

# WORKERS WORLD

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# Leaks expose criminal war End U.S. occupation of Afghanistan

By John Catalinotto

The media explosion following the publication of reports of some 90,000 classified cables between U.S. officials may accelerate the struggle to end the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan.

Those thousands of people in the U.S. who have paid close attention to Afghanistan may have already known that the occupation was criminal, was based on a fraudulent argument and was collapsing. Now tens of millions of people share this knowledge. No longer can elected or appointed officials claim ignorance of U.S.-NATO war crimes or the war's disastrous path.

The strategy debate within and outside the Barack Obama administration and the Pentagon had already hit the news. Gen. Stanley McChrystal's firing and his replacement by Gen. David Petraeus made it public. This latest media blitz now brings it before the entire population of the U.S. and its reluctant NATO allies. It turns the generals' crisis into a public debate.

Millions now also know that someone within the military machine, acting on a desire to stop U.S. war crimes, leaked these documents to the Wikileaks organization. There are undoubtedly others in the virtual belly of the militarist beast who understand their responsibility to humanity and will expose the truth and stop the crimes. The anti-war forces have a duty to defend these whistle-blowers and inspire others to follow suit.

### Timing the publication

Wikileaks had arranged to release the 90,000 documents, covering the period from 2004 to 2009 in Afghanistan, to three powerful corporate media. The New York Times in the U.S., the Guardian in Britain and Der Spiegel in Germany, after analyzing and editing the documents over some months to remove some names, released them July 26. The Times had also informed the Obama administration on July 23 that it would publish them.

There followed secondary reports in thousands of newspaper and broadcast media stories, which are continuing on July 27. These stories have also evoked strong reactions from the U.S., Afghan

*Continued on page 10*

## RACISM & CLASS

# Behind the firing of Shirley Sherrod

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A political firestorm erupted on July 20 when Shirley Sherrod, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's rural development director for Georgia, was terminated as the result of a false accusation made against her by a right-wing propagandist. A deceptively edited video of a speech, delivered by Sherrod at an NAACP event in March, was used as the pretense for her firing and public vilification.

The following day it was revealed that the videotape did not include key elements of her address, which highlighted the role of both race and class in the oppression of African Americans in the agricultural sector in the South. Sherrod received apologies from both the NAACP and the Obama administration, which offered her a more prominent position as the USDA's Deputy Director for Advocacy and Outreach.

Sherrod stated that she would need to seriously contemplate the offer in light of her recent experience within the USDA.

In a series of interviews in the corporate media, she pointed out the irony of the administration and other detractors labeling her as a "racist" after she had spent her entire adult life fighting discrimination against African Americans in Georgia.

Although the Obama administration and the corporate media attempted to frame the controversy as a failure to check the veracity of the videotape, the root of the political debacle stems from the ongoing plight of African-American farmers and the failure of the White House and Congress to seriously tackle racism.

The Obama administration came into office with a clear mandate from the electorate to implement sweeping reforms within U.S. society. However, the status quo has been maintained, leaving the national and class oppression of people of color and workers as a whole firmly intact.

### The unresolved national question in the South

During the 1950s and 1960s the African-American people rose up in opposition to

*Continued on page 3*



WW PHOTO: PAUL TEITELBAUM

**IMMIGRANT RIGHTS**  
Repression breeds resistance 7



PHOTO: ANDY SNEE

**N.C. community fights**  
resegregation 4

**ANTI-WAR CONFERENCE**  
Adopts action program 11



**HOTEL WORKERS**  
Militant actions in U.S., Canada 5

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# A witness to history: The making of the Freedom Party

By Paul Washington  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

The evening gathering on June 11 at the historic Siloam Presbyterian Church, located in Bedford-Stuyvesant in Brooklyn, N.Y., will go down in the annals of New York state's Black political history as a significant revolutionary development.

Our ancestors — Ella Baker, a founder of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; Fannie Lou Hamer, a founder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, who also ran for Congress in Mississippi, though because of institutional racism her name was not allowed on the ballot; and Rev. Milton Galamison, who pastored Siloam from 1949 to 1988 — are smiling down from the Heavens as the Freedom Party gathers momentum and steam to become a viable third party in New York state. (While Rev.

Galamison led civil rights boycotts and demonstrations against poverty and issues centered around social justice, it was his renowned leadership in school decentralization that put both his church and his name on the map.)

The co-chairs of this newly formed party are two highly respected and prominent leaders in the Black Liberation Movement: none other than Jitu Weusi, one of the founding members and Chief of Operations of the National Black United Front; along with one of the Queens of our movement, Viola Plummer, leader of the December 12th Movement and a founder of Sista's Place. Weusi is also the founder of the historic East Cultural Center and the Uhuru Sasa Shule (school) from which this writer was one of its first graduates. Both of these individuals are veteran activists and fierce fighters for the political and economic empowerment of African people.

Fannie Lou Hamer and Ella Baker used to set the tone and the atmosphere for numerous meetings through song as they registered record numbers of people to vote. In similar fashion and tradition, Viola began the meeting with her fiery and uplifting sloganeering, shouting, "When I say Freedom, you say Party!" When she shouted, "Freedom!" all the people shouted, "Party!"

But more importantly, at this second major public event, the community got a chance to meet and hear from the three candidates running at the top of the Freedom Party ticket — Charles Barron for governor, Eva M. Doyle for lieutenant governor and Ramon Jimenez for attorney general. The slate of the Freedom Party is clearly composed of dedicated individuals who have a deep, abiding commitment to social justice and self-determination for people of color. Through their pronouncements, you sensed an anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist worldview that is pro-working-class.

## Challenging the racist status quo

The audience consisted of various sectors of New York City's diverse communities. People were riveted as council member Barron articulated the vision and ideological themes of the Freedom Party, such as "not balancing the state and city budgets on the backs of people of color nor the working class." Brother Barron waxed in the Black oratorical tradition, using his favorite mantra, "White men have too much power." This truism raises its ugly head when we look at the all-white slate of Attorney General Andrew Cuomo, who recently selected Mayor Robert



Above, Fannie Lou Hamer with bullhorn during Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964. Left, Charles Barron.



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

Duffy of Rochester to be his running mate.

Brother Barron's inspiring cadence makes one realize that there could not be a better intellectual, gifted rhetorician serving as the standard barrier of the Freedom Party than Charles Barron. As I sat in the

audience with my four-year-old grandson, Tyrik Jr. (TJ), I overheard an elderly Black woman say to her husband, "[Charles] makes us proud."

The diversity of the ticket is surely its strength, with the selection of Sister Doyle as lieutenant governor. This brilliant, dynamic activist/intellectual in the tradition of Ida B. Wells illuminates her scholarship as a writer of more than 10 books and her enduring influence as a public school teacher and radio commentator.

Sister Doyle, hailing from Buffalo, N.Y., introduced herself for the first time to a number of Bed-Stuy residents. Her downhome, yet razor sharp analysis put forward the critical need for providing an Afrocentric curriculum in the New York state educational system. Tracing her political, intellectual and spiritual evolution and hearing about her husband — a member of the Nation of Islam who recently joined the ancestors — were truly a touch of grace and charm.

Finally, her vast knowledge of the historic and contemporary contributions of Black people was captivating and inspiring. As you witnessed both the young and old sit on the edge of their seats listening to her, you recognized she is truly a woman of moral and physical courage.

Brother Ramon Jimenez, a Harvard-trained lawyer and organic intellectual whose roots follow in the footsteps of the great Puerto Rican nationalist and freedom fighter, Pedro Albizu Campos, is a New York City community activist. He spoke on the imperative for Blacks and Latinos/as to build coalitions and unity, and stressed that this unity has always been based on principle and develops "from the bottom up, not from the top down."

In speaking before this attentive audience, he stated, "We have always worked together on a range of issues, from tenant organizing to the fight for the inclusion of Black and Puerto Rican studies throughout the CUNY system."

Brother Ramon, a former judge on the Workers Compensation Board during the 1980s, stated that there were once a number of Black and Latino judges who sat on the bench during that timeframe. Now, however, "There is only one." This clearly speaks to the need for fighting against systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Brother Jimenez reminded us that elected officials, through their role as instruments of government, must meet the material needs of oppressed communi-

*Continued on page 3*

## ★ In the U.S.

- Behind the firing of Shirley Sherrod..... 1
- The making of the Freedom Party..... 2
- Celebrating the life of a Warrior Queen..... 3
- Mass pressure stops foreclosure..... 4
- Struggle against racist resegregation heats up in N.C..... 4
- Militant actions block hotel entrances..... 5
- Calif. labor backs WPA-type jobs program..... 5
- On the picket line..... 5
- From 'Low-Wage Capitalism'..... 6
- Movement says 'no' to SB 1070..... 7
- Coalition adopts action plan to fight U.S. wars..... 11
- Solidarity march with Muslim community..... 11

## ★ Around the world

- Leaks expose criminal war..... 1
- African Union summit..... 8
- Six months after Haiti earthquake..... 8
- U.S. ratchets up military pressure on DPRK..... 9
- Imperialist strategy vs. worker militancy in China..... 9
- Annual caravans challenge U.S. blockade of Cuba..... 10

## ★ Editorials

- Never ending wars..... 10

## ★ Noticias En Español

- Entrevista con una escritora iraquí..... 12

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# Celebrating the life of a Warrior Queen

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

The rhythmic sound of African drums filled the air and brought hundreds of mourners into harmony in tribute to Sister Njere Alghanee, first on July 2 at the Tupac Shakur Center for the Arts and then at many home-going celebrations on July 3.

A respected leader of the reparations movement in the U.S., Alghanee had served in several capacities for NCOBRA, the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America, and was a national co-chair at the time of her death.

Alghanee died in a tragic car accident in Atlanta on June 24, when the car she was riding in lost power on the interstate and was hit by an 18-wheeler. It was her 58th birthday. Her son, Biko, suffered broken bones.

She had left the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit on that day to return home to Atlanta so she could prepare to leave for the NCOBRA conference in New Orleans the next morning.

Alghanee's life was dedicated to the liberation of African peoples. As a teenager in Indianapolis she joined the Black Panther Party and continued her activism as a student at Wayne State University in Detroit.

She became a citizen of The Republic of New Africa and was a vocal supporter of African liberation struggles in Zimbabwe, Angola, Namibia and South Africa. Detroit was a center of revolutionary Black political activism, and she established relationships with many who are today leaders of such organizations as the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement and The Republic of New Africa, as well as elected officials in Detroit and Mississippi.

Among Alghanee's many areas of work was her unceasing concern for the many political prisoners who have now spent decades in prisons as a result of their stands against racism and police terror.

With degrees in mass communications and early childhood education, Alghanee held executive positions at the Georgia Citizen's Coalition on Hunger and the Georgia

Advocates for Battered Women and Children. She also devoted considerable energy to Disabled in Action, consistently including the struggle of this marginalized community in the overall liberation agenda. Several schools, community arts centers, youth programs and women's organizations credit Alghanee's vision and skills for their creation and continued success.

Known as Sister Courage on her weekly radio show on WRFG 89.3 FM, Atlanta's progressive community station, Alghanee created a space for the issues of reparations, racism, political prisoners and grassroots organizing to be analyzed and discussed.

Mama Njere, as she was affectionately called, had six children and was the proud grandmother of three.

Dozens of laudatory tributes brought applause, tears and laughter to the many hundreds of family members, fellow activists and community supporters who traveled from across the U.S. to honor the contributions of this warrior for the people.



Sister Njere Alghanee

When speakers recalled her radiant smile and steady personality, unfailing love for justice for all those oppressed and exploited, dedication to the liberation of African people, and optimistic and hopeful spirit, all present knew just what they were talking about.

From the national and local leadership of NCOBRA to the co-hosts of her radio program, "What Good Is a Song," all declared that the life's work of Sister Njere would go forward.

