

WORKERS WORLD

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Activists refuse to back down Denounce FBI raids, grand jury repression

By Sara Flounders

Anti-war, anti-racist and left political activists in the United States have responded with unprecedented energy and outrage against nationally coordinated FBI raids on the homes of well-respected political organizers. Within 72 hours of the Sept. 24 raids, protest demonstrations were held or scheduled in 32 cities across the country.

Activists have established a Committee to Stop FBI Repression to coordinate the opposition to the FBI attacks. Dozens of organizations, local, regional and national, have condemned the FBI raids, including the San Francisco Labor Council.

This latest instance of state repression began early Sept. 24 as FBI agents armed with grand jury subpoenas raided the homes of several anti-war and social justice activists in Minnesota, Michigan and Illinois.

Organizers believe the Oct. 5, 7, 12 and 19 grand jury subpoena dates will become dates to mobilize the entire progressive political movement. They expect the demand to stop the subpoenas and "No to the grand jury investigation" to become slogans of a national movement that can stop this dangerous precedent.

That same day FBI agents "visited" activists' homes in California, Milwaukee, Michigan and North Carolina demanding immediate cooperation. When activists refused to speak with them, the FBI threatened to talk to employers and landlords, and also subpoena the activists.

The targets of this "raid against terrorism" included leaders of the Minneapolis Antiwar Committee, whose office was raided; the Palestine Solidarity Group; the Colombia Action Network; the National Committee to Free Ricardo Palmera (a Colombian political prisoner held in the U.S.); Students for a Democratic Society; and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Though their homes and lives had just been turned upside down, all those targeted had a calm and determined response. They refused to speak to the FBI. Faced with spurious charges of providing material aid to "terrorists," they reaffirmed their right to organize opposition to U.S. wars and to build

Continued on page 6

Demands moratorium on foreclosures UAW opens fight vs. Chase bank

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

United Auto Workers President Bob King announced Sept. 24 that the UAW was closing accounts worth "hundreds of millions of dollars" of strike and other union funds at JPMorgan Chase bank.

"Chase is destroying our communities," declared King. "We bailed out Wall Street, and they're throwing good, hard-working people out of their homes. If we don't take a position, things won't change. We demand a two-year moratorium on foreclosures."

He and other leaders announced a national divestment campaign to pressure Chase to enact a moratorium on foreclosures and participate in mortgage modification programs to enable workers and the unemployed to keep their homes.

A second demand is for Chase to stop bankrolling R.J. Reynolds Corp.'s extreme exploitation of tobacco field workers in North Carolina. Added King, "We are not going to tolerate inhumane treatment of workers in North Carolina and around the country. It is time to take a stand."

King was joined at the press conference at Central United Methodist Church by Baldeemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee; the Rev. Ed Rowe of CUMC; Pastor D. Alexander Bullock of Rainbow PUSH Coalition; Vanessa Fluker of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop

Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs; Maureen Taylor of Michigan Welfare Rights Organization; and other religious, union and community representatives. Dozens of union and community activists also attended.

"Chase refuses to participate in the Helping Hardest Hit Homeowners program to modify loans for the unemployed," said Rowe, "but the people are not powerless!" Chase also receives a fee from the state "every time a Michigan Bridge Card is swiped" to use food assistance and make purchases from unemployment benefits.

R.J. Reynolds "has the most exploited workforce in the U.S. in the fields of North Carolina" and it is "inexcusable what the company and its top financial partner are doing," Velasquez stated. "But we are not going to let them use our money to exploit us anymore!" He said everyone should close checking and savings accounts at Chase banks and cancel their Chase credit cards.

Vanessa Fluker, an anti-foreclosure at-

Continued on page 4

**WANT JOBS?
WANT JUSTICE?**
Workers need to fightback 8

**BRONX
PEOPLE'S
ASSEMBLY**
Building grassroots
resistance 5

**DEFEND PUBLIC
EDUCATION**
All Out Oct. 7! 3

**FREE
MUMIA
ABU-JAMAL**
Stop the legal lynching 2



MINNEAPOLIS

PHOTO: FIGHT BACK! NEWS

ACTIONS PROTEST FBI TERROR

The national headquarters of the FBI in Washington, D.C., was the scene of a spirited picket line and rally Sept. 28 to protest the FBI raids. Almost every progressive group in the area was represented, including Bailout the People Movement, International Action Center, Black is Back Coalition, Rev. Graylan Hagler, National Lawyers Guild, Code Pink, Students for a Democratic Society, Answer Coalition, Veterans for Peace, Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, International Socialist Organization, Green Party, Students for Justice in Palestine, and Workers World Party. Participants attempted to enter the FBI building to deliver a list of demands. Police and FBI agents quickly locked the doors to stop activists from getting inside. Groups vowed to continue with protests. See page 7.



