

WORKERS WORLD

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Pentagon expands U.S. role in Africa

Important issue for anti-war movement

By Abayomi Azikiwe

Several African states have been targeted by successive U.S. administrations for regime change and political domination. Those facing threats from the U.S. include, but are not limited to, Egypt, Sudan, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is essential that the anti-war movement in the U.S. firmly oppose U.S. imperialist intervention in Africa.

U.S. intervention in East Africa was apparent as African leaders from throughout the continent gathered in Uganda the week of July 19 to attend preliminary sessions for the annual African Union Summit, set for July 25-27. The African Union is comprised of 53 independent states whose stated objective is the strengthening of political and economic cooperation among member countries to resolve issues resulting from the legacy of colonialism and underdevelopment.

This year's summit follows a series of bombings that killed 74 people in and around Kampala, Uganda's capital. The Somali Islamic resistance organization al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying they were in response to Ugandan troops inside Somalia propping up the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government there.

The corporate-owned media reported these bombings while omitting Washington's role in interfering in Somalia's internal affairs and bankrolling Uganda, which serves as an outpost for imperialist foreign policy in East and Central Africa. Uganda, which already has 3,200 troops in Somalia, has pledged to dispatch another 2,000 soldiers in order to prevent the collapse of the TFG.

Following the July 11 attacks, Ugandan army spokesman Maj. Gen. Kale Kaihura

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WORKERS WORLD EDITORIAL

Albany and beyond

Workers World Party activists are proud to be among the many anti-war, union and community organizers from dozens of groups who have come to Albany, N.Y., on July 23-25 to plan the next steps to end the U.S. occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and stop further U.S. wars.

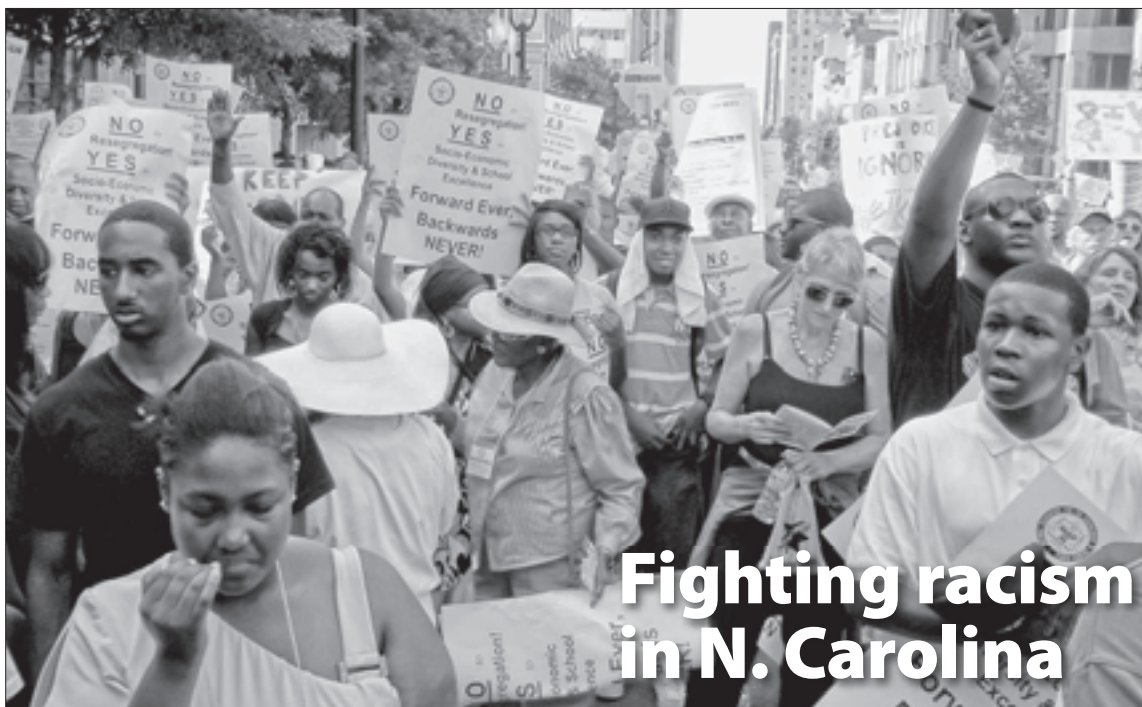
The anti-war movement must go beyond routine and symbolic actions to prevent the Pentagon from making war in whatever corner of the world it chooses. The Albany meeting could be a strong first step in building that fighting movement.

The disarray within the U.S. war ma-

chine exposed by Gen. Stanley McChrystal's firing presents a new challenge to anti-war forces. The turmoil within the military and civilian command provides an opening to convince workers here to oppose the war. It is time to take action.

There is continuing danger that the

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Fighting racism in N. Carolina

WW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

A mass demonstration July 20 against racism and school resegregation in Wake County took to the streets of Raleigh, N.C., as 1,000 people marched from the Convention Center to the State Capitol building. See more in an upcoming issue of WW.

Activists wave to imprisoned lawyer & activist, Lynne Stewart, outside of Manhattan's Metropolitan Correctional Center after she was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison on bogus "terrorist" charges. Read page 3.



'Free Lynne Stewart'

PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

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Racist profiling, cop stops rampant in NYC

By Larry Hales
New York

New York Gov. David Paterson signed a bill on July 16 limiting the use of a database of names collected by New York City cops of people who had committed no crime but whose names were gathered through the stop-and-frisk policy used by NYC cops and cops all over the country.

The database of people that have been stopped, frisked and released is supposed to be erased.

Since 2004 more than 3 million people in New York City have had their names entered into a database as a result of the stop-and-frisk policy used by the New York Police Department. Ninety percent of the people stopped were never charged with any crime.

People of color have been subjected to the abusive and demoralizing procedure at a high rate, illustrating the racism of the NYPD. In 2009, according to the Center for Constitutional Rights, a record 575,000 people — the overwhelming majority being Black and Latino/a — were stopped and frisked by cops in New York.

Blacks and Latinos/as were nine times as likely to be stopped and frisked, yet their arrest rate remained similar to whites although whites were a little more likely to be arrested. Whites were more likely to be carrying a firearm, but according to the data collected by the CCR, only 53,000 whites were stopped and frisked, compared to 490,000 Blacks and Latinos/as.

Multibillionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and his chief of cops, Raymond Kelly, protested Paterson's decision to sign the bill, citing the usefulness of the data-

base in supposedly curtailing crime and solving already committed crimes. The governor, whose administration is pushing through a budget that severely cuts education and other social services, signed the bill despite opposition from Bloomberg and Kelly.

While both Paterson and the sponsors of the bill noted at the signing ceremony the violation of civil liberties that the database poses, the illegal nature of the stop-and-frisk policy, which clearly utilizes racist racial profiling, was not addressed.

A look at readily available information of prior years further illuminates the racism of the NYPD. According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, in 2006, 89 percent of people stopped and frisked in New York were people of color: 55 percent were Black and 30 percent Latino/a.

The stops of whites account for only 2.6 percent of their total population, yet the stops of Black people account for more than 21 percent of the city's total Black population. This is despite the fact that according to arrest statistics, whites were twice as likely to have been found in possession of a weapon, drugs or stolen property. In 2006, Black people were 50 percent more likely to be subjected by cops to physical force when stopped.

Racial profiling is not unique to New York City. It is a policy employed by police agencies across the country. In some places it is law, such as in Arizona, where SB 1070 takes effect on July 29. Some cities and counties use cops to question immigrant workers on their status, which is discrimination backed up in many places by the law.

The racism that is endemic to U.S. society guides the police agencies in how they view and treat people of color. □

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Workers, Immigrants, Unemployed, Youth, Students:

Capitalism is Killing the People & the Planet

If you are interested in abolishing a profit-hungry system that is: ● throwing people out of work & their homes ● closing schools & hospitals ● denying universal health care ● making war ● bailing out banks ● jailing the poor & the youth ● racial profiling Black people, Latinos/as, immigrants and all people of color ● destroying the environment with global warming & oil spills



Then it's time to stand up, unite and fight back for a socialist future!

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Workers World Party and Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST), from coast to coast are actively organizing in the struggles for jobs, education, housing, health care; organizing to stand up against racism; to say no worker is illegal in Arizona and elsewhere; and for women's and lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer equality. We are organizing to stop imperialist wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and oppose occupation from Haiti to Palestine.

WWP & FIST are Fighting for Socialism —

a world without oppression, exploitation, poverty and war — where all the wealth of society belongs to the people and is used to meet human need not corporate greed. Don't wait until the Nov. conference. Workers World holds weekly meetings and discussions in addition to organizing. If you are interested call us at 212-627-2994, email wwp@workers.org and go to workersworld.net for updates on the Nov. 12-14 conference and to preregister.

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Workers World Party (WWP) fights for socialism and engages in struggles on all the issues that face the working class & oppressed peoples — Black & white, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women & men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed & students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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A travesty of justice for Lynne Stewart

'People's lawyer' receives 10 years in prison

By Sara Flounders
New York

Every struggle against the criminal injustice system in the U.S. today is a struggle to maintain morale and a combative spirit in the face of overwhelming repression, systematic racism, isolation and intimidation.

In every trial of a political prisoner the victim becomes the criminal through orchestrated media demonization and prosecutorial lies and distortions. The most important role of a defense committee is to again and again mobilize people to respond with determination and solidarity through long trials and often frustrating years of legal appeals.

This past week "people's attorney" Lynne Stewart faced the outrage of be-

ing returned to court for an even harsher sentence at the demand of reactionary judges on a higher court who had denounced her original sentence of 28 months as too lenient.

The entire case against Stewart is about a wildly fabricated charge of aiding terrorism based on a press release Stewart made 10 years ago for a convicted former client, Sheik Omar Rahman. Stewart, Ramsey Clark and Abdeen Jabara defended the sheik at a trial in 1995.

In April 2002 Attorney General John Ashcroft had federal agents arrest Stewart without warning and charged her with crimes that were not even on the books at the time the press release was issued. Stewart was sentenced four years ago by the same Judge John G. Koeltl to 28 months in prison. Judge Koeltl has now

caved in to judicial and media pressure and quadrupled her original sentence to 10 years in federal prison.

It is the mobilizations of love and solidarity in the streets that will help keep 70-year-old Stewart alive as legal challenges and a new appeal are raised.

On July 8 at Judson Memorial Church several hundred people packed a powerful solidarity rally for Stewart. The event was extremely well organized with tables of food, literature, CDs, speakers, drummers, music and a large screen with videos of Stewart and photos to help mobilize for the week ahead.

On July 14, the night before the resentencing hearing, hundreds rallied at the Metropolitan Correctional Center, next to the federal court building where Stewart was being held. There were two hours of

speakers and chants, followed by a march to the front of the jail.

Activists and Stewart's large extended family first took the streets in front of the MCC. At the rally site Stewart could be seen waving with both fists raised behind the bars, double grill and glass of her cell on the second floor. Drums, horns and chants resounded off the walls.