Njere Alghanee, ipresente! □

## Racism & class

# Behind the firing of Shirley Sherrod

Continued from page 1

the racism and national oppression that had been in existence since the failure of Reconstruction, which was attempted immediately after the Civil War. This movement, which took on various forms in the struggle for civil rights and Black power, mobilized millions and shifted the consciousness of African Americans, other oppressed national groups and whites. Significant concessions were won from the ruling class as a result of these movements.

Shirley Sherrod was impacted by developments in the South during this period. In 1965, at the age of 17, she became one of the first African-American students to integrate the all-white Baker County High School in rural southwest Georgia. That same year her father, Hosie Miller, was murdered by a racist white farmer.

According to Sherrod's mother, Grace Miller, the murder of her spouse stemmed from a dispute over three cows, which had

wandered onto the white man's property from their farm. The white farmer insisted that the cows belonged to him; Hosie Miller said that he would contact the law. He was shot in the back while closing the gate of the white neighbor's farm.

Grace Miller said that there was never any arrest or indictment against the white farmer who killed her spouse. Miller said that Sherrod was deeply wounded by her father's murder and would often be "off by herself." (Atlanta Journal-Constitution, July 23)

"One night she was outside," Sherrod's mother recalled. "And it was going through her mind, what would she do? She decided she would stay in South Georgia and make a difference."

Sherrod joined the civil rights struggle that was taking place in southwest Georgia. She attended Fort Valley State College and Albany State University, where she received a bachelor's degree in sociology. Sherrod eventually graduated from

Antioch University in Yellow Springs, Ohio, with a master's degree in community development.

During her tenure at Fort Valley State College, a racist mob of 40 white men burned a cross on her family's yard in Baker County, Ga.

Sherrod would marry a leading figure in the civil rights movement, Charles Sherrod, who was an organizer for Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and a member of the organization's cultural group, the Freedom Singers. Charles Sherrod had worked in the famous Albany Movement, one of the first mass mobilizations against racism in the Deep South.

In the videotaped speech, Sherrod said: "I want to do all I can to help rural communities be what they can. When I made that commitment, I was making that commitment to Black people and to Black people only. ... But you know, God will show you things and he'll put things in your path so that you realize that the struggle is really about poor people."

In the early 1980s Sherrod's 6,000-acre family farm was lost to foreclosure. The farm was occupied by numerous other families, who raised vegetables and livestock there.

### Unresolved plight of African-American farmers

The saga of Sherrod's family was not an isolated case. Since 1910, African-American farmers have lost nearly 13 million acres of land due to the racist practices of the USDA and financial institutions throughout the South. In 1920, one out of seven farms was owned by African Americans; however, by 1992 Black land ownership had dwindled from 15 million acres to 2.8 million.

African-American farmers fought this wholesale theft of their land at great risk. As a result of a class action lawsuit, in 1988 the USDA was forced to admit that "the history of discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture ... is well documented. Discrimination has been a contributing factor in the dramatic decline of Black farmers over the last several decades." (USDA National Commission on

Small Farms report)

In 1999 the government agreed to compensate African-American farmers through a settlement stemming from a lawsuit involving 22,000 families. Nonetheless, the majority of the farmers never received the promised \$50,000, which was a pittance compared to the vast losses of individual families over a period of decades.

In 2009 the Obama administration agreed to pay \$1.25 billion to settle claims by African-American farmers in a second settlement. However, the U.S. Senate has failed to allocate the money for compensation to the farmers. The struggle involves several African-American farmers' organizations, including the Federation of Southern Cooperatives, the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, and the National Black Farmers Association.

A BFAA statement asserts: "The statement from Tom Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture, that USDA does not 'tolerate' racial discrimination is a complete lie. Talk to almost any family member of a Black farmer or check out ... the government's documentation of how USDA employees, on the local and federal level, discriminated against Black farmers, in particular." (July 21)

The statement notes: "Nothing was ever done to penalize the all white officials bent on destroying a society of black farmers across the nation: not one firing, not one charge brought, and not one pension lost. Yet the first erroneous offering by a conservative blogger that a black woman from USDA might have discriminated, she is immediately forced to resign."

The Shirley Sherrod incident reveals that even with an African-American president in the White House, conditions will not improve until the structures of U.S. capitalism and racism are fundamentally changed. There can be no resolution of the national oppression of African Americans without the uprooting of the system and the genuine empowerment of people of color and working people as a whole in the U.S.

Read the full version of this article at [workers.org](http://workers.org)

## The making of the Freedom Party

Continued from page 2

ties. Those urgent needs relate to universal education, affordable public housing, accessible health care and other essential goods and services.

The final speaker for the evening was our "Attorney at War," Alton Maddox, chairman of the United African Movement, a brilliant legal mind and political strategist. In many ways Brother Maddox's legal skills follow in the tradition of the great Charles Hamilton Houston, "The man who killed Jim Crow." Houston played a role in nearly every civil rights case before the Supreme Court during the 1930s. Similarly, Alton Maddox led and participated in almost every civil rights case in the 1980s — Howard Beach, Tawana Brawley, the Day of Outrage, etc. It was Alton's genius and zeal during the 1990s that led the charge in the first serious attempt to create a Black-led third party, ironically called "The Freedom Party."

In essence, Maddox's overview of "Which Way Forward for the Freedom

Party" was educative, enlightening and informative. He highlighted the nexus of the two organizing meetings taking place weekly on Tuesday evenings — one at Sista's Place in Brooklyn, the other in Buffalo. It is clear there is a grassroots movement that is building energy and inspiring people across racial, ethnic and political lines.

In terms of political direction, numerous volunteers have come forward, hitting the streets around the state to collect the 15,000 signatures needed to gain ballot access for the formation of the Freedom Party in the November election. The Freedom Party will provide the people of this state with a choice and an opportunity to change the political paradigm in New York state and the entire United States of America.

Paul Washington is co-chair of Operation P.O.W.E.R. and the coordinator of the Black Male Initiative of Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn. He is also the author of the forthcoming book entitled "Black Radical Politics: A Vision for America!"

# Mass pressure stops foreclosure

A protest on July 22 to stop the foreclosure of Marvin and Louise Morris turned into a victory celebration after their mortgage servicer finally agreed to allow the elderly couple to remain in their modest Detroit home.

The Morrisses had fought in the court system for several years to keep their home after becoming victims of racist subprime predatory lending. At every turn they faced defeat — even the Michigan Supreme Court refused to hear their appeal.

The Morrisses had paid monthly into an escrow account that totaled more than the value of their home, but Barclays Bank and HomEq refused to settle the disputed arrearage on the mortgage.

When the Morrisses faced imminent eviction from their home of 32 years, activists with the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs called a demonstration and put out an e-mail blast to thousands of people around Michigan and throughout the country, asking for calls and e-mails to HomEq to demand they stop the foreclosure.

In less than 48 hours after the demonstration, attorneys for HomEq contacted the Morrisses' attorney, Vanessa G. Fluker, and agreed to work out a settlement that would allow the Morrisses to keep their home.

— Kris Hamel



On July 22 supporters from throughout Michigan gathered at the home of Marvin Morris, top left, for a victory rally where people's attorney Vanessa Fluker, left, spoke.

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

## Arrests, police attacks show

# Struggle against racist resegregation heats up in North Carolina

By Ben Carroll  
Raleigh, N.C.

A mass demonstration on July 20 to stop racist attempts to resegregate schools in Wake County, N.C., ended with the arrest of 19 people at a school board meeting.

Nearly 2,000 demonstrators filled the streets of downtown Raleigh that morning for a march called by the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP and endorsed by the national African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church. The church recently cancelled its winter meeting in Arizona in solidarity with the boycott called against the racist, anti-immigrant Senate Bill 1070.

Members of the faith community played a pivotal role in the demonstration. Black churches from across the state mobilized many members of their congregations, joining members from a number of NAACP chapters and community organizations, as well as civil rights activists and high school students.

The spirited march began at the Convention Center, where the AME Zion Church was holding its national convention, streamed through downtown Raleigh, and ended with a rally at the State Capitol building. There, many spoke out against the attempts of the "Resegregationist Five," five members of the nine-person school board who want to create a two-tiered system of education and send our schools back into the era of Jim-Crow segregation.

Speakers included high school students and members of NC Heroes Emerging Among Teens; Louis Hunter, president of AME Zion Church's board of bishops; Richard K. Thompson, head of the eastern N.C. AME Zion district; Al Gwinn of the N.C. Conference of the United Methodist Church; Michael Curry of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina; the Rev. William Barber, president of the state NAACP; and MaryBe McMillan, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO. All the speakers urged march participants to attend the school board meeting that afternoon.

NC HEAT, a newly formed organization of high school students in Wake County, along with Raleigh Fight Imper-



Activists at school board hearing prior to police arrests.

PHOTO: ANDY SNEE

alism, Stand Together and various church youth groups, played an important role in mobilizing young people and building youth leadership for the march.

"The overall outcome was impressive. The presence of youth was seen and heard, not only at the march but at the school board meeting as well. Posters at the meeting read 'Listen to the Students,' and this is exactly what they will have to do," said Monse Alvarez, a leader of NC HEAT. "[We are] working on recruiting and organizing students who have come to realize what is going on in our schools and want to stop this before future generations are affected by this unlawful and racist policy."

### Arrests, standoff outside meeting

The school board meeting resembled a prison. Metal barricades lined the sidewalks outside of the Wake County Public School System central offices. Two prison transfer buses waited behind the building in anticipation of mass arrests; cops on horses stood guard in the parking lot, as bike cops wove around the building. At least 40 uniformed cops patrolled inside and outside the building, including the chief of the Raleigh Police Department.

Barber, along with the Rev. Nancy Petty, senior pastor at Raleigh's Pullen Memorial Baptist Church, had earlier declared their intention to attend the July 20 meeting in direct defiance of their being prohibited from entering school property. They and two others were banned

after being arrested for civil disobedience at a June 15 school board meeting.

As the two made their way onto the grounds of the central office, a crowd of nearly 150 people flanked them as a line of cops and media approached. Barber read an open letter they had written to school board Chair Ron Margiotta and the rest of the Resegregationist Five, opposing their plans to segregate the schools and protesting the ban prohibiting them from entering school property. Barber and Petty were then arrested, along with the Rev. Gregory Moss, president of the North Carolina General Baptist State Convention.

The rally continued outside the meeting following the arrests, as tensions between the cops and the demonstrators became sharper. After a nearly 30-minute standoff, people made their way into the building to attend the meeting. As the public comment section opened, community members spoke out against the resegregation attempts.

The occasional GOP-planted "supporter" of the Five sang the praises of the board for, among other things, carrying out \$25 million in budget cuts to the school system and "putting an end to forced busing," recalling the rhetoric of segregationist and white supremacist Gov. George Wallace of Alabama.

### Refusing to be silent

Near the end of the public comment period the Rev. Michelle Cotton Laws,

president of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro chapter of the NAACP, refused to give up the podium. She was joined by nearly 30 audience members, as chants of "Forward ever; backwards never!" filled the room.

NAACP members, student activists and religious leaders linked arms at the podium, chanting and singing civil rights songs. The board had no choice but to go into recess — because the meeting had been taken over. Nearly two dozen cops, who had been lining the meeting room, moved to the front to break up the demonstration.

Ranging in age from 16 to 60, 16 people were arrested, including NAACP leaders and members; a high school student; youth members of NC HEAT and Raleigh FIST; and religious leaders from around North Carolina.

Chinni Collins, one of the 16 arrested and a member of Raleigh FIST, explained why he took a stand: "I believe that education equity is an important issue and people have to see how important it really is. There's a saying, 'There's no need of standing up for the right unless you're going to stand up against the wrong,' and I believe that when you know something is wrong, that is when you stand up for what is right."

As the arrests were taking place, Keith Sutton, the only African-American school board member, came over to make sure that demonstrators were being treated fairly by the cops. However, he was attacked by three cops, who twisted his arms behind his back as if to arrest him. He demanded an apology from the Raleigh Police Department.

