

WORKERS WORLD

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Gov't admits big jump in poverty

Women, people of color hit hardest

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The official U.S. poverty rate is now 15 percent which amounts to 44 million people or one out of seven. This is the highest number of people in poverty on record. Despite claims that the recession in the United States has been over now for 16 months, the Census Bureau's findings show that the entire working class has been deeply impacted by the loss of jobs, pensions, health care and housing. Among the most oppressed segments of the U.S. population, women and the internally colonized people of color, the situation is far worse.

The Wall Street Journal reports, "The longest recession of the post World War II period now has an end date." It continues, "The National Bureau of Economic Research announced Monday that the downturn started in December 2007 was longer than the 1973-1975 and 1981-1982 recessions." (Sept. 20)

The NBER did not say that the economy had improved but only that the recession had ended. NBER stated that it was impossible for there to be "a double-dip recession and that any downturn in the U.S. would be another recession and not the one that they said had already passed out of existence."

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development predicted that the U.S. economy would grow only 2.6 percent and not the 3.2 percent rate that had been earlier announced. It reported that the current crisis could result in long-term structural damage to the economy.

Impact on women and African Americans

These forecasts and summations based on the most current economic data illustrate that the U.S. capitalist system is not out of the recession as far as working people are concerned. Even though large banks and corporations are reporting higher profits, these optimistic figures do not translate into job creation or social benefits for workers, particularly those within the oppressed nations.

The data show that many more women have been thrust into poverty over the last several years, which only reinforces existing patterns of oppression, exploitation and inequality. The National Women's Law Center reported on Sept. 16 that "the rate of poverty for women rose 13.9 percent last year, the highest rate in 15 years." (www.nwlc.org)

NWLC noted, "The data show that over 16.4 million women were living in poverty in 2009, including nearly 7 million women in extreme poverty, which means that their incomes were below half of the federal poverty line. Poverty among men also rose from 9.6 percent in 2008 to 10.5 percent in 2009, but these rates remained substantially lower than poverty rates among women." Also noted was that the traditional wage differential between men and women remained unchanged from 2008 to 2009.

Nonetheless, when the poverty rates among women within the oppressed na-

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EDITORIAL

Cuba and our task

How should those in the United States who support Cuba in its struggle to remain free of imperialist domination react to the news that the Cuban government has made a painful decision to cut hundreds of thousands of state jobs?

Workers World says this should be a spur to greater solidarity with the revolution and stronger efforts to end U.S. imperialism's destructive economic blockade of the island.

The Cuban Revolution has produced the Western Hemisphere's most enlightened and humane social policies.

There is no homelessness in Cuba. Under the 1960 Urban Reform law, 85 percent of Cubans own their own homes and pay no property taxes

or interest on their mortgages. Mortgage payments can't exceed 10 percent of the combined household income.

No one goes hungry in Cuba. The population is guaranteed a subsidized basic diet that provides 2,000 calories a day.

Literacy is universal — 99.8 percent among adults, higher than in the U.S. Education is free, from pre-school to college and graduate school.

The infant mortality rate is 4.7 per 1,000 live births, again better than the U.S. rate of 6.0 infant deaths.

Imagine if someone in the U.S. political establishment were to propose subsidized food and housing and free universal health care

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Homeland Security in cahoots with fracking gas corporations

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Evidence that Pennsylvania's Department of Homeland Security is working on behalf of the natural gas industry came to light in early September when internal department bulletins were leaked to an anti-drilling list-serve. The department had contracted an Israeli-linked agency to spy on anti-drilling activists

The story was later leaked to reporters at Pro Publica and the City Paper. These papers' articles suggested a direct connection between the state agency and the natural gas industry. The exposure fueled outrage from targeted groups.

Gov. Ed Rendell had to retreat. On Sept. 14, he held a press conference to apologize to groups who had been monitored. "Protesting is not a threat, it's an American right," said Rendell. He said he was "appalled" and announced that the state would not renew its \$125,000 no-bid contract with the Institute for Terrorism Research and Response, set to expire in October.

ITRR has a post office box address in Philadelphia. It also has strong links to the Israeli spy agency Mossad and the Israeli Defense Force. These institutions are known for their terrorist activities against the Palestinian people, as well as their deadly assault on the aid flotilla attempting to bring supplies to Gaza in May 2010.

The intelligence bulletin ITRR supplied to the state listed as possible terrorist threats protests outside the Israeli Consulate in Philadelphia.

The confidential bulletin suggested that opponents of gas drilling were "violent terrorists" in need of monitoring. The memo combined the word "environmental" with "extremist, militant, and criminal." It warned that "criminals may soon escalate activities" directed at the gas drilling industry.

The bulletin also listed as potential risks demonstrations by anti-war groups, deportation protests in Philadelphia, a gay pride event, activities by Black Power radicals, an animal rights protest and a demonstration in support of the Ft. Dix Five endorsed by the International Action Center.

It advised Homeland Security and FBI agents to monitor environmental actions, including several hearings about Marcellus Shale drilling across the state; a City Council hearing in Pittsburgh, where the industry wants to drill in a public park; and screenings in Philadelphia of the anti-drilling documentary, "Gasland."

A timely error exposes the truth

Office of Homeland Security Director James F. Powers Jr. apparently had the mistaken impression that the list-serve which leaked the original bulletin was pro-drilling. He sent a private e-mail that read, in part, "Although an internet forum is certainly a great way to spread the word and receive input from forum participants, it's still in the public domain and thus be accessed by both pro and anti-natural gas drilling folk."

"Please assist us in keeping the information provided in the PIB [informational bulletin] to those having a valid need-to-know. ... We want to continue providing this support to the Marcellus Shale Formation natural gas stakeholders while not feeding those groups fomenting dissent against those same companies."

Former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge served as the first U.S. secretary of Homeland Security after George

W. Bush established the department in 2002. In early August 2010, two consulting firms owned by Ridge signed contracts to serve as strategic advisors to the pro-industry Marcellus Shale Coalition for a hefty \$900,000.

Austin Kelley is an activist with Philadelphia-based Protecting Our Waters, which works to educate the public about health impacts of Marcellus Shale gas drilling. Kelley announced that his organization is calling for a full investigation into exactly what happened and "what role the gas industry played."

Speaking of Rendell's retreat, Kelley said, "Being appalled is not enough." Kelley suggested that an independent inquiry explore whether James Powers, director of Pennsylvania Homeland Security, misused taxpayer dollars in providing lists of anti-drilling activities to private companies drilling in Pennsylvania for profit. (P.O.W. news release Sept. 3)

"The Marcellus Shale industry is paying big bucks to push their drill-hard-drill-fast-before-science-and-regulators-can-catch-up agenda in Pennsylvania," said Amy Wilson of Protecting Our Waters. "Tom Ridge is their best PR tool right now, and we have to wonder whether Ridge in turn used PA Homeland Security as a tool against clean water/public health advocates, as part of a public relations strategy to delegitimize anyone who questions the industry."

Meanwhile the real threat to communities across the state is clear. Earlier in September the Susquehanna River in northeast Pennsylvania began bubbling with methane gas after shale gas drilling operations started within two miles of the river. "We don't know the ramifications of this," local resident Don Palmer told WNEP TV, Channel 16. "All we know is that gas coming out of the river is explosive," said Palmer, who is also an engineer. (P.O.W. news release) The proposed 442-mile Millennium Pipeline, which would deliver natural gas from Canada to New York, snakes through significant portions of the Hudson River Valley, including critical fish and wildlife habitats.

New reports of damaged water wells appear almost daily. The number of explosions of gas wells as well as leaks of fracking water containing toxic, radioactive and carcinogenic chemicals into ponds, creeks and ground water is on the rise.

Fracking is going full tilt in Pennsylvania. Writing in Orion magazine, Sandra Steingraber reports that 14 percent of the land in Ithaca, N.Y., has already been leased for drilling, with 40 percent leased in surrounding Rockland County and, "In December 2009, ExxonMobil purchased a large natural gas company, a decision widely viewed as a game-changing commitment to fracking technology." (May/June 2010)

A Pennsylvania-based developer, East Resources, paid \$750 million for rights to 650,000 acres of state forest land in 2009. It recently sold the same rights to Royal Dutch Shell (Shell Oil) for \$4.7 billion.

Between July 2009 and June 2010, the state's 632 producing Marcellus wells released 180 billion cubic feet of gas — an amount more than double Pennsylvania's annual natural gas production from the years before the shale exploration began.

With fracking exempt from federal environmental regulations, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act and the Superfund law, the fight for state and local regulatory control is at a critical juncture. □

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FLOC opens campaign against Chase bank

By Briana Connors and Ben Carroll
Dudley, N.C.

The struggle for justice being waged by North Carolina farmworkers who toil in the fields for tobacco giant R.J. Reynolds continues to push forward. On Sept. 7 the Farm Labor Organizing Committee announced a divestment campaign targeted at JPMorgan Chase Bank.

For years farmworkers have fought for the most basic improvements in the slave-like working conditions in tobacco fields. The mostly immigrant workforce faces long hours stooping under the hot sun, intense racism, extremely low wages, deplorable housing, and numerous health and safety hazards, among many other terrible working conditions. Reynolds rakes in annual profit of more than \$2 billion extracted directly from the super-exploitation of those who labor in the fields.

Despite the organizing of FLOC and the massive community support that FLOC has built behind the workers' demands, Reynolds still refuses to come to the table to negotiate with the workers.

During the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, FLOC and the Moratorium Now! Coalition organized a demonstration against Chase Bank, targeting them for their role in financing farmworker abuse in North Carolina and in foreclosing and evicting people from their homes throughout the U.S. During the march FLOC announced that if Chase did not pressure Reynolds about the farmworkers' demands or cut their financial ties with Reynolds by Labor Day, FLOC would organize a massive divestment campaign against the bank.

Join the Chase divestment campaign!

JPMorgan Chase is one of the leading creditors among a pool of lenders who finance the Reynolds tobacco giant, giving nearly half a billion dollars in rolling credit to the company. This puts Chase in a position to exert a great deal of power over Reynolds — power they could use to support the demands of the workers to improve working conditions in the fields.

Since May 12, FLOC has been building a campaign to force Chase to push Reynolds to negotiate with the workers. If the tobacco company refuses, FLOC wants

Chase to then cut off the lending stream the bank extends to the company. Chase has thus far refused to do either.

With the Labor Day deadline passed, FLOC has promised to build the divestment campaign against Chase until the bank takes action to bring Reynolds to the table.

FLOC has put out a call to everyone who supports the farmworkers' struggle to pull their money out of Chase, close their credit card accounts and refuse to do business with the bank until it takes a stand for the farmworkers who supply R.J. Reynolds with tobacco.

Solidarity pours in

Already the campaign is drawing tremendous support from progressives, community organizations, labor unions and social justice organizations across the world, with many pledging to support the divestment campaign.

In addition to receiving activist support, the struggle against Reynolds and Chase has also recently gotten support and solidarity from several of the largest labor unions in the U.S.