— Report & photo by Sharon Black

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Nov. 9 in Philadelphia:

'Free Mumia Abu-Jamal'

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

The nearly 29-year struggle to free political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal faces a critical juncture with the announcement that the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit will review Abu-Jamal's death sentence on Nov. 9. It is imperative that all who stand for justice and against racism and state repression pack the courtroom in Philadelphia.

In 2008 the Third Circuit Court granted Abu-Jamal a new sentencing hearing based on flawed jury instructions in the sentencing phase of his 1982 trial. However, on Jan. 19 of this year, the U.S. Supreme Court granted the Philadelphia district attorney's petition for a review of a 2001 ruling by federal Judge William Yohn that overturned Abu-Jamal's death penalty but not his conviction.

The Supreme Court went against Yohn's decision as well as the 2008 Third Circuit ruling granting a new sentencing-phase jury trial to decide if Abu-Jamal's death penalty was to be reinstated. In the week before the Jan. 19 decision the Supreme Court ruled on *Smith v. Spisak*, a case that also involved questionable instructions to the jury during the sentencing phase, although the case differs from Abu-Jamal's in both legal and political aspects.

Neo-Nazi and white supremacist Frank Spisak killed three people and then bragged about it in court. Abu-Jamal, a former Black Panther organizer, was convicted of killing Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner on Dec. 9, 1981, but has always maintained his innocence. Several prosecution witnesses from his 1982 trial have since recanted their testimony.

Spisak's lawyers had appealed based on the 1988 Supreme Court ruling in *Mills v. Maryland*, which addresses confusing jury instructions. The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals had overturned Spisak's sentence based on *Mills*, but the U.S. Supreme Court decided the standard did not apply in Abu-Jamal's case.

It would appear that the Supreme Court, which had the district attorney's appeal of Yohn's decision since 2001, was waiting for a case like Spisak's so they could justify their reversal in Abu-Jamal's case, even though the two cases and the two defendants differ as night from day. Even though Abu-Jamal's case met the *Mills* standard, the Supreme Court refused to apply it, in what was clearly a decision motivated by politics and not law.

The announcement of the Nov. 9 hearing came on Sept. 21, the same day that a Fraternal-Order-of-Police-promoted "docummercial" by Tigre Hill titled "The Barrel of a Gun" premiered at the Merriam Theater in Philadelphia. This film was originally scheduled to preview in February, but Abu-Jamal supporters suspect it was purposely delayed to coincide with the announcement of the Court of Appeals hearing.

The premise of Hill's "The Barrel of a Gun" is based on an argument first raised by Michael Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner in their 2007 book "Murdered by Mumia: A Life Sentence of Loss, Pain and Injustice." Smerconish, along with prosecutor Joseph McGill, raises the baseless idea that the killing of Daniel Faulkner was the direct result of a long-harbored hatred of the police on Abu-Jamal's part and had maybe even been a pre-planned "hit" engineered by Abu-Jamal and his brother Billy Cook.

Pro-cop propaganda

Just as McGill attempted to do during the sentencing phase before a nearly all-white, predominantly middle-class jury, Hill uses a quote out of context in the movie to attempt to portray Abu-Jamal as an "angry Black man," introducing his membership in the Black Panther Party to imply he was "out to kill cops." Yet Abu-Jamal had no record of violent conduct prior meeting Faulkner that fateful night.

Hill's film is so one-sided, so pro-police and pro-prosecution that it was described by Philadelphia Inquirer columnist Annette John-Hall as "two hours of overblown conclusions from disconnected dots." John-Hall, who is African-American as is Hill, wrote, "I've known Hill for more than 10 years ... but I left the screening of his movie shaking my head in disbelief." (Sept. 24)

In response to Hill's portrayal of Abu-Jamal as a "premeditated killer," John-Hall notes, "A 1981 article in the Bulletin put Abu-Jamal, then a cabdriver, at 13th and Locust with a flat tire" at the time of Faulkner's shooting.