For an emotional hour there was a wild echoing chorus expressing love and solidarity and determination. Every form of energy and sign language that could raise Stewart's spirits was thrust forward. During the entire time Stewart kept her clenched fists raised.

Hundreds turned out hours before for Stewart's resentencing on July 15. Even with long lines and security checks the main court room and overflow court rooms to accommodate hundreds more were packed with supporters. The mood was grim but determined as people filed out of the courthouse and pledged to continue the fight.

The determination is enormous to continue the struggle to appeal this outrageous sentence and free Lynne Stewart.

The writer is a co-director of the International Action Center, a main organizer of the support activities for Stewart.



Ralph Poynter, Lynne Stewart's spouse, with her daughter Brenna Stewart, left. Right, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark speaking July 15 outside of jail holding Stewart.

WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

In response to Stewart's resentencing

Activists vow to continue fight

Following is a selection of responses from activists after the Lynne Stewart resentencing hearing July 15, when the judge gave the progressive lawyer and breast-cancer survivor a 10-year prison term.

The Lynne Stewart case proves that the desire for justice in the U.S. is alive and well as seen by the constant support Lynne has received over the many years of this case. The government's action is discouraging. The continued response of the people is encouraging. The struggle continues.

Ralph Poynter, Lynne Stewart's life companion

The death sentence imposed on a 70-year-old woman has sent a message that the terms "terror" and "terrorism" will be used to stifle dissent, to silence voices, to let the powers that be trample over the rights of ordinary [people]. Those of us in the peace movement, the anti-war movement, the anti-racism movement, the environmental movement, the movement for a just immigration policy, must continue our struggles. This is what Lynne Stewart wants us to do. Her sacrifice will not be in vain if we continue these vital grass roots movements for a just and humane society. We owe that to our beloved Lynne Stewart, the people's lawyer. We got your back, Lynne. Aluta continua!

Vinie Burrows, U.N. Rep., Women's International Democratic Federation; founding member of the Granny Peace Brigade; and recipient of the Paul Robeson Award from the Actors Equity Association.

WE MUST START FRESH!!! Imagine a world where Mumia, Peltier, the Cuban Five, Mehanna and Lynne are among us. It's time to start unsullied, introduce new and youthful ideas, blood and tools. Knowing what I know about Lynne there will be a surge in jailhouse lawyers, prison reform, anti-imperialist, anti-Zionist and anti-fascist revolutionaries. One of my catchphrases for the last 20 years has been, "This entire system was never designed to empower us."

Knowing this and being in media, everything I touch is aimed at exposing, indicting and criticizing this system while creatively designing a world without fascists, imperialists and dictators masked in free enterprise. Lynne was not the only one indicted, tried, convicted and sentenced; we all have been sentenced to a lack of access to this beautiful bright light that made us better every day.

U-Savior, journalist, media activist, filmmaker and director of the documentary "Disappearing Voices — The Decline of Black Radio." (www.disappearing-voices.com) E-mail: usavior@black-waxx.com.

The fourfold increase in the prison sentence for Lynne Stewart to 10 years is a tragic miscarriage of justice. In sentencing, the court relied on the guidelines as if they were the Ten Commandments, while they are discretionary and have proved disastrous nationally to federal justice, imposing and lengthening sentences that have multiplied the federal prison population to the level of an international dis-

grace. This sentence, if affirmed, will further distort federal sentencing, diminish the imperative role of federal trial judges in determining sentences, infect judicial decision making with the fear of terrorism and inhibit all but the bravest of the criminal defense bar from zealous advocacy on which the honor and integrity of the rule of law in [the U.S.] depends.

Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general, human rights lawyer and Lynne Stewart's co-counsel in trial of Sheik Omar Rahman.

The corporate media does not mention the extraordinary support Lynne got not just with hundreds showing up today for a three-hour court hearing, but a long vigil last night, and a long program a week ago at Judson Memorial Church. People call her "the people's lawyer," deeply appreciate her decades of contributions to the movement, and express their love for her in so many ways. Supporters wrote letters, contributed money and came to event after event. The love that poured out for Lynne was truly inspiring. It's what motivates our movement at its best and shows the kind of person and exemplary leader Lynne is, in her high level of morality, commitment and ability to unify.

Suzanne Ross, co-chair, Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC)

What the corporate media accounts omit is that there were hundreds of supporters in court today — so many that they had to accommodate most of us in an overflow room on a different floor with a closed-circuit TV broadcasting the pro-



Lynne Stewart, left, greets supporters from behind bars.

PHOTO: ROBERTO MERCADO

ceedings. We all must denounce this outrage committed against this wonderful 70-year-old person in fragile health, and work harder than ever to organize to free her.

Bob Lederer, Justice and Unity Coalition, WBAI (NYC)

We have work to do. We must never give up! Instead we must organize, organize, organize and resolve to fight now harder than ever! I completely disagree with the judge and was extremely disappointed with the resentencing. This is a horrible day for what is left of this system of justice and is an attack on the legal system as it sends a clear message that the U.S. is now going after the attorneys. Everyone should be concerned about this and attorneys everywhere need to come together and stand up to fight this horrible decision. Lynne Stewart is a courageous woman and we need more attorneys like her.

Lisa Davis, Take Back WBAI

The full force of the U.S. criminal "justice" system came down on innocent political prisoner, 30-year veteran human rights attorney and radical political activist Lynne Stewart. We can only hope that the winds of change that are stirring the consciousness of millions today in the context of [U.S.] capitalism in economic and moral crisis keep the movement for her freedom alive and well. The fight is not over! What we do now remains critical. Lynne's expected appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court cannot be written off as

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Life under low-wage capitalism

Reflections of an unemployed youth

By Caleb T. Maupin

As a consumer I have discovered that so many workers, such as clerks, food service workers or bank tellers, have to take on a second job. It seems every worker in these increasingly deskilled and low-paid jobs is now a salesperson, in addition to the drudgery of the dull, unforgiving work they already have to do.

When I walk into the bank to make a deposit and keep myself from getting further overdraft fees, I have to spend 10 minutes listening to the bank teller urging me to buy a special “rewards debit card.” I don’t want this card because it will cost me \$25 a year and have even stricter fees for overdrafts and penalties. He tells me he wants to give me this new card because he thinks it will be in my best interest.

He isn’t fooling anyone. This bank teller’s job used to consist of taking deposits and handing out cash withdrawals. But now he and his coworkers depend on the commission from the number of cards they sell.

No longer can I walk in, make a deposit and leave. Now I listen to a teller lecture me for 10 minutes while I try to do a two-minute task. He uses all the classic sales-

person tactics. He asks me about my life, as if he cares. He tries to make small talk while trying to get me to buy something I really don’t need.

I don’t blame the teller. His wages depend on it. He’s probably making less than \$15 an hour before the commission. If he wants to pay his mortgage, car payments, health care balances and other living expenses, he needs people like me who go to the bank to make a deposit to be convinced they “need” to buy a new card.

Car dealerships used to be the place for this kind of sales tactic, but now it’s the case practically everywhere. You go into an electronics store, and the worker who greets you depends on you purchasing the most expensive stereo, with six-foot speakers to boot, if he or she is going to walk away with more than minimum wage at the end of the shift. You just want to buy batteries.

Even McDonald’s workers are trying to convince me to buy a \$6 “value” meal when I only want some water. When I check out at a grocery store, I practically have to argue with the check-out clerk not to sign me up for an “advantage card” or “rewards program.”

It seems that capitalists have discov-

ered that any public service job can easily be transformed into a sales job to further increase the capitalists’ profits. The worker is made to do the sales pitch and strive to make a few more bucks.

The sad thing is that workers who used to make \$12 an hour as a bank teller are now making \$8 an hour and acting as salespeople, hoping to lure you into buying enough products or “banking programs” so they can make less than half the wages that generations before made and took for granted.

Are you psychologically fit to make coffee?

It seems I’m required to take a bizarre test for nearly every job for which I apply. The tests, interestingly enough, are not tests of my knowledge or intelligence but of my “attitude” and my “comfort in the working environment.”

I can understand a psychological test for some jobs like child-care providers or security guards. However, the positions that require psychological tests for employees are now jobs like “barrista,” maintenance/custodial worker and sales clerk.

When I applied at a local book/record chain outlet, I had to answer questions like: “When I am punished it is usually my

own fault. True or false?” I used to expect the person who sells me a CD to have lots of body piercings and chew gum loudly. Now it seems the requirements for the job are to have the psychological make-up of a fourth grader with Republican parents.

The questions sound almost hilarious: “The people who supervise me in the work place are usually much smarter than I am. True or false?” or “It is good to listen to people with knowledge, rather than acting opinionated and drawing only from your own experiences. Strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, or strongly disagree.”

I wonder who makes up these tests. I wonder if it works to simply answer the questions pretending you are Rush Limbaugh or if the test makers and scorers have a way to see through this.

Will they be able to tell I am a communist who seeks to overturn this kind of wage slave/wage master relationship? Or will I be able to fake my way into a job where they’re testing and looking to hire only the most compliant and non-questioning employees?

With five applicants for every job, they will have plenty of people to choose from other than me. □

From ‘Low-Wage Capitalism’

Flint workers rock the GM empire

The following is excerpted from the book “Low-Wage Capitalism,” a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on the U.S. working class by Fred Goldstein, published in the fall of 2008. Beginning with our issue of July 1, Workers World has been running excerpts from Part 3, “Lessons from the Past for Future Struggles.” The wide range of struggles covered, from the 1930s to the present, shows the capacity of the U.S. working class to engage in militant struggle at great sacrifice. The willingness of the rank-and-file workers to fight back against the anti-labor offensive of the last 30 years shows that the decline in the labor movement was not inevitable. This week’s excerpt gives another concrete example of militant struggle just over a decade ago. For information about the book, visit www.lowwagecapitalism.com.

1998: General Motors, Flint

The strength of the mass struggle of the workers was also demonstrated in a “selective strike” by two auto parts plants that virtually shut down General Motors in 1998. The strike was called by two UAW locals at GM parts plants in Flint, Michigan: the Flint Metal Center and Delphi Flint East Complex. These plants and others in the region were under extreme pressure from the company to speed up production. Plant-closing threats were out in the open. In fact, on Memorial Day, GM began to move parts-making equipment out of the Delphi plant. Grievances over health and safety issues mounted even as outsourcing was eliminating jobs.

But the strike was precipitated by the immediate fear of plant closings and was fueled by the fact that GM had reneged on a pledge, made in return for concessions, to invest \$180 million in modern equipment at the metal plant.

On June 5, 2,400 workers at the metal plant went out on strike, to be followed by 5,800 Delphi workers the next week. The metal plant produced doors, hoods,

fenders and other metal parts while the Delphi plant produced speedometers, spark plugs, filters and other parts used in the production of almost every GM car in North America.

What followed was a hard-fought, 53-day strike, the longest at GM in 30 years. It shut down more than 100 plants in the U.S., Canada and Mexico, including 27 of 29 assembly plants. Some 190,000 workers were off the job. The company lost production of 50,000 autos, \$3 billion in after-tax profits, and \$12 billion in sales, “the heaviest losses ever incurred by an American company in a strike, at least before adjusting for inflation.” (Keith Bradsher, “The GM Settlement: The Overview,” New York Times, July 29, 1998.)

