

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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Unemployment, cutbacks deepen

Fight needed for jobs, housing, services

By Fred Goldstein

The latest job reports for December should convince workers that all the talk about economic recovery coming from the media pundits is just hot air. The only recovery is the bankers' bonuses and the corporations' profits. And the time to fight back against layoffs, foreclosures and cutbacks is now.

In December 85,000 more jobs were lost, bringing the total in the last two years to 8 million. The total official unemployment rate remained at 10 percent, but that is only because 661,000 workers stopped looking for jobs and were not counted. If they had been counted, unemployment would have jumped to 10.4 percent.

A number which gives a truer picture of the dire situation for the workers is the so-called official "underemployment" figure. This includes the 15.3 million workers who have looked for a job in the last four weeks and are officially out of a job; the 2.5 million workers who are "marginally attached" to the work force; and 9.2 million workers who are forced to work part-time even though they need a full-time job.

Together these figures add up to 27 million workers — or almost one in five

workers who are officially unemployed or underemployed!

The racism in capitalist society shows up dramatically in the underemployment statistics. One in four African-American and Latino/a workers is underemployed. White underemployment is 14.6 percent, but the figure for African Americans is 25.1 percent and for Latino/a workers 24.3 percent.

As far as young workers are concerned, they are suffering greatly from this crisis. One in four workers between the ages of 16 and 24 is without any job — 25.7 percent. Students and youth have no future in this latest phase of capitalist economic crisis. Their only path can be one of rebellion and struggle for education and jobs.

In fact, things are even worse than these numbers indicate. The work force lost a net total of 810,000 workers because of dropouts in the last two years. But it should have increased by 2.8 million since the downturn started in December 2007 because of population growth and related factors. So there are 3.6 million "missing" workers who either dropped out or came of working age and never entered the labor force because there were no prospects of getting a job.

ger hours. They have sent jobs abroad, instituted technological speed-ups, and in general found ways to keep profits up by shedding workers and/or intensifying their exploitation.

The trend of destroying permanent jobs and putting temporary jobs in their place — a trend that has been in force for several decades — has intensified during the crisis. A major study by Business Week magazine (Jan. 18), a mouthpiece of the bosses, practically gloats that 26 percent of the work force is now in the temporary category. The capitalists can hire workers, with no health care, no pension, no vacation, no protection whatsoever, and then discard them at a moment's notice.

This trend fits in with shrinking the workforce in order to bolster profits. How is this possible? Corporations have downsized and squeezed more labor out of fewer workers. That is the very source of their increased profits.

For example, Ford Motor Co has laid off 53,000 workers and shut 15 plants since 2006. Yet Ford made \$1 billion in profit in the third quarter of 2009. Microsoft laid off 5,000 workers and made \$14.6 billion in profit in 2009. IBM's profits grew 18 percent last year to \$12.3 billion, but the company laid off 10,000 workers. Aetna made \$1.38 billion and laid off 1,240 workers. Verizon, Monsanto, Phillip Morris, Wal-Mart and other giants all had layoffs and boosted profit. (epi.org)

A deep and growing crisis

Communities are suffering from this crisis as the bankers and bosses try to get the people to foot the bill for the multi-trillion-dollar bail out of the banks and the trillion-dollar-plus cost of the Afghan-

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U.S. OUT OF MIDDLE EAST!

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- Tale of two armies



• Mumia on imperialism

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In Italy sign reads: 'We are people like you, don't let them kill. 6 are dead.'

In N.Y., Arizona, Italy IMMIGRANTS FIGHT BACK

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Higher profits with fewer workers

So much for the talk of recovery. During the entire crisis the bosses have been laying off workers and making those who remain work harder and/or work fewer hours or lon-

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EMPOWER communities not banks



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Death penalty changes spur optimism

By Gloria Rubac

Dozens of people arrived in a long car caravan with an escort of police cars, red and blue lights whirling. A bus had been reserved. Whole families celebrated, while cameras flashed to capture the historic moment.

The scene could have been photographed a century ago at a lynching in the Old South. But it took place on Jan. 7, as the state of Texas executed Kenneth Mosley at the Walls Unit in Huntsville. This legal lynching of a Black man was the first Texas execution of 2010 and the state's 448th since 1982.

Earlier in the day, Ohio also executed an African-American man, Vernon Lamont Smith. Then just 20 minutes after Texas pronounced Mosley's death, Louisiana State Penitentiary Warden Burl Cain announced that Gerald Bordelon, a man who had given up his appeals, was dead. This was Louisiana's first execution since 2002; no others are scheduled.

As a new year begins, it is important to know that, even though the executions continue, there are many changes in the U.S. use of the death penalty.

"The annual number of death sentences in the U.S. has dropped for seven straight years and is 60 percent less than in the 1990s," said Richard Dieter, the Death Penalty Information Center's executive director, in a press release. "In the last two years, three states have abolished capital punishment and a growing number of states are asking whether it's worth keeping. This entire decade has been marked by a declining use of the death penalty." There were 106 death sentences in 2009, compared with a high of 328 in 1994. (www.deathpenaltyinfo.org)

The decline in people being sentenced to death was particularly noteworthy in Texas and Virginia, the two leading states in carrying out executions. During the 1990s Texas averaged 34 death sentences per year and Virginia averaged six. This year Texas sentenced nine people to death and Virginia only one. Houston's Harris County has executed 112 people — more than any state except Texas — yet no one was sentenced to death there for the second straight year.

Due to the economic crisis, as many as 11 states are considering eliminating the death penalty in order to cut costs.

New Mexico became the 15th state to abolish the death penalty. Governor Bill Richardson observed that the cost of the death penalty was "a valid reason [for repeal] in this era of austerity and tight budgets." Eleven states considered legislation in 2009 to eliminate capital punishment; the cost of the death penalty was a large part of the debates.

One way to save hundreds of millions of dollars every year is to end the very expensive and wasteful death penalty and use those millions for job programs, education

and health care. Every cost study in the U.S. shows that the death penalty is far more costly than life in prison.

Almost all recent executions have been in just one region of the country — the South — and most of those have been in one state — Texas. The death penalty without execution is a very expensive form of life without parole.

In October, the American Law Institute, made up of 4,000 judges, lawyers and law professors, made a decision that New York Times writer Adam Liptak said "represents a tectonic shift in legal theory." (Jan. 4) The ALI had created the intellectual framework for the death penalty in 1962 to make the death penalty less arbitrary. The Supreme Court adopted their legal framework when it reinstated capital punishment in 1976. Now the institute has abandoned the structure it created because it states the capital justice system in the U.S. is irretrievably broken. As ALI member and Rutgers law professor Roger S. Clark put it, "What this does is pull the whole intellectual underpinnings for the death penalty."

Some important anti-death penalty developments

Innocence and the use of life without parole sentences are two reasons that death sentences are down.

According to the Innocence Project, a legal clinic affiliated with the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University in New York, 249 people in 34 states have been exonerated by DNA evidence; 150 of them are African Americans. Seventeen of them served time on death row.

Since 1973, 139 people in 26 states have been released from death row given evidence of innocence. The highest numbers are in Florida, Illinois and Texas, according to the DPIC. More than half are African American.

In an important development on the issue of innocence in 2009, the U.S. Supreme Court granted a stay of execution and an extraordinary evidentiary hearing to Troy Davis of Georgia. Davis has always maintained his innocence, and a movement to support him, led by his sister Martina Davis-Correia, has garnered support for Davis and forced the Supreme Court to reconsider his case.

In Texas a prominent forensic scientist commissioned by a state legislative panel reported that arson evidence used to convict and sentence Cameron Todd Willingham to death failed to show any crime had been committed. Willingham was executed in 2004. Dr. Craig Beyler's report reached the same conclusions as leading forensic scientists commissioned by the Chicago Tribune and the Innocence Project in New York.

As reported by New Yorker magazine, the jury at Willingham's trial was misled by faulty evidence to believe he had set the fire that resulted in the death of his three children. One day before the presentation of Beyler's report

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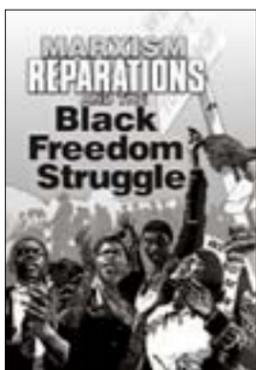
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CLEVELAND

Family, community defend police brutality survivors

By Sharon Danann
Cleveland

Nearly 20 supporters in a packed courtroom on Jan. 4 were in high spirits at the granting of a continuance in the cases of 23-year-old Rebecca Whitby and her mother, who is also named Rebecca Whitby. They will now be better able to prepare a strong defense against false charges following a brutal attack by Cleveland police on April 23.

After the police attack, Whitby had been released without arraignment by the grand jury. It was not until the day after the family filed a complaint with the Police Department's Office of Professional Standards on May 5 that a warrant was issued for Whitby's arrest. East Cleveland police rearrested Whitby in June, after running her license plates, on charges that contain many inconsistencies.

Judge Stuart Friedman railed against the younger Whitby's aunt, Marva Patterson, calling her "a demagogue and a rabble-rouser." Twice the judge accused Patterson of having "a personal agenda."

Patterson has documentation in the

form of photos of the injuries that Whitby sustained at the hands of the police in April, with time stamps proving that the injuries could not have come from an alleged fight with other inmates in the jail. Patterson also has copies of reports filed by the police that contradict their current allegations of having been injured by Whitby. In addition, the cops' guns, which Whitby allegedly tried to take from them, have none of her fingerprints on them.

Patterson's "personal agenda" is for the truth to come out in evidence and for justice to be served. She raised questions about why Whitby's attorney had not filed a motion for dismissal based on lack of evidence.

The judge also attempted to intimidate Patterson and the assembled crowd by calling her "a community activist, but not in the way that President Barack Obama was a community activist." The many community activists in the courtroom were duly amused. It was a brazen attempt to quiet a growing movement of support for Whitby and revealed the extent to which the judge is already biased on the case.

The younger Whitby's father and Patterson's brother, Timothy Walker, stated after the proceedings, "The judge will not split my family." Patterson added, "Clearly the judge does not want people watching these cases."

Whitby's mother is facing charges for throwing herself over her daughter to pro-

tect her when the cops were ferociously beating her. She is developing a legal strategy to fight for truth and justice in the pretrial on Feb. 16 and the trial on Feb. 24.

Walker asserts, "The judge will not intimidate us into silence. They tried to beat us down and we will not be beaten down." □

Veronica Jones Witness in case of Mumia Abu-Jamal



Death penalty changes spur optimism

Continued from page 2

to the Texas Forensic Science Commission, Gov. Rick Perry replaced the chair and two other members of the commission, and the investigation into the possible wrongful execution of Willingham was put on hold.

This commission has finally scheduled a meeting for the end of January in the small town of Harlingen in the Rio Grande Valley, far from Houston, Dallas and Austin where it had formerly held its meetings. But Texas activists are already making plans to be there and demand a full hearing on Willingham's case and the subsequent cover-up by the governor.

Each of the 35 states that has capital punishment on its books also has a sentence of life without parole. While many legal experts state that LWOP sentences are one reason that death sentences are down, others disagree.

Njeri Shakur, an activist with the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, says, "Too many innocent people are being released from general population as well as off death row. This publicity makes juries think twice because they don't want to be labeled as sending an innocent person to execution. With all the news about Todd Willingham, those on his jury are now responsible for his wrongful death. And Gov. Rick Perry should now be held accountable. Because of innocence, the end of the death penalty is nearing."

Even in Houston, former District Attorney Vic Weisner said that jury members are reluctant to wrongfully sentence a defendant to death because they don't want their names or photos in the news for causing an innocent person to die.

Life without parole has been advocated by some in the anti-death penalty movement as an acceptable alternative to executions. Others adamantly oppose anyone being sentenced to this cruel punishment.

The Sentencing Project, a research and advocacy organization for prison reform, released a new study which documents the continued increase in the number of people in prisons serving these sentences.

They found that of the lifers in prison,

one in four (26.3 percent) is serving a sentence of life without parole; this increased from one in six (17.8 percent) in 1992. In six states — Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Pennsylvania and South Dakota — all life sentences are imposed without the possibility of parole. Seven states — Alabama, California, Florida, Illinois, Louisiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania — have more than 1,000 prisoners each serving sentences of life without parole.