On Aug. 24 Mine Workers union President Cecil Roberts visited North Carolina to tour the tobacco fields with FLOC and meet with the workers. After seeing firsthand the conditions they face on a daily basis, Roberts pledged to support the campaign.

On Sept. 18 a United Auto Workers delegation that included UAW President Bob King met with tobacco workers to discuss ways the UAW could support the workers' struggle. Francisco, a longtime FLOC member, told reporters, "It was a wonderful experience to have such an important person come to meet us and to listen to us and see the problems that we have here — to understand what we leave behind in our country in order to work a lot and earn a few dollars to help our families."

At a reception that evening for the labor camp visitors, King spoke of the need to create a broader, social justice unionism and to build more concrete solidarity between union struggles, pledging the UAW's full support to the FLOC campaign.

"To think that human beings can treat



FLOC and UAW leaders visit with workers in North Carolina tobacco fields. PHOTO: BRIANA CONNORS

other human beings this way — it's devastating, it's really wrong," King said at the reception. "I'm happy to be an ally of FLOC and look forward to working together to bring justice to workers down here. ... This is an extremely important fight for social justice."

FLOC is talking with other unions across the U.S. and throughout the world

to find more ways to build solidarity with the workers' demands.

With all the anti-immigrant scapegoating being propagated in the mainstream media, and by the likes of the Tea Party and Glenn Beck, this solidarity and unity are exactly what is needed to cut through these distortions and win justice for the farmworkers in the fields of North Carolina. □

BRONX, N.Y.

People's Assembly builds momentum for struggle

By Dee Knight
Bronx, N.Y.

Momentum is building for a People's Assembly on Sept. 25 at Hostos College in the Bronx. Co-sponsors are the South Bronx Community Congress, the Freedom Party, Million Worker March Movement, People's Organization for Progress, the Independent Workers Movement, Operation POWER, Latin American Workers Project, May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, and the Bail Out the People Movement.

People's attorney Ramon Jimenez, the Freedom Party candidate for New York attorney general and a founder of the South Bronx Community Congress, told Workers World that the event will build on the Congress' inaugural session of June 5, which also took place at Hostos. It will help strengthen Bronx community organizations and struggles, he said, and help link them to citywide and national struggles.

Jimenez and other Freedom Party leaders will be featured speakers at the assembly, which will spotlight their vital campaign.

A member of the Band of Brothers — Bronx cemetery workers who are fighting racist abuse on the job — said that the People's Assembly will help them organize their next action on Oct. 9 to "Bury Racism at Woodlawn Cemetery."

Larry Hales, a national organizer of the Coalition to Defend Public Education and FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), sees the assembly as a springboard for a march in Harlem on Oct. 7. The march targets the massive and racist attack on public education, which is deceptively branded as a "race to the top," but aims to dismantle public schools and teachers' unions in favor of charter schools.

Ligia Guallpa, director of the Latin American Workers Project, who works with day laborers in the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn, plans to attend the assembly. Through hiring halls and street corner organizing, 300 day laborers

(jornaleros) work with LAWP in each of these boroughs.

Other groups that are part of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights are also mobilizing. Immigrant and workers' rights will be a central part of the assembly's agenda.

Brenda Stokely, a MWMM leader, explained that the call for People's Assemblies came out of the May 8 March for Jobs in Washington, and was echoed at the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit.

The campaign to Take Back Our Transit System, which is spearheaded by members of the Transport Workers Union Local 100, is also participating. They aim to highlight the fight against New York transit fare hikes in the midst of service cuts and massive layoffs.

Campaign organizer Gavrielle Gemma said the same attacks on public transit are taking place nationally. "It's really another wage cut in disguise. However, it hits those who can afford it least, including unemployed workers, students and people on fixed incomes. We can fight it. Affordable transportation is a right, and the subways and buses really belong to the people. We have to take them back from the bankers."

Larry Holmes, a BOPM leader, said, "This People's Assembly will be an expression of grassroots democracy: a challenge to the so-called 'official' bodies that are supposed to represent poor and working people, from the U.S. Congress down to state legislatures and city councils, which are solidly in the pocket of Wall Street."

People's Assembly organizers also see the gathering as a way to help mobilize a Youth-Community-Worker contingent for the Oct. 2 March for Jobs, Justice & Peace in Washington, D.C., and for the March to Defend Public Education in Harlem on Oct. 7.

Outreach for the assembly is taking place throughout New York City. Bilingual flyers and posters are visible throughout the Bronx and are available for download at www.BailoutPeople.org. □

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Indianapolis autoworkers resist GM's illegal union-busting schemes

By Martha Grevatt

"F — k the UAW!"

That statement, quoted in the tell-all book "Overhaul" by former White House Auto Adviser Stephen Rattner, was made by White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel during last year's General Motors bankruptcy proceedings.

Emanuel is part of the federal government, which currently holds 60 percent of GM shares. Accurate or not, the quote sums up the attitude of GM's executives and stockholders toward the workers who build the vehicles. The auto company, which in the first six months of this year made \$2.2 billion in clear profit, has been trying to force down wages of members of the United Auto Workers to near-poverty levels.

Workers at GM's Indianapolis Metal Fabrication plant have said "no way!" In 2007 a concessionary contract between the UAW and GM allowed for the closing of the Indianapolis plant. For three years members of UAW Local 23 have prepared themselves, and most are willing to relocate if it means they can stay with GM and keep the better wages and benefits they won in past struggles.

A significant number of stamping dies have already been moved out of the plant. So far, however, Local 23 members have been denied their contractual rights to follow their work and transfer to a new GM location.

GM wants to sell the plant to an upstart parts supplier, JD Norman Industries. Norman, however, is refusing to honor

the "successor clause" in the GM master contract with the UAW. This clause requires any new owner to honor the existing contract the union has with the former employer. Thus, under the current GM-UAW agreement, selling the plant to JD Norman would be illegal.

In a full-page ad in the Aug. 17 Indianapolis Star, owner Justin Norman stated that "to keep the facility alive" there need "to be fundamental changes," including "a new labor agreement." The new labor agreement Norman has in mind would slash skilled trades' wages from \$33 to \$24 an hour and production wages from \$28 to \$15.50 an hour.

Workers, who up to now saw themselves as "middle class" and who believed in the "American dream," are wondering how they are supposed to pay for their homes, their cars and their children's college education if their pay is suddenly cut by as much as 45 percent. Back in May the members of Local 23 voted 384-22 against reopening their contract.

New fightback strategy needed

Ignoring the democratic process, UAW Regional Director Mo Davison and his staff negotiated a concessionary agreement with Norman. This violates the UAW Constitution, which states that "no Local Union Officer, International Officer or International Representative shall have the authority to negotiate the terms of a contract or any supplement thereof with any employer without first obtaining the approval of the Local Union."

Davison has continued operating under

the flawed premise that labor's cooperation with capital — to keep the corporations "competitive" — is the only way to preserve jobs. Now that the UAW's ranks have fallen to 355,000 from a high of more than 1.5 million, it is obvious that a new fightback strategy is needed.

The workers of Indianapolis Metal Fabrication sent that very message to their International and Regional representatives on Aug. 15. At a special meeting on the proposed contract changes, the UAW staff were shouted down and told to leave the hall. Police, which the pro-concession local president had brought in to keep order, were ordered out.

Two days later JD Norman's letter in the newspaper appeared, followed by an attempt to stage a rally of employees to support the concessions. About 50 attended, most out of curiosity.

On Aug. 30 a UAW "follow-up" letter acknowledged that "the proposal from JD Norman needs to be voted on by the membership from UAW Local 23 to be approved." That statement obscures the fact that JD Norman has no legal right to negotiate any agreement until the workers become JD Norman employees. The members of Local 23 cannot become JD Norman employees unless Norman abides by the successor clause, which the company refuses to do.

The whole process is flagrantly illegal. Unfortunately, the UAW International has stepped in and is attempting to force a vote in favor of the concessions Norman is demanding. The International is conducting a mail-in ballot — virtually unheard of

in UAW contract voting — and has hired the American Arbitration Association to facilitate the process. Under the auspices of management, the International is holding "informational" meetings in the plant auditorium on Sept. 20.

Despite pressure from all sides, the local Bargaining Committee and Shop Chair Greg Clark have stood strong in upholding the will of the membership. The democratically elected Election Committee distributed a leaflet stating that the voting process is in violation of the local's bylaws, and therefore the Committee will not certify the results. A newly formed Local 23 Solidarity Committee is planning a rally outside Regional Director Davison's office on Sept. 25.

A support statement signed by 50 current and former UAW officials stated, "What we have seen in the last 40 years is a growing disparity between the rich and the rest of us. Those at the top cannot continue to get wealthier unless the rest of us give up more. And that is what they want us to do.

"That is why we stand in solidarity with you in this struggle. A line must be drawn. If you give in, it will be used to whipsaw other plants especially GM Stamping Plants into taking equal or greater concessions. Suppliers and other businesses will pressure their employees to take cuts in the never-ending 'race to the bottom.' If you stand strong, it will help everyone."

The GM bosses, their moneylenders on Wall St., the capitalist media and the capitalist state all share Emanuel's vulgar contempt for the workers. Solidarity will defeat them. □

Support GI whistleblower Manning

By Dee Knight

A strong showing of activist groups and individuals rallied and marched to support and defend GI whistleblower Bradley Manning in more than 17 cities across the country and internationally between Sept. 16 and 19. They called on the U.S. government to drop all charges against him.

Army Pfc. Manning, an army intelligence analyst, has been held in solidarity confinement since May. He is charged with releasing classified documents, including a video that shows U.S. troops killing civilians in Iraq in 2007. Two of them were journalists. If convicted on all 12 counts leveled against him, he could be imprisoned for more than 50 years.

He is also considered a "person of interest" in the leaking of 90,000 classified military documents known as "The Afghan War Diaries." WikiLeaks, the whistleblower website, has already released 75,000 of these documents, and is expected to release thousands more.

Manning told the June issue of Wired magazine, "I want people to see the truth



PHOTO: COURAGETORESIST.ORG

Demonstration at Quantico Marine Base backs Manning.

... regardless of who they are ... because without information, you cannot make informed decisions as a public."

Gerry Condon, president of Greater Seattle Veterans for Peace, said, "If Bradley Manning did what the Army has accused him of doing, he is a hero." At its national convention in August, Veterans for Peace awarded Manning its Courage of Conscience medal.

"Veterans really feel for the GIs because we were once in their shoes," said Con-

don, who refused orders to Vietnam in 1968. "The U.S. government has put these young men and women in an impossible situation — physically, morally and spiritually. They are being asked to sacrifice themselves and their families for lies, for oil, for unwinnable wars against entire nations of people."

The Days of Action to Support Bradley Manning kicked off in Oakland on Sept. 16 at an event titled "Afghanistan: Occupation, Wikileaks, and accused Whistleblower Army Pfc. Bradley Manning." Participants included anti-war retired army colonel Ann Wright and Ray McGovern, a retired CIA agent who has denounced the agency's torture policies.