The striking workers had the solidarity of the rest of the workforce. During the strike by the Flint workers, many other locals asked permission to go on strike but were denied by the national leadership.

During the 1998 strike GM brought the UAW to court for violation of the contract for the first time since 1937. The national contract only allowed plant-level strikes over outsourcing, speed-up, and health and safety issues. The company contested the right of the union even to bring up the issue that GM had reneged on promises of investment; it was looking for an injunction on that basis. GM management wanted to crush any form of say-so by the union as to how the company disposed of its capital. And it wanted a pretext for an injunction.

When it was over, the company got concessions on its speed-up of welders, but it had to promise not to shut down the Delphi plant and another assembly plant in Flint, as well as parts plants in Indianapolis and another in Dayton, at least until 2000. It also agreed to invest the \$180 million, which it had claimed in court was outside the jurisdiction of the union. The parts-making equipment was returned to the plant.

The hopes of Wall Street that GM would deliver a knockout blow to the union were

dashed. The steadfastness of the workers stood in the way. The workers were elated at having staved off the assault by the company on jobs, but they were not under any illusions that the victory was decisive. They had lived to fight another day and were preparing for an even bigger battle for the 1999 contract.

Neither side had expected such a momentous struggle in 1998. But the company dug in and the union dug in because GM had openly threatened jobs, on top of imposing grinding conditions that ate away at the health and safety of the workers. In the end, both sides blinked, but the workers got a temporary reprieve from plant closings and retained the ability to fight another round.

The key to the strength of the strike was its ability to disrupt GM’s “just-in-time” production system. Such systems had been instituted all over capitalist industry and retailing — from Dell Computer to Caterpillar to Wal-Mart. Advances in transportation, communications, and computerized inventory tracking had made it possible to reduce inventories to the absolute minimum. This meant lower costs, faster turnover of capital, and, thus, more profits. But the “just-in-time” production and retailing was predicated on labor peace. The Flint parts plant workers revealed a critical GM weakness: no inventory and a highly specialized division of labor, so that parts from two plants alone could idle most of GM’s North American empire.

However, there were ominous signs, even before the ink on the settlement had dried. As part of the agreement ending the struggle, there was a provision stating that both sides would meet regularly as a way to rebuild their relationship in order to avoid future confrontations.

The workers had collectively given up hundreds of millions of dollars in pay and stayed out almost eight weeks. They were anticipating that there would be a national follow-up on the question of job protection and shop issues. But the

UAW leadership went in the opposite direction. Anticipating GM’s demands in the upcoming national negotiations for expanding plant closures and threatening offshoring and more outsourcing, the leadership was building bridges to the company instead of preparing for an even greater struggle. In fact, the UAW leadership ignored the show of strength by the workers in 1998 and signed on to another round of concessions and tradeoffs in the 1999 contract. This laid the basis for further plant closings and layoffs.

One lesson that emerged from the selective strikes of 1998 was that the workers, after years of demoralizing retreats by the UAW, were nevertheless ready to fight if they were given the union’s go-ahead and support. In fact, there had been more than two dozen local strikes in preceding years, including a 17-day strike in Dayton, Ohio, that shut down most of GM. The 1998 strike was by far the largest and most hard-fought in decades and it showed that the workers were willing to fight. It made clear that they could mount a successful challenge to the company if it was a company-wide shutdown. The strike also demonstrated that preventive struggle by the rank-and-file mobilized for battle was the only defense against plant closings, not handing over concessions.

Next: Shutting Down New York; Transit Workers 2005. Send e-mail to fgoldstein@workers.org.

“Low-Wage Capitalism by Fred Goldstein is a most timely work, as the working class prepares for a fightback during the greatest crisis of capitalism since the Great Depression.”

Clarence Thomas,
ILWU Local 10 and Co-chair,
Million Worker March Movement

NEW YORK CITY

Fightback grows against transit cuts

By Dee Knight
New York

New York City Transit riders, communities and Transport Workers Local 100 have come together to launch a "Campaign to Take Back Our Transit System" (TBOTS). This alliance was formed in the face of an aggressive attack by the Metropolitan Transit Authority. In June the MTA slashed two subway lines, 37 bus routes and more than 900 jobs.

The MTA has closed hundreds of subway booths. It plans to raise the subway fare by 7.5 percent and impose a \$1 surcharge on new MetroCards. Station agents, bus drivers, train inspectors and mechanics have been laid off. Some neighborhoods have been cut off from public transportation. The lives of disabled people and seniors have become a nightmare due to these cuts.

A New York state court ruled the MTA had violated the law by not holding public hearings on the closing of station booths and ordered them to be held. The same day as the court order, the MTA arrogantly said they would hold the hearings but go ahead with the closings and layoffs. They continued to demolish the booths and hung signs in stations that booths would be closed.

On July 13 and 14 the MTA held the court-mandated public hearings in four boroughs. For years workers and riders have been attending hearings and testifying on the many hardships they faced due to MTA actions. But these hearings were different. Asserting that the MTA board was full of Wall Street and real estate developer stooges, workers and riders turned the hearings into tumultuous protests.

TWU members, including many laid-

off workers, wearing blue union shirts and an equal number of riders wearing white TBOTS shirts testified and took over the hearings with signs and constant chants.

In the Manhattan and Brooklyn hearings, after declaring "The hearing is a sham, fire the MTA!" workers and riders militantly walked out together. In the Bronx a union executive board member asked the laid-off workers to stand and demanded that the MTA board members look them in the eyes — which they refused to do.

In the Bronx, union Vice President Maurice Jenkins thanked the MTA for helping to unite the union's leaders and members in a determined fightback and for helping them forge ties with the community for the struggle ahead.

Local 100 Executive Board member Paul Piazza put it bluntly, saying there would be a strike if necessary. But this time the union would be fully prepared to win, with massive community and labor support — enough to shut down the whole city for as long as it takes.

The MTA says it has an \$800 million deficit. The TBOTS campaign says the MTA has plenty of money. The MTA continues to drain revenues with a multibillion-dollar, 20-year construction of the Second Avenue subway to serve Manhattan's posh Upper East Side and with the gargantuan Atlantic Yards development



PHOTO: MIKE EILENFELDT/PVN

in Brooklyn to serve the developers of a new profit-making sports complex. And the \$2.5 billion extension of the midtown 7 line fosters commercial development on the West Side. None of the profits of these developments will go back to the MTA or the riding public.

On top of these capital projects, jobs and services are cut so the MTA can pay bankers \$2.5 billion each year in tax-free interest payments on its debt. These budget choices were lambasted at the hearings.

More money could be available, such as between \$8 billion and \$16 billion in stock-transfer tax rebates that New York state gives back to Wall Street each year (and has for more than two decades).

The union has accused the MTA of keeping two sets of financial records. They also denounced the fact that the MTA received \$180 million in federal stimulus funds, which it has set aside for

capital projects, instead of directing it to essential services where it would begin circulating immediately.

The union and the TBOTS campaign are also pressuring the New York state legislature to pass a pending bill that would halt further booth closings. Disabled and senior groups have filed a class-action lawsuit against the MTA because the service cuts violate their right to access the public transit system.

Take Back Our Transit System is building a mass citywide campaign to challenge the authority of the "Authority." Gavrielle Gemma, an organizer with TBOTS, told Workers World: "Every train, every bus, every station belongs to the people of New York City. It is our property, public property. The MTA is not elected and represents Wall Street, not our streets. We paid for it, we built it, we run it, we ride on it, and we will take it back." □

What about '99ers'?

Millions of workers lose unemployment benefits

By Masao Suzuki

The following is an abridged version of an article originally entitled "Another 250,000 Dropped From Federal Unemployment Insurance Programs," published July 17 by fightbacknews.org.

On July 15, the U.S. Department of Labor reported that another 250,000 unemployed were cut from federal unemployment insurance rolls. In the last three weeks [from the end of June until mid-July], almost 1 million unemployed people were cut from the federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation (EUC) and Extended Benefits (EB) programs. These programs provide benefits for people out of work for more than six months who can no longer collect state unemployment insurance benefits.

Senate majority leader, Democrat Harry Reid from Nevada, said that the Democrats will have enough votes to overcome the Republican filibuster once a replacement is named for Sen. Robert Byrd, who recently died. Reid said that a vote to extend federal unemployment insurance programs should come next week. But even if the Democrats do follow through with their promise to extend federal unemployment insurance programs, there is nothing being offered to people out of work for more than 99 weeks.

According to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics data, almost 1.5 million people had been unemployed for more than 99 weeks as of June 2010. These so-called 99ers are not eligible for any unemployment insurance benefits, since the maximum length of time for combined state, federal EUC

and federal EB programs is 99 weeks. African Americans are hardest hit by this time limit, with almost one-quarter of those out of work for 99 or more weeks, about twice their fraction of the total population.

These 99ers could benefit from a fifth tier to the federal EUC program (right now there are four tiers) that would extend unemployment insurance benefits beyond the current total of 99 weeks. Also helpful would be a federal jobs program that could provide income to the long-term unemployed, help them maintain or even upgrade their skills, and provide a break from the grind of looking for work week after week, month after month, without any results.

Today, almost half of the unemployed

have been out of work for more than six months. This is almost twice as much as the previous post-World War II high of 25 percent following the 1981-1982 recession. Only during the Great Depression of the 1930s have there been more people out of work for so long.

In 1935 the federal government started the Works Progress Administration or WPA. At its height in 1938, the WPA employed more than 3 million people, who worked on construction of roads and public buildings. The WPA also expanded government services, from publicly owned utilities to library services. With public services being cut by state and local governments, a federal jobs program like the WPA could serve both the long-term unemployed and their communities. □

Low-Wage Capitalism

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

Fred Goldstein's book provides an easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

Paperback, 336 pages. Includes graphs, charts, bibliography, endnotes and index.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com and bookstores around the country

In response to Stewart's resentencing

Activists vow to continue fight

Continued from page 3

absurd and hopeless. What we do collectively to free her and all political prisoners and to fight for freedom and justice on every front counts for everything!

Jeff Mackler, West Coast director, Lynne Stewart Defense Committee

The Feds' targeting and extreme abuse of Lynne Stewart has everything to do

with her years of dedicated legal defense work for radical U.S. political prisoners such as Sekou Odinga and David Gilbert, as well as for Arabs and Muslims under legal attack. We all need to stand up for this hero whose life is at risk.

Elsbeth Meyer, Resistance in Brooklyn, member of Lynne Stewart Defense Committee

"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of
A People's History of the United States

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Brooklyn, N.Y.

Linking jobs, anti-war struggles

Operation POWER (People Organizing and Working for Empowerment and Respect), a Black grassroots organization, held an outreach forum on July 17 at the House of the Lord Church in Brooklyn. The group uses various organizing tactics, including running candidates of color for office, to promote the right to self-determination.