Supporters of Abu-Jamal responded to Hill's one-sided pro-FOP film just as they did when Smerconish and Maureen Faulkner's book was featured on NBC's Today Show with Matt Lauer in 2007 — by uncovering even more factual evidence of Abu-Jamal's innocence.

In December 2007, Journalists for Mumia provided an extensive press packet to Lauer before his interview with Smerconish and Faulkner that contained photos taken by press photographer Pedro P. Polakoff just after the Dec. 9, 1981, shooting. The photos show mishandling, manipulation and misinterpretation of the crime scene and seriously call into question "evidence" presented by the prosecution at Abu-Jamal's 1981 trial.

Lauer confronted his guests with these photos, including one showing a police officer holding both Faulkner's and Mumia's guns in his ungloved hand.

Hill makes no mention of the Polakoff photos in his movie, although he filmed the Journalists for Mumia press conference on Dec. 4, 2007, which unveiled the "newly discovered" crime scene photos, which the prosecution knew of but ignored in 1981.

'Justice on Trial' premieres

Polakoff's photos were featured prominently in Big Noise Films' "Justice on Trial" that also premiered in Philadelphia on Sept. 21 during a press conference. This film was screened before a standing-room-only crowd of over 200 people at the National Constitution Center in the afternoon and in the evening at the Ritz East. Polakoff is interviewed in the film.

"Justice on Trial" was directed by Kouross Esmaeli of Big Noise Films and produced by Johanna Fernandez, a professor of U.S. history at Baruch College and a leader of Educators for Mumia. Fernandez and Esmaeli introduced the film and took questions at both screenings.

Their film examines all the civil rights and constitutional violations in this case, including collaboration to conceal exculpatory evidence from the trial by police, prosecutors and openly biased, pro-prosecution Judge Sabo.

While Hill's film fails to even mention widespread police corruption and rampant police brutality against the Black community in Philadelphia that existed before, during and long after the trial, "Justice on Trial" looks

Continued on page 3

★ In the U.S.

- Denounce FBI raids, grand jury repression 1
- UAW opens fight vs. Chase bank. 1
- 'Free Mumia Abu-Jamal' 2
- All out to defend public education, Oct. 7 3
- Thousands see support for Freedom Party 3
- ADAPT protest for disability rights 3
- 'Public money for public schools!' 4
- Warehouse sweatshops, no! 4
- Bronx People's Assembly 5
- On the picket line 5
- The GOP, the Tea Party & the class struggle 6
- U.S. activists call emergency actions 7
- It's time for workers to fight. 8

★ Around the world

- U.S.-backed forces assassinate revolutionaries 9
- Mexican electrical workers cry for economic justice 9
- U.N. report condemns Israeli attack 9
- U.S. activists meet with Iranian president 10
- Millions strike in France & Greece 10
- Cuba, Venezuela advance with social planning 11
- Uniting workers in the Americas 11
- Haiti: The catastrophe continues 11

★ Editorials

- A tale of injustice 10
- Two sides of the same coin 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Activistas denuncian al FBI 12
- Cuba 12

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In NYC

All out to defend public education, Oct. 7

By Larry Hales
New York

On Oct. 7 there will be a citywide rally including students, educators, workers and community activists to defend public education at 4 p.m. at the Harlem State Office Building, followed by a march across Harlem, ending at the City College of New York.

Rallies, teach-ins, and sit-ins will take place at many City University of New York and State University of New York schools. Students at Brooklyn, Hostos, Hunter, Lehman, and Queens colleges and City College will conduct activities earlier in the day before joining the rally in Harlem.

These actions are part of the National Day of Action to Defend Public Education, which continues the national movement begun on March 4.

Since 2008 public higher education has been hit hard; \$400 million has been slashed from SUNY and \$200 million cut from CUNY. Since 2004 tuition has increased 46 percent at SUNY and 44 percent at CUNY. Vital services, like childcare, have been cut back.

Millions of dollars have been cut for kindergarten to 12th grade in public schools. New York state measures will tie teacher pay to student performance on high-stakes standardized tests.

This is in line with "Race to the Top," the federal government's \$4.35 billion fund, which is dangled in front of strapped state governments as a prize for states that launch the most vicious attacks against public education and teachers.