Daniel Ellsberg, the Pentagon Papers whistleblower from the Vietnam era, also addressed the crowd. He told the Associated Press that Manning "is the first person in 39 years to do what I did — and really better than what I did." (Sept. 16)

The Oakland-based Courage to Resist organized a global webcast on www.Mich-

aelMoore.com.

GIs, anti-war veterans and supporters marched on Quantico Marine base in Virginia where Manning is being held, while others participated in a "whistle-blowing rally" near Fort Lewis and McChord Air Force Base in the Seattle area. There were meetings and demonstrations in San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego, Calif.; Corvallis, Ore.; Seattle and Spokane, Wash.; Cambridge, Mass.; Minneapolis; Knoxville, Tenn.; Norfolk, Va.; Keene, N.H.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; as well as cities in Canada and Australia.

The campaign in support of Bradley Manning is picking up steam. This international movement has developed on the Internet at www.bradleymanning.org. Its Facebook page at SaveBradley has more than 10,000 members. Supporters have contributed more than \$50,000 for his legal defense. For more information, visit www.CourageToResist.org. To sign a petition, visit www.iacenter.org/iraq/free-bradleymanning. □

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*

This ground-breaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes.

Available at Leftbooks.com



Activists turn up the heat to

Free Jamie and Gladys Scott

By Monica Moorehead

The struggle to free Gladys and Jamie Scott is gaining more and more national attention and momentum. The African-American sisters have been in the Central Mississippi Correctional Facility since October 1994 after they were convicted for allegedly stealing eleven dollars from a Scott County convenience store in December 1993.

The sisters had no prior police record and no violence happened during the incident. Those who had initially accused them of taking the money recanted their testimony during the trial, but the sisters were still convicted. Their legal appeals demanding a new trial to prove their innocence have repeatedly been rejected, including by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The sisters were healthy women prior

to going to prison. Being subjected to abhorrent prison conditions for many years, including poor medical care and a nutritionally deficient diet, Jamie Scott developed stage-five kidney failure. She would have faced a certain death on more than one occasion had it not been for the intervention of family and supporters demanding that the prison provide more frequent dialysis treatments.

Since local activists mobilized a protest on behalf of the Scott sisters in Washington, D.C., this past June 21, this struggle has finally penetrated the national media.



Jamie Scott and Gladys Scott

are valued at little more than 11 dollars.

“From the outset, the measures in which the Scott Sisters were convicted were questionable and pattern themselves after dubious criminal justice trends in Mississippi and nationwide. We intend to pursue justice to the fullest extent for the Scott Sisters, and will continue our push for criminal justice reform throughout America.” (USA Today, Sept. 14).

The Scott sisters’ case is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the tragic legacy of racist injustice that is still prevalent today in Mississippi, the Deep South and the U.S. in general.

For example, three Black men — Philip Bivens, Bobby Ray Dixon and the late Larry Ruffin — were exonerated Sept. 16 in Mississippi 30 years after they were falsely convicted and imprisoned for the rape and murder of the same woman. Both Bivens and Dixon stated that they had been coerced into pleading guilty to the charges by the police when told the only alternative was to suffer the death penalty. Only DNA testing proved their innocence. Ruffin died in prison in 2002.

To read more about the Scott sisters’ case and how to get involved, go to <http://tinyurl.com/2vh3szr>.

Jon Stewart’s call for calm isn’t funny

By Brenda Ryan
New York

For weeks “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart” brilliantly skewered those who were leading and supporting a racist campaign against Muslims and the building of a Muslim community center blocks from the World Trade Center. And then on Sept. 16 Stewart announced he was holding a “Rally to Restore Sanity” in Washington, D.C., at the end of October, a sort of mocking of rightist Glenn Beck’s rally.

But Stewart did it by attacking progressive people who have been demanding the government take action to help the 30 million people who are unemployed or underemployed in the country; people who have been protesting against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan that have killed hundreds of thousands of civilians in those countries and left U.S. soldiers with horrific injuries and trauma; people who led the demonstrations against racism and anti-Muslim bigotry. He equated

Continued on page 10

Political comedian Dick Gregory publicly supported the efforts of these activists. Many supporters traveled to Washington from Mississippi, to demand that U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder pressure Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour to pardon the sisters.

A protest march of at least a couple of hundred activists from a park to the State Capitol took place in support of the Scott sisters on Sept. 15 in Jackson, Miss.

Benjamin Jealous, the national president of the NAACP, the oldest civil rights organization, was part of a delegation that presented many signed petitions to Barbour’s office in Jackson on Sept. 14 to demand that the sisters be freed. Jealous stated, “It is a travesty that in the state of Mississippi, the lives of two Black women

‘Low-Wage Capitalism’ reviewed in L.A.

A review of Fred Goldstein’s book, “Low-Wage Capitalism,” appeared Aug. 13 in the *Los Angeles Examiner*. This online news source is part of the *examiner.com* national news network that provides editions with local content for hundreds of cities in the U.S. and Canada. The reviewer, Laura Frazin Steele, recommended five books to read for Labor Day. One was headlined: “Fred Goldstein’s ‘Low-Wage Capitalism’ is a discussion of the plight of the working class.” Steele’s concise summary of the book follows.

An interesting book that discusses the plight of the working class is Fred Goldstein’s “Low-Wage Capitalism: What the new globalized, high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.”

“Low-Wage Capitalism” is based on Marxist concepts to show how the global restructuring of capitalism is providing a basis for social upheaval among the U.S. working class.

Fred Goldstein argues that modern technology allows transnational corporations to put workers who reside in rich countries in competition with workers in poor, low-wage countries. Furthermore, low-wage immigrants in the U.S. are ex-

ploited and are forced to accept low wages and unfavorable working conditions. As a result, workers in the U.S. have no choice but to accept low wages and reduced benefits. Low-wage workers in the U.S. are faced with layoffs and have resorted to borrowing just to make ends meet.

According to Fred Goldstein, the current struggle of low-wage workers is the foundation for social upheaval.

Author Fred Goldstein, who bases his writing on the principles of Karl Marx, is a contributing editor to *Workers World*.

“Low-Wage Capitalism” is available through Leftbooks. Leftbooks promotes political involvement through progressive and alternative materials. All of Leftbooks’ proceeds are used to fight against war, racism, and injustice. In April 2010, Leftbooks was one of many fascinating participants at the Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

“Low-Wage Capitalism” is also available at Los Angeles-area Barnes and Noble and Borders bookstores. It can be ordered through Amazon.com.

Information about LWC can be found at leftbooks.com, along with a link to this review.

BE IN PHILADELPHIA

OCT. 9 WORLD DAY AGAINST DEATH PENALTY

Several key members of U.S. anti-death penalty organizations have recently made a move to exclude political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal from the movement to abolish the death penalty, arguing that Mumia’s inclusion alienated potential law enforcement supporters of the abolition movement! This position caused an international uproar.

October 9 will be a reaffirmation of a real and unifying abolition movement:

We demand 100 percent abolition Now! No exceptions (including MUMIA)!

9 a.m. Rally at Fraternal Order of Police Headquarters, Broad St. and Spring Garden

We demonstrate at the FOP because of their long-term, vicious commitment to executions, even in cases of innocence, and their terrorist attacks against those who fight for justice.

10 a.m. — March begins

11:30 a.m. — Indoor rally at La Familia, 1310 N. Broad St.

Scheduled Participants: Welfare Poets, former death row prisoners, journalist Linn Washington and many others

Sponsors: Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement, Texas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty, Texas Moratorium Network, Campaign to End the Death Penalty, International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, International Action Center, Witness to Innocence (Philadelphia), exonerees from death row
For more information, including Oct. 9 NYC transportation to Philadelphia, visit www.freemumia.com or call 212-330-8029.



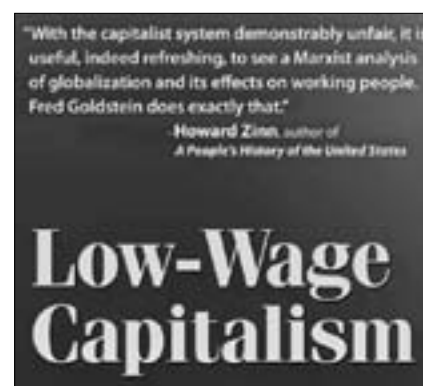
Low-Wage Capitalism

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

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

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

Available at Leftbooks.com and bookstores round the country



Poverty rate increases

Women, oppressed nations hit hardest

Continued from page 1

tions in the U.S. are taken into consideration, they reveal that historical discrimination based on race and gender is still evident in the second decade of this century. Although women and peoples of color have made tremendous strides in fighting and winning concessions related to civil rights and employment opportunities, the social imperatives of U.S. capitalism continue to be based on the superexploitation of the most oppressed workers.

The NWLC states, "Poverty rates were substantially higher for women of color, approaching one in four among African-American women (24.6 percent compared to 23.3 percent in 2008). Hispanic women experienced a similar increase from 22.3 percent in 2008 to 23.8 percent last year." Nearly four in ten single mothers (38.5 percent) were living in poverty in 2009, an increase from 37.2 percent in 2008. In 2009, 15.4 million children lived in poverty, representing an increase of 1.4 million in one year.

A 29 year-old, unemployed African-American woman was driven to an extreme act of tragic desperation when she smothered her two-year-old and 18 month-old children to death in Orangeburg, S.C. Aug. 17. Shaquan Duley has been charged with two counts of first degree murder and could face the death penalty. Poverty and unemployment as well as racism should be put on trial, not its victims like Shaquan Duley.

Women from 15 to 44 experienced widespread job losses that resulted in the termination of health care benefits. The Guttmacher Institute analyzed the census data related to private insurance and found that 2.3 million women within this age group lost their coverage between 2008 and 2009, forcing many onto

the Medicaid roles but increasing those without health insurance by 1.3 million. (www.guttmacher.org, Sept. 17)

The Women's Health News Digest states that the decrease in coverage affected family planning support services. Their publication states, "We also found that publicly funded planning providers were struggling to meet a growing need for subsidized contraceptive care, even as they had to make do with fewer resources." (HealthNewsDigest.com, Sept. 17)

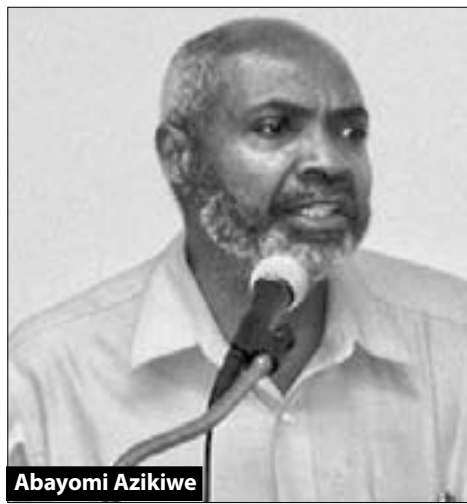
For African-American workers, who have the highest unemployment statistics in the U.S., the rate of poverty is twice as high as the general figures for the overall population. The Washington Informer reported, "In 2009, the poverty rate for African Americans reached 25.8 percent." (Sept. 18)

What these figures indicate is that any serious effort to address the economic crisis in the U.S. must pay special attention to the plight of African Americans, Latinos/as and women. The Obama administration's refusal to acknowledge the disparate impact of the economic crisis on women and the oppressed nations dooms his existing policies to failure.