Brenda Stokely, a leader of the Million Worker March Movement and Operation POWER founding member, gave a presentation on the New York City Jobs for All Campaign. The origins of this campaign began last Sept. 20 with a national march for jobs and a week-long tent city organized in the Black community of Pittsburgh.

Stokely emphasized that “a job is a right” means workers should not be forced to work more than one job in order to cover their housing, health care, education and other necessities. She said people also need jobs to be fully productive in society.

The campaign is reaching out to unemployed and underemployed workers and supporters throughout the New York City region to fight for a comprehensive jobs program in the form of building unemployment councils and people’s assemblies. E-mail nyjobsforall@gmail.com for more information.



Brenda Stokely, LeiLani Dowell, Charles Barron

LeiLani Dowell, an organizer for the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together and the Bail Out the People Movement, spoke on the impact of the U.S. war budget on the cutbacks in social services at home.

Dowell gave important facts and figures showing that the 2010 Pentagon budget, passed under the Barack Obama administration, is the largest in U.S. history. “At \$680 billion, it’s larger than the military expenditures of the whole rest of the world combined,” she said. Part of this budget

has gone to fight the people and occupy the countries of Afghanistan and Iraq.

Dowell explained that imperialism is not a policy, but rather a worldwide system of capitalist exploitation that destroys the Indigenous economies of developing countries.

Brooklyn City Councilperson Charles Barron opened up the forum with a talk that condemned capitalism as a system that cares more about making profits than providing for human needs. He said Cuba’s socialist revolution has created a

humane society where people live longer and where there is a lower infant mortality rate compared to the U.S.

Barron also stated that while New York City’s \$63 billion annual budget is higher than the budgets of 48 U.S. states, Black people suffer from high unemployment, foreclosures and homelessness. Barron is attempting to get on the ballot as a New York gubernatorial candidate for the recently-formed Freedom Party.

— Report & photos by
Monica Moorehead

Workers win strong union contract with student support

By Easton Smith

Food service workers at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y., have won a strong first union contract after a hard-fought, year-long struggle against union-busting company AVI Fresh and an unsympathetic, hands-off college administration.

From the initial push for union recognition with UNITE HERE Local 100 to final actions at the end of the school year, the workers and students worked together for justice.

Soon after AVI Fresh took over the food-service contract at SLC, students began coordinating with workers to ensure a just transition. The newly-formed

student group, SLC Worker Justice, grew quickly, attracting new students, activists and some faculty members. Students took direction from the workers and acted to hold the company, the administration and the union accountable.

Monica Wise, a leader in SLC Worker Justice, explains, “We made posters, passed out leaflets and helped organize demonstrations, raising awareness among the SLC student body and staff. These efforts ultimately helped to pressure the company to agree to affordable health care and a decent contract and to put an end to worker harassment.”

After the workers and students held multiple demonstrations, delegations,

negotiations and workplace actions, AVI agreed to a contract with the workers and UNITE HERE. “We fought hard for a good contract. We got medical insurance, a good raise, and we got everything we wanted,” Martin Valdez, an AVI worker and union shop steward, told Workers World.

“I want to say thank you to the students,” said Valdez, “because they helped and supported us on everything, and the teachers helped too. We were only able to win because we were united.”

The year ended not only with a robust contract, but also a new, strong, organized, activist base of students. New student leaders emerged, and the radical pedagogy taught in the classroom became

translated into concrete action.

“I came in without any expectations and didn’t have an activist background, but it was great to have so much student support,” said Wise. “It was great to experience real change. By the end we had so much student support — it progressed really well. This was a gateway to seeing how you can make a difference in your community on a larger scale.”

SLC Worker Justice will continue to fight for justice at Sarah Lawrence and in the New York area in the years to come.

The writer is co-founder and co-chair of SLC Worker Justice and an activist in the Bail Out the People Movement in New York City.

Activists plan protests as elderly couple faces foreclosure

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Forty-five activists attended an organizing meeting July 17 at Central United Methodist Church sponsored by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs. They discussed and projected plans for a number of struggle initiatives in the upcoming weeks.

People’s attorney Vanessa Fluker outlined the story of 79-year-old Marvin Morris and his ailing spouse, Louise, who face foreclosure and eviction from their home of 38 years after running out of options in the court system.

Morris sat beside Fluker as she told how the Michigan Supreme Court refused to hear the Morris’ case and how justice cannot be won in the courts but must be won in the streets. “Things aren’t getting any better with the foreclosure epidemic,” said Fluker. “In fact they’re getting worse. Lenders just won’t work with homeowners.”

“Mr. Morris has never missed an escrow payment of \$487 a month — in fact



WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

he has already paid more than what his home is worth! — but Barclays Bank and HomeEq just want it all. They want them out. We have to make it a top priority to keep Mr. and Mrs. Morris in their home. Because this isn’t just about the Morris — it’s about everyone that comes after them and everyone else right now who is up against these predatory banks.”

Morris said there are seven houses on his block alone that are vacant due to foreclosure. The house next door to his is empty and vandalized and is slated to be torn down.

The coalition will hold a press conference and demonstration on July 22 at 5 p.m. outside the Morris home at 9592 Plainview

in Detroit. Community members will pack the courtroom of Judge Kathleen MacDonal in Wayne County Circuit Court on July 23 at 9 a.m. as she hears testimony from Barclays and HomeEq on why the Morris’ should be tossed out of their home.

A blitz campaign of e-mails, phone calls and faxes is being set up to put community and media pressure on Barclays and HomeEq and expose their illegal foreclosure and eviction of the elderly Morris’ from their home. Details will be forthcoming at www.moratorium-mi.org.

Banks behind other ills

Jerry Goldberg, a coalition leader and anti-foreclosure attorney, said that “almost all home loans now are backed by Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac or HUD [Department of Housing and Urban Development], in other words, the federal government.” Goldberg said over \$400 billion has been given to government-backed agencies to pay banks for the full amount of mortgages along with added fees for every foreclosure carried out.

“The banks don’t just own and control

homes and communities, but schools, cities, everything,” said Michigan Citizen reporter Diane Bukowski, who talked about the role of the banks and lending institutions in the budget crises facing the Detroit Public Schools and the city of Detroit.

Bukowski’s research revealed that DPS this year owes \$439.8 million to the Bank of New York Mellon. Next year that debt is expected to reach \$523.8 million or a staggering 90.7 percent of DPS’s per-pupil state aid for 2011.

Coalition members voiced a resounding “Yes!” when Bukowski called for strengthening the campaign to demand a moratorium on the DPS and the city’s debt service and interest payments to the banks. She said Detroit and other cities around the country facing similar budget crises should follow the example of Cuba and other Latin American countries that have refused to be held hostage by the imperialist banks.

Abayomi Azikiwe, a leader of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, reported on the rash of racist incidents in suburban Eastpointe,

'Boycott Arizona' hits home

Groups gear up to resist as SB 1070 becomes law

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Organizations from Arizona's three major population centers — Tucson, Flagstaff and Phoenix — met on July 17 to prepare coordinated activities for July 29, the date of SB 1070's implementation. SB 1070 is a racist, anti-immigrant state law that is opposed by immigrant rights advocates, progressives and justice-loving people in Arizona and around the country.

Representatives of the July 29th Action Committee of Phoenix, the Tucson Ya Basta! Campaign and Flagstaff's REPEAL Coalition were among the two dozen organizations that agreed to make July 29 a day of "No Work, No Buy, Do Not Comply." Coordinated press conferences are planned in each city on July 20 to announce the protests.

Actions targeting SB 1070 have been taking place throughout the state. Tucson's weekly "Resist SB 1070" demonstration continues to grow in size, bringing hundreds into the streets on Friday afternoons. Activists are planning to shut down downtown on July 29.

The Boycott Arizona! Campaign has

had a definite impact. Alfredo Gutierrez, coordinator of the Arizona Boycott Clearing House, reported that for the city of Phoenix alone, the cancellation of conventions has resulted in 150,000 room cancellations and an estimated \$94 million in lost revenue. (boycottarizona1070.com)

The targeting of the Diamondbacks professional baseball team has also been successful, with the team facing anti-SB 1070 demonstrators wherever they travel. The team will face major protests when they play at home in Phoenix on July 24, in Philadelphia on July 29 and in New York City on July 30 when they play at Citi Field.

Along with this campaign, there has been growing pressure on Bud Selig, commissioner of Major League Baseball, to move the 2011 All-Star Game out of Arizona, where it is presently scheduled to be held.

The struggle to repeal SB 1070 and turn back the racist forces that created it and support it continues to grow. A real people's resistance can overturn SB 1070 and stop the racist campaign of border militarization and all anti-immigrant, anti-worker attacks. □



WW PHOTO: PAUL TEITELBAUM

July 30: New York City
MARCH TO STOP SB 1070
Boycott Arizona! — Stop Racist SB 1070!
Gather at 5 p.m., 83rd St. & Roosevelt Ave., for a march to Citi Field as the Arizona Diamondbacks play the New York Mets.

Organized by the May 1st Coalition as part of the
National Days of Action Against SB 1070
called by various groups in Arizona.
Call 212-663-6646 for more information.

Boston actions support immigrant rights

On July 10 around 600 demonstrators took to the streets of Boston to send a message to Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer and governors from around the country at the National Governors Association meeting here: Racist, anti-immigrant laws and their promoters are not welcome in Massachusetts.

The protest was initiated and endorsed by dozens of immigrant rights and social justice organizations, including the Student Immigrant Movement; the Boston May Day Committee; the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition; Deported Diaspora; the Rev. Filipe

Teixeira, OFSJC; the Coalition for Equal Quality Education; the Bail Out the People Movement; the International Action Center; the Women's Fightback Network; the Answer Coalition; and many others.

The rally at Copley Square featured dozens of speakers, including representatives of the Student Immigrant Movement and MIRA. The demonstrators marched through a torrential downpour to make their voices heard at the Sheraton Boston, where the governors' conference was being held.

A July 15 Workers World forum titled "What's next for the immigrant rights movement?" was well attended. José Palma of the Student Immigrant Movement described his personal experiences as an immigrant from El Salvador and the exciting 19-day, 24/7 vigil conducted by students in front of the Massachusetts State House to defeat anti-immigrant amendments to the budget law that had passed the state Senate.

Bishop Filipe Teixeira, OFSJC, spoke of his personal experiences as an immigrant from Angola and about the struggle for immigrant rights and against racial profiling.

Workers World Party leader Teresa Gutierrez, co-coordinator of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights in New York City, reviewed the emerging period of struggle and resistance for the immigrant rights movement.

Gutierrez saluted the immigrant students who are putting their lives on the line and risking deportation to fight for the DREAM [Development, Relief and Education of Alien Minors] Act. She explained how this struggle must be supported, while at the same time pointing out the limitations of the law and opposing the provisions requiring military service for those who cannot spend two years in college, as a condition for legalization.

Gutierrez also pointed out the need



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

Actions hit racist Arizona law.

to oppose "comprehensive immigration reform" like the plan by New York Sen. Charles Schumer, supported by President Barack Obama, which emphasizes the

militarization of the border and characterizes immigration as a "security issue." Gutierrez said it is not a security issue, but a labor issue.