Activist Marta Glass, a commentator with the Prison Show on Pacifica radio in Houston, says, "These LWOP sentences are another form of a death sentence. You just cannot morally sentence an 18-year-old kid to prison and deny him the hope of ever getting out. This is cruel and inhumane."

In the case of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, 2009 was not a good year. The Supreme Court refused to hear his appeal and didn't even give a reason. The appeal was based on the Supreme Court's own 1986 ruling in the Batson decision, which says that the district attorneys can't strike potential jurors based on their race. At Abu-Jamal's trial, the district attorney used 11 of his 15 strikes to exclude Black people. In response to the court's ruling, Abu-Jamal said, "It shows you that precedent means nothing, that law is politics by other means."

Abu-Jamal's supporters have undertaken a campaign to have the U.S. Justice Department review his case. In November they delivered 25,000 letters from around the world calling on U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to conduct a civil rights investigation into Abu-Jamal's case.

"[The year] 2009 was a good year for the anti-death penalty movement in general. We had big ups and some big downs also, but we are seeing a trend that the death penalty is going out of favor. We are seeing that light at the end of the tunnel getting brighter and are redoubling our efforts to bring about an end to this racist tool of the ruling class," reported Shakur.

"We will see abolition, and through struggle we hope we can make it sooner rather than later." □

By Betsey Piette

Veronica Jones, a witness during the 1982 trial and 1996 Post-Conviction Relief Act hearing for Mumia Abu-Jamal, died Dec. 8. Jones will be remembered as a heroic sister who stood up to Judge Albert Sabo in October 1996 and testified that she had been coerced by the Philadelphia police to lie about what she had seen.

Abu-Jamal, a progressive journalist and former member of the Black Panther Party, was framed in the fatal shooting of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on Dec. 9, 1981. Jones, a young sex worker who was in the area when Faulkner was shot, told police that she had witnessed two men "jogging" away from the crime scene.

Between that time and Abu-Jamal's 1982 trial, Jones was arrested and imprisoned, facing charges of robbery and assault. There in her cell she was visited by two detectives. Stressing that she faced 10 years in prison and the loss of her children if convicted, the police pressured Jones to finger Mumia. Afraid of losing her children, Jones didn't actually finger Mumia, but did not report that she had seen two men running from the scene of the killing. Subsequently, Jones only received probation and was never imprisoned on the 1982 charges.

However, when asked by the defense at the 1982 trial if she had talked with police since making her first statement, Jones testified that police had visited her in jail and offered to let her and key prosecution witness Cynthia White, another sex worker, "work the area" in return for testimony that Abu-Jamal shot Faulkner.

When the district attorney denounced her testimony as "absolutely irrelevant" and asked Judge Sabo to block that line of questioning and strike Jones' statement, Sabo happily complied.

The state's efforts to silence Jones

continued through Abu-Jamal's PCRA hearing in October 1996, when she again took the stand, this time openly on Abu-Jamal's behalf. As Jones stood to testify, Sabo immediately threatened her with five- to 10-years' imprisonment if she admitted to having perjured herself in 1982. Jones refused to back down and testified about the police pressure to change her version of events.

During cross-examination, the district attorney announced that there was an outstanding arrest warrant for Jones on charges of writing a bad check, and that she would be arrested after concluding her testimony. With tears pouring down her face, Jones defiantly stated, "This is not going to change my testimony!"

In a letter to MSNBC's Today Show in November 2007 — at the time the show's hosts were set to interview attorney Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner, spouse of Officer Daniel Faulkner, about their book "Murdered by Mumia" — Jones wrote: "If there were no merit or questions looming regarding Mr. Jamal's innocence, then can someone please explain to me why so much effort was exerted to publicly try to discredit and humiliate me? Having me handcuffed and arrested while on the witness stand when I tried to come forward with the truth is one such example of the intimidation, threats and bullying I've endured since December 1981."

Until her death, Jones continued to support efforts to win a new trial for Abu-Jamal and was a frequent speaker at rallies on his behalf. Longtime Black Power activist Herman Ferguson once described Jones as a real working-class heroine.

Suzanne Ross of the New York Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition said of Jones: "She was a reminder of what people can rise to when provided with any support or encouragement. We loved Veronica, and will never forget her." □

National mobilization in Phoenix

Rally and march to oppose racism, immigrant bashing

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

In response to the immigrant bashing and fear mongering tactics of the infamous racist sheriff, Joe Arpaio, and his colleagues in the Arizona state Legislature, Phoenix activists have called for a national day of action in Phoenix on Jan. 16. The event has been endorsed by dozens of organizations throughout the country, and will put the right wing on notice that they are no longer welcome in Arizona.

The people have had enough of Arpaio, his racist arrogance and the funding he continues to get from the state Legislature. We need money for jobs, not for Arpaio's tent city jails!

Arpaio's racial profiling earned him a Congressional investigation, which resulted in the revocation of his 287(g) agreement. This agreement allowed Arpaio to have his police and deputies carry out immigration enforcement. Arpaio's response to the termination of his 287(g) agreement was to launch massive neigh-

borhood sweeps in Latino/a communities, terrorizing and arresting people and declaring that these sweeps would continue.

In addition to Arpaio's crimes, which have been written about many times in the pages of Workers World, the Arizona Legislature has been introducing legislation nonstop aimed at criminalizing undocumented workers. A law passed in 2008 makes an undocumented worker from another country guilty of "conspiracy to commit human smuggling" for smuggling themselves into the country! (Associated Press, July 17)

Another, recently passed law requires that Department of Economic Security employees report any applicant who cannot show their "lawful presence" to the Department of Homeland Security. Failure to report makes the DES employee guilty of a class 2 misdemeanor. (www.azgovernor.gov) DES employees, who are already fearful of losing their jobs under draconian state budget cuts, are now being forced to be cops.

In June, community activists organized

to successfully fend off, for the second time, a racist attempt to eliminate ethnic studies programs in K-12 and university classrooms. The state has already cut \$135 million from university budgets over the last two years and is preparing another round of across-the-board education cuts for the coming year. It will likely choose the ethnic studies programs as its first target.

The Southern Poverty Law Center documents 19 "hate groups" located in Arizona, almost all of them setting up shop in Phoenix, which is under the jurisdiction

of Maricopa County Sheriff Arpaio. The so-called National Socialist Movement, a neo-Nazi group, held an open march on the streets of Phoenix on Nov. 7. While these racists can walk free and carry swastikas in Maricopa County, brown-skinned people who are indigenous to this area — which was stolen from Mexico in 1848 — must live in fear of both the racists and the cops.

The Jan. 16 action will show that things are going to change in Arizona. ¡Basta Arpaio! □

ITALY

African migrants rebel against racist attacks

By Monica Moorehead

The worldwide capitalist economic crisis is hitting tens of millions workers hard to one degree or another, be they in the poorer nations or the rich capitalist countries. Many of these workers are forced to migrate from their beloved homelands to look for work that will provide a decent wage to help them and their families survive.

Immigrants are amongst the most exploited and oppressed workers. They make tremendous profits for the capitalists. Not only do the bosses pay them starvation wages with no benefits, but many face political and social injustice, especially racism. The recent developments in Rosarno, Italy, are a prime example of this outright bigotry and repression.

On Jan. 7, African migrants, including some from Nigeria and Togo, rebelled against racist attacks by white Italians and the police in this working-class town near the western coast of Calabria. Many of these workers, who are both documented and undocumented, work in the citrus groves in the poorly developed southern part of the Italian peninsula.

Characterized as "rioting" by bourgeois news sources in order to demonize the justifiable nature of the rebellion, some African immigrants were provoked to rebel when an immigrant was shot by a vigilante in a nearby city. It has been reported that organized crime figures

helped to instigate the attacks.

The immigrants used rocks to fight back and torched cars against the vigilantes and the police. Some migrants were shot with pellet fire and beaten with metal rods, warranting surgery.

On the weekend of Jan. 10, more than 1,000 African workers were transported to detention centers, which are nothing more than jails, for an indefinite amount of time with no charges.

Thousands of African workers pick fruit during the harvest season for many hours a day for less than \$200 a week. This is work that many native-born Italians feel would be degrading for them to do.

The rebellion reflects the deepening economic crisis in Italy and Europe in general: In the absence of a strong anti-racist, pro-working class movement against the bosses, migrants are being scapegoated for the loss of jobs. Public statements and policies of the xenophobic, right-wing government of Silvio Berlusconi have given the green light for these racist attacks to intensify.

Treated as social outcasts, these African migrants are forced to live in makeshift shanty towns with much of the housing being subhuman. On behalf of the tourist industry, a majority of these makeshift houses have been bulldozed at the same time these workers are being detained.

A spokesperson for the International Organization for Migration in Italy, Flavio Di Giacomo, commented, "This event pulled the lid off something that we who work in the sector know well but no one talks about: That many Italian economic realities are based on the exploitation of low-cost foreign labor, living in subhuman conditions, without human rights." (New York Times, Jan. 11) He went on to describe the conditions of the African migrants as "semi-slavery."

The Italian section of the Anti-imperialist Camp, commenting on the rebellion of the African workers in Rosarno, while recognizing the extreme poverty of the region, made it clear that "We must be on the side of the Black laborers, no ifs or buts. ... It is a good thing that they have risen in rebellion, demonstrating that if they are human beings, the others are no more than pigs." (campoantimperialista.it)

This is not the first time that African migrants have been targeted in southern Italy. In 2008, six Ghanians were killed, execution-style, resulting in a rebellion near Naples. □

Ten arrested to protest Haitian community leader's detention

By G. Dunkel
New York

Jean Murat Montrevil got caught selling cocaine when he was 19, a few years after he emigrated to the U.S. legally from Haiti.

He did 11 years in prison and, instead of being deported when he finished his sentence in 2000, he was released on supervised parole. On the last day of his parole in 2005, Immigration and Customs Enforcement picked him up and held him for six months. Haiti wasn't taking deportees then, so ICE released him under strict supervision.

Montrevil is now a longtime community leader in New York City and active in a number of immigrant rights groups, including Families for Freedom, the New Sanctuary Movement of New York City and the Detention Watch Network. He married a U.S. citizen in 2000, is the father of four U.S. citizens, and has kept a steady job and supported his family.

On Dec. 30, Montrevil was once again detained by U.S. immigration authorities.

About 100 people came out in Manhattan for a Jan. 5 protest of his detention. Ten were arrested for blocking traffic. The Rev. Donna Schaper of Judson Memorial Church, one of those arrested, said, "I am being arrested because it is a moral outrage that our government would do this to such a great man and father."

A statement from Michael W. Gilhooly, ICE's Northeast communications director, was unfeelingly clear. "Jean Murat Montrevil is an aggravated felon with a significant criminal record who has a final order of removal from an immigration judge. Montrevil has exhausted all of his appeals and ICE will enforce the immigration judge's order. One of ICE's primary missions is to remove foreign national criminals from the United States."

Both Rep. Nydia Velazquez and state Sen. Tom Duane are urging ICE to let Montrevil stay. □

DEFEND VICTOR TORO

More than 50 activists gathered in front of 26 Federal Plaza in New York City to protest the U.S. government's attempt to deport Victor Toro. Dozens crammed into the courtroom where the U.S. prosecutor alleged that Toro was a "dangerous terrorist." Toro, four decades ago a founding member of the Movement of the Revolutionary Left in Chile, is currently an organizer with the Peña del Bronx community center. Toro's case represents the struggle of undocumented immigrants everywhere.

— Heather Cottin



WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

On the picket line

by Sue Davis

United flight attendants protest no contract

Thousands of United Airlines flight attendants and their supporters in 17 cities in the U.S., Europe and Asia held picket lines on Jan. 7 to protest United's failure to negotiate a new contract, which has been on the table since last April.

Due to expire on Jan. 7 were draconian cuts in pay and horrendous working conditions forced on the attendants during United's bankruptcy in 2002. Attendants are currently paid at 1994 wage levels and work 48 percent more compared to 2002 schedules and staffing levels. In contrast, when United exited bankruptcy, CEO Glenn Tilton got a bonus that could have provided a 10 percent raise for the airline's 15,000 flight attendants.