The chief of police responded the following day, saying he would be willing to meet with Sutton "to stress the importance of his not becoming involved with police officers performing their duties." (WTVD-TV/DT Raleigh-Durham, July 22)

Meanwhile, nearly two dozen people, who had been in two overflow rooms on the fourth floor, made their way to the meeting room during the demonstration. They demanded access to the room, and when the cops closed and locked the

Continued on page 5

## ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

### Shaw workers end strike

On July 8, four months after they went on strike, more than 300 warehouse workers at Shaw's Methuen, Mass., distribution center ratified a four-year contract. The workers, represented by Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 791, went on strike when they were offered a contract that would have resulted in a loss of \$28 per week, or about \$1,456 annually, for members enrolled in the family health insurance plan. The mediated contract includes wage increases and also higher health contributions from both the company and the workers. Though not a decisive win, the workers showed fighting spirit as they rallied support from labor, politicians and community activists.

### NYC support for Mott's workers

Thirty-seven members of the New York City Council took the unprecedented step July 19 of sending a letter to Dr. Pepper/Snappe to protest the outrageous contract terms demanded of Mott's workers in Williamson, N.Y. The 300 applesauce workers, represented by Local 400 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store union (part of the Food and Commercial Workers union), opted to go on strike May 23 rather than have their wages cut by \$1.50 per hour and the cost of their health care increased. Pointing out how profitable DPS is — its top three officers received multimillion-dollar raises in the recent past — the letter concluded, "The workers who are responsible for the company's success should not be forced into a contract that cuts their income at a time when the cost of living in this state increases with each passing year." On to a fair contract, Mott's workers!

### Solidarity after attack on SW Workers Union

Unions and community groups from all over the U.S. have been sending messages of solidarity to the Southwest Workers Union in San Antonio, Texas. The reason: a drive-by shooting at SWU's Solidarity House on July 11 sent a young college intern to the hospital with severe injuries. The SWU, a highly respected and accomplished labor/community organization that represents "low-income, people of color and disenfranchised communities," is calling on the city of San Antonio for a complete investigation. At the same time it plans to go forward with its summer graduation and Harvest Festival for Peace and Hope at its Roots of Change community garden on July 31. WW joins in condemning this violent attack, which appeared to be motivated by anti-immigrant racism, and joins in saluting SWU's ongoing commitment to economic justice and equality for all. ([mayfirst.org](http://mayfirst.org), July 14)

### Catholic hospitals in Mich. unfair to nurses

More than 700 nurses at three Catholic hospitals in Michigan, affiliates of the Ascension Health System, are without a contract because the hospitals, according to a new Interfaith Worker Justice study, are engaging in anti-union behavior and worker disrespect. The study is based on an IWJ fact-finding visit in May with Ascension reps and the nurses, represented by the Michigan Nurses Association, an affiliate of National Nurses United. Adding fuel to the study's findings, the National Labor Relations Board, no friend to organized labor, charged one of the hospitals, Borgess Medical Center in Kalamazoo, with multiple unfair labor practices the week of July 12. The charges include "illegally restraining and coercing employees, unlawfully discriminating against employees in terms and conditions of employment, and refusing to bargain in good faith with MNA." Borgess RN Moncia Walker told the AFL-CIO blog that the nurses are going to "hold firm" until they "are allowed to deliver quality health care." (July 19) Meanwhile, after more than three months of intense negotiations and a 24-hour strike, 12,000 nurses at 14 area hospitals in Minnesota's Twin Cities ratified a three-year contract with no concessions or givebacks and the continuation of its pension plan on July 6. Way to go!

### SF Labor Council demands immigration reform

The San Francisco Labor Council passed a unanimous resolution July 12 with multiple demands for immigration reform. Among the demands are that Congress reject all proposals that "promote the firing of immigrant workers, open the doors to new guest worker programs, and do not contain a program for the quick and inclusive legalization of undocumented workers" and that Congress pass a law that includes "the renegotiation of NAFTA, CAFTA and all other trade agreements, in order to stop the enforced poverty that displaces communities abroad and to protect jobs in the United States, and [opposes] any new trade agreements that cause such displacement and [do] not protect jobs."

### Unions endorse Oct. 2 march for jobs

The AFL-CIO joined the growing list of unions and labor federations, community and progressive groups in endorsing the Oct. 2 march on Washington, D.C., that the NAACP and the Service Employees Local 1199 called in early July. When the AFL-CIO's National Executive Council voted July 19 to support and mobilize for the March for Jobs, Justice and Peace, it added the following demands: jobs, economic security, "a safe and renewable energy policy, and a reversal of national priorities from making wars to meeting human needs." On July 14 the California Labor Federation, in addition to endorsing the Oct. 2 march, added the demand for a new Works Progress Administration-type jobs program to "Put America Back to Work."

## Militant actions block hotel entrances

After a brief rally on the sidewalk plaza by the Four Seasons — one of several San Francisco hotels where the workers are working without a contract — several hundred hotel workers, their allies and community activists marched by the Hotel Frank on July 22. The workers at that hotel, just purchased by Wells Fargo Bank, also need a contract. The march continued past Union Square Park, turning on Stockton Street, arriving at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. There, more supporters joined and formed a huge picket line of some 1,200 protesters.

About 150 workers and supporters then formed lines of about 10 each, locking arms and sitting down in civil disobedience directly in front of the hotel. The remaining hundreds continued to picket, chant and leaflet the evening rush-hour pedestrians until those sitting down were all arrested, shoved onto three double-length city buses and driven away.

The San Francisco protest was part of coordinated protests throughout the U.S. and Canada. Hotels were picketed in Boston; Chicago; Honolulu; Indianapolis; Long Beach, Los Angeles, San Diego



Women union members in the housekeeping staff and Santa Clara, Calif.; Miami; Pittsburgh; Rosemont, Ill.; San Antonio; and Toronto and Vancouver, Canada. Altogether, nearly 1,000 activists were arrested after blocking hotel entrances.

— Report and photo by Joan Marquardt

## California labor federation

### Backs WPA-type jobs program

*Following are excerpts from a resolution adopted by the California Labor Federation at its 28th biennial convention on July 14.*

In this 75th anniversary year of the WPA ...

We need the same kind of bold, sweeping public jobs program today!

Whereas, 75 years ago, on April 8, 1935, Congress passed legislation creating the largest public works program in U.S. history. On May 6, 1935, President Franklin Roosevelt issued an executive order founding the Works Progress Administration, which created 8.5 million jobs during the Depression of the 1930s; and

Whereas, the WPA didn't just happen because of the kindness and concern of President Roosevelt. It was a response to a tremendous mass movement in the streets and workplaces all over the U.S. — from the Bonus March and Ford Hunger March of 1932; to the San Francisco general strike and large industrial actions in Toledo and Minneapolis in 1934; to later sit-downs in the auto plants of Michigan; to militant actions by Unemployed Councils in hundreds of cities. It was this pressure from below that got us the WPA, which put millions of people back to work, Social Security and other New Deal programs; and

Whereas, today's crisis is nearly as bad as it was back then. Unemployment in manufacturing is almost at Great Depression levels. What we have now is an economy based on permanent high unemployment and low wages ... a political and economic system that provides trillions of dollars in bailouts for Wall Street, and trillions of dollars for war, but nothing for large numbers of workers and the poor, who are facing growing joblessness, foreclosures, evictions, layoffs, low wages, hunger and homelessness; and

Whereas, the AFL-CIO has a worthy five-point Jobs Plan, but without a massive amount

of "street heat" its implementation is far from assured. Proposals from many local and state unions for a labor-led Solidarity Day III march on Washington, in the tradition of past AFL-CIO Solidarity Day marches, have not yet been acted upon; and

Whereas, our infrastructure is falling apart, our schools and health care facilities understaffed. We need the same kind of bold, sweeping jobs program that people demanded — and got — in the 1930s. There are between 20 and 30 million unemployed and underemployed people in the country today. We need a real WPA-type program that is big enough to ensure that those who need work get work — work that is socially useful and paying union wages and benefits — a real jobs program fully funded by the government; and

Whereas, Martin Luther King Jr. dedicated the final months of his life to starting a movement for the right of everyone to a job or a guaranteed income — and we need a movement like that now. The issue of jobs is on the front burner: all it needs is a flame. But as in the 1930s, only a massive movement in the streets and workplaces will bring about a real public jobs program like the WPA.

Therefore be it resolved, that in this 75th anniversary year of the WPA, which created 8.5 million public jobs during the Depression of the 1930s, that the California Labor Federation urge the AFL-CIO and all of organized labor to do two things:

- 1) Fight for a real WPA-type program that is big enough to ensure that those who need work get work — work that is socially useful and paying union wages and benefits — a real jobs program fully funded by the government;
- 2) Get behind and urge that we support the Oct. 2 march called by the NAACP, SEIU Local 1199, other civil rights groups and supported by the AFL-CIO for **JOBS, JOBS, JOBS.** □

## Struggle against racist resegregation

*Continued from page 4*

doors, they began chanting "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it? Now!"

A crowd of supporters greeted the 16, arrested on charges of second-degree trespassing and disorderly conduct, as they were released from jail that evening. The three arrested earlier in the day had already been released.

In an open letter following the actions, the Rev. Curtis Gatewood, second vice president of the N.C. NAACP, made clear the need for continued resistance. Gatewood took head-on the claims, leveled by Margiotta, that the protesters were somehow "outside agitators," saying: "We will continue to mobilize against injustice. ... We will not slow down due to 'outsider' labels, arbitrary school meeting changes designed to

reduce rather than increase community input, two-faced promises, increased police presence, threats of jail, or if and when other tactics, which are being replayed from the old Jim Crow playbook, are used through efforts to intimidate and/or divide us."

The July 20 actions were an important step forward for the movement to stop resegregation in Wake County. The powerful unity forged among civil rights activists, the faith community, youth and students, and other community organizations signals a new stage. Every day, more and more people are drawn into this struggle, and if July 20 was any indication, this community fightback will continue to grow.

*The writer is a Raleigh FIST organizer who participated in the July 20 march.*

# From 'Low-Wage Capitalism'

# NYC transit workers fight slave-labor Taylor Law

*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 July 1 issue, 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 five years ago.*

For information about the book, visit [www.lowwagecapitalism.com](http://www.lowwagecapitalism.com).

## 2005: Transit workers, New York

This argument and historical precedent also apply to the New York City transit strike of bus and subway workers, which had national significance because it was carried out at the center of power of Wall Street and because it was an attempt to draw a line against concessions. The workers were up against New York State's Taylor Law, which forbids strikes by public employees.

Meeting such a challenge takes great effort. There are great risks and any such struggle must be well prepared and well grounded in the support of the workers, because it inevitably involves coming up against the capitalist state. But it begins with a readiness and determination of the leadership to resist as much as possible when the occasion arises.

In December 2005 the occasion was forced upon Transport Workers Union Local 100 in New York City by the Metropolitan Transit Authority, an authority set up by New York State to watch over the interests of bondholders. The union leaders, under Roger Toussaint, and the rank and file were prepared to stand firm against the MTA's demands, despite the almost certain risk of harsh penalties. The two-and-a-half-day strike pitted the 33,000 members of TWU Local 100, who are 70 percent Black, Latino/a, or Asian, against the forces of Wall Street, the governor, the mayor of New York, the courts, and the hostile capitalist media. It had national significance precisely because it was a challenge to the labor-hating, racist ruling class in the heart of their financial center and because the union was bucking a decades-long national trend of concessions by the labor movement.

The workers were being persecuted under an internal system of company discipline, to the point where one out of ev-

ery three workers had been "written up" in the prior year. The MTA was moving to eliminate and combine jobs. Working conditions, especially on the subway tracks, were harsh and unhealthy. The workers were chafing under a general atmosphere of harassment and disrespect.

As the contract expiration neared, the MTA suddenly demanded a two-tier system of retirement benefits — tripling the contribution extracted from newly hired workers to 6 percent from 2 percent — and an extension of the retirement age from 55 to 62. The MTA said this was non-negotiable. The leadership was confronted with a stark situation — concessions or a strike. The rank and file were overwhelmingly ready to strike and the leadership body voted to strike by a large majority.