In Harlem the attacks on public education and the community are really acute. Charter schools are being moved into the same buildings as public schools. Then public schools and the children who attend them are pushed out.

The economic crisis and devastating massive unemployment and homelessness converge in Harlem with the racist attacks on public education and the criminalization of young people who are being denied equal, quality education. At the same time, rich developers and Columbia University are taking over the community.

Oct. 7 organizers call for an immediate halt to and reversal of all tuition hikes, budget cuts, layoffs, privatizations and closures of public schools; jobs and free health care for all students; cancellation of student debt; free public education for all from kindergarten to college; the elimination of racism in the public school system; equal pay for equal work; and job security for all faculty and teachers.

Endorsers include Bail Out the People Movement, Black New Yorkers for Educational Excellence, City Councilper-

son Charles Barron, Coalition for Public Education, Coalition to Save Harlem, Committee to End Abusive Policing in Our Communities, December 12th Movement, East Village Community School Parents Association (NYC), FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together), Harlem Tenants Council and Iglesia San Romero.

Also endorsing are Independent Commission on Public Education, International Action Center, International Socialist Organization, Labor-Community Forum of the South Bronx Community

Congress, May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, National Black Education Agenda, New York City Labor Against the War, Roots Revisited, Socialist Alternative, STAND (Queens College), Students for Educational Rights (CCNY), Take Back Our Transit System, Workers World Party and Ya Ya Network.

For more information see www.march4ny.wordpress.com and www.defendededucation.org.

The writer is a national organizer of the Oct. 7 mobilization.

Thousands see support for Freedom Party

Harlem, N.Y.



On Sept. 19 the Freedom Party marched in the 41st annual African-American Day Parade in Harlem, N.Y., the largest Black parade in the U.S. New York state gubernatorial candidate Charles Barron and Attorney General candidate Ramon Jimenez proudly led the Freedom Party contingent of approximately 150 supporters, wearing Freedom Party T-shirts and buttons. Barron, who is African American, is a New York City councilperson. Jimenez is a Puerto Rican lawyer and activist.

Supporters of the Freedom Party displayed the traditional Black liberation red, black and green flag; there were also flags from Caribbean and African countries. Marchers chanted, "Nov. 2, Vote for freedom!" "Have you heard the news? We're gonna give them the blues!" "Black & Latino, unity together!" "Charles Barron for Governor!" Eva M. Boyle, an African-American educator, is the Lieutenant Governor candidate.

The Freedom Party is challenging the all-white New York state Democratic Party slate in the upcoming November election. The party is the first Black and Latino/a-led independent political party. It was created to fulfill the heretofore neglected needs of the people by both the

Democrats and the Republicans.

After much hard work and long hours of petitioning, Barron and his supporters managed to get nearly three times the 15,000 required signatures for the party to be officially placed on the ballot for this election. The party hopes to also receive the necessary 50,000 votes in the Nov. 2 election, which will enable it to run in the following election.

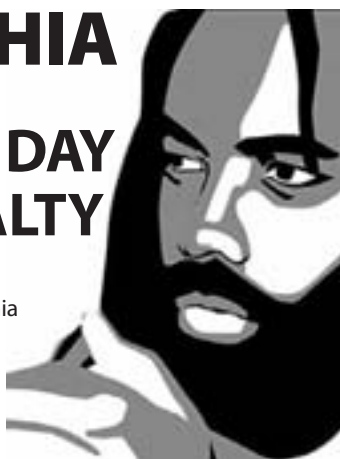
The Freedom Party is calling for the support and active involvement of everyone, regardless of skin color, who wants to see real, true systemic changes in U.S. society. It is an uphill battle, they admit, but winnable if the power of the people is fully utilized. To register to vote for the Freedom Party slate on Nov. 2, call the Board of Elections hotline at 800-FOR-VOTE or go to www.elections.state.ny.us.

For information on the Freedom Party and how you can participate in the campaign, visit or contact its citywide headquarters at Sistas' Place, 456 Nostrand Ave, Brooklyn, 347-636-3660; go to www.freedompartynys.com; or e-mail mail@freedompartynys.com. Go to www.workers.org to read more about the Freedom Party.

— Story and photo by Dolores Cox

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 & 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.

Continued from page 2

at the case in that context. Fifteen of the police involved in Abu-Jamal's case were later tried on charges of abuse and corruption.