"United has shown no interest in discussing improvements or reaching a new contract unless we agree to concessionary demands," said Greg Davidowitch, president of the executive council of the American Flight Attendants division of the Communication Workers union. "Flight attendants are angry because management seems only interested in delaying a new contract, refusing to discuss any improvements."

Rite Aid forced to rehire workers fighting for union

Ever since 600 workers at Rite Aid's Southwest distribution center in Lancaster, Calif., voted to join the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in 2006, they have been subjected to an anti-worker campaign that includes illegal threats, intimidation, harassment and firing of union supporters. The National Labor Relations Board issued complaints in September charging Rite Aid with violating federal labor laws by illegally laying off workers, reducing hours, reassigning work and failing to provide the union with information needed for negotiations. As a result Rite Aid has been forced to rehire dozens of employees with back pay and faces a pending court date with an NLRB judge.

To help the workers, a coast-to-coast campaign has been exposing the anti-union activities of the third-largest retail drug chain, with more than 5,000 stores in 31 states and sales of \$24.3 billion in 2008. The workers' negotiating committee, which has held 60 sessions since 2006, made some progress in late 2009. Management agreed on the workers' right to refuse dangerous work, a process to address ergonomic problems, protection from dangerous indoor heat, and discipline and discharge policies.

Boston unionists, activists show solidarity with Mexican workers

A delegation of labor unionists and community activists delivered a letter to the Mexican deputy consul general in Boston on Jan. 5 rebuking Mexican President Felipe Calderón for his government's seizure of Central Light and Power plants, decertification of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union, and firing between 44,000 and 45,000 union workers.

The letter, signed by representatives of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 103, the American Friends Service Committee and Massachusetts Jobs with Justice, urged President Calderón to revoke the decree liquidating Central Light and Power, reinstate the fired workers, respect their collective agreement and recognize the elected union leadership. The consul general agreed to meet with the delegation later in January. (www.openmediaboston.org)

Federal job site bans gender identity bias

The federal job Web site (www.usajobs.gov) now carries language that explicitly bans employment discrimination based on gender identity. Though the Jan. 5 New York Times claims that this "merely formalizes what had been increasingly unchallenged government practice over several years," this change was hailed by progressive organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union. □

SAN FRANCISCO

140 arrested to demand hotel workers' contract

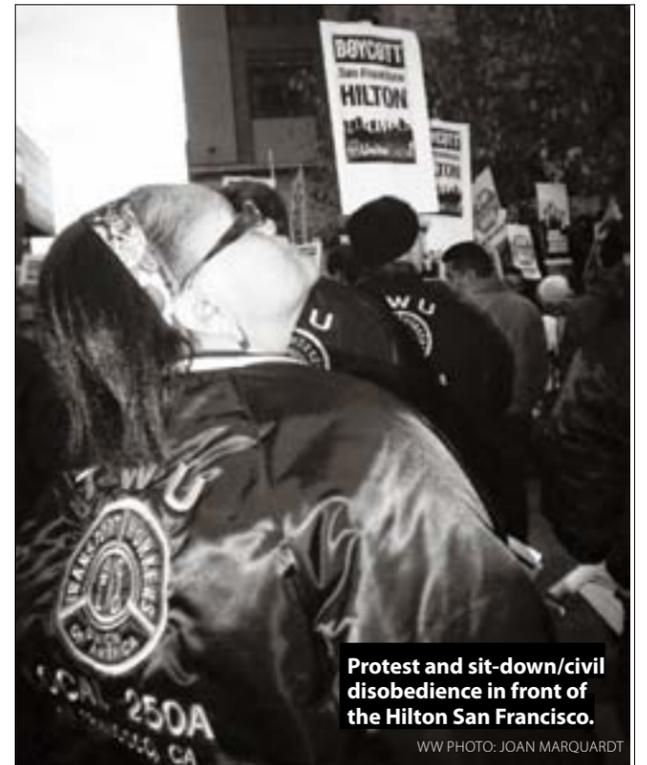
By Joan Marquardt
San Francisco

At least 1,000 San Francisco hotel workers and supporters rallied, marched and picketed during downtown evening rush hour on Jan. 5, kicking off a boycott of the upscale Hilton San Francisco hotel. Working without a contract since Aug. 19, the 9,000 union workers at more than 30 of the fanciest San Francisco hotels continued their fight for a new contract during the last months of 2009 right into 2010.

Sitting down in front of the main lobby doors, workers in UNITE HERE Local 2, members of the S.F. Labor Council, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and many other union workers and community supporters — 140 people in all — were arrested and cited for "trespassing."

Community organizations like California Universal Healthcare/Single Payer Now, the Filipino Community Center and Jobs With Justice organized their members to participate. The Day Labor Program of San Francisco had two banners, including one written in Spanish carried by a Women Day Laborers contingent. Unions came out in numbers showing spirited solidarity with the hotel workers. Unions represented included the Transit Workers Union, Service Employees International Union Local 87 janitors, United Transportation Union Local 1741 school bus drivers, the Sailors' Union of the Pacific, the Marine Firemen's Union, the California Nurses Association and the United Educators of San Francisco.

A leaflet distributed to passersby and hotel guests read: "The Hilton Corporation ... has made \$2.15 billion in profits since 2006 to 3Q 2009, thanks to the hard work of people like us. ... Yet Hilton wants to pretend none of this matters. This company is trying to churn out even more profits by squeezing workers like us. In wage and benefit agreements over the last several decades, we have forgone larger wage increases to keep our medical benefits affordable for ourselves and our families. Now Hilton is pushing proposals



Protest and sit-down/civil disobedience in front of the Hilton San Francisco.

WW PHOTO: JOAN MARQUARDT

that would make health care unaffordable, or would make us slash our coverage."

The San Francisco hotel workers will continue to fight alongside the more than 40,000 other union hotel workers across the U.S. Hotel workers in Los Angeles and Chicago are currently working without contracts; and in Minneapolis; Monterey, Calif.; Washington, D.C.; and Honolulu; as well as Vancouver and Toronto, Canada; the hotel workers will see their current contracts expire soon. They are united and they will fight!

For more information, see: www.unitehere2.org. □

Detroit activists challenge 'jobless recovery' at auto show

Members of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs joined activists with the Autoworkers Caravan and advocates for single-payer health care at a demonstration against the "jobless recovery" outside the North American International Auto Show in Detroit on Jan. 11. Workers, including many retired and unemployed, chanted, "A job is a right! We're gonna fight, fight, fight!" Media from around the world came out to videotape the protest and interview participants.

After the rally, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition sponsored a "corporate devastation tour" of the city. A coalition press release stated: "Detroit has the highest unemployment rate in the nation at 44.8 percent, stemming from decades of layoffs in the auto industry, predatory lending by the financial institutions and redlining by the insurance companies and bond-rating agencies. While the sponsors of the auto show will present one side of the city, our organization is providing an opportunity for the national and world communities to witness firsthand the degree of downsizing, deindustrialization and the consequent unemployment and poverty which have been the result of decades of corporate policies that have devastated working people and the poor."



Two Korean newspaper journalists attended the tour, as well as a reporter from Voice of America. They viewed closed auto plants, a closed and vandalized public housing project, foreclosed homes and shuttered businesses. Coalition organizers continue to press for a moratorium on plant closings, foreclosures, evictions and utility shutoffs and for a declaration of a state of economic emergency in Michigan. Activists are demanding a national, federally-funded public works program to put workers back to work and provide the services desperately needed in our communities.

— Report and photo by Kris Hamel

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Financial crisis hits the states hard

By G. Dunkel

Winter came early this year to the U.S. Many states and cities have run out of money to keep the roads plowed the way they should be to keep goods and people moving and to provide ambulance and other emergency services. In some hard-hit areas, all that the road crews can do is plow hills and curves.

If the financial crisis hadn't squeezed the state budgets past the breaking point, money would just be reallocated, and plowing to bare asphalt with salt or sand on the roads would be the norm. But the states had a collective budget deficit of nearly \$146 billion heading into fiscal 2010, which for most began on July 1. (www.ncsl.org)

Many states are attempting to cure these budget deficits with cuts in services like health care, education, mass transit, welfare and snowplowing, along with mass layoffs and furloughs of tens of thousands of state workers, tax hikes and additional fees.

New gaps totaling \$28.2 billion have since opened up in 36 states in the current fiscal year, and more cuts will be imposed because most states are constitutionally prohibited from running at a deficit. Principal revenue sources — personal income, general sales and corporate income taxes — continue to erode, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

One long-term pressure on the states comes from the policy, begun under President Ronald Reagan, of replacing direct federal funding of services like Medicaid and welfare with block grants to the states. The states gain flexibility but when the federal government wants to downsize, federal money is cut.

For example, by combining Aid to Families with Dependent Children, food stamps, child care and child nutrition into a single \$222 billion grant, the federal government was able to cut welfare funds by 30 percent, or \$89.5 billion, from 1996 to 2002. (www.govtech.com)

Both Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of

California, the state with the largest population in the country, and Gov. David Paterson of New York, the state with the third-largest population, gave state-of-the-state addresses on Jan. 6.

Given that one is a Republican and the other is a Democrat, and that they come from states with vastly different political styles, their speeches were remarkably similar.

Schwarzenegger's California faces a \$19.9 billion deficit — \$6.6 billion for the rest of this budget year and \$13.3 billion for the next budget year. His budget calls for deep reductions to health care, social services and public transit, while maintaining the state's current level of support for public higher education. He proposed a tax increase that would significantly impact the middle class and cuts, particularly to 11 percent of California's prison budget.

State Senate Democratic leader Darrell Steinberg said of Schwarzenegger's speech, "It would have been even a better speech six years ago because during the

governor's tenure, prison spending has increased 32 percent and higher education has declined 9 percent." (www.time.com, Jan. 9)

Paterson's basic message was: "We need fiscal reform. We need ethics reform. And we need an economic plan that will put New Yorkers back to work."

Earlier in October, when he announced his 2010 budget, Paterson proposed a cut of \$3.0 billion in 2009-10 and \$2.0 billion in 2010-11. (www.state.ny.us, Oct. 15) He wants to cut administrative spending by 10 percent, for a saving of \$500 million, and a \$1.3 billion cut in assistance to the cities, towns and counties in New York. Since he is an "education" governor, he would only cut aid to education by 4.5 percent, instead of the 10 percent he intends to impose on every other expense.

The absence of snow removal has historically caused mass anger in the U.S. As hunger grows, and the filthy rich grow more conspicuous, anger over other cuts is also going to grow. □

Unemployment, cutbacks deepen

Fight needed for jobs, housing, services

Continued from page 1

istan war, the campaign against Pakistan, the continued occupation of Iraq, and the general expansion of U.S. military aggression into Yemen and Somalia.

While Washington has trillions to bail out the banks and the auto and insurance giants and \$700 billion for the 2009 military budget, there is hardly any money for the state governments that are cutting back services for the workers and the poor with a meat axe.

The economic crisis has slashed state revenues. So 43 states plus the District of Columbia have carried out severe budget cuts, and more are on the way. According to a report by the Center for Budget Policy and Priorities, 28 states are cutting health care services; 24 states are cutting services to the elderly and disabled; 36 states are cutting aid to higher education and much more.

Over 132,000 state and local government workers have been laid off, and hundreds of thousands more jobs are on the chopping block. The crisis has left the states with projected total shortfalls of \$350 billion for the years 2010 and 2011.

One thing that is not discussed is that all the states and municipalities owe money to the banks. Most state and local budgets are heavily burdened with these payments. The banks they owe the money to are primarily the big banks that have gotten the bailouts.

But there is not one word about suspending the payment of tens of billions of dollars to these parasites who do nothing but sit around and collect money, while the masses of people lose their homes, their education, their health care and the very means of life. The laws of capitalist "free enterprise" and the profit system dictate that profits are sacred and the needs of the people come last.

The situation in this country has become so bad for the people that 6 million people in the U.S. have no income at all but live on food stamps. They get no pensions, no welfare, no unemployment insurance, no disability pay, no other source of income — in the richest country in the world. (New York Times, Jan. 3) Furthermore, one in eight people in the U.S. is poor enough to get food stamps.