The workers voted to strike in the face of draconian sanctions under the Taylor Law: fines for each worker of two days' pay for each day on strike, possible fines for the union of a million dollars a day, and loss of dues check-off rights.

The strike ended after three days in a limited victory and a mixed result for the union. But the union won a victory in that the MTA had to back off from the two-tier pension system, the fundamental issue of principle. The workers got a 10.5 percent raise over three years, maternity stipends, a paid holiday for Martin Luther King Day, plus a pension refund of thousands of dollars for nearly two-thirds of the members. In return for the MTA taking the two-tier system off the table, the compromise was a 1.5 percent contribution by all the workers to the health care fund.

[The settlement was initially defeated by seven votes and later passed overwhelmingly — F.G.] In reality, the overwhelming factor in any compromise forced on the union was the refusal of the city's AFL-CIO labor leadership to bring to bear the power of the organized working class.

These leaders offered symbolic support but failed to react to the serious crisis for the TWU created by the MTA. The crisis required broadening the struggle in order to have a significant impact on the outcome. Local 100 was defending not only its own union position but that of the labor movement in the city. Instead, the labor leadership acted as an instrument to transmit pressure against the union to end the strike and return to class peace.

Toussaint declared from the outset that the union would defy the demand for two-tier pension payments. The defiance was put in terms of standing up against the national trend of concessions. Furthermore, he made clear that Local 100 would not be party to setting a two-tier precedent that could then be imposed on all the municipal unions in the city.

The same day that the court imposed a

\$1-million-a-day fine on the union, Toussaint said, "There is a higher calling than the law. That is justice and equality." He invoked the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and Rosa Parks, both of whom had defied racist laws: "If Rosa Parks had answered the call of the law instead of the higher call of justice, many of us who are driving buses today would instead be at the back of the bus."

The union also showed that the MTA itself was in violation of the Taylor Law. Under the law, the MTA was authorized to bargain only over "salaries, wages, hours and other terms and conditions of employment, provided however, that such term shall not include any benefits provided by or to be provided by a public retirement system. ... No such retirement benefits shall be negotiated pursuant to this article, and any benefits so negotiated shall be null and void."

Pension benefits for public workers are determined in the New York State Legislature and not by the MTA. Thus, the MTA's demand for a two-tier pension system or any pension system was a clear violation of the Taylor Law. Considering the circumstances, even though the strike was forced at the last minute, the situation was rife with possibilities for mounting a struggle that could have challenged the enforcement of the Taylor Law, if not the law itself.

The union had a powerful legal basis to declare the MTA in violation of the law with respect to its two-tier pension plan demands. The law itself declared the MTA's proposal "null and void." The application of the law to the local could be clearly challenged on that basis.

The union also had a powerful economic argument that it was acting not only on its own behalf, but on behalf of all the unions subject to the Taylor Law. There was a direct material basis for union solidarity.

The strike took place at the height of the winter holiday shopping season. Most major retailers make up to 50 percent of their annual sales during this period. It would not take long before the commercial interests in the city and other employers would feel it.

There was no way the MTA could hire scabs to replace the 33,000 bus and subway workers. The option that had been used by bosses for the past decades to extract concessions was not available.

Despite the hardships it caused, the strike was extremely popular among the masses, for a variety of reasons: the demands for respect on the job, the fight to stop givebacks on pensions, and the fact that the union was 70 percent Black, Latino/a, and Asian in a city with a majority of oppressed people. These factors gave the strike an underlying source of support, despite claims to the contrary by the capitalist media. People in the city walked long distances, crossed bridges, and found ways to get to work.

Arguments can be made about the timing and circumstances of the return to work and the final settlement. But such arguments pale into insignificance in comparison to the need to examine the objective conditions of the strike and the behavior of the broader labor leadership in the city, which became prostrate before the Taylor Law.

In a conference call two days into the strike, with 40 union officials and the Local 100 leadership on the phone, the en-



NYC transit strike Dec. 2005.

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

tire drift of the discussion was to pressure the union to end the strike. Toussaint expressed the tenor of the conversation during the call, when everyone was offering verbal, symbolic support on the one hand and trying to bring an end to the struggle on the other hand.

Toussaint is said to have declared, "I don't need anyone standing on the sidelines holding my coat; I need someone to take off their coat."

As we showed earlier, during the United Parcel strike of 1997, John Sweeney, president of the AFL-CIO, had strengthened the struggle of the workers by openly pledging \$10 million a week to the strike fund of the Teamsters UPS division and its president, Ron Carey. One basic gesture that would have shaken the MTA and the capitalist establishment during the transit workers' strike and strengthened the hand and the position of Toussaint and the TWU workers would have been a pledge by the New York City Central Labor Council or by a coalition of unions to support the transit workers with funds to carry them through the struggle and to help defray the cost of fines to the union, should they be levied.

Instead of becoming the high priests of compromise, they could have seen the situation as an opportunity to open up a political and propaganda struggle to weaken the ability of the MTA to apply the Taylor Law. They could have mobilized rallies and mass marches and used a variety of creative tactics.

Many legal arguments and illustrations could have been elaborated. For example, by depriving workers of their right to withhold their labor, the Taylor Law nullifies the only leverage workers have in collective bargaining. With its onerous fines and sanctions, the law requires hundreds of thousands of workers to enter negotiations with a gun to their heads. The law makes the bargaining process inherently weighted in favor of the bondholders and other investors. Such a campaign could have made the Taylor Law the issue in the struggle and weakened support for it, limited its application in the strike, and laid the basis for future efforts to overturn it altogether by bringing these arguments to the attention of the masses.

It was incumbent upon the leadership to weigh the political, economic, and tactical advantages of the workers in the struggle against the onerous Taylor Law. It could not be left to Local 100 to fight alone. It required a class-wide approach of the workers in the metropolitan region to counterbalance the forces arrayed against the union. But the relationship of forces between the workers and Wall Street in the struggle against the Taylor Law was never tested. The labor movement fatalistically accepted the legal boundaries established by the bosses on government workers instead of trying to change the legality by facts on the ground.

Of course, not every situation lends itself to an open challenge to anti-labor laws and judicial rulings. But the mindset of any genuine, class-conscious leadership of the workers must always be preparation for challenging the restrictive and repressive aspects of bourgeois legality in favor of extending workers' rights. Emphasis on lobbying and electing "pro-labor" bourgeois politicians, as a substitute for fighting the bosses, will do nothing at all but sow illusions. The only path is that of mass mobilization in the class struggle. □

"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

## Low-Wage Capitalism

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# Movement says 'no' to SB 1070 & Washington's 'Secure Communities'

By Teresa Gutierrez

Despite a continuous onslaught of attacks against immigrant workers, resistance and opposition continue to grow in the U.S. — not only against Arizona's Senate Bill 1070, but also against the entire campaign to criminalize and drive workers born outside this country underground.

In the month of July alone, there were not one but many national actions in Washington, D.C. Organized by different sectors of the movement, they included Arizona but focused on other immigration issues as well. These actions included militant civil disobedience by undocumented students in support of the DREAM Act, who, risking deportation, boldly carried out actions directly at the center of power in this country.

National days of actions, in solidarity with the people of Arizona and against SB 1070, are taking place in cities across the country on July 29 and 30.

The danger exists, however, of all attention being turned on SB 1070 while ignoring other just as dangerous — if not more ominous — measures, such as President Barack Obama's "Secure Communities." And SB 1070 must not sideline condemnation of Senator Charles Schumer's plan on immigration either.

Washington has clearly lacked the political will to meet the demands of the movement for immigrant rights. Instead of granting well-deserved legalization and pro-worker, comprehensive immigration legislation, the White House and Congress deliberately handed over immigration policy to the states. Piecemeal congressional immigration policy paved the way for Arizona's SB 1070.

SB 1070 takes place in the wake of the "funnel effect," where the militarization of the 2,000-mile southern U.S. border by President Bill Clinton and his successors forced migrants to cross through not only one of the hottest areas of the Southwest, but also one of the most conservative. U.S. policies dared migrants to cross into hated racist and neo-fascist "Sheriff Joe Arpaio country."

Nonetheless, as attacks continue in Arizona and around the country, the movement strongly demonstrates the adage "repression breeds resistance." This righteous mood of indignation and level of organizing could bode well for May Day 2011.

## Not only in Arizona

After 2006 — and the massive immigrant rights demonstrations that took place across the country — both the Bush and Obama administrations imposed policies on immigration that went against the movement's demands.

Immigration policy was outsourced to state and local law enforcement agencies through a federal program called 287(g). This program deputized local authorities as federal immigration agents, giving them carte blanche to go after immigrants and workers of color.

A New York Times editorial notes that "a new report by the inspector general ... paints a portrait of 287(g) agencies as a motley posse of deputies who don't know Spanish, who don't know or care about the dangers of racial profiling and who operate well beyond the control of the federal agen-



Above, Union Square, New York, May 1. Right and below, Boston, July 10.

cy that they are supposed to be working for." The report warned that 287(g) laid the basis for civil right violations. (April 8)

Another, even more ominous policy is quietly being applied in cities across the country.

In April and July, CounterPunch published two informative articles: "Why Obama's 'Secure Communities' Program May Be More Dangerous Than Arizona" by Stewart J. Lawrence and "It's Not Just Arizona" by Bill Quigley.

The articles correctly describe the creeping danger of what Lawrence described as "one of the Obama administration's most important and secretive immigration enforcement programs."

Lawrence writes, "Known euphemistically as 'Secure Communities,' the program looks and sounds innocuous, and even beneficial." But it is far from that.

He documents how the program has targeted "low-level misdemeanor offenders, including people who may be guilty of little more than running a stop sign or driving with a broken taillight." Many of these people are innocent. "But," writes Lawrence, "they are getting rounded up and processed for deportation just the same."

The program began in North Carolina and Texas in October 2008. Now, more than 450 jurisdictions, in at least 24 states, are working with the Department of Homeland Security to implement the program. Lawrence notes that is more than six times the number of jurisdictions working under 287(g).

Lawrence warns that President Obama is moving to fast-track the Secure Communities program. "By 2013, under the Obama plan, all 3,100 of the nation's jails



WW PHOTO: STEVE KIRSCHBAUM

in all 50 states are slated to have the Secure Communities database in place."

Quigley illustrates the heartbreaking and insidious application of Secure Communities with the case of Florinda Lorenzo-Desimilian.

He writes, "Lorenzo-Desimilian, a 26-year-old married mother of three ... was arrested in her home [in Maryland] by local police on a misdemeanor charge of selling \$2 phone cards out of her apartment window without a license. ...

"Local police sent her prints to the FBI who in turn notified [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement] that she had overstayed her work visa. Even though her three children are U.S. citizens, ICE kept her in jail for two days and is now trying to deport her."

Secure Communities, he writes, is "really operating a dragnet scooping up and deporting tens of thousands of immigrants, like Ms. Lorenzo-Desimilian, who are no security risk to anyone."

Quigley adds, "ICE says this program 'supports public safety by strengthening efforts to identify and remove the most dangerous criminal aliens from the United States.' However, ICE is not actually targeting convicted criminal aliens, dangerous aliens, or even violent aliens. They are targeting everyone."

For more information on Secure Communities visit [www.uncoverthetruth.org](http://www.uncoverthetruth.org).

Other examples of the wrenching devastation of immigrant's lives are laws such as that in Fremont, Neb. Amidst billboard campaigns that read "Stop the invasion," the City Council passed legislation prohibiting the rental of homes to people without documents.

The week of July 12 a Utah state government worker released a list of about 1,500 immigrants' names, along with their immigration status, address and date of birth to the media! Some of the names included women who had just given birth or were pregnant. This amounts to a Nazi-like reign of terror.

## War on immigrants is war on workers

The state-applied immigration policies, the right-wing rhetoric and hysteria, coupled with the policies of the Obama administration, amount to a war on immigrants.