The film makes the point that just like Abu-Jamal, people of color in the U.S. end up incarcerated every day because they are unable to afford adequate representation in the courts. That the prosecution knowingly withheld evidence should be ample grounds for a new trial in Abu-Jamal's case, as more examples of such violations continue to surface.

Read this article in its entirety at www.workers.org.

Washington, D.C.

ADAPT protest for disability rights

ADAPT, a national disability rights action group, fought state budget cuts to Medicaid home services by mobilizing in Washington, D.C., Sept. 19-22. Activists chained themselves to three gates at the White House and blocked street intersections. ADAPT also barricaded the Department of Housing and Urban Development building and parking structures with their wheelchairs until HUD Secretary Shaun Donovan agreed in writing to meet with them on Oct. 15. Sixteen were arrested.

On Sept. 22 attendees at a swanky luncheon honoring House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for supporting women's rights heard from women with disabilities because Pelosi refuses to sponsor and promote the Community Choice Act — legislation allowing people with disabilities to choose home care instead of nursing homes.

Demanding "Our homes, not nursing homes," ADAPT women said, "68.4 percent of all nursing home residents are women. You can bet they would rather



PHOTO: TOM OLIN

be in their own homes with services and supports. Most are seniors and women with disabilities and definitely not rich. These women are not exactly on Speaker Pelosi's high priority list." For more information on these actions, go to www.adapt.org.

— Cheryl LaBash

Chicago occupation demands:

'Public money for public schools!'

By Rakhee Devasthali
Chicago

In an echo of the Republic Windows and Doors occupation, which brought national attention to immigrant workers' fight for their rights in December 2008, the battle to preserve the Whittier School Field House and Community Center has received a groundswell of support.

Hundreds of Chicago residents have turned out to support the predominantly Mexican-American families who are occupying the field house to forestall demolition, push for a much-needed school library and demand that Alderman Danny Solis fulfill his pledge to keep public money in public hands.

On Sept. 20 the organized parents of the school held a bilingual press conference to address Ron Huberman, CEO of Chicago Public Schools, and hold him to his past

commitments about school expansion.

Chicago Public Radio, Univision, FOX, CBS, ABC, NBC and WGN were present. Hundreds of community supporters held signs reading "Kids need libraries" and "Public money for public schools" and chanting "Aquí estamos! Y no nos vamos!" (We are here and we aren't leaving!) and "Show your face, Solis!" when the alderman failed to attend the press conference.

Parents Lisa Angonese and Virginia Guevara called out CPS for its unkept promises and missing public funds. While parents hired an independent engineer to assess the building, and found it only needs \$20,000 in roof repairs, CPS has declared the field house structurally unsafe, while never once producing documents to prove a formal inspection has been done. Parents also questioned the disappearance of \$104,000 out of \$200,000 allotted to the school for renovations under

the American with Disabilities Act.

As in many cities, Chicago uses the Tax Increment Financing method ideally to finance community improvement projects by borrowing against future gains in taxes. But, just as public money is being used to fund private interests, TIF funds here must be monitored closely by the communities to protect against gentrification and ensure the money returns to them and stays in the hands of the public.

In guarding the interests of the Pilsen Mexican-American neighborhood, the parents refuse to accept the proposal for only 5 percent of the saved TIF funds to return to the community; of that, \$356,000 would be used to demolish the community center. Additionally, the speakers revealed CPS plans to make the current public land available to a local Jesuit private school or developers.

The Whittier school building is cur-

rently filled to capacity and lacks many resources for education, namely a library. On top of this, the public library in the neighborhood has been closed all summer. Parents, joined by local representatives, are demanding that the TIF funds be used to renovate the field house and turn it into a library and that an abandoned police building on the same block be utilized as the promised school expansion.

Parents, students, teachers and community members intend to continue the occupation until they win their demands. "They keep threatening us with demolition crews that never show up. They are just playing with us and waiting until we get tired and leave. But what they don't know is that we are Mexicans; we don't get tired. This is important!" said Araceli Gonzales, one of the parents leading the occupation. □

Warehouse sweatshops, no!

By Gavrielle Gemma
Joliet, Ill.

There are 150,000 workers toiling 365 days a year in sweatshop warehouses in the Chicago region. With dockworkers and truck drivers, they load and distribute most of the products we wear, eat or use. The gigantic, concrete, windowless warehouses hide the brutal and unsafe conditions inside.