— Frank Neisser

Loss of home

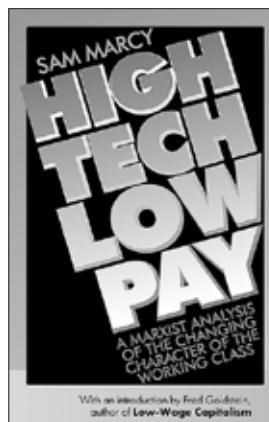
where African-American families have received death threat letters and a house burned recently in a possibly related incident. A solidarity action with the African-American community in Eastpointe is being planned by activists in conjunction with MECAWI.

Raphael Thurin of the Detroit Socialist Party gave a report on unemployment, the cutoff of extended unemployment benefits, and why workers must demand and fight for full employment and a public works program similar to that of the Works Progress Administration during the Great Depression.

Organizers will be doing further outreach on these various struggles and are planning a contingent in the Aug. 28 Detroit march for jobs, justice and peace recently announced by the United Auto Workers and the Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

A dynamic discussion took place after the reports.

The coalition meets every Monday at 7 p.m. at 5920 Second Ave., Detroit. To get involved go to www.moratorium-mi.org, call 313-887-4344 or attend a meeting. □



A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com and bookstores around the country

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

'The man called Robert C. Byrd'

Taken from a July 4, 2010, audio column at www.prisonradio.org. Go to www.millions4mumia.org to read updates on Mumia's ongoing struggle for freedom.

The longest-serving member of the U.S. Senate would've been a title cherished by Robert Carlisle Byrd, who became, among many other things, a respected historian.

Byrd's beginnings were from the white Southern poor and he hailed from a family of coal miners. Despite this poverty, Byrd had a prodigious memory, and he excelled in high school.

But Byrd, being politically ambitious, was much more than a bright schoolboy. By his young adulthood he was a ranking member of the Ku Klux Klan, the white terrorist arm of the southern Democratic Party. In West Virginia, this was a ticket to high political office and Byrd punched his ticket well.

He began as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in 1953. Six years later he entered the Senate and except by death, never left. From 1959 to 2010 he became the embodiment of West Virginia, and the state became a reflection of him. There are so many roads, schools, airports and government buildings named after him that the state might best be known as Byrdsylvania.

His biographers cite his KKK membership as a youthful indiscretion, a passing fancy almost. But Byrd, historian that he was, made history of sorts when he opposed the elevation of Thurgood Marshall to the Supreme Court in 1967. Marshall was, at that time, one of the most successful lawyers in America, winning 29 of 32 cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, including *Brown v. Board of Education*. He was a federal appeals court judge for the Second Circuit (up in New York) for five years, and he was U.S. Solicitor General for two years.

Why did Byrd oppose Marshall, perhaps the most distinguished lawyer of his generation? Because he didn't want to see a Black man on the court. Period.

Youthful indiscretion? Byrd was 50 when he voted against Marshall's confirmation.

Two years before, when riots erupted across America, Sen. Byrd would opine on the Senate floor that perhaps planned parenthood should be introduced to Blacks so that they wouldn't have so many children who would grow up and be unemployed.

Sen. Robert C. Byrd, born Cornelius Calvin Sale Jr., in North Carolina, was a man of his time and place.

Perhaps he distinguished himself from the pack best when he rose to the floor — a copy of the Constitution in his shaking hand — and denounced the Bush regime's mad march to war in Iraq as a violation of the Constitution. He voted against authorization for war, saying it was the duty of the Congress to declare war — not the president.

He rose from humble beginnings, with pluck, smarts and dogged determination. He held his office like a pit bull on a bone. He played the fiddle with considerable skill.

But he was a Klansman at heart.

Source: *Berry, Mary Frances, "Black Resistance; White Law" (N.Y.: Penguin, 1996 (orig. 1971), p.169.*

NAACP challenges Tea Party racists

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

At the annual convention of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People held in Kansas City the week of July 12, the largest civil rights organization in the U.S. went on record through a resolution condemning the racist elements within the right-wing Tea Party movement.

The resolution was approved July 13 and affirmed that the NAACP "calls on the Tea Party and all people of good will to repudiate the racist element and activities within the Tea Party," according to Hilary Shelton, who heads the Washington bureau of the organization.

At rallies and through statements by Tea Party leaders, racially motivated claims and epithets have been put forth against President Barack Obama, African-American political officials in the U.S. Congress, members of the lesbian/gay/bi/trans community, immigrants, women's rights activists and others who are perceived as liberals, progressives or socialists.

The Christian Science Monitor in a July 14 article on the NAACP convention put it this way: "Charges of racism have surfaced in the past, largely in response to individuals at Tea Party meetings making comments or displaying signs that minority groups find offensive. Some African-American lawmakers, including Rep. John Lewis (D) of Georgia, a hero of the civil rights movement, have said that Tea Party activists yelled racial epithets or spat at them as they arrived at the Capitol for the final vote on health care reform legislation in March."

In response to the passage of the resolution by the NAACP, high-profile Tea Party members and supporters dismissed the allegations of racism as false. Former Alaskan governor and 2008 Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin, who is often a mouthpiece for the right-wing group, issued a statement saying that she was "saddened by the NAACP's claim that patriotic Americans ... are somehow racists." (Christian Science Monitor, July 14)

The increasing criticism of the Tea Party for racism has contributed to on-

going internal tensions and factionalism within the right-wing movement. The leader of one of the more extreme elements of the movement, the Tea Party Express, was expelled in mid-July by another faction, the National Tea Party Federation, for racist comments made in response to the NAACP convention resolution.

David Webb, a spokesman for the National Tea Party Federation, appeared on the CBS news program "Face the Nation" on July 18 where he announced the expulsion of the rival Tea Party Express.

Mark Williams, who heads the Tea Party Express and coordinates Republican Party-financed tours across the U.S., stated on National Public Radio that the NAACP makes "more money off of race than any slave trader." (FoxNews.com, July 19) Williams, who has also spoken of Muslims in disparaging terms, placed a satirical letter on his website parodying NAACP President Ben Jealous in a fictional letter to Abraham Lincoln requesting the reinstatement of chattel slavery.

Confusion versus clarity

The right-wing Tea Party movement in the U.S. is attempting to cause confusion and promote divisions amid the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Utilizing racism and other forms of bigotry, the assortment of neofascist groupings falsely places the blame for the worsening conditions faced by working-class and middle-class people on the Obama administration and its purported "socialist" policies.

The fact that Obama is the first African-American president in the U.S. does not sit well with many whites in the conservative political camp. The Southern Poverty Law Center has issued numerous reports over the last two years indicating there has been a rise in racist and far-right groups throughout the country.

The growth of these groups can be heavily attributed to the role of the big-business-owned media which promote the Tea Party as a legitimate and rapidly growing political tendency within the U.S.

They are labeled "legitimate," yet

some Tea Party leaders and politicians have called for the repeal of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, claiming that the bill, which was won because of the mass struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, is unconstitutional.

The Tea Party was featured in the right-wing attempts to disrupt public hearings around the Obama-sponsored health care plan that was passed by Congress earlier this year. Its role was to strip away any notion of a universal right to health care for people living in the U.S.

In mid-July a billboard sponsored by the North Iowa Tea Party linked President Obama to German fascist leader Adolph Hitler as well as V.I. Lenin, the leader of the socialist Russian Revolution. The billboard drew sharp criticism from throughout the country.

It showed photographs of all three men with misleading, incorrect labels and the phrase "Radical Leaders Prey On The Fearful & Naive." The group's co-founder, Bob Johnson, said the billboard was intended to send an anti-socialist message to the public but the intent was lost through the provocative imagery.

This assertion, like the billboard itself, blurs the critical differences between socialism, fascism and capitalist democracy and is meant to cause confusion as well as demonize Obama. The Obama administration is by no means socialist and has upheld the right of banks and oil companies to continue their practices that have contributed to the current economic decline in the U.S. and around the world.

It was the socialist former Soviet Union during World War II that sacrificed the most people in the struggle to defeat fascism in Europe. The false notions of Obama being a socialist and a fascist seek to fuel racism and anti-communist hysteria in the U.S.

It is the obligation of progressive publications to expose the right wing for its divisive politics as well as provide clarity on what socialism really is and why such a cooperative economic system is the only viable alternative to the capitalism and imperialism that are destroying the planet and its people. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance LeiLani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice!

Saladin Muhammad

Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping and Segregation Consuela Lee

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Racism and Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

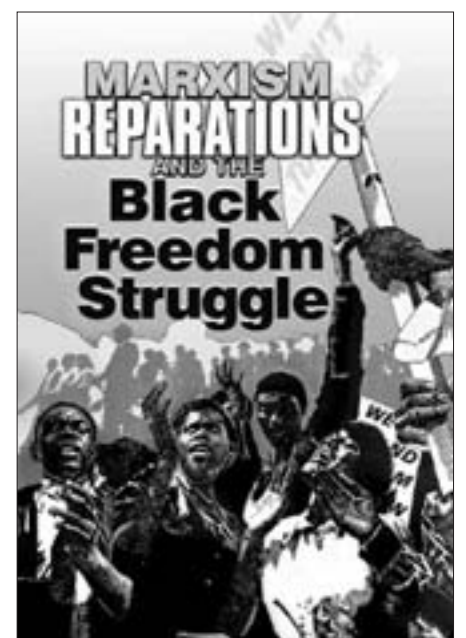
Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

A Voice from Harper's Ferry, 1859

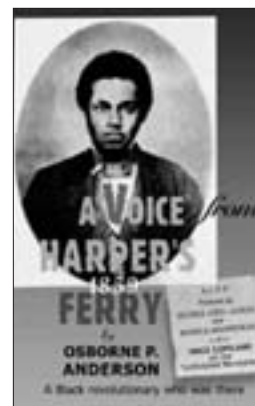
By **Osborne P. Anderson**, a Black freedom fighter.

Prefaces by Mumia Abu-Jamal, Monica Moorehead and Vince Copeland on the 'Unfinished Revolution.'

A unique book from the raid on Harper's Ferry by Osborne P. Anderson, the only Black combatant to survive the raid. His account of this turning point in the struggle against slavery—an armed attack by Black and white volunteers on a citadel of the South—refutes those who try to minimize the role of African American people in fighting for their freedom.

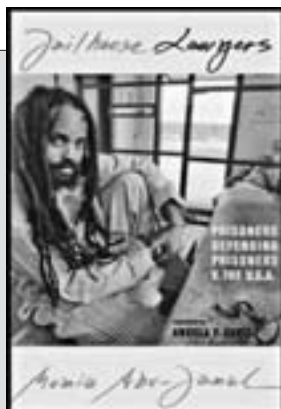


COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON



Mumia Abu-Jamal's book,
'JAILHOUSE LAWYERS: Prisoners defending prisoners v. the U.S.A.'