The Washington Post reported on July 26 that a record number of undocumented workers have been or will be deported. It wrote that the Obama administration expects to deport about 400,000 workers this fiscal year — "nearly 10 percent above the Bush administration's 2008 total and 25 percent more than were deported in 2007!"

One of the principal ways these deportations have occurred merits a full campaign by every single union in this country.

The Post writes: "The Obama administration has been moving away from using work-site raids to target employers. Just 765 undocumented workers have been arrested at their jobs this fiscal year, compared with 5,100 in 2008, according to Department of Homeland Security figures.

"Instead, officers have increased employer audits, studying the employee documentation of 2,875 companies suspected of hiring illegal workers and assessing \$6.4 million in fines."

This policy, called "velvet deportations" by some and "silent raids" by others, is in response to the economic crisis that is sweeping the world. If labor does not respond to these deportations, 287(g) and Secure Communities not

only will devastate immigrant communities, but will continue to undermine union drives and campaigns to raise wages. Furthermore, it will exacerbate tensions and racism, instead of fostering solidarity and unity — the main tools for winning workers' demands.

Stopping 287(g) and Secure Communities should be one of the main demands of the Oct. 2 March on Washington for jobs that is being organized by sectors of the labor movement and the Black community. The immigrant rights movement should mobilize for this demonstration.

## Linking to anti-war movement

An important anti-war conference took place in Albany July 23-25. The immigration struggle had a significant role there. This alliance-building is key to building the anti-war movement as well as advancing the immigrant rights struggle.

Immigration policy is clearly an anti-war issue, as Predator B drones — the same ones used by the CIA in the Middle East — are now patrolling the U.S./Mexican border. The militarization of the border is an act of war, not only on the people south of the border, but on all decent-minded people.

The Albany conference voted to hold spring anti-war actions on April 9 instead of later in April, because it would have presented a problem if they took place closer to May Day. This solidarity and coordination by various sectors of the movement is a tremendous example of the kind of unity that is urgently needed in the face of all the assaults against the workers and oppressed of the world.

As fall and spring actions fill the calendar, perhaps a crescendo of movement will culminate on May Day 2011, where all sectors — not just the immigrant movement, but labor, anti-war and others — will march together in a splendid show of class unity.

In New York, the rallying cry will be "May Day where? Union Square!" □

# African Union summit burdened with U.S. imperialism's role in Somalia

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

This year's African Union summit, which was held in the East African state of Uganda on July 25-27, came under tremendous pressure from the U.S.-supported government of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. The head of state sought to turn the entire continent's attention toward implementing Washington's foreign policy objectives in Somalia.

The Ugandan capital of Kampala was hit by a series of explosions on July 11 that killed 76 people. The Somali resistance organization al-Shabab has claimed responsibility for the attacks, saying that the operation was carried out in response to the killing of civilians by the African Union Mission (AMISON) peacekeeping forces in Somalia. These forces are largely composed of troops from Uganda and Burundi.

Even though the theme of the summit was maternal and child health, Museveni in his opening address said that the primary concern for African states is to fight against al-Shabab and other Islamic resistance movements on the continent. "Let us work in concert to sweep them out of Africa," Museveni said on July 25. (Associated Press)

Museveni has pledged that Uganda will deploy another 2,000 troops to Somalia in an attempt to prop up the weak Transitional Federal Government, which is funded and politically supported by the United States. The West African state of Guinea announced that it will send an 850-member battalion to Somalia as well.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder attended the AU summit as an envoy of the Obama administration. He told the African leaders that the administration would maintain its existing support for the AMISOM forces in Somalia.

Since 2007, under both the George W. Bush and Obama administrations, the United States has supplied more than \$176 million to AMISOM. There are plans

in the works to provide additional "enhanced pre-deployment training" to both Ugandan and Burundian troops operating inside Somalia.

European Union officials at the summit said they would maintain their current allotment of \$750 monthly salaries paid to the AMISOM soldiers and that if there was an increase in troops to Somalia, funds could be found to cover the cost.

Meanwhile, in the capital of Somalia, Mogadishu, it was reported that eight people were killed over the weekend of July 23-25. The Islamic resistance movement controls most of Mogadishu and has placed the TFG in a very precarious situation.

As a stark illustration of the crisis facing the U.S.-backed TFG, several members of Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed's personal guards defected to al-Shabab just days prior to the opening of the AU summit. The Somalia leader met with Johnnie Carson, U.S. assistant secretary of state for African affairs, on the sidelines of the Kampala gathering on July 26.

Despite calls from Museveni, the Obama administration and the EU to focus more attention on the situation in Somalia, the Horn of Africa nation of Eritrea warned against the escalation of the conflict through the deployment of additional troops. Eritrean Foreign Minister Osman Saleh emphasized during pre-summit meetings that there needed to be dialogue between the conflicting parties in Somalia rather than reliance on military measures.

"We believe that military involvement cannot bring a peaceful solution," Saleh said. "Priority should be given to a political solution" that would require talks involving al-Shabab, Hizbul Islam, the TFG, and breakaway areas Puntland and Somaliland. (rebelnews.org, July 25)

Saleh also rejected allegations made by the U.S. government that Eritrea was supporting al-Shabab. On July 20 U.S. Congressperson Ed Royce sent a letter to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton suggesting that Eritrea be placed on the list of states

designated as "terrorists."

In the same article the Foreign Minister dismissed Royce's claim: "This is an allegation that doesn't have any evidence. We haven't supported the al-Shabab."

Even though the United States has created the Africa Command (AFRICOM) and increased military intervention in Africa, AU Commission Chair Jean Ping conveyed in a speech to the summit that the security situation on the continent was still fragile.

"[The year] 2010 has been declared the 'Year of Peace and Security in Africa.' On the ground, we cannot but admit the persistence of certain conflicts, the eruption of crisis linked to elections and the resurgence of the scourge of coup d'etat," Jean Ping said during his opening speech at the summit. (Xinhua News Agency, July 25)

## Gender issues, health care need greater attention

This year's AU summit was initially designed to address the pressing need for increased attention to the role of women within society and the general public health within member-states. The overall theme of the gathering was "Maternal, Infant and Child Health and Development in Africa," reflecting the commitments made at the AU summit in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2006.

Nonetheless, women's organizations attending the pre-summit meetings in Kampala expressed concern over the slow pace of change related to gender issues and health care. According to Bineta Diop, the executive director and founder of Femmes Africa Solidarite, "When you look at reality on the ground, a lot still needs to be done." (Voice of America, July 24) The women's rights organization is concerned with the impact of war and human rights violations

Diop continued, "We are appreciative that [the AU summit is] sitting down and saying 'let's review and see what didn't work.' I think that takes political will."

She urged summit participants to take women's concerns more seriously: "Even in issues of peace and security and terrorism, it is women who bear the brunt and pick up the pieces." Diop emphasized that women make up half of the continent's population, and should be fully engaged in developing solutions to national problems.

In October the African Union will launch the "Decade of Women" from 2010-2020. During that time numerous projects will be initiated on the continent that are designed to raise the standard of living and quality of life for women and to further empower them within society.

In addition, a call was made for African states to increase funding to continue the battle against HIV/AIDS. Global Fund Executive Director Michel Kazatchkine said from the sidelines of the summit that "We expect at least a two-paragraph declaration calling for the replenishment of funds for the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis." (Africajet.com, July 26)

In the same article, Michel Sidibe, head of the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS, expressed concern about a decrease in funding resulting from the impact of the economic crisis in the industrialized countries. "It is the first time we are experiencing the decline in HIV/AIDS [funding]. The gap is huge, from US\$26 billion to US\$16 billion mobilized this year. We need an extra US\$10 billion every year to finance the care."

Singling out the United States, Jeffrey Sachs, a senior adviser to the United Nations director on Millennium Development Goals, said in the same article, "It strikes me as hard to understand that they cannot increase their funding to HIV/AIDS through the Global Fund when bankers walk away with US\$30 billion bonuses untaxed. ... It is even harder when they spend US\$100 billion to fund the war in Afghanistan, when they say they find no money for HIV/AIDS funding." □

## HAITI

# Growing anger, misery six months after earthquake

By **G. Dunkel**

Conditions are worsening daily for the 1.5 million people in Haiti living in tents or under oilcloth tarps on the streets of Port-au-Prince, Leògane or Jacmel. Food distributions in the 1,368 U.N.-recognized camps have stopped since the work programs that pay people for removing debris by hand have spread. However, many people are hungry and have insufficient food. If you can't work, you don't eat.

The free distribution of water to the camps, which involved waiting on long lines in the broiling sun for small rations of barely potable water, is being opposed by private water vendors because it cuts into their profits. The camps don't have electricity, not even flashlights, and no sanitation. Many of the clinics that were set up after the catastrophic earthquake have been closed.

One of seven Haitians is homeless.

Beverly Bell, who has lived and worked in Haiti on and off for 30 years, compares the situation in Haiti to post-Katrina New Orleans. However, in Haiti it's as though people are still trapped in the Superdome and the Arena after six months, fed and given water sporadically, sharing

temporary sanitation facilities with thousands of people.

Father Wismith Lazard, head of the Jesuit Refugee Service in Haiti, told Haïti-Liberté, "Now is the time for the Haitian government, the international community, and the U.N. agencies to concretely address these problems — having enough to eat, education, sanitation and the other social needs of the most vulnerable sectors of society, including those living in the non-official camps." (July 14)

For the fortunate few, those with money whose houses survived, conditions in Port-au-Prince are picking up. Children are back at private schools, people are playing games on the streets, and restaurants are playing music. The water company supplies water every two days. Meanwhile, men and women in the work-to-eat program are removing the debris in these areas.

According to former President Bill Clinton, who is the special U.N. envoy to Haiti and co-chair of the Interim Commission for the Reconstruction of Haiti, less than 10 percent of the \$5.3 billion in international aid that was promised to Haiti has been paid. (New York Times, July 9) It should be remembered that Clinton did

nothing to aid the Haitian people during his presidency.

## U.S. \$1.5 billion pledged, not paid

The U.S.-pledged \$1.5 billion still has not been paid. Even Sri Mulyani Indrawati, managing director of the World Bank, reports that less than \$100 million of the billions promised have been sent to the World Bank's Haiti account. (NYT, July 15)

Without substantial, steadily flowing aid, the fancy plans and documents posted on the ICRH web site — which are almost entirely in English, not in Creole or French, the official languages of Haiti — are worthless.

Beyond aid, there is the ever-pressing problem of debris. U.N. consultants estimate that less than 2 percent of the rubble from the earthquake in Port-au-Prince has been removed. The Haitian government gives the excuse that there is no place to put it. Haitian landlords, members of Haiti's rapacious bourgeoisie, want bigger crumbs from the booty the big imperialists want to extract from the Haitian masses and the humanitarian aid they have been promised.

As has been the case throughout Haiti's history, protests regularly occur. The

masses have not been silent during this vicious assault on their very existence. Many have marched to demand housing for the displaced, education, agricultural production and to protest nonpayment of state workers and teachers' salaries.

They continue to protest violence by MINUSTAH, the U.N. security mission that replaced the occupation of U.S., French and Canadian troops. A massive demonstration protested Monsanto's "gift" of genetically modified seeds, which are designed to subvert Haitian agriculture.

## Fanmi Lavalas protest on July 15

Fanmi Lavalas called a big demonstration on July 15 to mark the 57th birthday of ousted democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Thousands marched six miles under the hot sun from his home in Tabarre to the ruined National Palace in the center of Port-au-Prince, which is near a major squalid camp on the Champ de Mars.

The protesters chanted, "If Aristide was in Haiti, we would not be in this disgusting situation. We would be sending our kids to school. We would have a place to live. Unlike Préval, he wouldn't have sold

*Continued on page 9*

## Unable to get other countries' support

# U.S. ratchets up military pressure on DPRK

By Deirdre Griswold

The U.S. and south Korean militaries are staging their largest joint war exercises in years off the coast of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

By the most amazing twist of logic, the U.S. government and the corporate media are presenting this monstrous display of force as a response to "aggressive behavior" by the DPRK.