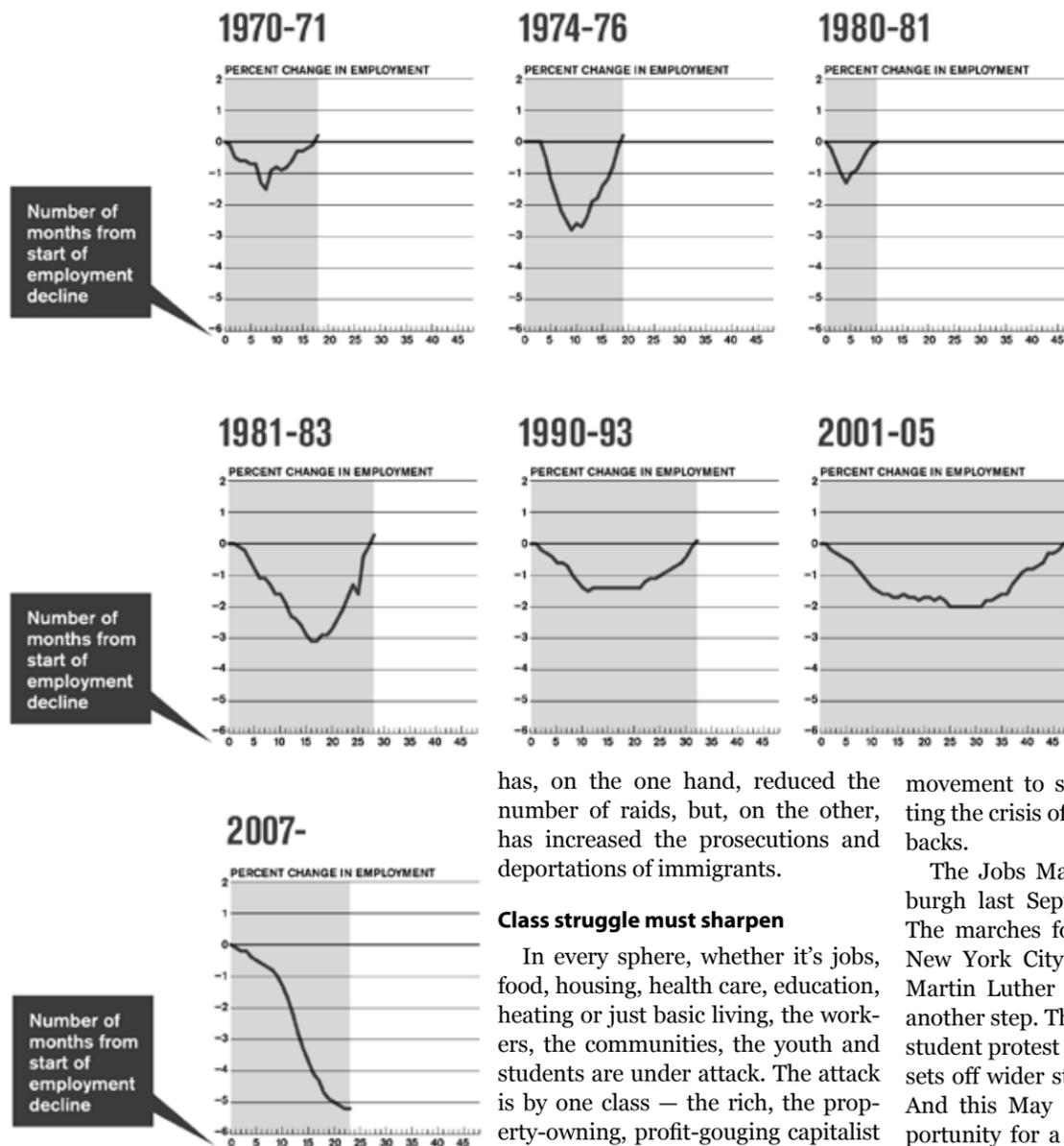
DEEP DECLINE. SLOW RECOVERY?

Since the early '80s, the U.S. economy has been taking longer to regain all the jobs lost in a downturn. After employment peaked in February 2001, it took four years to get back to that level. This time it could take even longer because employment is off 5% from its December 2007 high.



Set of graphs illustrate the lead article on the 'Disposable Worker' in the Jan. 7 issue of BusinessWeek. It illustrates the historic development of the jobless recovery and the difficulty of starting employment up again over time.

Data: Bureau of Labor Statistics



has, on the one hand, reduced the number of raids, but, on the other, has increased the prosecutions and deportations of immigrants.

Class struggle must sharpen

In every sphere, whether it's jobs, food, housing, health care, education, heating or just basic living, the workers, the communities, the youth and students are under attack. The attack is by one class — the rich, the property-owning, profit-gouging capitalist class.

The attack is upon the working class — employed, unemployed, documented and undocumented of all races and nationalities, women, men, lesbian, gay, bi and trans, old and young.

The working class has no choice but to unite and answer back. The labor movement and the communities, the youth and students must unite into an organized

movement to stop the bosses from putting the crisis of their profit system on our backs.

The Jobs March at the G-20 in Pittsburgh last September was a beginning. The marches for jobs on Wall Street in New York City and in Detroit over the Martin Luther King Day holiday will be another step. The March 4 day of national student protest could become a spark that sets off wider struggles against the crisis. And this May Day is another great opportunity for a united effort to push the struggle further.

The rich will not stop taking until we stop them. That is the lesson of every workers' struggle, of every fight for the rights of the masses of people — from the struggle to organize the mass unions in the 1930s to struggles for civil rights and against racism, national oppression and sexual oppression in the 1960s. The time is now. □

The enduring legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Fight against racism, poverty and war continues

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

Jan. 15 marks the 81st birthday of civil rights and anti-war martyr Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. A federal holiday in his honor is held every year on the third Monday of January, when federal offices, state and local municipal agencies are closed. Some private businesses also give their workers the day off.

This recognition of Dr. King, an African-American clergyperson who was born in Atlanta on the eve of the Great Depression, grew out of a struggle that lasted for nearly two decades. Numerous civil rights organizations, artists like Stevie Wonder and African-American politicians such as Detroit Rep. John Conyers led the fight for the adoption of the holiday.

In 1986, after the King holiday bill was passed by Congress, it was reluctantly signed into law by perhaps one of the most ideologically right-wing presidents, Ronald Reagan. Every year the government, transnational corporations and their media counterparts present a view of Dr. King that strips his legacy of the broad social movements in the civil rights and anti-war struggles between the mid-1950s and late 1960s.

The corporate media reduce his contributions to the struggle to a few sound bites from his classic "I Have a Dream" speech — a speech that was delivered to hundreds of thousands of people in Washington, D.C., and millions more over national television and radio on Aug. 28, 1963.

Those who participated in those struggles or studied that history understand that although Dr. King was a tremendous orator and charismatic figure, his efforts were a reflection of the mass consciousness and political commitment of millions within the U.S. and around the world.

This understanding of the historical and social context that produced Dr. King and countless other leaders, who sacrificed their well-being and lives to fight institutional racism, poverty and war, is fundamental to the ongoing efforts to complete the revolutionary movements that made such a monumental impact during the 1950s and 1960s.

The election and inauguration of the first African-American president, as significant as it was, by no means resolves the social contradictions that have characterized the U.S. since its inception. In fact, the election of President Barack Obama has created new and more complex challenges that activists are grappling with.

Why King's legacy remains relevant today

After the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee realized that the African-American struggle would need to shift focus toward addressing the fundamental institutional racism and class oppression that were still prevalent in the U.S. With the passage of civil rights legislation and the mass mobilizations surrounding the movement against segregation, a new wave of repression by the ruling class was launched in the South.

The eventual failure of the Johnson administration's "War on Poverty," due to lack of funding and disempowerment of the poor, coupled with the escalation of military involvement in Vietnam during

the mid-1960s, created a political crisis in the U.S. that remains unresolved. During the 1960s the ruling class stifled the mass movement towards genuine equality and self-determination by both channeling the aspirations of African Americans into the electoral strategy of the Democratic Party and by intensifying the repressive apparatus of the state and the corporations.

This reaction to the gains of the civil rights struggle was illustrated in an article cited in Samuel Yette's "The Choice: The Issue of Black Survival in America." In the Jan. 31, 1967, issue of the New York World Journal Tribune, Marianne Means reported that "the practical economics of wage increase (to 84 cents per hour) hardly warrant the sudden eviction of huge numbers of impoverished Negro families ... but political realities are something else again."

Yette quotes a letter written by Dr. King to President Lyndon Johnson on Aug. 10, 1966, where he addressed the mass removal of African Americans from the land they had farmed for decades as a result of wage and political demands put forward by the movement.

Dr. King said: "Last January, numerous poor, homeless Mississippi Delta Negroes went to the empty Greenville Air Base seeking shelter from the winter cold. They were forcibly driven off by Federal troops.

"Some fled to Northern ghettos. Some burdened already overcrowded Mississippi kinfolk. Others are trying desperately to survive today on 400 acres of land in Washington County without adequate permanent housing, jobs, education, on the verge of starvation, and with little hope. Another group of poor, evicted Mississippi Negroes at Tribbett, Washington County, Mississippi, struggled through the long winter in tents because of the Federal Government's failure to respond to their pleas for housing. They have no jobs and almost no food."

Yette places the mid-1960s expulsion of African Americans from Southern agricultural areas within broader trends in the labor market. He quotes a June 15, 1964, press release issued by then-Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz: "We are piling up a human scrap heap of between 250,000 and 500,000 people a year, many of whom never appear in the unemployment statistics.

"They are often not counted among the unemployed because they have given up looking for work and thus count themselves out of the labor market. The rate of nonparticipation in the labor force by men in their prime years increased from 4.7 percent in 1953 to 5.2 percent in 1962.

The increase has been the sharpest among nonwhites, increasing from 5.3 percent to 8.2 percent in that period."

It is obvious that things have now worsened tremendously. The actual unemployment rate among African Americans and the working class in general is far higher than the 10 percent the federal government acknowledges in its monthly job loss report. Rates of joblessness among youth and the oppressed are much higher, with African Americans and teenagers suffering the highest levels of unemployment.

It was estimated that 85,000 people were thrown out of work in December. This figure is not reflective of the broader trends towards declining social wages for the class as a whole.

There have been three stimulus or recovery packages enacted by Congress and two presidential administrations over the last three years. During this same time period 8 million workers were laid off, according to official government statistics. Millions of working people have lost their homes and apartments.

The federal government and the corporations have no effective plans to put the estimated 34 million people back to work at decent wages with benefits.

The principal objectives of the U.S. ruling class are the widening of the so-called "war on terror" and the maximization of profits for the bankers, industrialists and insurance companies. By promoting fear of "terrorism" among all segments of the working class, the ruling class is seeking to build public support for its aggressive wars of domination in Central Asia, the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and Latin America.

Working class and oppressed must advance their own program

With the escalation of war in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Obama administration, at the behest of the Pentagon, is dashing the hopes that millions of working people and nationally oppressed embodied in their mass support of the 2008 Obama campaign. Just as the prospects for improvement of African-American social conditions in the 1960s and 1970s were eviscerated through the "war on poverty" and the occupation of Vietnam, today the rising militarism of the U.S. around the world has trumped the material needs of the masses.

When Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo in late 2009, he claimed that U.S. imperialism had underwritten world security for the last six decades. However, what he did not say is that during the post World War II period the U.S. has utilized



its military might, funded by profits accrued from the exploitation of labor, to fight against every progressive and revolutionary movement that has developed to challenge world capitalism and racism.

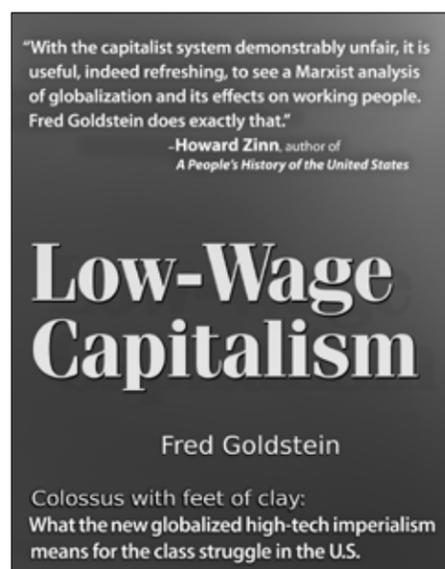
It has been the United States ruling class that waged wars against the peoples of Korea, China, Vietnam and Southeast Asia, Angola, Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Cuba and other geopolitical regions throughout the world. The U.S. ruling class has waged war against the people of this country by stifling the civil rights, Black power, anti-war, women's and working-class movements.