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Reparations is in bookstores
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PROTESTS HIT LATIN AMERICA

BY BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

PUERTO RICO

This past weekend Puerto Rico was the scene of two main events protesting the neoliberal policies of Gov. Luis Fortuño's administration.

The XXI Central American Games, with the participation of 31 countries, were to be opened on July 17 in the western city of Mayaguez, but a severe tornado hit that coast, damaging several structures in the stadium scheduled to hold the games. The opening was postponed to the following day.

On July 18, along with enthusiasm for the games, there was also a clear message denouncing Fortuño. In front of the entrance to the stadium several people held signs that read "Pítale a Fortuño en repudio" (Blow a whistle against Fortuño).

Fearing loud public disapproval in front of the international media covering the opening of the games, the governor cut short his planned speech. Instead, he just said, "The games are opened." Though he shortened the time for the whistles, they were heard anyway.

Right after he opened the games, a group of athletes from Puerto Rico's delegation held a banner that read in Spanish, "Red card for the Government of Puerto Rico." In the World Cup of soccer, a red card is a penalty card that gets a player ejected from the current game and the next game.

The increase in hostile U.S. policy toward socialist Cuba also showed up in the games. In 1993 Cuba attended the games in the Puerto Rican city of Ponce. This time, however, the Cuban athletes could not participate in Mayaguez. Cuba



Demonstrators in Puerto Rico. PHOTO: PR INDYMEDIA

canceled their participation last February when it became clear that U.S. federal authorities were imposing unequal treatment on the Cuban athletes.

The Puerto Rican Committee in Solidarity with Cuba issued a press release that read:

"We denounce the United States Government as the only actor responsible in preventing the participation of Cuba in these games and we understand that such action is an attack against our people, against Cuba and against all the peoples of the region."

A Day of Solidarity with Cuba was held July 17 under the title "Not all are present, Cuba is missing. [We want] Games without layoffs and privatization, secure jobs for all."

Some 30,000 people demonstrated July 19 in San Juan, protesting Fortuño's repressive actions against demonstrators during and following the University of Puerto Rico's two-month student strike. The "End of repression, respect for our rights march" also protested the economic policies of the current government. These policies have led to thousands of layoffs, widespread privatization and the imposition of an overall right-wing agenda.

PANAMA

Panamanian unions held a successful general strike July 13 to oppose President Ricardo Martinelli's anti-people Law 30, other anti-people measures and the police massacre of Indigenous banana workers who were on strike in Changuinola. According to a statement by the Popular Alternative Party, "The strike achieved an almost complete standstill in the construction sector directed by SUNTRACS; the teacher's movement achieved similar success nationwide as well as the administrative workers of the University of Panama; work at Coca Cola, Concreto S.A., Plásticos Modernos and Empaques de Colón, stopped 100 percent.

"In Cemento Panamá, Cuadernos Escolares, Plastiglas, Harinas Panamá, Cervecería Nacional more than 50 percent of the workers joined the strike. Other industrial sectors, which could not have a work stoppage, held picket lines and protest marches." (pappanama.blogspot.com)

The actions, along with the Changuinola strike, forced the government to call for a Commission for Dialogue. This commission has only three labor representatives out of 13 members. Many sectors of the labor movement are opposing this commission, including CONATO, the National Council of Workers, which is composed of nine unions and several trade union federations. They are calling for an independent commission to investigate the Changuinola massacre.

When Martinelli recently visited Bocas del Toro (where Changuinola is a district) to distribute food to those affected by the criminal repression, the people refused to take it, stating that what they wanted was justice.

COSTA RICA

Under a shroud of silence from the U.S. media, on July 1 the Costa Rican National Congress approved a U.S. request to permit the presence of 46 U.S. Navy warships on both Caribbean and Pacific coasts for a period of six months. Equipped with the most sophisticated technology, these ships can carry 200 helicopters, including the infamous Black Hawks, warplanes and 7,000 Marines.

There are estimates that together with the U.S. National Guard already in Costa Rica, the number of U.S. troops could go up to 18,000. Supposedly to "combat drug trafficking," this extraordinary display of U.S. military might is a terrible threat to the region, most particularly against socialist Cuba and the progressive governments of Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador.

This militarization is part of the new, more aggressive U.S. foreign policy. It augments the already-hostile U.S. presence south of the Rio Grande, which now includes the IV Fleet, seven new bases in Colombia, 11 bases in Panama and two in Honduras. The Costa Rican Constitution prohibits the presence of an army in the country. Article 12 of the Political Constitution states that "only by continental convention or for national defense may military forces be organized."

The government of recently inaugurated right-wing President Laura Chinchilla Miranda from the National Liberation Party — she had worked with USAID — quickly approved the U.S. request to position its military. But opposition legislators and others have filed a lawsuit challenging this position.

There is popular opposition. A demonstration was called for July 21 to protest the approval of the U.S. request. □

Letter from Colombian unionist

Act July 22 against Coca-Cola

Longtime Colombian labor activist Gerardo Cajamarca, currently residing in the United States due to death threats against him and his family in his homeland, sent this letter to WW/MO. It is a reminder and an appeal for action on July 22, International Day of Actions Against Coca-Cola and other transnational corporations.

Dear comrades,

As in past years, we invite you to join us on July 22. That day was established as the World Day against Coca-Cola during the Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2003. Since then, July 22 has been a day of activities to show and alert about the power and impact of transnational corporations on the planet. There are many examples and many areas where these policies are manifested: environmental issues, labor rights, human rights, war, terror, destruction, dependency, etc.

At this moment 1.7 million gallons of crude oil spurt every day into the Gulf of Mexico, destroying this Caribbean area, because BP failed to take necessary measures for the exploitation of oil in the deep sea. This same company lays off workers and destroys the environment in Colombia. Other companies such as Shell, BHP Billiton, Fonterra, Drummond, Chiquita Brands, among others, also apply unethical and criminal behavior.

There are campaigns against Coca-Cola, OXI, Repsol and Nestlé; against the latter, because of labor problems, death and persecution of trade unionists in Colombia and its contribution to environmental damage and the destruction of forests in Indonesia where Nestlé grows palm oil for its products.

The companies from the chemical-pharmaceutical sector appropriate the wisdom of Native peoples to feed their pharmaceutical research and create genetically modified plants to ensure the sale of their medicines and their pesticides. Many countries are now indebted in their effort to buy antiviral drugs against swine flu, a product of the widespread panic released to ensure profits for European and American laboratories. Auto companies refuse to produce cars more compatible to environmental concerns. Banks manage the world and blackmail companies to ensure their profits and keep their power in the world.

These are only some examples showing the role of transnational corporations. This serious situation is not the product of an individual company, but it is the functioning and the goal of capitalism, which brings with it destruction, violence and death to maximize profits and control the markets. The economic crisis that currently afflicts us is a clear expression of the voraciousness of the system, which now seeks to resolve its crisis through greater exploitation of the workers, mak-

ing them poorer and violently plundering natural resources.

"Let the rich pay for the crisis" is the slogan of the majority of the current struggles where popular sectors and workers defend their rights.

We invite the social and human rights organizations and all those affected by the policies of the transnational corporations to adhere to the great International Day set for many countries on July 22 as an expression of protest against exploitation, poverty, hunger and war, so that we can avoid being the ones who pay for the crisis. We invite you to include the July 22 protests in your action agendas.



You can find more information at sinaltrainal.org

Gerardo Cajamarca Alarcón
Sinaltrainal International Mission

Rainbow Solidarity

In Defense of CUBA

Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This ground-breaking book is a compilation of articles from the Lavender & Red series that appeared in *Workers World* newspaper. Feinberg explains how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love from the colonial and imperial eras.

This never-before-compiled information offers a factual vista on the trajectory of progress of the Cuban Revolution. It's a must-read to understand the revolutionary process required to uproot prejudice.

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Albany and beyond

Continued from page 1

militarists may look to use high-tech weapons and air power to expand U.S. wars. They already are bombing with pilotless planes in Pakistan, a country of 170 million people. And they even threaten to use nuclear weapons against Iran's 70 million people.

The conference's action program provides a starting point. This program includes fighting to end the ongoing wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also allows a full discussion on fighting U.S. interventions in Africa and elsewhere.

There are workshops on supporting the Palestinian liberation struggle, with full participation of Palestine activists from Al-Awda and other groups. Supporting Palestine's liberation is a cutting-edge issue deserving solidarity from all anti-imperialists.

The discussions should open the door to building a movement that opposes all imperialist wars worldwide. Whether the pretext is "human rights," "the war on terror" or "weapons of mass destruction," and whether the administration is Democratic or Republican, any U.S. military intervention must be actively opposed.

The war at home

The action program, the breadth of invited speakers, and the workshop topics at the Albany conference show that this coalition is reaching toward the working class and the more oppressed sections of the population.

The demands to "Reverse and end all foreclosures" and "Stop the government attacks on trade unions, civil and democratic rights, and immigrant communities" are a sign of this outreach. So are the presence of immigrant rights organizations, those who defend political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, and groups defending Muslims that Homeland Security has framed. A march on the last issue will take place in Albany following the conference.

Those who are serious about stopping imperialist wars should work to reinforce these developments: a more anti-imperialist approach, more outreach to and more leadership from the oppressed communities of color, and more focus on the working class and working-class demands.

This is a principled position. It is also

the only way to build a fighting movement that can take effective action.

This approach may or may not bring the most people out to protest at a given moment. But this program is not just a question of tactics. It involves the root cause of imperialist wars and how to fight it.

War rooted in capitalism

The U.S. drive to war is rooted in the profit system. Since capitalism led to monopoly and thus imperialism at the end of the 19th century, the imperialist powers have steadily engaged in aggressive wars, including two enormously destructive world wars in which they fought for domination.

Since World War II, U.S. imperialism has launched six major wars and hundreds of military attacks. Since the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991, this drive to war has turned to conquering lands that the world's peoples had earlier liberated from colonialism — such as Yugoslavia, Iraq, Iran and much of Africa.

The almost unbounded expansion of the capitalist productive capacity combined with a steady decrease in average wages has resulted in a crisis of capitalist overproduction that is refusing to be resolved by a normal cyclical recovery. The ruling class opts for war not out of rational choice; it is driven toward war by this economic crisis.

Only by eliminating capitalism can the drive to war be ended. At a time like now, when anti-capitalist struggles are ripe for breaking out and when so many millions are unemployed and faced with dire economic woes, the movement must consider as worthy of solidarity any action that exposes the profit system and challenges its legitimacy.

Workers going out on strike; an Oakland, Calif., community rebelling against police brutality; immigrants marching against Arizona's SB 1070; students seizing their schools to demand education; homeowners fighting to stop foreclosures and evictions; soldiers leaking videos exposing war crimes — and any other troops who throw a wrench into the war machine — should all be welcomed and defended as allies in a critical struggle.

Solidarity is crucial. Any blow against capitalism and its state apparatus is a blow against imperialism and war. □

Pentagon expands U.S. role in Africa

Important issue for anti-war movement

Continued from page 1

exposed his government's intentions. "The act of bombing Uganda is a confirmation of the need to take control and pacify Somalia," Kaihura stated. (BBC, July 14)

Inside Somalia, however, many in the civilian population see the Ugandan military forces as the enemy of the people. Uganda's forces are part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). This so-called peacekeeping operation in Somalia, which also includes more than 2,000 troops from Burundi, has openly declared as its objective to neutralize the resistance forces led by al-Shabab.