Even the label given to this menacing show of naked power — "war games" — is meant to allay fears among the population at home that the Pentagon might be planning to plunge this country into yet another war.

The DPRK has responded with warnings that, whether they are called "games" or "exercises" or "drills," it takes such threats from Washington very seriously and is ready to fight back in the event of any aggression by the U.S. war machine.

Plowing the sea off the east coast of the DPRK beginning July 25 was a large flotilla headed by the USS George Washington, a Nimitz-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. One of the largest ships in the U.S. Navy, it is really a floating airport that cost \$3.6 billion, took 40 million person hours and six years to construct, weighs 97,000 tons, has a crew of more than 6,000 and holds 75 combat planes. (gw.fcc.navy.mil)

Accompanying the George Washington are 20 more ships and submarines, wrote the July 25 New York Times, with a combined 8,000 troops and "an unusually large number of warplanes: more than

200 aircraft, including the F-22 Raptor fighter, which was part of an exercise in South Korea for the first time."

No wonder that the DPRK needs to prepare for any kind of attack! And this "drill" is but the first in a series of 10 to be conducted by the U.S. and the right-wing government in south Korea before the end of the year.

### Koreans won't surrender — then or now

These very real war threats come exactly 57 years after the DPRK finally forced the U.S. to end its three-year aggression against the north and sign a ceasefire on July 27, 1950. The Korean People's Army fought so valiantly that the U.S. invaders had to give up their ambition to conquer all of Korea, after having inflicted terrible damage with their technologically superior forces and causing the deaths of 3 million Korean people.

To this day, however, a state of war is still technically in effect. The U.S. refuses to discuss a peace treaty with the DPRK and keeps nearly 30,000 soldiers stationed in the south.

To put further pressure on the DPRK, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, formerly head of the CIA, went to south Korea the week before the war maneuvers began and made sure to be photographed at the demilitarized zone dividing the north and south of Korea. It was meant to be a chilling reminder of the trip made to the very same spot by U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles in 1950, just days before the outbreak of the war.

### The Cheonan — a manufactured crisis

The U.S. media, instead of reminding the people of this country of the horrors of that war, have instead been focused for months on a cooked-up "crisis" the Obama administration says was caused by the DPRK. However, the State Department has found it very difficult to get other countries to accept this story, which alleges that the DPRK in March torpedoed the south Korean naval ship Cheonan in waters near the border between north and south, causing it to sink with the loss of 46 crew members.

The DPRK vigorously rejects this story and has demanded that it be allowed to send an inspection team to the south to evaluate what south Korea calls the "evidence." South Korea won't let them in. In the first weeks after the Cheonan broke apart and sank in shallow waters, both the military and intelligence authorities in the south had referred to it as an accident and said there was no reason to think the DPRK was involved.

The U.S. media, however, tried hard to give the impression that the U.N. Security Council would pass a resolution condemning the DPRK for the sinking. That didn't happen. China rejected the U.S. claim that the DPRK was responsible. China also has objected strenuously to the war exercises off Korea, which had originally been planned to take place in the sea west of Korea. This would have put them even closer to the Chinese mainland. The Pentagon still plans to carry out naval maneuvers in the western sea later this year.

An analyst at Dongguk University in Seoul, south Korea, told the media that

"For now, both Washington and Seoul seem to believe that they've got nothing big to lose by continuing the pressure. What worries me is that the tension is not just between the two Koreas, but also between the biggies, the United States and China." (New York Times, July 25)

The U.S. talks as though the DPRK were completely isolated. But in a recent regional forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Washington failed in its effort to push through a resolution condemning the DPRK for the Cheonan incident.

Unable to whip up other countries to join its offensive against the DPRK, Washington is now going it virtually alone, abetted by the right-wing regime in south Korea that also thrives on anti-communism and is joined at the hip to the Pentagon.

While in south Korea, Clinton announced on July 21 that the U.S. would unilaterally tighten economic sanctions on the DPRK, targeting offshore bank accounts of Korean personnel. However, the north, which has been trying to build socialism ever since its popular revolution drove out the Japanese imperialists in 1945, has weathered much worse than economic sanctions. It will not bow down to U.S. pressure — military, diplomatic or economic.

The days when a few U.S. gunboats could succeed in demolishing the resistance of small countries are over. No amount of saber-rattling can overcome the determination of the Korean people, hardened by generations of struggle and sacrifice against foreign imperialist aggressors, to defend their hard-won sovereignty and independence. □

## What's an 'independent' union?

# Imperialist strategy vs. worker militancy in China

By Deirdre Griswold

Can it be just a coincidence?

After a wave of strikes at foreign-owned firms in China — strikes that were supported by the government and gained significant wage increases for the workers — the business media in the United States and other imperialist countries are complaining that China is taking an economic turn harmful to their interests.

Articles with headlines like "China Is Coming Under Fire" (Wall Street Journal, July 20) and "China's Summer of Labor Unrest" (Forbes.com, July 23) say that corporate investors in Europe and the U.S. are worried that the stability foreign firms have enjoyed in China may be coming to an end.

What they don't say is that these companies went to China because they could get away with paying low wages while demand-

ing intensive labor and long workdays. In other words, they went for the profits at a time when China's leaders felt they had no other choice than to invite in foreign capital in order to build up their economy.

The articles don't put it that way. These organs of big business would never admit that U.S. and other imperialist corporations are in China in the first place in order to exploit the workers to the utmost. In fact, they deliberately write as though they are sympathetic to the workers' demands, while pushing those demands further. The workers are seeking better wages and working conditions. The Western media almost universally call for "independent" trade unions — saying that's what Chinese workers want.

The Forbes article, written by Phelim Kine, turns everything upside down, blaming not the exploiting corporations but the Chinese government for a "deficit of workers' rights" that it says is responsible for "destabilizing the manufacturing sector."

In a July 5 editorial, the New York Times waxed eloquent about workers' rights. China's workers, it said, "need higher wages, better working conditions and a chance to form independent unions. They need China to stop being sweatshop to the world."

The editorial admits that "China, over all, has done well with its export-dependent strategy based on cheap labor and a cheap currency. Gross domestic product per person trebled over the last 10 years, to \$7,200. The share of the population living on less than a dollar a day fell to 16 percent in 2005, from 36 percent in 1999. But China needs to move on. Too much of the country's prosperity has been ab-

sorbed by companies' profits. Too little has gone to workers."

Who could disagree with that? But isn't it suspicious that the Times editors reserve their most passionate editorializing for workers' rights in China? When did this paper — whose ads for multimillion-dollar estates and baubles for the filthy rich betray its true class orientation — ever editorialize in the same way about the struggles of the Republic Windows and Doors workers in Chicago or the low-paid Hyatt hotel workers across the U.S.?

Meanwhile, the Times business section advises those with plenty of money how to invest it to get even more — out of the sweat and blood of the workers, who of course are never mentioned in the context of the billions in profits sloshing around Wall Street.

### What are 'independent' unions?

The question of what unions will represent workers in China in their struggles for higher wages and better conditions is a serious one for all progressives. In calling for "independent unions" in China, the Western media are either sidestepping or directly attacking the All-China Federation of Trade Unions, the largest labor federation in the world. Unfortunately, this demand is also raised by many organizations in the West that claim to be on the side of the workers.

China's workers need fighting unions, no doubt about it. So do workers everywhere who are exploited by capital. A struggle is going on right now in the U.S. labor movement to make the union leaders fight and not keep making concession after

concession to the bosses. Rank-and-file caucuses exist in many unions to promote greater internal democracy and open the door for more militant leadership.

But how would workers in unions under the umbrella of the AFL-CIO or Change to Win feel if the anti-labor, corporate media, like the Wall Street Journal or Forbes, in the midst of a militant strike wave, suddenly began to demand "independent unions" in the U.S.?

The imperialists complain that China's unions are too close to the government and the ruling Communist Party. Despite the big opening that the party leaders have given to capitalists to do business in China, the exploiting classes don't trust any government that still declares socialism to be its goal and the working class to be the central class in society. So they promote the idea of unions that are independent of the Communist Party.

U.S. unions are not independent of the political structure, either. Their long history of supporting the Democratic Party is common knowledge. But here's the point: Who is to tell the workers that they should break with their existing unions and set up "independent" labor organizations? The Republicans?

What the capitalist media and imperialist agencies within the international labor movement want to do is seize upon the growing anger of the Chinese workers towards capital and redirect it against the ACFTU and the Communist Party in the interest of weakening the Chinese government politically. They also fear that militant Chinese workers will fight their way

Continued on page 10

Continued from page 8

the country to foreigners. Préval must go." (Haïti-Liberté, July 26).

The marchers focused their anger at Préval because he has sold the country out to the U.S., Canadian and French imperialists by passing unjust laws, scorning the needs of the masses and denying Fanmi Lavalas — the largest political party in the country — the right to participate in the November elections.

Beyond help with their immediate physical needs and rebuilding, the people of Haiti need political solidarity in their struggle against the imperialists who are maneuvering to drain their country of every resource. □

# Never ending wars

The crude arrogance of the Bush years has yet to be replaced with a kinder, gentler form of imperialist diplomacy. Making a tour of sites of past and present U.S. wars, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton recently put in appearances in Afghanistan, south Korea and Vietnam. Spinning the visit to two countries where the U.S. military was defeated and one that seems to be right on track to repeat this outcome, she put south Korea and Vietnam forward as models for the world. She gushed that they were shining examples of countries that have successfully overcome the legacy of war and conflict.

Overcome the legacy of war and conflict? How about the legacy of Agent Orange? Over two million Vietnamese still carry evidence of the terrible and painful legacy of this unprosecuted U.S. war crime. Dioxin continues to cause horrific birth defects in new generations while those who were alive during the war and those who live on poisoned land suffer from a cluster of dioxin exposure-related cancers and other severe and chronic health problems. Agent Orange inflicts cruel personal economic and emotional burdens on individuals and families, and remains a severe drain on the country's meager public health resources.

What will the U.S. do to help "overcome" this particular legacy of the war? Clinton had a chance to answer this question. What specific plan, a Vietnamese journalist asked her at a press conference, did the U.S. have for cooperating with Vietnam to deal with the consequences of the war there? "We've been working with Vietnam for about nine years to try to remedy the effects of Agent Orange," Clinton responded vaguely, promising to "work to increase our cooperation and

make even greater progress together." (AFP, July 22)

Would an example of these efforts be when U.S. courts refused even to accept a suit for damages brought by Vietnamese Agent Orange survivors against the U.S. companies that got rich from producing the dioxin the U.S. military sprayed over huge areas of Vietnam?

As if failure to make good on reparations for Vietnam wasn't enough, Clinton's trip included plenty of examples of U.S. bullying and threatening Asian nations. In case China had forgotten, Clinton warned that the policy of keeping the world safe for U.S. oil companies remains in force, thus ratcheting up tensions around the oil-rich East Sea/South China Sea. In this case defending oil companies is called, in opaque State Department jargon, support for "national interest in freedom of navigation." The Korean tinderbox was also the subject of much politicking by the Secretary of State, who continually tried to rally support for increased international pressure on north Korea.

You have to wonder just what kind of aid Clinton had in mind when she emphasized the U.S. commitment to work with nations everywhere to help them strengthen civil society. Would that be replicating the exemplary U.S. imperialist policies of rendition and torture? Or perhaps the brutal roundups of immigrants and Arizona's SB 1070? Or perhaps it would be building institutions of "control" similar to the ones that do not control the racist police forces in the U.S. Or would it be duplicating the outrageous hijacking of relief efforts for the Haitian earthquake tragedy? The U.S. has so many "lessons" it could teach other governments. □

## Annual caravans challenge U.S. blockade of Cuba

The Pastors for Peace 21st Friendship Caravan to Cuba arrived in Havana on July 22. The 85 caravanistas had collected more than 100 tons of humanitarian aid as they traveled through Canada and the United States on 13 routes to more than 130 cities before gathering on the U.S./ Mexico border.