The recently released census data also have serious implications for organizing around the worsening plight of working people and the oppressed. If the special oppressions of women and people of color are not taken into consideration, it will not be possible to build a fighting movement that can effectively take on the capitalist system.

Oppression and exploitation based on race and gender must be uprooted in order to build a society devoid of institutional discrimination. True equality among working people can only be achieved by destroying all forms of inequality based on gender and nationality. □

WWP MIDWEST CONFERENCE



Abayomi Azikiwe



Martha Grevatt

By Kris Hamel
Chicago

Eighty people attended a Midwest conference that the Chicago branch of Workers World Party hosted here on Sept. 18. Its theme: the need for a revolutionary struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

Participants came from Chicago and other areas of Illinois; Detroit and Lansing/East Lansing, Mich.; Cleveland, Toledo and other Ohio cities; and Wisconsin. A few speakers and organizers came from New York and New Jersey as well as North Carolina.

The attendees represented many struggles and included activists and revolutionaries of many nationalities, ages and

abilities; lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer and straight people; women and men. They were workers employed, unemployed and retired; union members; high school and college students; community organizers; and anti-imperialist activists.

Solidarity and a fightback mood permeated the meeting hall at the United Electrical Workers building where the conference was held. UE workers in Chicago had occupied the Republic Windows and Doors factory in December 2008 when the company announced it was closing the plant and moving elsewhere.

The UE union hall's walls are embellished with magnificent murals of the multinational working class engaged in struggle. This "is my house and now your

Native people rise up against killer cop



Protesters in Seattle's City Hall.

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

The outcry continues to grow against the killing of John T. Williams, a First Nations wood carver, by a member of the Seattle police force on Aug. 30.

In the third and largest protest, some 500 Native people marched on Seattle's City Hall on Sept. 16 and took over the main floor. There were many speakers and many drummers. People sang songs of their ancestors as they marched in the rain. Non-Native supporters also participated in all the protests.

John T. Williams was a seventh-generation master carver and belonged to the Ditidaht First Nation, a member Nation of the Nuu-chah-nulth on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, Canada. He was well known and respected for his carvings. He earned his living as a wood carver and often worked on his craft in the streets, as many others do. Williams had also been homeless.

On Aug. 30 Seattle cop Ian Birk shot

Williams four times after Birk saw Williams carrying a piece of wood and a small pocketknife. Eyewitnesses have said Williams in no way threatened Birk and never advanced on him, as the police initially claimed. Birk told Williams to stop walking, but since he is deaf in one ear, Williams didn't stop. Then Birk shot Williams.

A cold-blooded killing

"It is a great cultural ignorance for the police department even to admit they weren't familiar with [people] carving with knives on the street [because it's] not unusual," said Williams' family friend Storme Webber, who is a member of the Aleut Nation. (Indian Country Today, Sept. 7)

Big business, which owns the gentrified downtown area, has a very hostile attitude toward poor people and people of color. The Downtown Seattle Association and the Chamber of Commerce influence the cops to engage in repression.

Activists plan more actions to gain justice for John T. Williams. □

Workers, Immigrants, Unemployed, Youth, Students:

Capitalism is Killing the People & the Planet

If you are interested in abolishing a profit-hungry system that is:

- throwing people out of work & their homes
- closing schools and hospitals
- denying universal health care
- making war ● bailing out banks
- jailing the poor & the youth
- racial profiling Black people, Latinos/as, immigrants and all people of color
- destroying the environment with global warming & oil spills



Then it's time to stand up, unite and fight back for a socialist future!
Abolish Capitalism – Fight Injustice!



**Workers World Party
REGIONAL CONFERENCES**

WESTERN LOS ANGELES SEPT. 4

MIDWEST CHICAGO SEPT. 18

Southern DURHAM, N.C. Oct. 23

Marvell Event Center, 119 W. Main St., Durham, N.C.



**WORKERS WORLD PARTY
NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

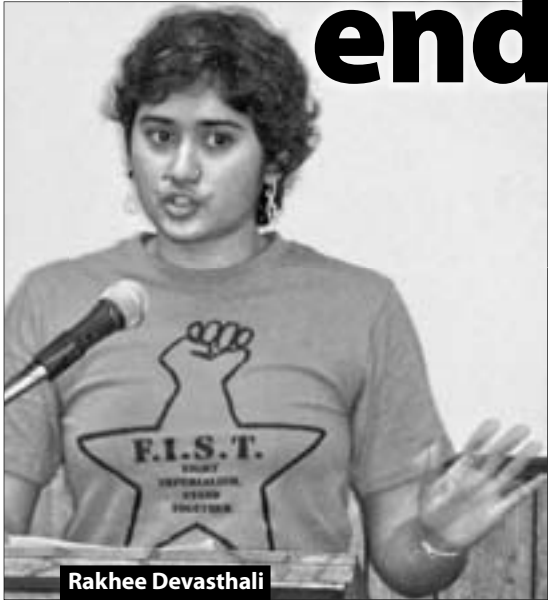
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Agrees on need for ending capitalism, winning socialism



Megan Spencer



Rakhee Devasthali



Julie Fry



Armando Robles



Jorge Ortiz



Joe Iosbaker



Adam Gluntz



Larry Hales



Jill Hill

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

house,” said Armando Robles, president of Local 1110 and leader of the 2008 plant occupation, as he welcomed the audience.

The six-hour agenda was divided into five discussions. Each had several introductory speakers. The first session on “Class struggle and socialism,” kicked off with a political analysis by Larry Holmes, a WWP national leader and organizer with the Bail Out the People Movement in New York City.

Fight for socialism

Holmes said “the new normal” of mass unemployment and continued layoffs and cutbacks in this stage of capitalism is “painful, but it wakes workers up to the need to struggle. And we support every fight, however small.

“But capitalism cannot be fixed or reformed. Capitalism is an existential threat to life, to everything that human beings need. We must launch a powerful, magnetic struggle for socialism,” declared Holmes.

Jill Hill of the Chicago WWP branch, who also chaired the session, spoke on the Party’s contributions in providing a Marxist understanding of the roots of women’s and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer oppression. She explained how these oppressions arose with the development of private property and how to overturn them through struggle.

Julie Fry, a national organizer with FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together — described socialism as “organizing and planning the economy and society to meet human needs. The workers and oppressed will decide how to use the wealth we all create.”

National question, anti-imperialism

The second discussion panel heard from Abayomi Azikiwe, a leader in the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice and a WW contributing editor, on the national question and the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, “the cutting edge issue for the working class.”

Sara Flounders, a WWP national leader and co-director of the International Action Center, spoke on the topic of international solidarity and the anti-imperialist struggle. She described the 9/11 action in New York City that brought out thousands in defense of the Muslim and Arab communities. “This

kind of anti-racist response to the ruling class and the right wing is the acid test for revolutionaries in the U.S.” she said.

Youth, students on the march

FIST organizer Rakhee Devasthali chaired the third discussion, which focused on youth and student struggles. Megan Spencer, a Michigan State University student activist, spoke about Ahlam Mohsen, an MSU student facing federal charges for allegedly putting a pie into the face of U.S. Sen. Carl Levin as an act of anti-war protest. “The struggle she faces is significant for all of us in the fight against capitalism, racism and imperialism,” said Spencer. Mohsen herself was among the conference attendees.

National FIST organizer Larry Hales described the fight for equal, quality public education and last March 4’s day of actions when hundreds of thousands of students, parents, teachers and other education workers, community members and progressives demanded an end to budget cuts, layoffs and cutbacks. “This struggle was about more than just public education — it was about the system itself and what it’s done to people,” said Hales. He urged everyone to participate in the upcoming Oct. 7 National Day to Defend Public Education.

Workers and community struggles

Chicago union activist Joe Iosbaker, who represented the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, spoke during the fourth discussion, on workers’ and community struggles. “We need to build a fighting movement that connects [these] struggles in order to take away the anger from the Tea Party movement — because we are the angriest,” he said.

Martha Grevatt, a longtime United Auto Workers member and lesbian activist, talked about fighting racism and bigotry on the shop floor. “When combined, women, people of color, LGBTQ people, immigrants, Muslims, the disabled and other oppressed groups are the majority of the working class. We build class

solidarity by educating all workers to be against the bigotry promoted by the bosses and directed against the most oppressed workers.”

Jerry Goldberg, a WWP leader and organizer in the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs, talked about “the art of revolution” and “how to bring our program to the workers in a living way that challenges capitalism in a way workers can grasp.” He affirmed, “We don’t recognize the property rights of the bankers and capitalists. Workers have a property right to a job and a home. That’s the right we fight for when we demand a moratorium on debt service to the banks, on foreclosures and plant closings.”

Jorge Ortiz of the Chicago Anti-Eviction Campaign told about the struggle to save the Rogers Park Community House, a free daycare and community center for low-income families that is facing foreclosure and eviction by the federally owned mortgage entity, Fannie Mae.

Ortiz also gave a firsthand report of the occupation that began Sept. 15 at a school field house in Pilsen, where the Chicano/a community is fighting to save the structure from being demolished. Residents use the building for after-school programs and community meetings and demand it be turned into a library.

Hundreds of people have been supporting the occupation and preventing police from removing the activists. A delegation from the WWP conference visited the field house in solidarity.

Why join Workers World Party

WWP Detroit leader Debbie Johnson chaired the discussion on building a revolutionary party. Lou Paulsen of Chicago

WWP discussed why workers should study Marxism. “The fundamental reason is so that workers can understand the system and act in their own interests,” he said.

Kris Hamel, a Workers World newspaper managing editor from Detroit, spoke about the role of a workers’ newspaper. “Workers World takes sides in the class struggle — you can tell our ‘bias’ right away when you read it. We need workers and students and activists to make this your own newspaper, to write for it and tell about the struggles you’re involved in.”

Caleb Maupin of Cleveland FIST gave a fiery talk on why workers and youth should join WWP. “When we leave here today we’ll go back to the world where we constantly struggle to survive. If you take anything away with you today, I hope it’s the idea that it doesn’t have to be this way, that a better future is possible, but only if we take to the streets and fight for it.”

After each panel’s initial speakers completed their remarks, the floor was opened up for discussion and questions. Every conference participant had the opportunity to take the microphone and talk about the struggles they were engaged in and how socialism could be achieved in the U.S.

New activists joined veteran organizers in talking about the broad range of issues raised at the conference. Many indicated it was their first time attending a “socialist” event. Several youth said they were dedicating their energies to the fight against capitalism and learning more about socialism.