Warehouse Workers for Justice are exposing this and fighting back.

In the warehouse or "logistics" industry, high-tech restructuring has meant fewer workers move mountains of goods to megafirms like Wal-Mart, K-Mart and Target. This has created super-profits for them.

With unemployment high in Illinois, corporations are using this to drive down wages. While manufacturing plants with good union wages are closed, the warehouse industry is expanding; it pays minimum wage and denies benefits like sick or vacation pay to workers.

WWJ says 63 percent of warehouse workers are hired through temporary agencies, which often pay piece rates. A worker might make 90 cents a piece for each refrigerator loaded off a truck; sometimes that 90 cents is split between two workers doing the job together.

"It's all based on economics, so employees can be cut when business is slow or added when it's busy," said Angelo Ippolito, who runs Pridestaff temping.

Tory Moore, a WWJ leader, worked at Del Monte's warehouse, hired by temp agency Select Remedy. He told Workers World, "I worked six years, 52 weeks a year because I had no vacation pay. I worked when I was sick because there was no sick pay, and I could not afford to go to a doctor. ... I was in charge of packing, and I trained the first and third shifts as well."

Temporary agencies hide their real income. Moore worked 12,480 hours over six years. Select Remedy made \$50,000 to \$60,000 from his labor. With this type of windfall, temporary agencies have sprung up, competing with each other by worsening workers' conditions.

Moore was fired when he asked for a raise. "I don't want other workers to be temps like me. People need to have a permanent job and a living wage with benefits. We should not have to get food stamps while working at a multimillion-dollar warehouse, so I joined Warehouse Workers for Justice."

Wal-Mart owners, the Walton family, are rolling in dough, but they want more. Rather than hiring workers directly, they contract with Maersk, a world

shipping and logistics giant, to run their warehouse. Maersk then contracts Select Remedy for warehouse workers. They make huge profits, while the workers get poverty.

Many agencies short workers on wages and overtime pay by paying less than minimum wage and not contributing to workers' compensation or disability funds. Twenty percent of warehouse workers are injured on the job, and they're often disciplined for reporting their injuries to management. Racist and sexist discrimination are common. Agencies routinely violate state and federal laws.

Wal-Mart and Maersk claim they never violate any laws. However, they contract temporary agencies, which act as their agents and impose illegal, inhumane conditions on the workers — the very reason they're contracted. These corporations, which profit from law-breaking agencies, should be held accountable.

Boycott anti-union Bissell

The corporate barons, who are exploiting these workers, fear they will organize and fight back.

Bissell Homecare, Inc. illegally used unregistered temporary agencies, which paid some workers as little as \$2 an hour. Women warehouse workers at Bissell made \$2.50 per hour less than men. Preg-

nant women were assigned the heaviest jobs because the company wanted to force them out.

After WWJ ran a "Know Your Rights" seminar, Bissell workers organized and voted to join the United Electrical union. When 70 workers were fired, Bissell hid behind the temporary agency, which claims the workers were just laid off.

UE and WWJ are fighting back with lawsuits and a national campaign to boycott Bissell.

Referring to the use of public funds for building "intermodal centers" for warehouses, Abraham Mwaura, WWJ coordinator and UE organizer, said, "Local politicians are giving subsidies to the logistics industry," which says "it is okay that 63 percent of warehouse workers are temps and permatemps without basic benefits and that one in four [workers] receive government assistance. So they bail out the temp industry with our tax dollars. ... [To] sweeten the deal, it's the workers who will pay the money back to the state."

"WWJ is rallying Oct. 30 in Joliet to demand that those tax dollars provide good living-wage, direct-hire jobs."

Moore appeals to workers, unions and activists to support WWJ. "If we workers don't step up, we will all make minimum wage." To learn how you can help, go to www.warehouseworker.org. □

UAW opens national fight vs. Chase bank

Continued from page 1

torney, stated: "Entities like Chase created the racist subprime mortgage crisis with its predatory lending. They created the mess facing homeowners and now they refuse to modify loans. No laws hold lenders accountable for their actions. The people must act to demand a moratorium!" Fluker said governors and President Barack Obama have the executive authority to impose a moratorium during times of economy emergency.

Stop bank 'gangsters'

"We stand with the UAW and other unions and with Moratorium NOW! in demanding justice," declared Bullock. Describing the banks as "gangsters," he said, "Chase must own up to its responsibility for destroying our communities."