From Texas they traveled to Cuba via Mexico without asking for a U.S. government license, as a collective challenge to the U.S. blockade and travel ban and as ambassadors for a "people-to-people" foreign policy based on mutual respect. They entered Mexico on July 21 after U.S. Customs officials withheld five computers donated in Vancouver, Canada, claiming they were a possible military threat.

Participants with skills in construction, organic gardening and mural painting are working alongside Cuban counterparts for a couple of days, interchanging knowledge, skills and perspectives. All will see and learn about many aspects of Cuban life under socialism.

The caravan will attempt to re-enter the U.S. on Aug. 3.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC  
**Cuba Solidarity Committee activists in Dallas and Houston worked hard to raise the money to buy a bus to send to the people of Cuba.**

Chanting "¡Cuba sí, bloqueo no!" an energetic and enthusiastic group of some 30 members of the 41st Venceremos Brigade marched across the Peace Bridge from Fort Erie, Canada, to Buffalo, N.Y., on July 26, proudly declaring they had been to Cuba in defiance of the United States' blockade and travel restrictions.

The brigadistas worked as volunteers, learning from and building relationships with Cubans. As they returned to the U.S., they were welcomed with a solidarity rally and picnic organized by the Buffalo/WNY International Action Center and the WNY Peace Center's Latin America Solidarity Committee Task Force.

The diverse group of mostly young people was eager to share their experiences. Many of them remarked that they were most deeply impressed by the way socialism has transformed all the institutions of people's daily lives.

— Gloria Rubac

— Ellie Dorritte

## Imperialist strategy vs. worker militancy in China

*Continued from page 9*

into the ACFTU and force it in a struggle direction to the detriment of capital. They will dangle the prospect of higher wages and better conditions as a carrot in order to break up the ACFTU and promote a version of the pro-imperialist "Solidarity."

U.S. imperialism has a long history of promoting "independent" unions in countries it wants to destabilize. The American Institute for Free Labor Development was an agency set up supposedly by the AFL-CIO in 1962. In fact, it was to function as an arm of the CIA. It depended almost entirely on government funds. AIFLD agitated for "free" unions in the countries of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and played a big role in building the counter-revolutionary "Solidarity" movement in Poland. Today Poland is just a vassal of imperialism and has become the low-wage country of choice for rapacious corporations eager to exploit a well-educated, low-paid work force.

AIFLD became so exposed as an instrument of imperialism that its name was changed to the American Center for International Labor Solidarity. But its role has remained the same.

When the moneyed elite in 2002 attempted a coup against the progressive government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela, Carlos Ortega, head of the Venezuelan Workers' Confederation, was a major player, joining the country's business federation in a two-day strike to shut down the oil industry. Ortega and his union received money and other support from Washington's National Endowment for Democracy, funneled through the ACILS. The coup failed because hundreds of thousands of workers surrounded the presidential palace and demanded that Chávez be freed.

These are examples of the kinds of "in-

dependent" unions that Wal-Mart, General Motors and ExxonMobil can love.

Last year, the National Endowment for Democracy gave \$6 million in grants to nongovernmental organizations operating in China. Four of the grants went to ACILS projects claiming to promote "labor solidarity" and "workers' rights" in China. (ned.org) ACILS is an "NGO" that gets 97 percent of its funding from the U.S. government.

There is no question that China's working class needs to be organized and militant to push back the rapacious bosses. And it is both. Strikes are not a new thing in China. The government reports about 100,000 "mass incidents" per year, many of them wildcat strikes.

According to the ACFTU's website, by 2008 the federation had 212 million members working in 3,682,000 unionized enterprises and institutions. The union has targeted foreign-owned companies like Wal-Mart and Yum Brands for organizing. (Wal-Mart signed a union contract in 2006 — in China, not in the U.S.) However, only about half the newer migrant workers who leave the rural areas to seek jobs in industry are in unions.

An article about the strikes at Honda plants in May and June ("Wildcat Strikes in China" by Lance Carter, China Study Group) reports that, while workers initially raised a demand for a reorganization of their local trade union, the Honda workers "seem to have backed away" from demanding an autonomous union. The best outcome will be one that strengthens the unity of China's working class in the struggle to push back the bourgeoisie, foreign and domestic, while developing a planned economy for the benefit of the 1.3 billion Chinese people.

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## Leaks expose criminal war End U.S. occupation of Afghanistan

*Continued from 1*

and Pakistani governments.

The Obama administration attacked Wikileaks' publication of the material, calling it "a crime" and claiming Wikileaks' anti-war history makes it biased. The administration also claims that the documents put U.S. forces at risk, although no names are used and the cables involve no current operations.

The Times, which has supported the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan from October 2001 to the present day, put its own biased spin on the data. The Times' coverage has minimized the importance of the information exposed in the cables and focused attention on the alleged role of Pakistan supporting the Taliban. This approach draws attention away from U.S.-NATO war crimes against Afghan civilians and the complete lack of a legitimate justification for the occupation.

The Guardian has a more nearly balanced coverage. This paper has published more articles critical of the occupation of Afghanistan. The Guardian has provided a type of indexing, making it possible to locate specific cables. If one were to read each cable in only three minutes, reading 12 hours a day, it would take over a year to read them all.

### Pentagon Papers 2?

When Daniel Ellsberg released "the Pentagon Papers" in 1971 to a public that already opposed or had doubts about the U.S. war on Vietnam, their publication accelerated the anti-war movement. Ells-

berg has likened the Wikileaks release to the scale of the earlier Pentagon Papers, although he points out that they don't reveal top secret policy decisions.

The Pentagon Papers exposed the Lyndon Johnson administration's lies about an alleged North Vietnamese patrol boat attack on U.S. destroyers in the Tonkin Gulf in August 1964. Johnson used this phony story as a pretext to bomb two major North Vietnamese cities, Hanoi and Haiphong, and to escalate the war.

Those active in the anti-war movement knew of this fraud long before the Pentagon Papers were released in 1971. Following the first bombing raids in 1964, Workers World editor-in-chief Deirdre Griswold and contributing editor Fred Goldstein stayed up all night to write a leaflet for Youth Against War and Fascism that nailed the alleged attack as a phony pretext for expanding the war. This writer distributed that leaflet at an all-day protest at the United Nations the next day.

But it took seven years of a failed criminal war and ever growing protests to make the Pentagon Papers happen. In turn, their publication exposed the fraud to the entire population, adding to the protests that helped to finally end the war. A small revolutionary group swimming against the tide then became the flood.

Perhaps the Wikileaks publication will inspire continued exposures of the criminal plans of the U.S. administrations to invade and occupy Afghanistan and Iraq

*Continued on page 11*

# Coalition adopts action plan to fight U.S. wars

By John Catalinotto  
Albany, N.Y.

With the overwhelming support of the more than 700 people who registered for the three-day event, the United National Anti-war Conference decided July 25 to adopt an action program. It included support for a series of actions across the country in the coming weeks and months and for mass demonstrations next April 9 on the East and West Coasts. These actions will demand the immediate withdrawal of U.S. and other occupation troops and mercenaries from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Some 12 hours after the conference ended, the New York Times, the British newspaper The Guardian and the German weekly newsmagazine Der Spiegel published summaries of 92,000 leaked classified cables between U.S. officials regarding the Afghan occupation. This evidence, showing the bankruptcy of U.S.-NATO war strategy and exposing imperialist war crimes, may impel the anti-war movement to take action even sooner.

The Albany conference also clearly opposed any U.S. or Israeli military actions against Iran. Recently, Washington imposed new heavy sanctions against Iran and sent additional warships to the seas within striking range of Iran's 70 million people. In anticipation of a possible bombing raid, the anti-war coalition also agreed to seek early opportunities to protest.

In contrast with some of the earlier broad anti-war coalitions, most of the individuals and organizations at the conference enthusiastically supported Palestinian liberation and opposed the Israeli state. This issue sparked the most extensive debate, but resulted in overwhelming

support for the addition to the action plan of a demand to end all U.S. economic, diplomatic and military aid to Israel.

It has always been a principled position to support Palestinian self-determination. Following the criminal attack on Gaza in December 2008 and the murderous assault on the Freedom Flotilla this June, a strong and dynamic movement has grown opposing the reactionary, pro-imperialist Israeli state and demanding boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. This movement — with a strong lead from the Palestinian Solidarity Caucus of the conference, composed of Al-Awda and many solidarity and anti-imperialist activists such as the International Action Center — had its impact in Albany.

## The war at home

Many organizations and individuals had had defining experiences in the 1960s and 1970s movement opposing the U.S. war against Vietnam. At that time many supported the "single issue" tactic — that is, just calling for ending the war and bringing U.S. troops home.

Given multiple U.S. aggressions taking place in the midst of a capitalist economic downturn, with massive unemployment, home seizures and losses of both wages and government-supplied benefits, the conference favorably considered expanding the movement's demands.

Slogans like "Jobs, not war" were on the order of the day. Immigrant rights organizations were invited to address the conference and hold workshops. Those defending political prisoners such as Mumia Abu-Jamal, Lynne Stewart — whose spouse, Ralph Poynter, spoke — and the numerous Muslims framed for alleged

terrorist conspiracies addressed a lunchtime plenary. Other workshops took up defending education and health care.

The action plan also urged participation in the jobs march on Oct. 2 in Washington called by the NAACP and endorsed by the AFL-CIO, the student mobilization to defend education on Oct. 7 and demonstrations defending immigrant rights. This attempt to integrate the anti-war movement with these other actions showed the intention of reaching out to the working class in general, to oppressed communities and to youth, even if this was not reflected in the participant composition of the conference.

The conference gave evidence of its fighting spirit when roughly half of the 500 people at its adjournment joined a militant demonstration from the State Capitol through Albany's oppressed community to a nearby mosque. The march showed its solidarity with Muslims in the U.S. under attack and with the Albany-based Project SALAM group that is defending hundreds of Muslim prisoners persecuted in the phony "war on terror." ([projectsalam.org](http://projectsalam.org))

## Anti-imperialist participation

Among the anti-imperialist participants in the conference were activists who



frequently contribute to Workers World newspaper. Abayomi Azikiwe took part in two workshops and introduced a resolution opposing U.S. military intervention in Africa, which was adopted. Sara Flounders of the International Action Center co-introduced resolutions on "Jobs not war" and on stopping any bombing or sanctions against Iran and then fought successfully for their adoption. The IAC participated in the Palestine Solidarity Caucus.

Teresa Gutierrez of the IAC and the May 1st Coalition for Worker & Immigrant Rights explained at a plenary the importance of the movement to win legalization for immigrant workers. She also brought up the need to fight all imperialist wars and threats, including those against Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Larry Holmes of the Bail Out the People Movement reminded the veteran activists of the revolutionary spirit of the 1960s and 1970s, evoking that spirit for the current struggle. When discussing Palestine, Holmes also underlined how Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. defied his labor advisors when he spoke out against the war in Vietnam.

These talks and others relating directly to ongoing struggles evoked strong cheers from the audience.

Workers World Party sent a strong delegation to the conference, and its many experienced and young activists participated with others in the debates, distributed newspapers and leaflets, and sold books.

For more information see [nationalpeaceconference.org](http://nationalpeaceconference.org) and [iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org).

at horrible costs to the local populations and to thousands of U.S. youths.

## Defend the whistle-blowers

It is also important that anti-war forces defend those in the military and government who make the truth available to the public and expose the criminal war conspiracies of the various administrations. A GI who allegedly released these documents and an earlier video to Wikileaks, Spc. Bradley Manning, is currently being held in Kuwait by the Army. A petition supporting him can be signed at the International Action Center website ([iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org)), among others. □



From left, Lynda Cruz of Derechos Humanos in Tucson, Ariz.; Rafael Sananez of Vamos Unidos, NYC; Monami Maulik of Desis Rising Up & Moving; author David Wilson; and Teresa Gutierrez, May 1 Coalition, NYC at the Immigrant Rights workshop.

