micheletti ha atacado consistentemente la embajada brasileña, tirando bombas de gas químico, cortando el agua y la electricidad, y usando Aparatos Acústicos de Largo Alcance que resultarían en la pérdida permanente de audición.

La co-directora del IAC, Teresa Gutiérrez, dijo a Workers World/Mundo Obrero que el grupo, “también planea reunirse con estudiantes, el sector laboral, mujeres, jóvenes, representantes del Frente Nacional de Resistencia contra el golpe y otros para saber la verdad sobre la situación en Honduras y traerla a Estados Unidos”. Vanessa Ramos, presidenta de la Asociación Americana de Juristas y miembro del NLG, ayudó a organizar una delegación a Honduras a finales de agosto. Ramos dijo a los/as organizadores/as que la presencia de la delegación de Estados

Unidos es muy importante ahora y que ella apoya sus esfuerzos en la investigación.

El informe del viaje del NLG que fue redactado por los/as miembros de la Asociación Americana de Juristas, el NLG y la Asociación Internacional de Abogados Democráticos, así como la Asociación Internacional Contra la Tortura, confirma que los hechos del 28 de junio en Honduras constituyen un verdadero golpe de estado militar. El informe señala además que el derrocamiento militar “fue una clara violación a la Constitución Política hondureña del 1982”. En vista de la tensa e inestable situación en Honduras, la delegación que permanecerá en el país entre los días 7 y 11 de octubre, publicó una petición en el Internet dirigida a los/as funcionarios/as electos, miembros del Congreso y representantes de la prensa llamándoles a que aseguren el éxito y la seguridad de la delegación estadounidense declarando que el gobierno de Micheletti es ilegítimo, condenando la represión del pueblo hondureño y exigiendo el inmediato restablecimiento del presidente democráticamente electo de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya. El IAC/CAI también comenzó un Twitter para permitir la comunicación instantánea desde Honduras durante el viaje. Estos enlaces

Continúa a página 7

Conferencias fortalecen la solidaridad internacional de los/as trabajadores/as

Por Cheryl LaBash

Ignacio Meneses representó al U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange (Intercambio Laboral EEUU/Cuba) en la Segunda Conferencia Laboral Nuestramérica, celebrada en Sao Paulo, Brasil, los días 22-24 de septiembre. Desde 1991 el Intercambio Laboral ha establecido vínculos internacionales entre trabajadores/as en los EEUU y en América Latina, particularmente en Cuba.

Mundo Obrero (Workers World) habló con Meneses sobre la reciente conferencia de Sao Paulo.

MO: Háblenos de esta reunión.

Meneses: La segunda conferencia sindical “Nuestramérica” unió a federaciones de trabajadores de todos los países de América Latina, incluyendo grandes federaciones sindicales como la federación central del trabajo brasileña que representa a 7 millones de miembros, y la Confederación de Trabajadores de Cuba, con 3,5 millones de miembros. Los líderes sindicales están activamente haciendo cambios en sus propios países—como Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua y otros. Vinieron invitados de Europa, Vietnam y Japón.

MO: ¿Qué se discutió?

Meneses: Hubo un debate muy interesante acerca de la crisis económica mundial. Todos estuvieron de acuerdo que no se trataba sólo de una crisis típica del capitalismo, sino de la misma estructura del capitalismo. No importa que los economistas tradicionales digan que todo está

mejorando; ellos no saben qué va a pasar o qué se debe hacer.

En esta crisis las personas trabajadoras son las más afectadas. Salarios más bajos, beneficios reducidos, las pensiones están en el aire y hay tantos problemas. El desempleo está aumentando en el mundo. Hay cerca de 60 millones nuevos desempleados. No hay futuro brillante para los jóvenes y el capitalismo no está dando una solución para ellos.

MO: ¿Trataron de soluciones?

Meneses: Hay cambios favorables para la gente trabajadora, cambios muy importantes están avanzando en América Latina—especialmente la revolución venezolana, los cambios en Ecuador, Bolivia y también en otros países. Estos avances son importantes no solamente para la gente trabajadora en América Latina sino para los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos también. Aunque han sido golpeados/as duramente por la crisis, los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos no tienen un liderazgo claro sobre lo que se debe hacer.

Las manifestaciones en Pittsburgh contra el G-20 para movilizar a la gente trabajadora—eso es lo que nos hace falta. Eso es lo que se está haciendo en esos países latinoamericanos que mencioné: movilizar a la gente.

MO: ¿Cuáles fueron las otras cuestiones que fueron analizadas?

Meneses: Los elementos derechistas en América Latina, al igual que en los Estados Unidos, están formándose en

grupos nuevos, tratando de regresar gobiernos que siguen completamente los mandatos del imperialismo estadounidense. La elección en Panamá este año es un ejemplo. Otro ejemplo es el golpe de estado en Honduras que los/as trabajadores/as allí están luchando para revertirlo. Las bases estadounidenses en Colombia amenazan a toda América Latina pero especialmente Venezuela.

En los Estados Unidos necesitamos mantenernos alertos/as. Si los avances en el cuidado de salud, educación y pobreza en los países del ALBA son revertidos, no solamente la hará daño a América Latina, sino también a los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos.

MO: ¿Qué es el ALBA?

Meneses: En América Latina los gobiernos que están uniéndose para su independencia en diferentes niveles—UNASUR, MERCOSUR, por ejemplo. Pero especial atención debe prestarse al grupo del ALBA—nueve países que están tratando de integrar sus economías en solidaridad para mejorar la vida del pueblo en los campos más esenciales: educación, cuidado de salud, cultura y deportes, por ejemplo. La vida de las familias de la clase trabajadora está mejorada por estos pasos importantes. En Nuestramérica II estuvimos de acuerdo que el movimiento laboral de América Latina apoyaría y defendería estos avances.

MO: ¿Estuvo representado el movimiento laboral de Honduras?

Meneses: Recibimos informes cada

día sobre los sucesos en Honduras que se enfocaban en lo que tenemos que hacer. Si el gobierno de golpe respaldado por los Estados Unidos gana, esto será una derrota importante para nosotros/as. Confiamos que los/as trabajadores/as ganen, pero los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos también ganarán o perderán en esta lucha y deben mostrar su apoyo. Armas hechas en los Estados Unidos son usadas contra los/as trabajadores y campesinos/as de Honduras que están movilizándose para apoyar a su presidente elegido, Manuel Zelaya. Zelaya aprobó muchos beneficios para la gente hondureña más pobre. Por eso los conspiradores lo secuestraron. El mismo “cañón de sonido” LRAD que se usó en Honduras, fue también usado en las calles de Pittsburgh.

Tuve la oportunidad de invitar al movimiento de trabajadores/as hondureños/as para asistir a la Sexta Conferencia de Intercambio Laboral Estados Unidos/Cuba/Venezuela el 4 a 6 de diciembre. Representantes de las federaciones sindicales más grandes del Caribe y América Latina participarán. La gente trabajadora de los Estados Unidos está invitada a participar en la discusión que seguirá a Nuestramérica II en Brasil y Nuestramérica I que tuvo lugar en Ecuador en mayo del 2008.

La Sexta Conferencia de Intercambio Laboral Estados Unidos/Cuba/Venezuela América Latina se reúne en el hotel Palacio Azteca en Tijuana, México, del 4 al 6 de diciembre. Se puede inscribir en el Internet en laborexchange.blogspot.com.