Organizers must raise issues that address the needs of the workers and the oppressed. What the majority of people in the U.S. and the world need today are jobs, income, health care, quality education, housing and a life free of intimidation and harassment by the armed agents of the capitalist and imperialist states. This is the only way that the true legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. can be realized.

On March 4 students around the U.S. will protest the drastic cutbacks in education funding, which has been taken away from the people to fund the Pentagon and Wall Street bankers. Youth must militantly ask: How can the ruling class and its state talk about national security, when tens of millions inside the country are without jobs, decent incomes, utility services, health care and quality education?

The peoples of the Middle East, Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and other areas of the world have not taken anything away from the working class and oppressed inside the U.S. The true enemy of the people of the U.S. is the bourgeoisie, who have not only taken trillions of dollars in wealth away from the people but have also sent youth into battle to carry out the bidding of the bankers and militarists.

A major jobs initiative being planned for April 10 must politically challenge the false notion of a "jobless recovery." Increasing profits for the corporations do not translate into better conditions for the workers and nationally oppressed. Taxpayer bailouts of the banks and insurance companies have resulted in depression-like conditions for greater numbers of working people. □



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Abayomi Azikiwe, Editor, Pan-African News Wire

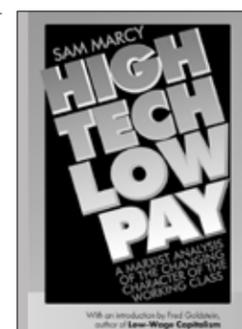
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As Egypt regime assists U.S.-Israeli genocide

Viva Palestina convoy breaks the siege of Gaza

By Bill Cecil

For the third time in a year, Viva Palestina, the international relief effort led by British Member of Parliament George Galloway, has broken the siege of Gaza.

On Jan. 6, 518 volunteers from many countries drove more than 156 vehicles loaded with tons of medicine and other humanitarian aid into the only part of Palestine independent of Israeli control. They were backed by a global outpouring of solidarity, especially from the people of Turkey and the Arab and Islamic world, and as far away as Malaysia.

When the convoy entered Gaza after its month-long, 5,000-mile journey, hundreds of thousands of Gaza's 1.5 million people lined the streets in welcome. "The sight of people lining the streets virtually the full length of the Gaza Strip, after waiting for 10 hours for our last vehicles to pass (thanks to further Egyptian delays) was the only vindication that this initiative ever required," said convoy leader Kevin Ovenden.

The third Lifeline to Gaza convoy defied an international conspiracy against the people of Gaza by the military/banker regime in Washington, D.C.; the U.S.-funded Israeli apartheid state; and the U.S.-funded Mubarak dictatorship in Egypt. The day before they entered Gaza, the international volunteers were assaulted and beaten by 2,000 Egyptian riot police and undercover cops with clubs, stones and water cannons. Fifty-five people were injured, some seriously, and seven arrested. Egyptian troops opened fire across the border on people in Gaza itself, who were protesting the attack on the convoy. Israeli missiles also struck Gaza while the convoy was there, killing three Palestinians. After returning from Gaza, MP Galloway was seized by undercover cops, forced on a plane to London and barred from returning to Egypt.

Lifeline 3 left London on Dec. 6 with 200 volunteers and 80 trucks and ambulances filled with supplies donated by people across Britain and Ireland. It drove through Europe, warmly welcomed and joined by people, trucks and supplies in Belgium, Italy and Greece. A huge popular outpouring greeted the convoy in Turkey, where 125 people, including 10 MPs, and 60 more vehicles joined the convoy.

International Action Center activist Ralph Loeffler, one of 62 U.S. volunteers

on the journey, reported, "For the first time in 30 years the Turkish government permitted a political demonstration in historic Taksim Square, and it was to support Viva Palestina's medical relief convoy to blockaded Gaza. A massive, enthusiastic crowd turned out in the pouring winter rain to hear George Galloway and Kevin Ovenden thank the Turkish people and government for supporting Viva Palestina's third convoy to Gaza.

"After leaving Taksim the convoy proceeded to Adapazari [Turkey] to overnight in a sports stadium. Although the convoy arrived about 2 a.m., the citizens of Adapazari were there and ready to help. Locals swarmed the vehicles and buses to carry ... the 200 convoy participants' sleeping gear and baggage into the stadium."

In Syria, a British volunteer reported, "We were greeted by the sound of music and cheering. At the border posts, a huge reception was waiting for us, with speeches, music, flowers and flag-waving customs officers.

"There were also many, many Palestinians from the Syrian refugee camps, whose welcome was overwhelming. They told us we were heroes, angels, and thanked us over and over again for helping Gaza. We could only tell them that it was our duty, our obligation, and an honour to do what we can to fight the occupation — what else can you say when you experience such hospitality from people who've been exiled from their homeland for more than 60 years? It was a humbling experience. ...

"One 12-year-old girl said to me: 'I'd like to come with you to my country, to see my land, but I'm not allowed. Thank you for going. It gives us the strength to carry on.'"

In Jordan too, the convoy was officially welcomed by the government and warmly welcomed by the people. But when they reached the Red Sea port of Aqaba, Jordan, whence they had planned to take a ferry to Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and drive to Gaza, the Mubarak regime told them they could only enter Egypt through the Mediterranean port of Al-Arish. This forced the convoy's return to Syria, from whence a Turkish ship conveyed the vehicles to Egypt while the majority of volunteers followed by plane.

The Egyptian regime's open subservience to the Israeli state — which has twice

invaded Egypt and murdered thousands of Egyptians, including schoolchildren and prisoners of war, and executed hundreds of Egyptian prisoners in cold blood — shocked even veteran political activists. It is in stark contrast to the attitude of ordinary Egyptians, who at every opportunity have expressed sympathy with the VP convoys.

When the first 167 VP participants landed at Al-Arish, Egyptian authorities seized their passports and told them the rest of the convoy would not be allowed in. After a sit-in at the airport, Egyptian authorities backed down temporarily, but the next day told the convoy leaders that 43 of the vehicles and their contents would have to pass through Israeli-controlled territory.

When Viva Palestina leaders tried to negotiate that demand, pointing out the aid would be unlikely to reach Gaza, the Mubarak regime sent in police to try and seize the trucks. Plainclothes cops hurled rocks at the volunteers while uniformed police attacked with clubs, gas and water cannons. The activists stood up to the assault however, even capturing one of the assailants, and a standoff ensued. Viva Palestina agreed to the Egyptian regime's demand in return for the release of convoy members arrested by Egyptian authorities. The supplies the Egyptians did not allow in will be sent to Turkey and distributed there to people in need.

The violence against Viva Palestina came only a week after Mubarak's police attacked the 1,400-strong Gaza Freedom March and prevented it from bringing aid to Gaza. The regime took a very different attitude toward Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who received a warm welcome in Cairo on the anniversary of Israel's assault on Gaza. In the 1970s Netanyahu was involved in terrorist operations in Egypt as part of the Zionist special operations unit Sayeret Matkal.

Viva Palestina's third entry into Gaza was a people's victory in spite of the force arrayed against it. It not only brought in much-needed aid, but it posed a powerful political challenge to the blockade. Said

Ovenden: "We launched Viva Palestina with a strategic outlook that we could crack open the siege by fusing aid, a savvy understanding of the political context and campaigning. We think this effort is working and can contribute to the growing international movement in solidarity with the Palestinian people."

While solidarity with the besieged Palestinians of Gaza is growing, so is their peril. With U.S. funds and help from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Mubarak regime is building an 80-foot-deep wall along Gaza's southern border to block the tunnels that are Gaza's primary lifeline. And there is growing evidence Israel is preparing another full-scale assault on Gaza.

The lengths to which the forces of oppression are going to crush the people of Gaza make it incumbent on the people's movement to redouble efforts to break the blockade. The Viva Palestina movement appears determined to rise to the call. Upon his return to London, George Galloway told the media: "I've been banned from returning to Egypt, but that doesn't mean I'm not going back to Gaza. There's more than one way into Gaza."

Videos and first-hand accounts of the convoy may be found at vivapalestina.org.

Cecil participated in the second Viva Palestina caravan in July.



WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Jan. 6 demo in support of Viva Palestina caravan, New York.

Dennis Brutus, anti-apartheid fighter

The following is excerpted from Patrick Bond's obituary of his teacher and colleague Dennis Brutus, a South African poet, anti-apartheid fighter and internationalist known and admired by U.S. activists.

Dennis Brutus died at age 85 on Dec. 26, battling cancer, climate change and capitalism.

Trying to keep up with the octogenarian after his 2005 move to Durban dazed even the most Brutus-addicted staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society — where he was honorary professor and our visionary guru — and UKZN Centre for Creative Arts, for which

he served as a fixture at their famous Time of the Writer and Poetry Africa festivals.

At least one overarching impression sings out from the cacophony of warm memories: the Brutus philosophy that genuine liberation — not the half-measures won in 1994, when class apartheid replaced racial domination in South Africa — represents a war to be waged on many fronts because as one battle is won and many more usually lost, there are still others on the horizon that make an engaged life fulfilling, that keep the fires of desire for social change burning long into the night.

The denial of opportunities to play sports across Port Elizabeth's neighborhoods was Brutus' youthful entry point into revolutionary politics, initially with

the Teachers League and then the Congress movement centered on Nelson Mandela's African National Congress.

In the process, Brutus received deep battlefield scars, suffering bannings (both personal in 1961 and affecting most of his poetry until 1990); a 1963 police kidnapping in Maputo, Mozambique, followed by a near-fatal shooting outside Anglo American's central Johannesburg headquarters during an escape attempt; imprisonment and torture from 1963-66 at Johannesburg's Fort Prison and on Cape Town's Robben Island (he was next door to Mandela much of the time); and alienating times in exile from 1966-1991.

Those three decades in the U.S. spent teaching at leading universities gave Brutus opportunities for high-profile support to every crucial struggle: ending the unfair

incarcerations of Philadelphia poet Muriel Abu-Jamal, American Indian Movement leader Leonard Peltier and Guantánamo Bay prisoners; halting sweatshops; imposing Boycott/Divestment/Sanctions on Israel; building Burmese solidarity; opposing Washington's militarism by following Thoreau's lead and refusing to pay a portion of his taxes; attempting to prosecute George Bush for war crimes; and supporting the successful Vieques protest against U.S. Navy weapons testing on the Puerto Rican island.

Upon returning to South Africa in 1998, he and Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane inaugurated Jubilee South Africa to demand rejection of inherited apartheid debt and to then launch the World Bank Bonds Boycott.

Other SA-based campaigning included



U.S. mercenaries charged with long list of crimes

By John Catalinotto

The murderous mercenary outfit formerly known as Blackwater and now called Xe has been making headlines all January, with most stories showing how deeply committed the CIA and Pentagon are to outsourcing a portion of the task of re-conquering the former colonial world.

A U.S. court threw out murder charges against four Blackwater employees for a massacre of 17 unarmed civilians in Nisoor Square in Baghdad in September 2007 and wounding 20 more — but only because of “prosecutorial misconduct,” not because any evidence indicated they weren’t guilty. Even the Iraqi puppet regime complained when they were set free.

Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.), who has sponsored legislation that would prevent the government from outsourcing security to private military contractors, expressed her displeasure at the court’s decision. “A question I’ve been asking for a long time is, ‘Can these private military contractors actually get away with murder?’ This indicates that the answer is yes.” (Los Angeles Times, Jan. 8)

In a civil case involving the same massacre, families of some of the Iraqis killed and some wounded Iraqis agreed to accept payments. They were not necessarily sat-

isfied with the settlement, but accepted it after they were warned it might be the last chance to get anything from the courts.