Opposition forces in Uganda have expressed grave concerns about the role of President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's government in carrying out U.S. foreign policy aims in the Horn of Africa. This trepidation over the role of AMISOM echoes sentiment throughout Africa, which has been wary of deliberate and politically motivated intervention into the internal affairs of AU member states.

Opposition Member of Parliament Hussein Kyanjo said in response to the July 11 attacks: "All the time there has been this reply from the government side that 'we are in control and nothing can happen to Uganda.' Now it has happened. It is very sad and I am sure we are not going to be prepared to let the blood of Ugandans be spilt over an issue that we have not been convinced about." (BBC, July 14)

Aware of its unpopularity in Somalia, the U.S. State Department has issued a travel advisory valid until Aug. 15 to U.S. citizens saying they "should consider the possibility of similar terrorist attacks occurring in conjunction with the African Union Summit." (CNN, July 19)

Pentagon increases role in Africa

On Oct. 1, 2008, the Pentagon inaugurated a new regional military structure known as the Africa Command. Africom's stated aim is to prevent the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, terrorism and other security threats on the continent.

The Pentagon's plans met tremendous opposition from African states as well as mass organizations. At present no African country has been willing to host the Africom headquarters, which remain located in Stuttgart, Germany. The Pentagon has a military base in Djibouti, as does the French military. Other African states throughout the region have held joint military exercises with both of these imperialist states.

U.S. military involvement in Africa has escalated over the last decade. It was estimated that at the beginning of the millennium the cost of the Pentagon's African operations was between \$100 million and \$200 million. Today the figure is estimated to be at least \$1.5 billion and is growing annually.

These figures may exclude other projects that have military and intelligence implications but are funded through the State Department and private contractors. This increased involvement in Africa was reflected in the bombing of Somalia in 2007-2008 and the dispatching of warships into the Gulf of Aden beginning in 2008.

According to Daniel Volman, who writes for the Concerned Africa Scholars Bulletin, there are two major concerns that are driving the U.S. in its increasing military role in the region. One is that the U.S. is "becoming increasingly dependent

on resources, particularly oil, coming from the African continent." (ACAS Bulletin 85, June 2010)

Volman points out that "today the U.S. imports more oil from Africa than it does from the entire Middle East. The U.S. still imports more from the Western hemisphere — Mexico, Canada, Colombia, Venezuela and Ecuador — which has a lot to do with explaining U.S. policy these days towards Latin America and disputes with the Chávez regime."

Volman notes that "Africa is the next most important source of imported oil," second only to the oil-producing countries in the Western hemisphere. "Nigeria and Angola are now the U.S.'s fifth and sixth largest suppliers of oil imports," Volman continues. "[U.S.] American policy makers began to see this happening in the late 1990s."

In addition to the supply of oil, the U.S. is concerned about the growth of movements in Africa that resist U.S. control. These are mainly Islamic resistance movements. This concern dates back to the second half of the Bill Clinton administration during the late 1990s and has extended to the current government of President Barack Obama.

Volman emphasizes that this growing intervention by U.S. imperialism "is not a partisan political issue. ... Instead it represents a bipartisan consensus amongst the political elite, that Africa is of growing military importance to the U.S. and therefore requires a growing level of military involvement on the continent and that is what has led to the creation of the new African command."

Anti-imperialist view necessary

U.S. involvement in Africa dates from the period when colonists first brought indentured servants from the continent to Virginia in 1619. By 1660 African slavery had become a primary institution within the displacement of the Native peoples and the expansion of British and colonial control over North America.

The U.S. Constitution did not recognize African people as full human beings and their enslavement continued well into the latter half of the 19th century. At the conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, 4 million Africans resided in the U.S.

It would take another century after the conclusion of the Civil War and the failure of Reconstruction to guarantee in law the ostensible rights of African people. The enslavement of Africans in the Western Hemisphere would lay the groundwork for the eventual colonization of the African continent.

Today, neocolonialism is the principal mechanism used to perpetuate the exploitation and oppression of African people. Neocolonialism is a form of imperialism, controlling Africa's economies through trade, investment and international finance as well as direct and indirect military intervention.

Serious consideration must be given to the increasing role of U.S. imperialism in Africa. Resolutions and action proposals must be developed to effectively address these concerns alongside the demands for the immediate withdrawal of Pentagon forces from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and other geopolitical regions throughout the world.

Azikiwe is editor of the Pan-African News Wire and a leader in the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice.

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Interview with Iraqi author Haifa Zangana

'Invasion & occupation awaken resistance'

While both were attending an international conference in Asturias, Spain, this June, Iraqi author and activist Haifa Zangana granted an interview to *Workers World* managing editor John Catalinotto. Zangana's novels include "Women on a Journey," "Through Vast Halls of Memory" and "Keys to a City." She also wrote "City of Widows" about the occupation of Baghdad.

JC: The George W. Bush administration promised to bring democracy and a better life to Iraqis. What has been the real impact of the U.S.-British invasion, the long occupation and the so-called surge?

HF: The 2003 military invasion and occupation of Iraq has brought the people of Iraq nothing but loss of human life, destruction and diminishing hope in democracy. For over seven years now, they have been subjected to collective punishment, Israeli style.

They are often seen as terrorists' facilitators. Therefore, if the U.S.-Iraqi puppet regime makes gains in security, for the people it means pre-dawn house raids, arbitrary arrests, kidnapping, killing by mercenaries called security employees and car bombs in crowded markets. Daily blasts continue to occur in Baghdad, Salah ad Din, Najaf, Anbar and Ninevah. Fear of death, planned or accidental, permeates society to the degree of paralyzing it.

The highly publicized "success of the surge" was preceded by a major population shift and ethnic cleansing. What were previously religiously mixed neighborhoods of Baghdad became homogenized Sunni or Shi'ite Muslim enclaves. Thus, the road was paved for the occupation forces to draw the new map of sectarian-



Haifa Zangana in Madrid, June 2010.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

divided Baghdad.

Furthermore, the surge has scarred Baghdad with barriers, checkpoints and walls. There are now around 1,400 checkpoints and over 50 areas divided by concrete walls in Baghdad alone. Every wall has one entry checkpoint and one exit, boxing closely linked communities into ghettos and gated communities.

These walls are called "security walls," from inside the Green Zone. However, most Iraqis call them the "occupation walls," which have evoked comparisons to the apartheid wall built by the Israelis dividing Palestinians along the length of the West Bank.

Building segregation walls and destroy-

ing bridges means that hardly any mixed religious, ethnic areas would exist, enforcing the policy of divide and conquer. Walls have an immense impact on Iraqis' daily life, shredding off the social fabric of Baghdad and dismembering Iraq.

The walls have been a way of emptying the streets and the country, in tandem with forced displacements of about a quarter of the population, sharpshooting by snipers perched in rotation for months atop buildings in key areas, and car bombs in markets to fulfill that role.

Iraqi women have lost all they had achieved as activists before the invasion, and they comprise thousands of the 650,000-and-climbing casualties since mid-2006. By mid-2007, one in eight Iraqis had left their homes to become refugees, with up to 50,000 people leaving their homes each month.

UNHCR [the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees] has said the exodus was the largest long-term population movement since the displacement of the Palestinians after the creation of Israel in 1948. The Iraqi Red Crescent estimates that two-thirds of the displaced are women and children, often living in female-headed households.

The Iraqi refugee catastrophe that only exploded in the media in early 2007 is the latest visible facet of the collapse of the U.S. project in Iraq, which includes the U.S. Army military casualties, the ex-

posure of systematic torture of prisoners and atrocities against civilians, and the escalating economic, political and environmental costs of these regional strategies of the U.S.

The forced displacement of 2 million Iraqis inside the country and another 2 million in neighboring countries was, in 2006, followed by gruesome atrocities committed by murder squads and militias, which coincided with the occupation's quest for an alternative way to ensure U.S. domination following its failure to subdue the country. The new strategy is based on fragmenting the population into manageable segments to be dealt or dispensed with.

In seven years of occupation, the U.S. has moved from publicly opposing religious forces in the Arab world and advocating modern secular "model democracy" in Iraq, to open reliance on sectarian Islamist forces, a stark indication that it has failed to find any other social base for its new colonial domination.

The U.S. has tried to justify this failure by claiming that the move to democracy initiated by the liberation exposed deep conflicts in Iraqi society that had been covered up by the previous dictatorships. Unheard of forms of violence, resulting in immense suffering for all Iraqis, is readily ascribed to sectarianism.

We are being told repeatedly that the main story in Iraq is that Iraqis are killing Iraqis by the hundreds each day, and that the main question is whether it has yet become a sectarian civil war or not, and more recently: "Why do they hate each other?" Blaming the victims has become the widely accepted rationalization for foreign troops to remain in Iraq indefinitely.

Next: The resistance regains strength in 2010.

MARILYN BUCK

U.S. political prisoner freed after decades in prison

Article by staff writers at *fightback-news.org*, July 17.

Marilyn Buck, a political prisoner in the U.S., was released July 15 from the federal prison medical center in Carswell, Texas, according to her support group, Friends of Marilyn Buck. She is paroled to New York. As of the writing of this article, no further details about her release have been made available.

Life-long commitment to anti-racism and anti-imperialism

Buck started her commitment to fighting against racism and U.S. imperialism as a student activist in the 1960s, when she was a member of Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Texas. There she organized against the Vietnam War and against racism, and she was one of the women who helped make women's liberation a central part of SDS's politics.

In the 1970s Buck worked to support revolutionary anti-imperialist movements around the world, while also actively supporting the Native American

and Black liberation movements within the U.S.

Despite great personal suffering, including decades in jail, Buck maintained her commitment to anti-imperialist and anti-racist politics, including supporting those fighting against imperialism and for national liberation.

Decades in prison

Buck spent four years in prison in the early 1970s, allegedly for helping Black revolutionaries buy firearms. After she was furloughed from jail, she went underground to resume her political activism against U.S. imperialism and in support of Black liberation.

She was captured again in 1985, and has been in prison ever since. At that time she was accused of actions such as helping Black revolutionary Assata Shakur successfully escape from prison in 1979, as well as conspiracy in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Senate building in response to the Reagan administration's invasion of Grenada, which had a leftist government at the time.

With her capture in 1985, Buck became part of the Resistance Conspiracy trial. This was a prominent trial in the 1980s against seven white anti-racist and anti-imperialist activists who were accused of

conspiring "to influence, change and protest policies and practices of the United States Government concerning various international and domestic matters through the use of violent and illegal means."

The seven were accused of supporting armed Black revolutionaries within the U.S. and accused of a series of bombings of U.S. government and military buildings in protest of U.S. foreign policy in Central America and the Middle East.

Buck received an 80-year sentence in the case.