At the conference’s end, Cleveland FIST organizer Adam Gluntz played the guitar and led the audience in singing “The International.” □

It's not grassroots

Why billionaires love the Tea Party

This article is adapted from a brochure, written by Gavielle Gemma, that was given out at the 9/11 demo in New York.

Koch Oil Industries, Donald Trump, Rupert Murdoch, ExxonMobil and the super rich are all telling us to hate Muslims, hate immigrants and blame them for everything. They don't like speaking in their own names so they get the Tea Party to do it for them.

Meanwhile, they are laughing all the way to the bank, making huge profits and living like kings.

While we are fighting for good jobs, they are laying off workers, attacking Social Security and public education, polluting the environment, raising our rents and destroying the lives of working people.

The Tea Party and other right-wing racists are claiming they represent workers. They claim they are standing up against "special interests" for the "little guy." The media, owned by huge monopolies, give them free publicity and repeat this over and over again.

But repeating a lie does not make it true. It only makes it dangerous for those of us who really are workers.

It's time to fight the lies.

Who funds the Tea Party?

Heading the list is Koch Industries, headed by David and Charles Koch (pronounced Coke), the third-richest people in the United States.

From David Koch's Park Avenue duplex or from his other mansions, he heads up Americans for Prosperity. This group has given more than \$198 million to right-wingers in the last 10 years.

The Koch brothers are the main funders of the Tea Party. The ideas and slogans of the Tea Party come from one of the dozens of AFP think tanks.

Koch Industries is an oil and chemical company with \$100 billion a year in revenues. It is the second-largest privately held U.S. company. To protect its special interests, Koch has spent \$55 million on lobbying elected officials and giving them campaign contributions.

The Kochs think workers are idiots. In Texas they funded a Tea Party event they called a "populist uprising against corporate power." They said, "Today, the voices of average Americans are being drowned out by lobbyists and special interests." They should know, because this is exactly what they are doing.

They lobby against Social Security, public schools, unemployment insurance, Medicare, unions, any regulation on corporations, the rich paying taxes, child labor laws, minimum wage and environmental protection.

These oil company billionaires lobbied against money for BP oil-spill victims. They are going wild over the idea that Bush's tax cuts on corporations may be repealed. They hate Barack Obama.

The Koch brothers fund dozens of groups that sound objective, with names like Institute for Humane Studies and Institute for Justice. But David Koch said,

"If we're going to give a lot of money, we'll make darn sure they spend it in a way that goes along with our intent."

And what is their intent? Make profits and the public be damned.

The Wall Street Journal, no friend to workers, called the Kochs' Mercatus Center "the most important think tank you've never heard of." Mercatus was against most of the corporate regulations that George W. Bush then eliminated.

One of Mercatus's favorites is attacking environmental protection. This oil company front group argues that oil refinery emissions are good because smog protects people from skin cancer.

Funny? Not very. In 1999 a group of judges in Washington, D.C., agreed with them. It turns out that they had all partied on a Montana ranch where David Koch picked up the tab.

It gets worse. David Koch sits on the board of the American Cancer Institute even as Koch Industries fights the banning of formaldehyde, a carcinogen. Yes, they produce the stuff by the tons. Koch Industries was charged in the 1990s with more than 300 oil spills and received a 97-count criminal indictment for covering up the discharge of benzene in Texas. Benzene causes cancer. So much for protecting Texas workers.

The Koch brothers say they hate big government. But that's only when the government funds unemployment insurance, which they lobby against. They have no problem with the more than \$100 million in government contracts that go to them.

National health care is no good, according to these silver-spoon children of millionaire Fred Koch. So they funded Patients United Now Against Health Care Reform.

They never knew a hard day in their lives. Daddy Koch was an oil man and pro-Nazi sympathizer who left them his wealth. This didn't stop an AFP rep from saying, "We're a grassroots organization. ... I think it is unfortunate when wealthy children of wealthy families want to send unemployment rates up."

We think so, too. But this AFP flunky was actually attacking environmentalists, saying they cause unemployment — not the corporate bosses and bankers who have laid workers off by the millions.

Not just the Kochs — it's the whole capitalist class

The Tea Party also gets money from ExxonMobil, Philip Morris, Rupert Murdoch, the Coors family, Mellon-Scaife. The whole right-wing, racist Tea Party and other similar groups are funded by the billionaires of hate.

The Tea Party uses catchy names like Contract from America and Freedom-Works to hide their real agenda.

Are you angry about taxes, unemployment, foreclosures? Their answer: Hate immigrants and Muslims.

The fact is these billionaires hardly pay any taxes. They don't mind when a trillion a year of our taxes goes to war-profitteer-

ing companies. They don't mind when \$400 billion of the federal budget goes tax free to banks in interest payments in one year alone. They don't mind giving mortgage companies our tax dollars.

But they're against giving tax money to homeowners to save their homes. They don't mind the \$12-trillion bailout of the banks and Wall Street, but it drives them crazy when tax money goes to pay unemployment insurance.

Media gives billionaires' view

Why don't we hear about these things? Because the major media are part of the billionaire network and print billionaires' lies as truth.

Fox News, for example, is a giant monopoly run by Rupert Murdoch. Both Glenn Beck and Sara Palin are on the payroll. In fact, all the major media are monopolies and many are connected to war-profitteering companies like General Electric. They love the Tea Party and give it lots of free coverage.

What is the Tea Party's real agenda?

Divide working class at a time of economic crisis

Right now the banks are making record profits. So are corporations. They've had a recovery.

But we've got 30 million who need full-time jobs. Foreclosures and evictions take place every day. Prices are rising and wages are falling.

The bankers and corporate owners are sitting on piles of money made from our labor. They are refusing to put us to work. When they do, they pay low wages. They are lowering our benefits or giving none. They are attacking our unions.

They are stealing our money from the public treasuries of all our city, state and federal budgets and giving it over tax free to banks.

What is scapegoating?

It is blaming innocent people for creating a problem. It is deliberately lying to get us to look in the wrong direction, away from those who really create the problems.

It's easier to just vent anger than really fight the establishment - right? But the rich just laugh at us for doing that. Not only does scapegoating not put one cent in our pockets, it actually helps the super-rich step on our necks even more by blaming the wrong people, people we should all unite with. Today the Tea Party and others are trying to blame immigrants and Muslims.

United, we workers can force the government to take money from corporate

welfare, from billionaire tax cheaters, from the warmongers and create a national jobs program for all.

In the 1930s, employed and unemployed workers in the United States fought and won the WPA, which put them back to work. We can do this today.

Join us in Workers World Party

Workers World Party is made up of workers. There are no billionaires, not even one rich boss. No militarists sending our children, not theirs, to fight in wars for oil company profits. No capitalists stealing a country's resources or imposing low wages on them.

We are auto workers, cooks, laborers and wait staff, computer techs, nurses, teachers, students, unemployed and underemployed from all around the U.S. We are union members and unorganized, we are women, men, young and old, we are lesbians, gays, trans and straight. We come from every race, nationality and religion.

Workers World has no hidden agenda. We are committed to a world free of want. We believe that together the world's workers produce enough for us all to have not only an adequate life, but a wonderful life — with healthy food, education, fulfilling jobs and time off to pursue all of life's bounty. This is called socialism.

We believe in standing up for all the members of the working class so that we can unite and get rid of the capitalist class and the capitalist system — the system that is the cause of misery and war and holds back humanity.

We stand up against war and expose how it's all about profiteering, not national security.

Every day we fight for jobs for all, for education and housing, against foreclosures, for pensions, for health care that is real national security.

We stand up every day against racism, for the rights of women and against any form of prejudice based on sexual orientation.

We are united with workers and youth from all around the world with whom we have common interests against Wall Street.

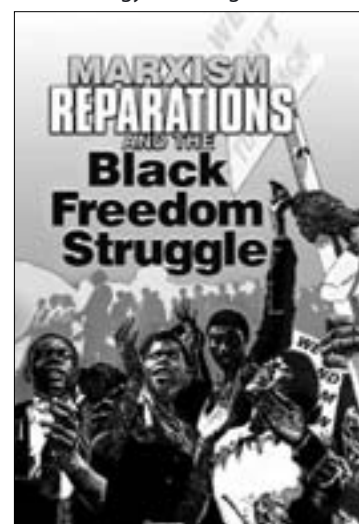
We can never be free under capitalism. But we are freedom fighters. And you can join us.

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Facts for this article came from: Rachel Maddow, MSNBC, Aug. 21; Jane Mayer, New Yorker Magazine, Aug. 30; Constitutional Accountability Center; Frank Rich, New York Times, Aug. 29.

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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



Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination

Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery

Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance

Leilani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key

Monica Moorehead

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

Saladin Muhammad

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

Consuela Lee

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior

Mumia Abu-Jamal

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today?

John Parker

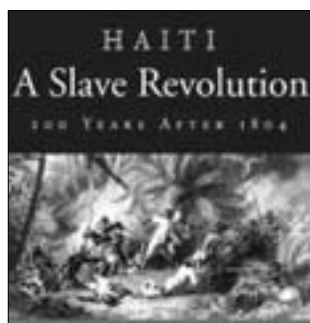
40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion

Larry Hales

Racism and Poverty in the Delta

Pat Chin

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HAITI: A Slave Revolution 200 Years after 1804

New edition includes Aristide's kidnapping by the U.S. & the 2010 earthquake.

First published in 2004 as a joint project of the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network. This is not a traditional history book or textbook, but a people's history. In the preface the editors state: "This book is going to combat 200 years of racist indoctrination and propaganda about the Haitian Revolution."

Available at Leftbooks.com

JUAN MARI BRAS

A life dedicated to Puerto Rican independence and socialism

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

When Boricua revolutionary Juan Mari Bras died on Sept. 10 from lung cancer, he left behind a life dedicated to the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and socialism, including many contributions that propelled the progressive movement on the island. Many in Puerto Rico describe him as the key figure of the “new pro-independence struggle” in the 1960s that included unions, students and community activism.

Born in 1927 in the western city of Mayagüez to pro-independence parents, Mari Bras started his political life quite young. At 15, he and his fellow high school students founded the *Capítulo de Agregados Pro Independencia* (Chapter of Pro Independence Apprentices).

He was expelled from the University of Puerto Rico in Río Piedras in 1948 after his UPR organization, the Puerto Rican Independence Youth, invited nationalist hero Don Pedro Albizu Campos to speak on campus. Albizu Campos had just been released from prison.

The students struck to protest the nationalist leader's ban. Mari Bras raised a Puerto Rican flag on a pole. The U.S. forbid this act, and it served as the reason for his expulsion.

Mari Bras eventually went to the United States, finished his bachelor's degree and graduated from law school at American University in Washington, D.C., in 1954.



In 1947, he co-founded the Puerto Rican Independence Party together with Gilberto Concepción de Gracia. But his belief in the revolutionary struggle for independence with socialism, led him to found the Pro-Independence Movement in 1959. This was a

crucial time for such an organization since the leaders of the Nationalist Party were imprisoned and Mari Bras' organization helped coalesce some of the pro-independence forces who saw socialism as the path that would in actuality change society. In 1971, the Movement became the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, with a Marxist-Leninist political viewpoint.