Two subcontracted Xe hirelings in Afghanistan were arrested there Jan. 7 and now face murder charges for gunning down two Afghan civilians and wounding a third last May in Kabul. In this case Xe terminated the mercenaries and dissociated itself from the case as much as possible. The two had been training the Afghan National Army.

Two of the seven CIA agents killed at Forward Base Chapman in Khost province on Dec. 30 turned out to be mercenaries working for Xe, one a former Navy Seal and another a former Army Special Forces troop.

That’s in the countries that the U.S. is occupying. In addition, January’s Vanity Fair reports that in 2004 the CIA apparently hired Xe contractors as hit men to carry out an assassination or assassinations in Germany.

“Among the team’s targets, according to a source familiar with the program, was Mamoun Darkazanli, an al Qaeda financier living in Hamburg who had been on the agency’s radar for years because of his ties to three of the 9/11 hijackers and to operatives convicted of the 1998 bombings of U.S. embassies in East Africa,”

writes Vanity Fair.

“The CIA team supposedly went in ‘dark,’ meaning they did not notify their own station — much less the German government — of their presence; they then followed Darkazanli for weeks and worked through the logistics of how and where they would take him down,” continues Vanity Fair. That report has been repeatedly cited in the German media. Sentiment is already strong in Germany against being dragged into the U.S.-led occupation of Afghanistan.

Perhaps the most blatant crime U.S. forces committed recently — it’s not known yet if these are U.S. troops or a special paramilitary unit consisting of soldiers of fortune — has not yet gotten the same publicity as the above cases within the U.S. It was reported in the Dec. 31 edition of the Times of London.

According to that report, U.S.-led troops were accused of dragging innocent children from their beds on Dec. 27 and shooting them during a night raid that left 10 people dead. Eight schoolchildren were killed, according to Afghan government investigators. People from the local area told Jerome Starkey, the Times reporter, that some of the children were wearing handcuffs when they were shot.

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From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

‘Obama: Post imperial?’

Taken from a Dec. 24 audio essay that can be heard at www.prisonradio.org. To subscribe to Mumia’s podcasts, go to mumiapodcast.libsyn.com. For information on Mumia’s case, go to www.millions4mumia.org. To make a donation to the grassroots work, go to www.freemumia.com.

According to a think-piece in a recent edition of Newsweek, President Barack H. Obama is a “post-imperial” leader, who seeks to bring “balance” to foreign affairs, and a kind of disciplined realism to interactions with other nations.

Of the similarities between the dreaded example of Vietnam and Afghanistan, the analogy fails because unlike the fateful Diem brothers, Afghan leader Hamid Karzai was “elected” and has significant support.

The analogy is about as weak as wet toilet tissue.

To say Karzai was elected is to do extreme violence to the term.

A recent piece in the Washington Post describes the Taliban as a virtual “shadow government” throughout much of the country, with dual governors, police chiefs, tax staffs and village governments.

Indeed, the Post reports Taliban control covers “broad swaths of the country, especially Afghanistan’s vast rural areas.” That’s because in many of these districts, the U.S. supported Karzai regime has no presence.

Back to the point: a corrupt, foreign-supported government, which is widely seen as a puppet regime. Sound familiar?

Do we have another Vietnam? Perhaps. The imperial press dutifully followed Pentagon and White House reports, painting Vietnam in rosy colors until the walls came tumbling down. They almost universally praised the Afghanistan and Iraq wars as righteous retribution.

Why should they stop now?

As for “post-imperial,” this is a label that is about as ridiculous as post-racial!

To invade countries that did nothing to it, to bomb and kill tens of thousands, to occupy and install puppets sounds pretty imperial to me.

And to add over 30,000 troops to this process means more of the same.

Is this “post-imperial?” Hardly.

Sources: Zakaria, Fareed, “The Post-Imperial Presidency,” *Newsweek*, (Nov. 14), pp. 36-40; Witte, Griff, “The Shadow Government’s Clout: In Afghanistan, Taliban Officials Offer a Concrete Alternative,” *Washington Post*, [national weekly edition], Dec. 14-20, p. 18

A tale of two armies

By John Catalinotto

Despite the Pentagon’s unmatched high-tech weapons and firepower, the U.S. military is bogged down by glaring weaknesses rooted in the capitalist system it operates to defend. The resistance fighters, with far less firepower, have shown the ability to innovate and adapt their tactics to the needs of their war to liberate Afghanistan.

The Pentagon’s difficulties in creating a special program to carry out colonial interventions in Afghanistan and Pakistan have exposed its weakness.

Before Gen. Stanley McChrystal took charge of the Afghanistan occupation last year, he had chaired a special group of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that came up with the “Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program.” In November the Pentagon announced the program, saying it would create three

units of 304 people each, 912 in total, to form the new corps.

The program’s main innovation is that instead of the customary one-year rotation in the region, officers who volunteer or are assigned to it would expect to spend three to five years on duty there. They would start with 16-week training courses in Urdu, Pashtu or Dari, the three major languages in the region, and would become expert in the history and culture of the peoples living there.

The order was that the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps appoint a proportional number of their “best people” to this program. These personnel would be involved as trainers, military planners and advisers to Afghan ministries. In other words, they would be the backbone of a colonial takeover of the countries and peoples.

In theory, such a corps might become a weapon against any resistance or liberation movement. But so far, the Armed Forces have only come up with 172 officers ready to take on the assignment. In addition, according to a Jan. 6 New York Times article, Joint Chiefs chair Adm. Mike Mullen chewed out the heads of the four armed services in mid-December for failing to pick the most suitable people among the too few they sent.

When a military force is serving the cause of building an empire, and the basic goal of the empire is to increase the profits of the banks and corporations, the military too adapts to these pressures. What is the major goal of the officers? It’s advancing their careers.

Since advancement has always come through a succession of one-year assignments, the officers preferred to avoid the Afghanistan-Pakistan Hands Program.

In turn, the top brass in each service were also reluctant to send their “best people” to this special unit. That meant giving up their most capable subordinates, the ones who would help the ca-

reers of the top officers. This too became an obstacle.

In an attempt to redress this failure, Mullen criticized the top brass on the one hand and on the other hand promised that the careers of those in the special unit would advance. Whether this combination of stick-and-carrot will create the desired colonial corps is yet to be determined.

The resistance army

The resistance army can tell a completely different story. Resistance fighters already know the local languages and customs: They are part of the people. Even by the Pentagon’s reports they are growing in strength and influence, and the population sees them as the local fighters while it sees the U.S.-NATO forces as the invaders.

The resistance has also been flexible in adapting its tactics. Perhaps nothing showed that more than the bombing strike on the CIA’s Forward Operating Base Chapman on Dec. 30, which killed seven CIA operatives, including some top officers, and a Jordanian officer along with the resistance agent. According to the latest version of the events, the resistance forces operating in Khost province decided it was necessary to strike back after unpiloted airplanes — drones — killed some of their leaders along with a lot of other people.

They took the decision to sacrifice a skilled double agent, himself a Palestinian with Jordanian citizenship, who was serving the resistance out of idealism and hatred of imperialism. He didn’t hesitate. His choice was the complete opposite of worrying about a career move.

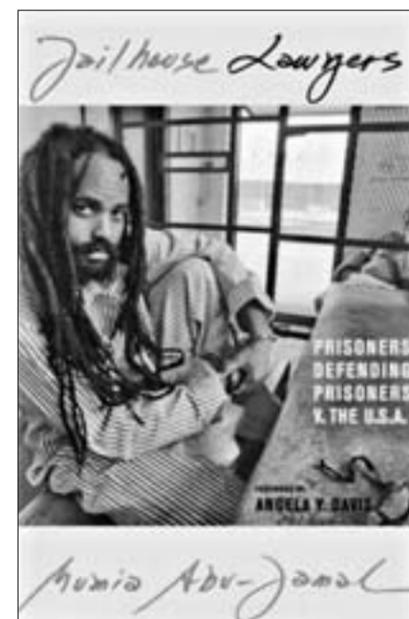
There is no doubt the Pentagon can bring much destruction to the Afghanistan-Pakistan region and its people. There is plenty of reason to doubt it can vanquish the resistance.

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leadership in protests numbering 10,000 against the U.N.’s World Conference Against Racism in 2001 — for failing to include Zionism and reparations for slavery, colonialism and apartheid on the agenda — and 30,000 against the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 because of the U.N. turn to water privatization, carbon trading and similar market-environmental strategies.

Brutus was subsequently the highest-profile plaintiff in the lawsuit filed by Jubilee and the Khulumani Support Group for apartheid reparations, fighting not only three dozen corporations which made profits and interest in SA prior to 1994, but also the Mbeki regime, which sided with the Bush regime and capital. Last October [after President Thabo Mbeki was pushed out of office], Pretoria finally reversed that position, to Brutus’ satisfaction.

For more information and a schedule of memorials for Brutus, see www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs.



Mumia’s latest book, above, is available at Leftbooks.com

Get a mirror

This is what the State Department's website says about what is commonly called the "terrorist list":

"Countries determined by the Secretary of State to have repeatedly provided support for acts of international terrorism are designated pursuant to three laws: section 6(j) of the Export Administration Act, section 40 of the Arms Export Control Act, and section 620A of the Foreign Assistance Act. Taken together, the four main categories of sanctions resulting from designation under these authorities include restrictions on U.S. foreign assistance; a ban on defense exports and sales; certain controls over exports of dual use items; and miscellaneous financial and other restrictions."

Incredibly, Cuba, Iran, Sudan and Syria are the four countries on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's list.

Israel is not on the list, despite its constant repression of the Palestinian people — it killed more than 1,400 Palestinians in Gaza just a year ago — and its long history of attacks on neighboring countries, like Lebanon. Adding it to the list would require ending Washington's huge subsidies and arms shipments that have turned Israel into a spearhead against Arab liberation in the heart of the Middle East.

The U.S. never called apartheid South Africa a terrorist, even though it employed every kind of terror to totally disenfranchise and enslave the African majority. Perhaps this is not considered "international terrorism"? But apartheid South Africa was known to also have secretly tested a nuclear weapon in the South Atlantic and frequently carried out terror attacks on neighboring countries like Namibia, Angola, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Gambia.

If any country is to be designated an international terrorist, shouldn't it be one that has brought death and destruction to dozens of others around the world? Shouldn't it be one that has sent hundreds of thousands of killers armed and trained to use the most destructive modern offensive weapons against people thousands of miles away, armed with only the simplest weapons for self-defense?

Isn't it international terrorism to destroy another country's cities, water supply, museums, schools, hospitals, bridges and communications, to kill hundreds of thousands of its people and create millions of refugees, while lying to the whole

world about the reason for the attack?

It is a monumental mockery of the truth that the very country that has done all these things is the same one that thinks it can absolve itself by creating a "terrorism list." On that list is Syria, which happens to have taken in many of the Iraqi refugees who were forced to leave their broken country after the devastating U.S. "shock and awe" bombing and subsequent military occupation.

Also on the State Department's list is Iran, which has no nuclear weapons but is the target of a huge propaganda blitz about whether it will ever have any in the future. Meanwhile, Israel openly threatens Iran with nuclear bombs that it won't admit having, but everyone knows are there. The Arms Control Association says Israel has up to 200 nuclear warheads. Other sources, including U.S. intelligence estimates, give even higher numbers.

Sudan, another country on the list, was the target of U.S. cruise missiles in 1998 when Bill Clinton was president. The Pentagon said it destroyed a plant making chemical weapons and linked to Osama bin Laden, but this U.S. terror attack really destroyed the country's main pharmaceutical plant, which made medicines for the whole region. U.S. officials later admitted they probably made a "mistake," but have never apologized or compensated Sudan for the damage. Germany's ambassador to Sudan estimated that tens of thousands of Sudanese probably died for lack of medicine because of the plant's destruction.

Most shocking is the Obama-Clinton administration's inclusion of Cuba on this list. (See our article in this issue of Workers World.) Not only are there absolutely no grounds for this, but for years after its revolution, Cuba was victimized by U.S. terrorist operations. Theaters and hotels were bombed, scores of attempts were made on the lives of Cuban leaders, and a mercenary army actually invaded the country — all paid for and organized by the CIA. Five Cuban men languish in U.S. prisons today because they penetrated exile groups in Miami that had a criminal history of carrying out attacks on their country. The U.S. jailed these anti-terrorists but let go free those in the employ of the CIA who bombed Cuban cities and even a civilian airliner.