While in prison, Buck became a prolific writer of political articles and poetry. She wrote, "The trials, those years of intense repression and U.S. government denunciations of my humanity had beat me up rather badly.

"Whatever my voice had been, it was left frayed. I could scarcely speak. For prisoners, writing is a life raft to save one from drowning in a prison swamp. I could not write a diary or a journal; I was a political prisoner. Everything I had was subject to investigation, invasion and confiscation. I was a censored person. In defiance, I turned to poetry, an art of speaking sparsely, but flagrantly." □

Marilyn Buck in federal prison, 1994.
PHOTO: MARIANN G. WIZARD / THE RAG BLOG.



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Represión del estado despierta resistencia de trabajadores/as en Panamá

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El gobierno derechista del presidente de Panamá, Ricardo Martinelli está terminando su primer año en el cargo aprobando leyes reaccionarias contra los/as trabajadores/as a nombre de la oligarquía y de las empresas transnacionales, y asesinando a seis manifestantes indígenas. Pero la clase trabajadora de Panamá opone resistencia con una huelga general el 13 de julio.

El régimen de Martinelli está aliado a la criminal administración paramilitar de Álvaro Uribe en Colombia. Ha abierto 11 bases aéreas para el ejército estadounidense bajo el pretexto de luchar contra el narcotráfico, pero lo cierto es que están dirigidas contra sus vecinos progresistas del sur.

El 1 de julio entró en vigor una ley aumentando los impuestos en bienes y servicios de 5 al 7 por ciento. Esto golpea más duro a las familias pobres en un país donde las políticas neoliberales de la presente y de las pasadas administraciones han incrementado el desempleo, el subempleo y la pobreza.

El 16 de junio Martinelli impuso la Ley 30, conocida en Panamá como la “Ley Chorizo” que altera tres códigos y seis leyes nacionales. Usando como pretexto la mejora del transporte aéreo comercial, esta ley destruye los sindicatos, prohíbe las huelgas, facilita la destrucción del medioambiente, y amenaza los derechos civiles al permitir la impunidad total para las actuaciones de la policía.

Para aprobar esta ley sin el escrutinio público, la Asamblea Nacional celebró tres días de reuniones extraordinarias — a puerta cerrada — sin audiencias públicas

WW/MO entrevista dirigente sindical

y custodiada por la Policía Nacional.

Martinelli dijo: “Las leyes aprobadas tendrán un impacto y una gran repercusión en la vida nacional”. “Tengo que reconocer no tuvieron el debate que hubiera querido que tuvieran, pero que si se hubiera hecho así lo más probable es que muchos de los artículos de la Ley 30 no hubieran pasado”. (rebanadasrealidad.com.ar /)

Anticipando resistencia, en abril Martinelli promulgó la “Ley Carcelazo”, la cual permite que arresten y encarcelen a manifestantes que cierren o bloqueen las calles.

A finales de junio, los/as trabajadores/as indignados/as resistieron con varias protestas. Los sindicatos convocaron a una huelga general para el 13 de julio y se unieron a otras organizaciones para impugnar la Ley 30 con al menos dos demandas legales que exigen su derogación.

Trabajadores/as indígenas lideran la resistencia

En Changuinola, un distrito de la provincia de Bocas del Toro en la costa atlántica de Panamá, los/as indígenas, en su mayoría Ngäbe Bukle dieron a los/as panameños/as una lección de lucha de clases. Los/as habitantes de esta región son en su mayoría personas indígenas nativas.

Changuinola es zona de producción bananera que aporta entre el 50 y 60 por ciento de los puestos de trabajo. Pero también es una de las regiones más pobres de Panamá. Según un estudio por el estado panameño, las regiones indígenas del país sufren de una pobreza del 96,3 por ciento. (telemetro.com)

abierto una serie de causas a varios dirigentes sindicales, cosa que aún no ha sido esclarecida. Han estado arrestando a dirigentes sindicales durante este fin de semana, incluso a un profesor de la Universidad de Panamá, el Prof. Juan Jované intentaron sacarlo de su casa y llevárselo arrestado. Fue un hombre vestido de civil, sin identificarse como policía. Puede haber más de una docena de dirigentes sindicales arrestados. Algunos pasaron a la clandestinidad por temor a ser arrestados sin causa”.

Esta preocupación, sin embargo, no ha disminuido de ninguna manera la voluntad de luchar y prepararse para la huelga general. John añadió: “El paro sigue en pie, además tiene más peso a raíz de lo que han sufrido los compañeros en Changuinola. El paro va, no hay marcha atrás.

“El paro es una forma de demostrar claramente al estado que no estamos de acuerdo. Ellos no están tratando de negociar, no están buscando una salida. Están disparando a los trabajadores, hay brutal represión. Y eso fortalece la solidaridad con los compañeros de Changuinola”.

WW/MO supo que hubo alguna especie de arreglo de última hora de la huelga de Changuinola, postergando por 90 días la Ley 30. Preguntamos a John qué significaba este acuerdo, quiénes habían hecho este trato, y cómo estaba respondiendo la gente.

Así reportó John: “Ha habido una tregua de la Ley 30 por 90 días, pero solamente de los aspectos de trabajo. La posición nuestra en ULIP, el sindicato de la de Coca Cola, y todos los demás es que demandamos la derogación total de la ley, no solamente posponer los artículos sobre el trabajo. Además, el presidente y los compañeros bananeros llegaron a un acuerdo que no incluye la anulación de la Ley 30 y eso ha creado en la región molestia. Y aparentemente han vuelto a cerrar las calles esporádicamente en la provincia de Bocas del Toro.

“La situación ahora en Bocas del Toro es inestable. No hay certeza que se haya levantado la huelga y que hayan regresado a sus puestos de trabajo. Las cosas no están muy claras porque hoy es el primer día que se ha conocido el acuerdo. Lo cierto es que hay más de 20 víctimas que han sido gravemente heridas, que han perdido uno o los dos ojos, y han tenido que ser reclusos en hospitales de la ciudad capital”.

John añadió: “Creo que esta situación no tendrá una salida tan fácil, a pesar de los acuerdos. Esta situación aún no se ha resuelto ni en la región (Changuinola) ni para el resto de los trabajadores en el país”.

Alejandro John finalizó con un mensaje a los/as trabajadores/as y sindicatos en los Estados Unidos: “Pedimos que sean solidarios y que no se ratifique ningún tratado de libre comercio entre Estados Unidos y Panamá porque la libertad sindical y la libertad y las garantías individuales están en peligro en nuestro país. Necesitamos que haya un cuestionamiento de los sindicatos a nuestro gobierno sobre esto, y que sea respetada la libertad sindical e individual de las personas que adversan las actuales políticas del gobierno en Panamá”. □

Más de 5.000 trabajadores de la empresa Bocas Fruit, de la corporación Chiquita, inició un paro laboral de 48 horas el 2 de julio. La compañía inmediatamente se había aprovechado de la Ley 30 para eliminar las cuotas sindicales y eliminar así la base financiera del sindicato.

Los trabajadores, representados por el sindicato SITRAIBANA, exigían principalmente la derogación de la Ley 30 y que la empresa restableciera las cuotas sindicales. También estaban protestando por los cambios recientes de Martinelli a la Carta Orgánica que permiten la violación de los derechos laborales, al igual que los derechos ambientales, culturales y sociales del pueblo indígena.

A falta de una respuesta de la empresa y del gobierno nacional, los trabajadores en el segundo día declararon la huelga indefinida. Desde entonces, otros trabajadores bananeros se han unido a la huelga. La comunidad apoya la huelga y toda la región se ha paralizado. Los padres no han enviado a sus hijos/as a la escuela. Otros pueblos indígenas han venido a Changuinola en apoyo de sus hermanas y hermanos trabajadores.

El estado respondió con represión, enviando a miles de policías antimotines armados para combatir la resistencia. Los trabajadores respondieron bloqueando todos los caminos que conducen a la región. Incendiaron oficinas, incluyendo la sucursal del Global Bank y el cuartel de la policía de menores, capturando a cuatro policías durante varias horas. Los trabajadores también tomaron el aeropuerto de Changuinola y respondieron a las balas de la policía con piedras y palos.

Los sindicatos dicen que seis personas murieron, el gobierno sólo informa de dos muertes. Cientos de personas fueron heridas, decenas con perdigones disparados a los ojos. Las/os heridas/os tuvieron que ser trasladados a hospitales de la ciudad de Panamá.

Al mismo tiempo, 1.200 trabajadores de la ampliación del Canal de Panamá también se declararon en huelga, exigiendo mejores condiciones de trabajo.

Mientras se desencadenan estas acciones, el régimen abrió una campaña de represión arrestando a cientos de trabajadores y activistas.

WW/MO entrevista a dirigente sindical

En la víspera de la huelga general, Workers World/Mundo Obrero habló con Alejandro John, secretario general del sindicato que representa a los/as trabajadores de la Coca-Cola, el Sindicato Industrial de Trabajadores de la Fabricación y Comercialización de Bebidas Gaseosas, Cervezas, Licores y Similares, SITRAFCOREBGASCCELIS. John también está en la directiva de la Unidad de Lucha Integral por el Pueblo (ULIP) y forma parte del Consejo de Trabajadores Organizados (CONATO), una de las federaciones de trabajadores/as en Panamá.

John resumió la situación general a partir del 12 de julio: “Estoy muy preocupado porque existe un estado policiaco y un terrorismo de Estado. El gobierno ha

Obreros/as, Inmigrantes, Desempleado/as, Jóvenes, Estudiantes:

El capitalismo está matando a la gente y al planeta

Si está interesado/a en abolir un sistema basado en ganancias

- sacando a la gente de sus trabajos y de sus viviendas
- cerrando las escuelas, negando atención médica
- haciendo guerras
- rescatando a los bancos
- encarcelando a los/as pobres y a los/as jóvenes
- utilizando el perfil racial contra toda la gente de color y los/as inmigrantes
- destruyendo el medioambiente con calentamiento global y derrames de petróleo.



El Partido Workers World/ Mundo Obrero y FIST (Luchemos contra el imperialismo, unámonos) De costa a costa están organizando activamente por trabajos, educación y atención médica. Estamos organizando en contra del racismo, para decir que no hay trabajadores/as ilegales en Arizona ni en ninguna otra parte; y en pro de los derechos LGBTQ. Estamos organizando para ponerle fin a las guerras de los ricos en Iraq y Afganistán y oponernos a la ocupación, desde Haití hasta Palestina.

El Partido WW/MO y FIST luchan por el Socialismo –

un mundo sin opresión, explotación, pobreza y guerra — donde toda la riqueza de la sociedad pertenece al pueblo, y esté organizado para satisfacer las necesidades humanas y no a la avaricia corporativa. ¡No espere hasta la conferencia de Noviembre! WW/Mundo Obrero tiene reuniones semanales además de organizar. Si usted está interesado/a, llámenos al 212-627-2994 o mándenos un correo electrónico a wwp@workers.org para más información sobre la conferencia del 12-14 de Noviembre.

Entonces es tiempo de levantarnos, uniros y luchar por un futuro socialista

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