The legacy of Mari Bras extends throughout decades and sectors of struggle. In the 1960s, U.S.-based corporations had plans to mine copper in the central part of the island where farmers cultivated important agricultural produce. The PSP was instrumental in defeating these mining plans.

Mari Bras was a key figure in the progressive *Colegio de Abogados*. He also won the legal right for people to use the bridges' and overpasses' columns as a public space to express popular discontent and dissent with posters.

He became the first Puerto Rican person to renounce the U.S. citizenship that has been imposed on all Puerto Ricans since 1917. He formally renounced in

the U.S. Embassy in Caracas, Venezuela. As a result, now the Puerto Rican State Department issues a certificate of Puerto Rican citizenship and the Puerto Rican Supreme Court ruled that a person born in Puerto Rico does not need U.S. citizenship in order to cast a vote on the island.

He was a prolific writer of political analysis, founding the weekly *Claridad* with his longtime friend and collaborator, César Andreu Iglesias. His writings intertwined with his educational and political interests, leading to the establishment of the Eugenio María de Hostos Law School in his hometown of Mayagüez.

This school's importance resides on its goals. As its website states, “To train jurists with critical thought, ethical sensitivity and social awareness, for a professional practice of excellence.” Through his writings, he tried to show the practice of applying historical materialism to the analysis of events, past and present.

Throughout his political life, the movement's relations and solidarity with Revolutionary Cuba grew. This solidarity has endured since the time of the legendary Cuban José Martí and Puerto Rican Ramón Emeterio Betances, both fighters against Spanish domination and for the liberation of the Antilles. Both struggles have since then been intimately connected, both country's flags identical but with the colors reversed.

Revolutionary Cuba is still waiting, patiently and caring like a big sister, for the freedom of Puerto Rico. In Cuba, Puerto Rico has its office. It was opened in col-

laboration with Mari Bras' organization, sometimes referred to as the Embassy of the People of Puerto Rico. During one of Mari Bras' trips to Cuba, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro received him with all the honors reserved for heads of state, with the Puerto Rican flag raised and the sound of the Lares anthem.

This strong relationship has helped the independentistas to raise the Puerto Rican colonial case in the United Nations through the Movement of Non Aligned Countries, sponsored by beloved Cuba.

But Mari Bras' life has not been exempt from suffering. The U.S. federal government, its FBI political police and their stooges have been a constant threat as they have been to all Puerto Ricans who are committed to independence and socialism. In 1976, the year Mari Bras was a candidate for governor of the island, his eldest son, Santiago “Chagui” Mari Pesquera, was assassinated.

Although this killing clearly had political motives, to this date the crime remains unpunished. Recent investigations have shown that the FBI knew of the plans and threats from Cuban exiles against Mari Bras and his family but never alerted him. Mari Mari Narváez, Mari Bras' daughter, said of the crime, “When ‘Chagui’ was killed, he [Mari Bras] declared on his tomb, ‘There is no place for revenge in the hearts of real revolutionaries’”.

¡Juan Mari Bras, PRESENTE! ¡Viva Puerto Rico Libre y Socialista!

Email: bjceci@workers.org

In Nigeria case

U.S. court denies right to sue corporations

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit issued a stunning decision in the *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum* case on Sept. 17. The judges ruled 2-1 that transnational corporations could not be held liable for human rights violations. The case stems from Shell's actions in Nigeria's Ogoni region where activists were falsely arrested, charged and summarily executed for organizing protests against the oil company's destruction of their communities.

Judge Jose Cabranes wrote for the majority: “The principle of individual liability for violations of international law has been limited to natural persons — not ‘juridical’ persons such as corporations — because the moral responsibility for a crime so heinous and unbounded as to rise to the level of an ‘international crime’ has rested solely with the individual men and women who have perpetrated it.” (www.ca2.uscourts.gov; for majority and dissenting opinions, see decisions, Sept. 17)

The court said that the Alien Tort Statute, which has existed since 1789, does allow noncitizens to seek redress involving international law violations but that corporations were immune from liability, even if their actions result in injury and death. Consequently firms such as Royal Dutch Petroleum and Shell Transport and Trading cannot be held accountable for their crimes in collaboration with foreign governments that blatantly disre-

gard the human rights of individuals and communities.

Shell representative Bill Tanner said, “We agree with the decision of the court.” The global corporation has denied any involvement in human rights violations in the oil producing regions of Nigeria. (Bloomberg News, Sept. 17)

The case, which was filed in 2002, alleged that the Shell corporations assisted the military government in Nigeria, through subsidiaries operating inside the country, in carrying out gross human rights violations starting in 1993. Plaintiffs said human rights violations resulted in the suppression of mass protests among the Ogoni people against Shell's policies.

The case links the oil corporation to the execution of environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa and seven of his colleagues. In 1993 they were accused of crimes in Nigeria and executed two years later. Protests have been carried out for years against the environmental and social conditions created by Shell in the Ogoni region.

Judge Pierre Leval dissented from the appeals' court's decision, but not over whether the case filed by the Nigerian citizens should be dismissed, but that the law should apply to corporations. He wrote, “The majority opinion deals a substantial blow to international law and its undertaking to project fundamental human rights. According to the rule my colleagues have created, one who earns profits by commercial exploitation of abuse of fundamental human rights can successfully shield those profits from vic-

tim's claims for compensation simply by taking the precaution of conducting the heinous operation in corporate form.”

Judge Leval noted the implications of the ruling for firms involved in crimes against humanity: “So long as they incorporate, businesses will now be free to trade in or exploit slaves, employ mercenary armies to do dirty work for despots, perform genocides or operate torture prisons for a despot's political opponents, or engage in piracy — all without civil liability to victims.”

The court's majority says that the U.S. Congress would have to pass new legislation to include corporations under existing law. After the ruling, legal analysts said that foreign governments are largely immune from lawsuits related to official policy, and therefore the dismissal of the cases brought by Nigerian family members of human rights victims would leave no recourse in U.S. courts.

Cited in the Bloomberg report, Jonathan C. Drimmer, an attorney at Steptoe & Johnson and a lecturer at Georgetown University Law Center, stated, “This [court decision] is going to alter the landscape of existing and contemplated cases. Assuming this ruling stands, and even while it remains in effect, there are going to be motions to dismiss Alien Tort Statute claims cases by corporations.”

Ruling's implications for U.S.-Nigerian relations

The extraction and export of oil from Nigeria is that country's largest source of foreign exchange. For many years Nigeria

was the largest oil exporter from Africa into the United States. In 2009 it was reported that Angola had surpassed Nigeria in total exports to the U.S.

In recent months Nigeria has embarked upon a restructuring of its oil industry by signing many agreements with the People's Republic of China valued at \$50 billion. The Nigerian legislature recently debated a Petroleum Industry Bill which is a cause of concern for Western-based oil firms that have dominated the industry since 1956.

With so much at stake for the U.S. and other imperialist states in Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan's government has been under tremendous pressure from the Obama administration. The State Department has even sent representatives to Nigeria to demand that the legislature pass a so-called “anti-terrorism” bill.

Nigeria, which has the largest population of any African state, will hold national elections in 2011. The U.S. has attempted to set the terms governing the elections by questioning the composition of the country's national electoral commission.

This court decision illustrates that the U.S. ruling class is seeking to absolve transnational corporations from being held liable for acts of oppression, suppression and mass murder. The message emanating from such a ruling is that the people in various states around the world will have to seize control of such corporations in order to hold them accountable for their actions. □

Cuba and our task

Continued from page 1

and education here. What a howl both capitalist parties would put up! Their first words would be, “Who will pay for all this?”

Is it costly? Yes it is. Yet even a poor country, straining to develop its economy, has done it. Furthermore, Cuba has made huge material contributions to countries that are even poorer, sending medical brigades and disaster aid teams to those in dire need around the world. Cuban troops shed their blood in the struggle to end the racist apartheid system and liberate the countries of southern Africa.

Yet at the same time the Cuban people have also had to fight the damaging effects of nearly 50 years of an economic embargo — really a blockade — that not only bars U.S. goods from reaching the island but even penalizes other countries that trade with Cuba. Every year almost every country in the world votes in the U.N. General Assembly to end the U.S. embargo. Polls show that a majority here in the United States are for ending it. Yet just recently the Obama administration not only reaffirmed the blockade but even strengthened some of its provisions.

Because of this, Cuba lacks many needed imports as well as markets in which to sell its exports. Food in Cuba, while adequate to keep the population healthy, is of limited variety. The housing belongs to the people, but it is very difficult to get lumber, paint, furnishings and appliances. The medical system is top notch, but Cuba can't get drugs or medical equipment from the U.S. or countries that obey the blockade.

The Cuban government estimates that the blockade has cost its economy \$751 billion over the last 50 years. This vindictive persecution of the revolutionary island by the imperialist superpower is because Cuba has been trying to build a socialist society in which the state owns and controls the means of production so the needs of the people can be put first, instead of profits for a few.

Cuba is a small island in a hostile, imperialist-dominated world. Its position was made even more precarious by the downfall of the Soviet Union, which had been Cuba's main trading partner. The USSR had exchanged its oil and other commodities for Cuban sugar and nickel on terms much more favorable than Cuba could get on the world capitalist market.

In the “special period” after the fall of the USSR, the Cuban economy virtually imploded for several years. However, because everyone in the country shared the suffering, including the most powerful officials, there was no lack of confidence in the government or a political crisis. Imagine the situation for the government here if economic output were to be cut in half! But Cuba painfully struggled back, showing modest growth each year and eventually boosted by help from Venezuela in the form of energy.

Nevertheless, the capitalist crisis of the last three years has stunted economic development all over the world and Cuba is not immune, despite its socialist system.

The goal of socialism is clear: to eradicate class divisions in society by eliminating private ownership of the means of production for profit. Socialism has become a realizable goal for the world working class because of the tremendous development of technology and the means of production under capitalism. But where, under capitalism, new technology and greater productivity mean layoffs, pay cuts and eventually a crisis of the system, under socialism they mean a lightening of the workload in production so more people can get employment in services, culture and other social needs. The gains go to society as a whole, not to billionaire owners.

But what happens when a country trying to build socialism is prevented from getting access to the new technologies? When the world transition to a socialist system is still in its early stages and the countries that have had revolutions are coming out of severe underdevelopment caused by colonialism and imperialism? Cuba, Vietnam and even China are all still trying to “catch up” to the capitalist countries that have amassed wealth for centuries — much of it plundered from them. They have been forced to put on hold some of the goals of socialism just to be able to survive.