# Solidarity march with Muslim community

A solidarity demonstration with the Muslim community of Albany, N.Y., on July 25 immediately followed the last session of a national anti-war conference held in this city. Nearly 300 people showed their support for the Muslim Solidarity Committee, chanting as they marched a mile from the State Capitol through Albany's inner city to the Masjid As-Salam Mosque on Central Avenue.

The committee was originally formed to support local residents Yassin Aref and Mohammed Hossain, who were prosecuted for alleged terrorist acts in 2002 and sentenced to long prison terms, based completely on the testimony of informants. The committee has now become the local chapter of Project SALAM (Support and Legal Advocacy for Muslims), which itself grew out of the committee's four-year advocacy for Aref and Hossain.

Project SALAM has taken up many similar cases in which Muslims have been framed up, such as the case known as the Fort Dix Five. Hanging on a wall inside the mosque are the names of many Muslims victimized by the post-9/11 "war on terror," which many experience as a war on Muslims. The families of some of the victims of this persecution participated on the march and spoke emotionally of their relatives at a rally in the mosque. Representatives of local and national anti-war groups attacked the FBI and other police agencies' role in framing Muslims. (For more information see [projectsalam.org](http://projectsalam.org).)



— Report and photo by John Catalinotto

Entrevista con la escritora iraquí Haifa Zangana

# Las mujeres iraquíes bajo el bloqueo imperialista

Entrevista conducida en Asturias, España, mientras John Catalinotto, redactor auxiliar de Workers World-Mundo Obrero, y Haifa Zangana asistían a una conferencia internacional.

**WW:** ¿Cuál era el papel de la mujer en el movimiento anticolonial y su participación personal en la política en Iraq, y cómo se reflejó esto en su escritura? ¿Cómo afectaron las sanciones impuestas contra Iraq en 1990 a las mujeres en particular y a la población iraquí en general?

**HZ:** Las mujeres iraquíes han estado entre las más liberadas de Oriente Próximo; tienen una larga historia de militancia política y de participación social desde el siglo XIX. Durante el siglo XX participaron en la lucha contra la dominación colonial al igual que en las luchas por la unidad nacional, la justicia social y la igualdad de la mujer. De hecho, en 1993 la UNICEF declaró que “raramente las mujeres del mundo árabe disfrutaban de tanto poder y apoyo como del que disfrutaban en Iraq”.

Yo no fui una excepción. Fui miembro de la Dirección Central (DC) del Partido Comunista Iraquí y en 1972 fui encarcelada (primero en Qasr al-Nihaya y después en Abu Ghraib) debido a mi papel en la lucha armada mientras aún era estudiante en la Facultad de Farmacia de la Universidad de Bagdad.

La DC, que surgió a mediados de la década de 1960, era una facción revolucionaria del Partido Comunista Iraquí [PCI]. Se oponía a la política de colaboración del PCI con los gobiernos ligados a las políticas de la Unión Soviética.

A finales de la década de 1960, este grupo se convirtió en un elemento poderoso dentro del PCI que defendía la lucha armada para levantar a las masas, inspirándose en la revolución cubana y en la lucha en Vietnam. La DC luchaba por la autodeterminación del pueblo kurdo iraquí dentro de un Iraq democrático y exigía el fin de la ocupación de Palestina.

En 1974 salí de Iraq para trabajar con la OLP en Siria y el Líbano; y al comienzo de la guerra civil del Líbano (1975) me trasladé a Londres. Después de yo salir de Iraq, mi familia tenía que presentarse regularmente a la seguridad del Estado y demostrar que no tenían contacto conmigo.

A pesar de oponerme al régimen del Baaz, siempre mantuve que el Baaz no representaba al conjunto del pueblo iraquí por lo que los/as iraquíes no tenían que ser castigados/as por los crímenes cometidos por el régimen. Este es el motivo por el que siempre mantuve una oposición activa contra el brutal régimen de sanciones o el “bloqueo” — como lo llamábamos — establecido por Naciones Unidas mediante la resolución 661 del 6 de agosto de 1990 y que duró hasta la invasión de 2003.

El bloqueo afectó todos los aspectos de la vida iraquí y provocó muertes, enfermedades, el rápido derrumbe de la economía y prácticamente el fin del desarrollo humano. El desempleo aumentó



Haifa Zangana

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

y la gente no podía comprar alimentos ni medicinas. Los sueldos en el sector de la salud y de la educación cayeron de un promedio de 200 dólares mensuales antes del bloqueo hasta entre los tres y 10 dólares durante el período de sanciones. Para sobrevivir, los/as iraquíes tenían que vender toda cosa de valor que poseyeran.

A mediados de los 90, ya había muerto medio millón de niños/as iraquíes, un crimen considerado como genocidio por muchos. Cuando Madeleine Albright, la entonces embajadora de EEUU ante la ONU fue confrontada con estas cifras, ella respondió que para derrocar al régimen de Saddam “el precio merecía la pena”.

Las sanciones tuvieron un efecto devastador sobre la salud del pueblo, especialmente de las mujeres y los niños. Los/as científicos y médicos iraquíes llevaron a cabo una exhaustiva investigación sobre las causas del inusual incremento de los casos de cáncer tras el bombardeo anglo-estadounidense de 1991 con uranio empobrecido y nuevamente tras su uso reiterado durante la operación “Conmoción y pavor” de 2003. Sus pruebas concluyentes indican que el uso del uranio empobrecido es la causa de esta nueva epidemia de cáncer, aunque se han tenido que enfrentar a la negación de este hecho por parte de oficiales en ambos países.

El sufrimiento de las mujeres iraquíes fue físico y psicológico. El 57% de las mujeres iraquíes padecían depresión, insomnio, pérdida de peso y dolores de cabeza debido al trauma causado por los bombardeos militares, la muerte de sus hijos, la ansiedad y la incertidumbre sobre el futuro. (UNIFEM, 2004)

Voy a darle un ejemplo de la brutalidad de las sanciones: el 6 de diciembre de 1995, envié a mis sobrinos en Mosul, un sobre acolchado tamaño A4. Dentro había una caja de lapiceros, tres gomas de borrar, tres sacapuntas, seis plumas fuente, dos rotuladores, una barra de pegamento y dos bolígrafos. En el sobre ponía “regalo para niños”. Me devolvieron el sobre con una nota que leía: “Debido a las sanciones internacionales contra Iraq, no se ha podido entregar el paquete”. Me dijeron que para mayor información me comunicara con el Ministerio británico de Comercio e Industria.

## Invasión y ocupación despiertan resistencia

**WW:** El gobierno de George W. Bush prometió llevar democracia y una vida mejor a los iraquíes. ¿Cuál ha sido el impacto real de la invasión anglo-estadounidense, la larga ocupación y el gran incremento posterior de tropas?

**HZ:** La invasión militar de 2003 y la ocupación de Iraq no ha traído nada al pueblo iraquí salvo pérdida de vidas, destrucción y falta de esperanza en la democracia. Por siete años ha sido objeto de castigos colectivos al estilo israelí.

A menudo se los ve como propiciadores del terrorismo. Por lo tanto, si el régimen marioneta estadounidense-iraquí logra avances en seguridad, para la gente de la calle eso significa redadas en las viviendas antes del amanecer, detenciones arbitrarias, secuestros, asesinatos a manos de los mercenarios — llamados agentes de seguridad — y coches bombas en mercados atestados de gente. En Bagdad, Saladin, Najaf, al-Anbar y Nínive hay explosiones a diario. El miedo a morir de manera accidental o premeditada recorre toda la sociedad hasta el punto de paralizarla.

El tan publicitado “éxito del incremento de tropas” fue precedido por un cambio poblacional y una limpieza étnica. Los barrios de Bagdad, otrora mixtos, se han homogeneizado y se han convertido en enclaves suníes o chiitas. De este modo se allanó el camino para que las fuerzas de ocupación diseñaran el nuevo mapa de un Bagdad dividido sectariamente.

Además, el incremento de tropas llenó a Bagdad de barreras, retenes militares y muros. Actualmente y sólo en Bagdad existen 1400 retenes militares y alrededor de 50 zonas divididas con muros de hormigón. Cada muro tiene únicamente un retén militar de entrada y una salida, lo que deja a las comunidades encerradas en guetos.

En la zona verde a esos muros los denominan “muros de seguridad”. No obstante, la inmensa mayoría de los iraquíes los conoce como “muros de la ocupación”, lo que evoca comparaciones con el muro del apartheid construido por los israelíes para separar a los palestinos en Cisjordania.

La construcción de muros de segregación y la destrucción de puentes significa que la existencia de zonas con mezcla religiosa o étnica es prácticamente imposible, lo que pone en práctica la política del divide y vencerás. Los muros tienen un tremendo impacto en la vida diaria de los iraquíes, porque reducen el tejido social de Bagdad y desmiembran Iraq.

La forma de vaciar las calles y el país han sido los muros en tándem con el desplazamiento forzado de alrededor una cuarta parte de la población, los francotiradores que rotan durante meses apostados en los techos de los edificios en zonas claves, y los coches-bomba en los mercados.

Las mujeres iraquíes han perdido todo lo que habían logrado como activistas antes de la invasión y hay miles de mujeres

entre las 650.000 bajas producidas desde mediados de 2006 — y el número sigue aumentando. A mediados de 2007, uno/a de cada ocho iraquíes había abandonado su hogar para convertirse en refugiado/a, llegando a las 50.000 personas al mes que abandonan sus hogares.

El Alto Comisionado de Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados [ACNUR] ha declarado que este éxodo era el mayor movimiento de población que se había producido después del éxodo de los palestinos tras la creación del Estado de Israel en 1948. La Media Luna Roja Iraquí calcula que dos tercios de los desplazados son mujeres y niños que a menudo viven en un hogar cuyo cabeza de familia es también una mujer.

La catástrofe de los/as refugiados iraquíes, que no saltó a los medios de comunicación hasta principios de 2007, es el último aspecto visible del fracaso del proyecto estadounidense en Iraq, que incluye las bajas en el ejército de EEUU, la tortura sistemática de prisioneros y las atrocidades contra los/as civiles, así como el incremento del coste económico, político y medioambiental de esas estrategias estadounidenses en la región.

El desplazamiento forzoso de dos millones de iraquíes dentro del país y de otros dos millones en países vecinos fue seguido, en 2006, de las terribles atrocidades cometidas por los escuadrones de la muerte y las milicias, lo que coincidió con la búsqueda por parte de la ocupación de una alternativa para asegurarse la dominación de Iraq tras su fracaso al no poder subyugar el país. La nueva estrategia estadounidense está basada en la fragmentación de la población en grupos manipulables para poderlos gobernar o administrar.

En los siete años de ocupación, EEUU ha ido desde la oposición pública a las fuerzas religiosas en el mundo árabe y a reclamar un “modelo de democracia” moderno y secular en Iraq, hasta depender abiertamente de las fuerzas islamistas sectarias, una clara indicación de que no ha conseguido encontrar ninguna otra base social de apoyo para su nueva dominación colonial.

Estados Unidos ha intentado justificar este fracaso afirmando que el avance hacia la democracia que inició ‘la liberación’, puso de manifiesto profundos conflictos en la sociedad iraquí que las dictaduras anteriores habían ocultado. Las insólitas formas de violencia, cuyo resultado es un inmenso sufrimiento de todos/as los iraquíes, son fácilmente adscritas al sectarismo.

De forma repetida se nos ha dicho que la cuestión principal en Iraq es que los iraquíes se están matando diariamente por centenares entre ellos y que la pregunta esencial es si ya se ha iniciado una guerra civil sectaria o no, y más recientemente la cuestión es ¿por qué se odian? Culpar a las víctimas se ha convertido en algo ampliamente aceptado por las tropas extranjeras para justificar su permanencia indefinida en Iraq. □