Vanessa Fluker



Bob King



Baldemar Vasquez

As part of the U.S. Social Forum in June, 1,000 angry people marched on Chase bank in downtown Detroit demanding a foreclosure moratorium and justice for North Carolina tobacco workers. Since then two meetings have occurred with religious, union and community leaders and Chase representatives, but the bank has offered "nothing."

King said a national campaign to withdraw money and close Chase accounts

and credit cards will involve the UAW and other unions as well as individual workers and people of conscience. He said the fight will continue until banks and financial institutions are held accountable for their destruction of people's lives and livelihoods.

Throughout the press conference the struggles of workers — union members, the unemployed, immigrants, farm workers, homeowners and families — were linked and strong solidarity was expressed by all speakers.

Chase responded to the press conference by claiming it had negotiated 900,000 loan modifications since the beginning of July 2009. But this claim is contradicted by government statistics on the Making Home Affordable Program. According to the Treasury Department's July 2009 Servicer Participation Report, 394,075 Chase mortgage holders were eli-

gible for HAMP modifications. The August 2010 report said only 60,932 Chase borrowers had been placed in permanent loan modifications. (financialstability.gov)

HAMP, the only federal program mandating loan modifications, has collapsed. In August, 96,000 trial modifications were canceled by lenders, while only 17,000 new trial modifications were offered. (New York Times, Aug. 20) The August Treasury report noted that of 201,771 eligible homeowners at that time — whose loans were 60 days or more behind — only 22,799 were in active trial modification.

The Chase divestment campaign represents a bold step by a major union in the U.S. to link with the community to take on the growing crisis of mortgage foreclosures by demanding a two-year moratorium. The persistent work of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Michigan has helped to finally put this demand on the political agenda of the union movement. □

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN PFEIFER

On the picket line

by Sue Davis

Thousands demand jobs

Jobs with Justice coalitions in more than 100 cities nationwide demanded on Sept. 15 that Congress pass laws to stop layoffs, among other measures. For example, in Chicago more than 300 people demonstrated against Rep. Mark Kirk who recently voted against extending unemployment. “We need jobs, and until we get them we need unemployment benefits,” said Carole Ramsden, an unemployed union electrician and member of the Unemployed Workers Council. (jwvblog.org, Sept. 17) In San Francisco the local JWW affiliate, S.F. Demands Jobs in S.F., demonstrated in front of Sen. Dianne Feinstein’s office. Those most impacted by the economic crisis — young workers, low-wage workers and single mothers trying to transition off welfare — demanded that Temporary Assistance to Needy Families be extended after Sept. 30.

Boycott Andiamo restaurants!

Workers fired for union organizing by the Andiamo restaurant in Dearborn, Mich., took their campaign to a new level on Sept. 17 when United Auto Workers President Bob King joined them in calling for a boycott of the 11 restaurants in the chain in southeast Michigan. The workers, who have been picketing for months, were joined on the line by the UAW, Metro Detroit AFL-CIO and interfaith leaders on Sept. 16 with signs reading “Hungry for justice.” The director of UAW Region 1A tried to deliver a letter to the Andiamo management demanding reinstatement of the workers who were fired for organizing with the Restaurant Opportunity Center of Michigan. The boycott was called after the manager refused to take the letter. Earlier this summer the National Labor Relations Board ruled that the workers were fired illegally in retaliation for organizing with ROC-Michigan, which has filed a lawsuit charging that \$125,000 in wages were withheld from the workers, who also suffered racist discrimination and sexual harassment. The company attempted to settle the case by paying one worker \$30 and posting a list of 15 things management will not do in the future. Boycott Andiamo until all the workers are rehired and paid back wages!

Immigrants rebuilding N.O. fight wage theft

Last year a survey by the Congress of Day Laborers in New Orleans found that 80 percent of the largely Latino, mostly undocumented immigrant construction workers it represents had been victims of wage theft. Even though the Department of Homeland Security suspended immigration enforcement and invited undocumented workers to help rebuild the city after extensive hurricane damage in 2005, the work continues. Statistics show the city’s Latino/a population increased from 4.4 percent in 2000 to about 10 percent in 2010. If the workers attempt to confront bosses individually, the bosses either call Immigration Control and Enforcement or physically attack them, so the workers have turned to the Pro Bono Project and Loyola New Orleans School of Law. Last year the groups helped workers file 365 cases suing bosses and drafted 146 demand letters. Now the New Orleans Center for Racial Justice is trying to get an anti-wage theft ordinance passed by the City Council. (Washington Independent, Sept. 1) □

Uniting the struggles

Bronx People’s Assembly



WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

By Deirdre Griswold
Bronx, N.Y.