Once this is understood, the responsibility of progressives and revolutionaries in the imperialist countries should be clear. We do not diminish our own struggle for socialism by one iota when we say, “Now is the time to redouble our solidarity with Cuba. For Cuba to achieve its socialist goal, we must build unity in the multinational working class here and fight the rapacious capitalist bosses wherever they seek to impose their domination.” □

National Day of ACTION to Defend Public Education

Thursday
Oct 7
4 pm
Rally

Harlem State Office Building

Adam Clayton Powell Jr. Blvd. & 125 Street



march4ny@gmail.com

defendededucation.org

March4nywordpress.com

First Nation says:

Oil companies shall not pass

By G. Dunkel

From British Columbia to Quebec, from Canada to the United States to the United Kingdom, a movement inspired by the resistance of the Unist'ot'en of the Wet'suwet'en First Nation people to an oil pipeline proposed by the pipeline giant Enbridge is gaining momentum.

Enbridge has a long history of pipeline spills, including one of a million gallons of crude oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan in July.

Oil extracted from tar sands is the most expensive, polluting oil in commercial production. The proposed pipeline would move 525,000 barrels of oil a day. It would cross 785 watercourses, fragment wildlife habitat and impact fragile salmon fisheries.

The Wet'suwet'en/Unist'ot'en First Nations Environmental Action Camp was built early in 2010 on traditional lands in central British Columbia. The camp is located on the path the oil companies have picked to take oil from the tar sands of Alberta to a port on the northern coast of British Columbia.

But the Wet'Suwet'En didn't just build a camp. To inaugurate it, they invited members of nearby communities, the Indigenous Environmental Network, the Council of Canadians and others to spend five days connecting with the land and discussing strategies and tactics to protect it.

As one of their leaders told the Cana-

dian progressive web site rabble.ca, “The Action Camp was devised to draw in more of our clans' membership to learn of peaceful means to protect their lands and waters, and to unite nations in their opposition to the tar sands giga-project.”

On July 16 a rally was called in Smithers, B.C., to gather together all the people opposed to the pipeline. On Sept. 8 hundreds rallied in Prince George, the main commercial center in northern British Columbia, and also in Vancouver, calling on the government to deny the permit Enbridge needed.

The same day the rallies in British Columbia were taking place, a crowd greeted House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in Ottawa. She had come there to meet with politicians and executives promoting tar sands.

In August many Wet'suwet'en community members made the long trip to Fort McMurray in northern Alberta, ground zero of tar sands exploitation, for the first Healing Walk held there. Over 150 people took part in the 8-mile trek through the heart of Canada's largest industrial devastation, calling for healing the land, water, skies and animals that try to live amidst this pollution.

Members of the tar sands-impacted communities took part in the protests at the G-20 in Toronto, the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit and a 16-day Climate Camp outside of Montreal. Two activists from northern British Columbia even managed to make their way to the Climate Camp in the United Kingdom. □

Jon Stewart's call for calm isn't funny

Continued from page 5

the Tea Party with progressive groups like Code Pink, saying both are extremist. Spouting racism and fighting racism are not the same thing.

Stewart said it's time for America to calm down.

It is really time for people to fight back the way they did in the 1930s. It's time to demand a real jobs program like the Works Progress Administration, where the government put millions of people to work on construction projects building bridges, schools, hospitals and roads; employed artists and musicians and actors who brought music and theater productions to small communities across the country; had writers go out and interview Black people and produce an oral history of slavery. It's time to demand a halt to the closing of hospitals, bus lines (37 have been eliminated in New York leaving people stranded in the outer boroughs with no way to get to work), libraries, social programs, and assistance for elderly, the reduction in school days and elimi-

nation of educational grants.

Satire is useful. It can expose hypocrisy, cruelty and injustice in a searingly funny way. And Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert are among the best of satirists. But people can only change things by joining together and fighting back. The end of segregation and implementation of civil rights came when people took to the streets. The end of child labor, the gaining of the eight-hour workday, and every other right given to workers only came through a hard struggle. Those fighting were met with violence and many died.

To call on people to calm down, be quiet and ignore the growing poverty and misery is a terrible thing. It is an effort to tamp down the struggle. It's one thing for Stewart to hold an entertaining rally. But it's another thing to tell people that it's extremist and wrong to fight back.

The rallies people should really be going to are the national march for jobs in Washington on Oct. 2 and the youth and student actions to defend education on Oct. 7. □

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Lucius Walker built solidarity with Cuba

By Cheryl LaBash
New York

On Sept. 17 Harlem's Convent Avenue Baptist Church filled with people celebrating the example, ongoing legacy and life of the Rev. Dr. Lucius Walker. Walker, 80, died suddenly Sept. 7 at his home in New Jersey.

The headline in Granma, the daily newspaper of the Cuban Communist Party, announcing his death stated, "We do not want to think of a world without Lucius Walker."

An implacable foe of the U.S. war against socialist Cuba and a longtime and well-respected friend of the Cuban people, Walker is widely remembered for the 21 Friendship Caravans he led. These caravans carried material aid to Cuba, in a direct and determined challenge to the U.S. trade and travel blockade against that small island. Each caravan openly defied the blockade, traveling without license or government approval. From Canada, throughout every region in the U.S. and into Mexico, the caravans gathered medicine, humanitarian aid and whatever successive U.S. administrations decried could not go to Cuba — including school buses, computers, satellite dishes, solar panels and more.

"The Little Yellow School Bus" became an ongoing caravan symbol in 1993. That year, U.S. agents impounded a small bus, but caravanistas refused to abandon it, launching a hunger strike and international campaign from the summer-sun-scorched impound lot in Laredo, Texas. The campaign ultimately forced the U.S. officials to let the bus go to Cuba.

After the anti-terrorist Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González — were unjustly convicted in 2001 and harshly sentenced, caravan buses and trucks decorated with the images of the Five helped publicize the struggle to free them along the caravan routes.

A miniature yellow school bus was placed in the Rev. Walker's pine-box casket, which was surrounded by white floral tributes from former Cuban President Fidel Castro, current President Raúl Castro and the Cuban Mission. The Rev. Miriam Ofelia Ortega, a Presbyterian pastor, president of the World Council of Churches

for Latin America and the Caribbean and a member of the Cuban Parliament, represented the Cuban leaders and people, particularly the children who have benefited from the caravans. She likened Walker's work to Cuban independence leader José Martí's 1894 call, in *Nuestra América* magazine, for a campaign of tenderness and opening our hands to others.

In 1967 the Rev. Walker became the founding director of the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization, steering the organization to work in support of African liberation movements and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. IFCO was the first and one of the largest U.S. foundations led and controlled by people of color, working with organizations such as the American Indian Movement and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee. In 1988, the Rev. Walker founded the IFCO project Pastors for Peace after U.S.-armed Nicaraguan contras attacked 200 civilians, wounding Walker. His daughter Gail, an IFCO leader herself, was with him.

In 1992, when the Cuban economy lost its Soviet and Eastern European trading partners to capitalist restoration, the U.S. government saw its opportunity to defeat the Cuban revolution. The U.S. tightened the economic blockade and allowed paramilitaries to escalate terror attacks, including hotel bombings, to damage Cuban income from tourism. The caravans began to counteract the U.S. government aim of creating havoc and hardship on the island. In a letter to the *New York Times*, Walker wrote, "We know that starving a third world country into submission is a morally bankrupt foreign policy." (Aug. 15, 1993)

At the memorial Ellen Bernstein, co-director of IFCO/Pastors for Peace, and the Rev. Tom Smith, president of its board of directors, presented Walker's living legacy — the U.S. graduates and students from the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba. The program began when representatives of the Congressional Black Caucus visited Cuba and noted the number of doctors available. When



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

Above, U.S.-based doctors trained in Cuba at front of tribute to Lucius Walker.

Left, Rev. Lucius Walker, Fidel Castro, Ellen Bernstein, Rev. Tom Smith in 2009.



PHOTO: IFCO/PASTORS FOR PEACE

from sunup to sundown serving the people.

Zayid Mohammed presented a spoken word praise poem based on the hymn, "Amazing Grace," that raised up the "insurgent commentary by Mumia Abu-Jamal" and ended calling for "witnesses organized to continue for this man; we need commitment, we need commitment; compañeros to the front; we refuse to back down; we will fight to the end. Revolution is needed here."

Walker's surviving brother William and daughter Donna represented the Walker family. Joining the wide representation of Cuba solidarity, socialist and progressive activists were Cuba's United Nations Ambassador Pedro Núñez Mosquera; Nicaraguan Ambassador María Eugenia Rubiales de Chamorro; many members of, and the spirited choir from, Walker's Salvation Baptist Church; New York City Councilperson and Freedom Party candidate for governor, Charles Barron; Ramsey Clark; and Akbar Mohammed of the Nation of Islam. Messages and resolutions from churches, individuals and elected officials, including congressional Reps. Charles Rangel, Jose Serrano and Maxine Waters, and author Jane Franklin were acknowledged. □

Rep. Bennie Thompson said his Mississippi district needed doctors, President Fidel Castro announced scholarships for youth from underserved communities in the U.S. who apply through IFCO/Pastors for Peace. Currently 146 U.S. students study at LASM with full scholarships, including 16 in the new class. Forty-seven have graduated and two are residents in U.S. hospitals.

Narciso Ortiz, LASM graduate, said, "The most important thing he taught me is: All that matters is revolution. He didn't talk much, but did much." Melissa Barber expressed the condolences of the delegation of incredible, revolutionary doctors who learned the importance of being agents of social change. She recalled Walker telling the students not to settle for just graduating, encouraging them to do better. "I want to thank Lucius. Because of him my name is Dr. Melissa Barber," she said in closing.

After the earthquake disaster in Haiti in February, the LASM graduates volunteered to serve there. A representative of the Haitian organization Lakou New York reported that the young doctors worked

KASHMIR

Youth lead resistance to Indian occupation

By G. Dunkel

Beginning in 2008 and greatly intensifying in June of this year, growing resistance in the Indian-occupied part of Kashmir has created a major political crisis for the ruling class of India.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh told an all-party meeting in New Delhi on Sept. 15, while being covered on India TV, that dialog is the only way out to ensure peace and to resolve the unrest in the Kashmir valley. As recently as August, however, speaking to a conference of police chiefs on the situation in Kashmir, Singh took a harder line. He said at that time, "We need to revisit standard operating procedures and crowd control measures to deal with public agitations with nonlethal, yet effective and more focused measures." (AFP, Sept. 19)

Despite Singh's talk of peaceful measures, the online Indian news service SIFY reported Sept. 19 that 101 Kashmiris had been killed by Indian civilian police and Indian military police, called gendarmes, since June — three of them on Sept. 15,

the day the prime minister spoke. CNN updated the death toll later that day, since another three young men and one woman died after the SIFY report.

Kashmir, a mountainous area in the lower Himalayas, borders on India, Pakistan and China. Three-quarters of its inhabitants are Muslims and its main industries are agriculture and tourism.

At the end of direct British rule of the entire subcontinent, it had been partitioned mainly along religious lines between Hindu-dominated India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. After a war and ceasefire between India and Pakistan in 1947-1948, the United Nations at India's request drew up what was supposed to be a temporary Line of Control dividing most of the Kashmir region between those two countries. The rest — a small, sparsely inhabited piece on the border — went to China.