Looking for terrorists? Get a mirror, Secretary of State Clinton. □

Phony 'war on terror'

U.S. keeps Cuba in imperialism's crosshairs

By Cheryl LaBash

The new year began with the U.S. government announcing new intensive airport screening for anyone traveling from or through 14 countries — the four unilaterally designated by the U.S. as "states sponsoring terrorism" and ten others allegedly "of interest." One of the most obvious indications that this arbitrary list has nothing to do with protecting air travel or residents within the U.S. is the listing of socialist Cuba as one of the 14.

Dr. Wayne Smith, former U.S. State Department analyst and chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana until 1982, wondered if "the United States itself should be on the list?" (www.nowaruncuba.org)

The hypocrisy and self-serving character of declarations against other nations is clear. The U.S., in fact, harbors individuals who have admitted bombing civilian aircraft and been convicted of attempting to bomb a university in Costa Rica where revolutionary Cuban leader Fidel Castro was speaking. The U.S. government refuses to even comply with international law requiring extradition or trial for aircraft bombers.

In contrast, the Cuban Five, who were attempting to prevent violent acts against Cuba, are imprisoned in the U.S. with severe sentences that were only moderated after global outcry from parliaments, unions and international support committees. One of the Five, Gerardo Hernández, is still serving an exceptionally cruel double life term and is denied family visits from his spouse.

The Five are now enduring their 12th year of captivity in U.S. prisons precisely because they monitored the activities of organizations based in the U.S. — with the full knowledge of the U.S. government — that planned and carried out bombings of tourist hotels to disrupt the Cuban economy.

The Five — Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — protected their homeland by observing terrorist actions and plans in Florida so defensive measures could be prepared and taken in Cuba. They undertook this mission after Cuban government appeals for the U.S.

government to stop the attacks from Florida were ignored.

Not only are the Cuban Five imprisoned and visits from family members denied or obstructed, but the admitted organizers of the first midair bombing of a civilian airliner, Luis Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch, are walking free in Miami. Venezuela has formally requested Posada's extradition to stand trial, since the plot to blow up Cubana Flight 455 was hatched there in 1976. The Montreal Convention (1971), which was signed by the U.S., requires that anyone suspected of destroying a civilian aircraft in the air be extradited or face trial in the country of residence. (www.asil.org)

Cuba is known for teaching the world to read and sending doctors to countries in need. The country provides Cubans with a life expectancy equal to that of the U.S. — their wealthy, powerful neighbor only 90 miles away — and an infant mortality rate lower than the U.S. Cuba leads the way in sustainability and environmental preservation.

Cuba has achieved all this because its socialist system is not driven by maximizing profits. Maximizing the educational, cultural and physical development of every human being is its priority.

Cuba's achievements are astonishing considering the relentless economic, political and terror war waged against it by U.S. imperialism. Every year the entire world, except the U.S., Israel and one or two small nations, vote in the U.N. against the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

Since the U.S. trade and travel ban cannot prevent U.S. residents from going to Cuba, the U.S. thinks that perhaps more harassment at airports can dissuade them. The Obama administration rebuffed Cuba's request to be removed from the Jan. 4 list. By so doing, it restates the U.S. imperialist intent to destroy socialism in Cuba, whether by subversion, starvation by blockade or military means.

Cuba provides a living example for the U.S. working class, which is looking for a way out of the capitalist economic crisis stealing their jobs, homes and futures. Cuba remains a beacon that a concocted anti-terror hysteria cannot dim. □

Socialist Korea poised

By Deirdre Griswold

This year's economic plans in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will put greater emphasis on the development of light industry and agriculture, promising a surge in the living standards of the people.

An outline of these plans was contained in a joint New Year's editorial that appeared in the DPRK's three leading newspapers: one representing the party, one the youth and one the army.

For almost a decade, at great sacrifice, the DPRK has had to allocate a large amount of its resources to building up its means of defense. This emphasis took on special urgency when, in January 2002, former U.S. President George W. Bush arbitrarily added the DPRK to the propaganda invention he called the "axis of evil." Such a pronouncement by the commander-in-chief of the world's largest military power could only be interpreted as a threat to attack Korea.

At the time, the Bush administration had already embarked on a war in Af-

ghanistan and was threatening to invade Iraq, another country on Bush's "axis." Hundreds of billions of dollars were being added to the budget for the Pentagon and other agencies of U.S. aggression and intervention around the world.

The DPRK had to take the threat seriously.

From 1950-53, hundreds of thousands of U.S. troops had invaded Korea and fought a war there against the People's Liberation Army of the DPRK. The Korean soldiers were bolstered by a million Chinese volunteers, who came across their common border to fight alongside their Korean comrades. Both the Koreans and the Chinese were defending revolutions that had begun in their countries decades earlier, when the masses of people suffered under Japanese troops and puppet regimes. Sweeping to victory when World War II ended in Japan's defeat, the Korean revolutionaries soon had to fight a second war for national liberation and social justice — this time against U.S. imperialism.

Virtually no family in Korea was left

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A new phase in the struggle in Honduras

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

After a brief holiday interlude, the Honduran resistance went back to the streets with renewed energy and commitment. On Jan. 7, 15,000 people marched from the Polytechnic University to the National Congress in Tegucigalpa. This time, beside demanding the return to office of their legitimate president, Manuel Zelaya Rosales, the resistance's demands included the continuation of the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA) — since de facto president Roberto Micheletti had sent a bill to Congress for the withdrawal of Honduras from the ALBA — and the refusal of amnesty for crimes perpetrated since the coup on June 28. Both were items scheduled to be discussed at the Congress' session that day.

ALBA, hope for the poor

Honduras joined the ALBA in 2008 under Zelaya, and membership in it, although short-lived, has enormously benefited the poorest in the country. However, since the beginning, transnational companies, particularly U.S.-based ones like ExxonMobil, have opposed it, fearing huge losses in their profits. In fact, the purpose of ALBA trade includes precisely the kind of transactions that put people first and profits at the service of the poor.

For example, through the ALBA, Honduras received a donation of 100 tractors from Venezuela, in addition to financial aid for poor peasants. In this the third-poorest country on the continent, the ALBA was a promise to elevate the quality of life — bringing education, housing and health care to the poor. In less than a year, more than 150,000 people attained literacy, out of 300,000, before the golpistas (coup plotters) kicked out the Cuban teachers who were part of the program "Yo Sí Puedo" (Yes, I Can).

One of the main objectives of the military coup was precisely to hit the ALBA, not only in Honduras but in the entire region. It is a tremendous threat to the capitalists in Honduras and to the imperialist north. ALBA trade is not only based on solidarity, but on a different system that promotes regional integration and socialism and therefore challenges imperialism.

Amnesty, yet the repression continues

The second main item put forth in the Honduran Congress was a proposal for

amnesty for all crimes committed since the coup. This was the second bill sent by Micheletti to Congress — a grotesque circus plotted, with the help of the United States, for the mere purpose of convincing the international community that the fraudulent elections held on Nov. 29 were valid. Right-wing National Party's Porfirio Lobo was "elected" by less than 50 percent of the voters.

Most of the countries, with the exception of the U.S. and those headed by right-wing U.S. allies — Canada, Panama, Colombia, Peru and Costa Rica — have not recognized the result of the elections and only recognize Zelaya as the legitimate president of Honduras.

The U.S. sent State Department representative Craig Kelly to Tegucigalpa last December to convince Micheletti to step down before Jan. 27, the date of Lobo's inauguration, in an unsuccessful effort to make Lobo's presidency palatable to the international community. Since Micheletti refused to step down, Kelly simply endorsed the amnesty proposal from both Micheletti and Lobo. To try to put a face of legitimacy on the coup government, they have again proposed a government of "national reconciliation" as was proposed, yet failed, before.

The second act of this circus happened after Kelly's visit, when the Office of the Prosecution, composed of pro-coup officers, charged coup leader and Army General Romeo Vásquez and all the members of the Joint Chiefs for their role in the expatriation of Zelaya on June 28 and for "abuse of authority" during the coup. Yet there was not a word about their many crimes against the people in resistance after the coup — the assassinations, mutilations, injuries, harassment, arrests and all sorts of violent acts against women, children, seniors, men, youth, the Garifuna people and the lesbian, gay, bi and trans communities. Of course, amnesty for these criminals is already being planned in Congress.

Zelaya's response

While still in the Brazilian Embassy, President Zelaya continues to be very much in touch with the people, with whom he communicates through radio interviews. On Jan. 6 Zelaya read a statement to Radio Globo where he presented a proposal for the transformation of Hon-

duras into a new social model, a "pro-socialist liberalism that will give way to a popular and democratic authority."

In the statement he mentions the need for the redistribution of wealth and equal opportunities for all, among other popular measures. He concludes, saying, "It is inevitably the duty of every Honduran to mobilize and dismantle the ideological dictatorship. ... The bourgeois state has concluded and collapsed." Zelaya proposed instead a "state as a guide, to orient and to be responsible for the destiny of the population. ... The bourgeois model has exhausted itself."

A new phase in the struggle

The National Front of Popular Resistance has been meeting to discuss the new phase of the struggle, trying to strengthen the resistance and convert itself into a viable alternative political force.

On Jan. 7 the FNRP issued its first public statement of the year, its 44th since the coup on June 28. It reviews the current scenario in Honduras and the tasks ahead for the resistance:

The FNRP states:

- "1. The Honduran Resistance starts the year 2010 in the struggle against the dictatorship, rejecting the maneuvers that this regime carries out in order to clean up its image through a false power transition process from Micheletti to Lobo, which will in turn leave untouched the current system of state domination by a privileged minority of highly corrupted entrepreneurs, transnational corporations and the army and repressive police.
 - "2. We make it known that the regime is ready to withdraw its membership as the State of Honduras from the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of the Americas — People's Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) that, since its signature on Oct. 9, 2008, has benefited the popular sectors in our country and has shown that it is actually possible to establish new types of relationships between peoples and governments in order to benefit the poor while proposing a true integration of the great Latin American motherland.
 - "The imminent withdrawal from the ALBA-TCP shows that the coup d'état took place in order to stop the urgent
- structural transformations of society and to send a message to other Latin American nations that are building alternative and progressive national projects.
- "3. We reject the anti-poor economic reforms proposed by the oligarchy and denounce its deliberate intention to dismiss social achievements that have been so preciously obtained by popular organized sectors. Water and basic food prices have increased, international reserves are being emptied dramatically in the past few months as well as the savings of state-owned companies like ENEE [Empresa Nacional de Energía Eléctrica] or Hondutel. The oligarchy amended the formula to calculate fuel prices in order to benefit the big transnational companies; contracts are constantly being written in favor of the entrepreneurs involved in the coup. Likewise, they are planning other measures such as a real reduction of the minimum wage, repeal of the teacher's decree, cancellation of free school tuition, currency devaluation, privatization of national public companies and the pension funds of public employees, among others.
 - "4. We denounce to the international community the repressive state in which the Honduran society lives which has reached its worst since the end of last year with an increasing number of assassinations, persecution and exile of our comrades. We call on the international human rights organizations to increase their pressure on the de facto regime.
 - "5. We reject the regime's plans to approve an amnesty which would forgive themselves for crimes against humanity committed since the carrying out of the coup. We must remind that such crimes have no statute of limitations and that sooner or later those responsible will have to face justice.
 - "6. We keep up our demands of returning to the institutional order and to install a democratic and popular National Constituent Assembly, in accordance with the sovereign right of the people to define the society in which they live.
- "We are in resistance and we will win!"

for economic growth

untouched by that war. Millions of civilians and soldiers were killed. At the end, the U.S. continued to occupy the south militarily — and still does. This division of Korea and the constant pressure on the north have been a drag on its economy ever since.

Despite all this, industrialization in the DPRK began almost immediately after the armistice in 1953, and its economy soon outstripped the U.S.-occupied south. Living conditions for the people rose quickly. Ever since, the socialist system of the DPRK has been able to provide quality free, universal medical care and education to its people.