A promised plebiscite in the area of Kashmir under India's control, where at least three-fourths of the people are Muslims, never happened. Instead, India claimed it as a state and called it Kashmir

and Jammu. This is the area that has long been the scene of a militant struggle for self-determination.

Kashmiris protest 24-hour curfews

A 24-hour curfew imposed Sept. 13 on parts of Srinagar, a large city in the northern part of Indian-controlled Kashmir and a center of resistance, was lifted for a few hours on Sept. 18 for families to buy food, medicine and water. (Al-Jazeera, Sept. 19) The curfews are so strict that people have been arrested just for looking out their windows during curfew time. (Christian Science Monitor, Aug. 3)

Since Sept. 13, when 18 people were killed, tensions have reached a fever pitch and demonstrations have challenged the curfews. The Indian army has started patrolling some of the hot spots where both police and gendarmes have lost control.

For all the stringency of the Indian forces and their tendency to shoot live ammunition without warning, Kashmiris have protested frequently during the curfews, in villages and in cities, especially to

protest what they say have been atrocities.

According to the *Christian Science Monitor* (Aug. 2), this uprising appears to have no links to Pakistan. It is led by unarmed Kashmiri youth who defy the curfews and throw rocks to protect themselves and their communities.

An all-party delegation of Indian leaders, including Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Home Minister P. Chidambaram, in addition to representatives from the main opposition party and other parties, is going to Srinagar on Sept. 20.

The delegation most certainly will meet leaders of various pro-India parties, based mainly in the non-Muslim communities of Kashmir. However, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, the public leader of the Kashmir resistance, has already announced his decision not to meet the delegation, saying, "The mandate of the delegation is limited to talking within the framework of the Indian Constitution."

Unless India makes some real concessions to the Kashmiri people and lightens the repression, the political situation can only grow more unstable. □

Se intensifica la resistencia contra el régimen golpista hondureño

Por Heather Cottin

Agosto fue un mes de lucha encarnizada en Honduras. El Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP) ha participado en huelgas, marchas y plantones, mientras que el gobierno hondureño ha respondido con represión despiadada. Hablando el 6 de septiembre en la estación de la resistencia, Radio Globo, Juan Barahona, coordinador adjunto del FNRP y presidente de la Central Unitaria de Trabajadores, dijo que nunca había visto tanta brutalidad del ejército y la policía en Honduras, ni siquiera en la década de 1980.

Septiembre promete ser aún más intenso.

Los/as hondureños/as han estado en

las calles y organizándose en el país desde el 28 de junio 2009, cuando un golpe de estado cedió el país a los militares y oligarcas: las 10 familias hondureñas que poseen la tierra y las empresas, junto a las transnacionales estadounidenses. El régimen golpista de Roberto Micheletti removió de su cargo al presidente Manuel Zelaya que había sido elegido legalmente e instituyó una serie de medidas draconianas que despojaron a la población de sus derechos.

Durante su presidencia, Zelaya había respondido a las demandas de los/as trabajadores/as y campesinos/as de aumentar el salario mínimo y mejorar las condiciones de la mayoría de la población. Con la aquiescencia encubierta del gobierno

de EEUU, que había criticado las reformas anti-imperialistas de Zelaya, la oligarquía hondureña tomó el control de la nación de 8 millones de personas.

Aunque Washington alegó oponerse al golpe, favoreció el proceso fraudulento de "elección" que en enero llevó al títere Porfirio (Pepe) Lobo Sosa a la presidencia. Lobo está bajo el control total de las fuerzas armadas y la oligarquía y desde su elección ha utilizado a la policía y al ejército para reprimir a la población en todo el país. Aunque decenas de personas, incluidas periodistas, han sido asesinadas, torturadas y desaparecidas desde la elección de Lobo, el gobierno de EEUU sostiene que Honduras ha "recuperado la democracia". (Agence France-Presse, 29 de agosto)

En el Bajo Aguán en el norte de Honduras, los/as campesinos/as exigían el cumplimiento de una reforma rural agraria que les hubiera devuelto sus tierras ancestrales. El gobierno de Lobo respondió en abril con 3.000 soldados fuertemente armados y una represión violenta de las organizaciones campesinas.

El 5 de septiembre, la policía y el ejército disolvieron una huelga de hambre que llevaban por tres meses los/as trabajadores/as despedidos/as de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma (UNAH). Los/as 150 trabajadores/as sindicalizados protestaban por su despido participando en una huelga pacífica hasta que los militares entraron y golpearon, dispararon y rociaron con gas pimienta a los/as trabajadores/as y estudiantes dentro de los muros de la universidad. El ejército entonces tomó el control de la escuela. (Presente Honduras, 5 de septiembre, y Telesur, 06 de septiembre)

El gobierno de Lobo y el sumiso congreso nacional se acordaban de la victoria de la huelga que por tres semanas en agosto llevaron a cabo los/as maestros/as. Los/as maestros/as, a quienes el gobierno no había pagado desde febrero, salieron en huelga para exigir los pagos atrasados y para oponerse a la privatización de la educación. A pesar de los ataques viciosos por la policía y las fuerzas armadas, los/as maestros/as se mantuvieron firme y ganaron sus demandas. Lobo, a quien algunos llaman "Golpepe", fue obligado a prometer la restauración de las pensiones — que el gobierno de Micheletti había robado — y restaurar sus beneficios.

El 26 de agosto los/as maestros/as habían salido a las calles de la ciudad capital, Tegucigalpa, en apoyo a las demandas de los movimientos campesinos por una distribución de la tierra. Los militares respondieron con armas de fuego y gases lacrimógenos. (Resistencia, 26 de agosto)

Desde 1 de mayo, la resistencia hon-

dureña ha estado organizando para "La Constituyente", una asamblea nacional constituyente para reemplazar la actual Constitución. Se ha hecho circular una petición exigiendo un referéndum para iniciar el proceso de una constitución popular.

La actual constitución, que fue escrita en 1982 en connivencia con el gobierno de Reagan en los EEUU, ha agravado la brecha entre ricos y pobres. Defiende los derechos de los oligarcas y los inversionistas extranjeros.

Hasta EEUU admite que desde 2004 la tasa oficial de pobreza en Honduras ha aumentado de un 50 por ciento de la población a más del 60 por ciento. (CIA World Factbook) Los efectos de la crisis económica mundial han sido brutales en Centroamérica, y Honduras es el país más pobre de la región.

Más de 1 millón de personas han firmado la petición para la Constituyente hasta ahora. Las exigencias de la Resistencia incluyen la reforma agraria, el aumento del salario mínimo, el respeto a los derechos humanos; el fin a la persecución y el asesinato de miembros/as de la Resistencia, y la no privatización de los recursos naturales. Esta última exigencia es de particular interés para los pueblos indígenas de Honduras que se oponen a la privatización de los ríos.

Además, la Resistencia está pidiendo el reconocimiento internacional para la asamblea nacional constituyente y garantías para el regreso de Manuel Zelaya, el coordinador de la Resistencia Nacional, y de 200 hondureños/as más forzados/as al exilio por el golpe. La Resistencia llamó a un paro nacional de 12 horas en Tegucigalpa el 7 de septiembre. Cuando las fuerzas armadas atacaron tan brutalmente a los/as trabajadores/as de la UNAH el 5 de septiembre, Lobo emitió una advertencia de que cualquier persona que apoye la ocupación de edificios públicos o carreteras sería reprimida. Pero la respuesta de agrupaciones obreras y campesinas ha sido la de intensificar su oposición, pidiendo a todos/as los/as trabajadores/as, estudiantes y campesinos/as a ocupar las calles de Tegucigalpa el 7 de septiembre.

Juan Barahona, el coordinador auxiliar del FNRP, dijo que el paro será el prelude a una huelga general que las cuatro centrales sindicales del país están preparando. (Prensa Latina, 3 de sept.)

La Resistencia espera tener 1.250.000 firmas para la Constituyente el 15 de septiembre, y anota que el Paro Cívico es su primer paso. La Resistencia hondureña avanzada resueltamente. Su consigna "Nos tienen miedo porque no tenemos miedo", parece ser muy cierta. □

EDITORIAL

Tropas estadounidenses en combate

Al menos de una semana después de que el Presidente Barack Obama anunciara — mientras trataba de evitar un tono triunfalista — el fin de la misión estadounidense de combate en Irak, tropas estadounidenses participaron en una batalla en una de las comandancias principales de Bagdad el 5 de septiembre.

La declaración ocurrió simultáneamente con un aumento súbito de los ataques aparentemente realizados por elementos de la resistencia iraquí contra la ocupación estadounidense. Casi todos estos ataques han estado dirigidos contra las tropas o la policía del gobierno títere de Irak. También ha habido ataques con morteros contra bases y recintos estadounidenses.

Los oficiales dijeron que murieron 12 personas en el ataque del 5 de septiembre contra el centro de operaciones de la División 11 del Ejército de Irak. Al menos cuatro de las personas muertas eran soldados y otras 36 personas fueron heridas. Según la Comandancia de Operaciones de Bagdad, los seis insurgentes que participaron en el ataque murieron. La mayoría llevaba explosivos. Un ataque con bomba había asaltado la misma base militar el 17 de agosto, matando a 57 hombres jóvenes que esperaban alistarse al ejército títere. (Sydney Morning Herald, 5 de sept.)

Esta historia subraya el hecho de que el combate en Irak está lejos de acabar, incluso para las tropas estadounidenses. Es interesante que el 2 de septiembre Prensa Asociada enviara un memorándum a sus escritores para insistir en este punto. "Para empezar", leía el mensaje, "el combate en Irak no ha terminado, y no debemos repetir sugerencias sin críticas de que sí se ha acabado, aún cuando vengan de oficiales superiores. La situación en Irak no es diferente hoy de lo que ha sido algunos meses atrás".

La declaración de Obama sobre Irak el 31 de agosto criticó la decisión de iniciar la guerra allí, pero mostró simpatía al Presidente George W. Bush. El problema con esta posición contradictoria es que Bush es visto por millones de personas, alrededor del mundo y en los Estados Unidos, como un criminal de guerra responsable por la muerte de más de 4.000 tropas estadounidenses y por lo menos de cientos de miles, si no más de un millón de iraquíes. □

LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez & Fernando González Llort.

¿Quiénes son los Cinco Cubanos?

Los Cinco Cubanos están cumpliendo largas e injustas sentencias en prisiones de EEUU por defender a su patria — Cuba — de grupos terroristas del exilio Cubano en Miami. Los Cinco Cubanos fueron arrestados en 1998 por monitorear las actividades de esos grupos violentos e informar a Cuba sobre sus planes. Por casi 12 años, estos cinco hombres han permanecido en priso-

nes de EEUU y como un castigo adicional, a dos de ellos se les ha negado el derecho humano básico de recibir visitas de sus esposas. Únase a personas de todas partes del mundo — parlamentarios, Premios Nobel, sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios — que se han pronunciado contra el injusto encarcelamiento de los Cinco Cubanos y continúan demandando su libertad. Para más información visite: www.thecuban5.org