However, much of this progress was cut short in the 1990s. Not long after the fall of the Soviet Union, which had been an important ally and trading partner of the DPRK, the legendary leader of the Korean Revolution, Kim Il Sung, died. The country then experienced several years of the worst weather of the century, when floods ruined much of its agricultural land and swept away bridges,

hydroelectric dams and other important infrastructure.

Add in the increased threats from the U.S., including economic sanctions that still continue, and it is clear that this has been a very difficult period for the Korean people, but one in which their resolve to defend their socialist state has never wavered.

In recent years, the DPRK has announced its ability to defend itself not only with a superbly trained and motivated army but with nuclear weapons. It has staged underground nuclear tests and launched several missiles that could send a warhead thousands of miles if Korea were attacked. Last year, Pyongyang announced it had put a communications satellite in space, launched by its newly developed Kwangmyongsong-2 missile.

Underlying these military achievements is the DPRK's progress in rebuilding its scientific-technological base on a higher foundation. The joint statement points to its success last year in perfecting new steel-making techniques at the Songjin

Steel Complex and in achieving "cutting-edge" computer-guided machinery.

The DPRK registered growth in its economy last year, even as the economy of the south was contracting because of the world capitalist crisis. The joint New Year's statement credits the unity of the people with the Workers Party of Korea and its leader Kim Jong Il for having turned the situation around so dramatically.

Now the DPRK is poised to take a leap forward in providing more and better consumer goods and services.

At the same time, it is calling for the U.S. to drop the sanctions and join it in

signing a peace treaty ending the Korean War. Only an armistice exists — which Washington uses as the basis for keeping some 30,000 U.S. troops in southern Korea to this day. Pyongyang is also calling for Washington to join it in hammering out an agreement to create a nuclear-free Korean peninsula — a reminder that the DPRK was under the shadow of U.S. atomic weapons for more than half a century before it attained a nuclear deterrent of its own.

Griswold has visited both the DPRK and south Korea a number of times.

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Ataque a la base de la CIA expone debilidad de la ocupación estadounidense

Por John Catalinotto

La explosión de una bomba en el campamento de la Agencia Central de Inteligencia (CIA) en Khost, provincia de Afganistán el 30 de diciembre, resultó en la muerte de siete agentes de mucha experiencia, incluyendo al comandante de la base. El ataque ha sido un fuerte golpe contra la ocupación estadounidense. Esto ha cambiado las reglas para la organización espía y ha provocado amenazas del Presidente Barack Obama y el jefe de la CIA Leon Panetta.

A pesar de las pretensiones de los militares y la CIA y sus amenazas de venganza, el exitoso ataque a una importante base estadounidense subraya las debilidades básicas del imperialismo estadounidense para llevar a cabo la más reciente escalada de la guerra y la impopular ocupación de Afganistán.

A nivel táctico, el ataque significó la pérdida de espías con décadas de experiencia en Afganistán que tenían un gran conocimiento de las costumbres y los lenguajes. Estratégicamente significa que las fuerzas de ocupación de EEUU y la OTAN tratarán ahora más que nunca, a todos los afganos como enemigos. Esto destruirá toda posibilidad de que Estados Unidos "se gane los corazones y las mentes" de una parte de la sociedad afgana en su intento de dividir para conquistar Afganistán.

"Entre los que murieron estaban oficiales experimentados y su conocimiento y experiencia se extrañará profundamente," dijo Henry A. Crumpton, quien dirigió la campaña de la CIA en Afganistán en los

años 2001 y 2002" (Wall Street Journal, 2 de enero)

La CIA no sabrá 'en quién confiar'

Un reportaje de la agencia noticiosa Reuters del dos de enero describió la otra parte de la pérdida citando a un ex oficial de la CIA: "Es un gran golpe para la agencia. Este es un grupo muy cerrado. Ellos no sabrán en quien confiar ahora".

Los oficiales estadounidenses y la prensa corporativa a menudo distorsionan la verdad y más aún en una situación de guerra. Sin embargo, reportes en el Wall Street Journal, el New York Times y el Washington Post que incluyen entrevistas con pasados y actuales oficiales de la CIA, indican que algo como lo siguiente pudo haber ocurrido:

El personal del Centro Operativo de Avanzada Chapman (Forward Operating Base Chapman, FOB), en la provincia Khost se ha estado enfocando en dos tareas principales: encontrar objetivos para bombardear con aviones sin piloto e investigar esa parte de la resistencia afgana conocida como "la red Haqqani" para que la Fuerzas Especiales de EEUU o "contratistas" mercenarios la busquen y asesinen a sus miembros y a sus líderes. La FOB Chapman utilizó informantes tanto en Afganistán como en Pakistán.

Tal como al-Qaida, la red Haqqani era una aliada de Estados Unidos en la batalla contra la Unión Soviética, cuando el ejército Soviético asistía al gobierno progresista afgano en la década de 1979 a 1989. Sin embargo ahora la red Haqqani está aliada al Talibán. Utilizando información provista por la FOB Chapman, tanto los

aviones sin piloto como las fuerzas terrestres mataron a algunos de los líderes Haqqani a lo largo del año 2009.

El atentado del 30 de diciembre fue por alguien que los agentes de la CIA conocían, alguien que estaba considerado como un actual o potencial informante afgano. Era capaz de pasar la seguridad de la base y entrar en una sala en la que al menos 13 miembros de la CIA o "contratistas", es decir, mercenarios, estaban presentes para escuchar el reporte del informante. Cuando explotó la bomba, el afgano murió junto a siete agentes de la CIA. Otras seis personas resultaron heridas.

Las fuerzas de la resistencia en Afganistán y en Pakistán, que los medios corporativos describen como los talibanes de Afganistán y de Pakistán respectivamente, se han responsabilizado por el ataque. Los afganos ven el atentado como un fuerte golpe contra las fuerzas estadounidenses. Las declaraciones de la resistencia también identifican a la persona que hizo el atentado como un "doble agente".

La CIA no ha revelado los nombres de quienes murieron. Algunas infiltraciones han proporcionado información diciendo que se incluyen, además de funcionarios de la CIA, un antiguo Navy Seal que era un "contratista" y a un ex comandante de la reserva del ejército.

El papel de los 'contratistas'

La CIA no ha nombrado a la empresa que proporciona los mercenarios. Sin embargo, el 15 de diciembre la resistencia afgana atacó una base de la USAID en Gardez, la capital de la provincia de Pak-

tia en el sureste, provocando la muerte del personal de seguridad y un guardia que trabajaban para la Development Alternatives Inc. DAI es el principal proveedor de fuerzas mercenarias para la ocupación.

Según un informe de la abogada estadounidense y escritora investigadora Eva Golinger, quien ahora reside en Venezuela, la DAI está activa en toda América Latina. Uno de sus empleados es el agente estadounidense capturado en Cuba que estaba entregando materiales ilegales a los grupos contrarrevolucionarios. La DAI tiene un contrato por \$40 millones para administrar el "Programa de Planificación de Contingencias para la Democracia en Cuba".

DAI está gestionando un programa similar para la USAID en Venezuela. La USAID también ha sido expulsada de dos ciudades de Bolivia, acusada de intervenir en los asuntos domésticos. Según Golinger, "un alto funcionario de la USAID confirmó hace dos semanas que la CIA utiliza el nombre de la USAID para facilitar contratos y financiación a terceros a fin de dar cobertura a las operaciones clandestinas". (Chavezcode.com)

La dependencia de Washington en los mercenarios para combatir sus guerras coloniales es otra señal de su debilidad. No sólo el Pentágono, que tiene el problema de reclutar un ejército necesario para una ocupación, sino la CIA y la USAID también tiene que contratar a mercenarios. Los combatientes de la resistencia por el contrario, están dispuestos a inmolarse con el fin de liberar a su país de la ocupación y la dominación extranjera. □

Protestas internacionales en solidaridad con Palestina exigen:

'Alto a la hambruna del pueblo de Gaza'

Por Brenda Ryan

Manifestantes por todo el mundo marcharon en solidaridad con el pueblo de Gaza en el primer aniversario de la masacre israelí y para exigir el fin del bloqueo israelí a Gaza.

Israel lanzó un ataque por 22 días en Gaza el 27 de diciembre de 2008 que mató a 1.400 personas, incluyendo a cientos de mujeres y niños/as. Miles más resultaron heridos/as, perdiendo brazos, piernas y ojos y quedando paralíticos/as. El informe de las Naciones Unidas Goldstone consideró que Israel cometió crímenes de guerra. Estos crímenes incluyeron el lanzamiento de fósforo blanco, que quema a través de la piel y cuando se inhala hace que la gente se quemé desde adentro causando la muerte, y de DIME (explosivos densos de metales inertes, por las siglas en ingles), que arranca las extremidades.

En **Nueva York**, 1.000 manifestantes, la mayoría jóvenes, se reunieron en un mitin en Times Square el 27 de diciembre y marcharon a la Misión Israelita y de allí a la ONU. Se detuvieron frente a la Misión Egipcia para demandar que el gobierno permita al convoy de auxilio internacional organizado por Viva Palestina entrar a



MO FOTO: BRENDA RYAN

Egipto para pasar a Gaza. Un miembro del convoy, que está liderado por el Miembro del Parlamento británico George Galloway, habló con la asamblea por teléfono. El gobierno de Egipto rehusó permitirle al convoy pasar por el puerto Nuweiba en el Mar Rojo. (Finalmente el convoy entró en Egipto por el puerto de Al-Arish el 3 de enero.)

La manifestación en Nueva York fue organizada por Al-Awda Nueva York, la Coalición Palestina por el Derecho a Volver, Musulmanes Americanos/as por Palestina, la Fundación Árabe de Musulmanes Americanos/as, la Fundación de Libertad MAS, el Centro de Acción Internacional, y otros grupos.

En ciudades por los Estados Unidos hubo marchas y vigiliás, incluyendo a **Boston;**

Chicago; Denver; Dubuque, Iowa; Minneapolis y San Francisco.

Casi 200 personas asistieron a una vigilia/protesta en solidaridad con la Marcha de Gaza por la Libertad en **Dearborn**, Michigan el 29 de diciembre. La protesta fue organizada por la recientemente formada Coalición de Michigan para la Justicia en Palestina. Después de la vigilia, los/as manifestantes marcharon al Club de Herencia Libanesa para una asamblea donde organizaron comités para iniciar actividades para continuar la lucha en Michigan.

El 28 de diciembre hubo una manifestación frente al consulado israelí en **Atlanta** planteando las mismas cuestiones. Participaron unas 125 personas, muy multinacional, y mayormente jóvenes. Esta acción fue llamada por el Movimiento para Acabar el Apartheid Israelí-Georgia, que fue formado en la primavera pasada específicamente para fomentar campañas de "boicot, desinversión y sanciones".

La Coalición por Justicia y Paz en Palestina de **Houston** convocó una manifestación muy animada en el primer aniversario del ataque israelí contra Gaza. Unas 400 personas llegaron con banderas palestinas volando a lo alto, y letreros y

banderas que desplegaron en las cuatro esquinas de la intersección de más tráfico de la cuarta ciudad más grande de los Estados Unidos. A los/as palestinos/as les acompañados/as otra gente árabe, un grupo de Turquía, afro-americanos/as, blancos/as, chicanos/as, mexicanos/as, y otros/as latinos/as.

Una delegación grande de estudiantes de la Universidad de Houston asistió y lideró las consignas. Los discursos fueron pronunciados en árabe, español, turco e inglés. Se oyó un gran grito de aprobación cuando uno de los oradores anunció que había acabado de oír noticias de **Turquía** donde más de un millón de personas estaban protestando también.

Otras manifestaciones tuvieron lugar en **Toronto, Roma, Madrid, Dublin, Dusseldorf y Venecia**, entre muchas otras ciudades. Más de 1.000 personas marcharon en **Tel Aviv** el 2 de enero exigiendo que se acabe el bloqueo de Gaza. El bloqueo ha impedido que alimentos, medicina y materiales de construcción entren a Gaza y continúa provocando desnutrición, hambre, miseria y muerte.

Gloria Rubac, Dianne Mathiowetz, y Mike Shane colaboraron en este informe.