Many community activists filled the meeting hall Sept. 25 at the first session of the Bronx People’s Assembly for Jobs and Economic Survival. They came to exchange information about independent organizing and to broaden their links to national social and economic justice movements.

The assembly was held at historic Hostos Community College, scene of a 40-day sit-in in 1974 that kept officials from shutting it down. Awareness of that militant past resonates today in the mostly Latino/a and Black student body and faculty.

Speaker after speaker told of fighting for relief from the crushing burden of poverty, unemployment and racist repression in the Bronx. This borough of New York City is not geographically far from Wall Street, where trillions of dollars in stocks and bonds are traded every day.

But the South Bronx is home to the poorest congressional district in the United States, where 27 percent of the people live below the poverty level, explained Rev. Lydia Lebrón Rivera as she opened the gathering.

Large banners on the walls proclaiming “South Bronx Community Congress,” “A real jobs program now — Bail Out the People Movement,” “Vote for Freedom Party” and “Equal rights for all workers — May 1 Coalition” showed that the People’s Assembly had brought together not only individuals but organizations and existing community coalitions. These groups have carried out powerful struggles for housing, jobs, mass transit, better public education and an end to police and government repression of people of color and immigrants.

Applause greeted co-chair Larry Holmes of BOPM when he explained that the People’s Assembly movement was growing nationally because “the people are disenfranchised” and bodies supposed to represent them, from city councils to Congress, “are in the pocket of the bankers.”

Holmes took note of the upcoming Oct. 2 march on Washington supported by much of the labor movement and the NAACP and urged that people go to it to put forward “a real jobs program.” He also suggested making the January birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. an “Uprising for Jobs Day.”

Co-chair Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March Movement emphasized that the People’s Assembly should focus on developing tactics by learning what has worked in the past and what is working in the present.

Many struggles represented

A speak-out followed that gave everyone an opportunity to be heard.

Ramón Jimenez led it off. Now a candidate for New York attorney general on the statewide Freedom Party, Jimenez is a veteran of the 1974 student takeover of Hostos and a founder of the South Bronx Community Congress.

The Freedom Party, a new political formation led by Black and Latino/a militants, is going up against a “three-headed monster” in the gubernatorial election, said Jimenez. Democrat Andrew Cuomo, Republican Carl Paladino and the Tea Party forces are all for lowering wages and cutting the pensions of state workers.

The Freedom Party nominee for governor, Charles Barron, is a former Black Panther who, as a member of the New York City Council, has often been outvoted 48 to 1. “He’s the one,” said Jimenez, humorously underscoring that Barron is a principled fighter.

Larry Hales spoke for the Coalition to Defend Public Education, which organized national protests last March and will be marching in Harlem on Oct. 7 demanding funds for jobs and education for youth. Mark Torres, also of the CDPE, added that the event will start on noon at City College and march to the Harlem State Office Building. It will stop at a charter school along the way to demand that profit-sucking corporations be kept out of the school system.

Daniel Vila of the Independent Workers Movement spoke of the struggle of day laborers and street vendors, who are mostly undocumented and often don’t even get paid. His group held three marches that helped reduce police harassment of vendors.

The need for solidarity with anti-war activists in Minneapolis, Chicago and other cities whose homes had just been raided by the FBI was raised by Holmes and echoed by many other speakers. A demonstration in New York City against the raids and subpoenas was announced for Sept. 28.

Where are the jobs?

Ligia Gualpa, an Ecuadoran woman who directs the Latin American Workers Project, told of the severe suffering of those who can’t find work in their own countries because U.S. corporations monopolize the main industries — in the case of Ecuador, bananas and petroleum — and migrate to the U.S. in desperation.

Gualpa denounced the “Memorandum of Agreement” by New York Gov. David Paterson to turn over names and information to Immigration and Customs Enforcement when these workers are stopped for even minor traffic violations.

Christine Williams of Transport Workers Union Local 100 and Gavielle Gemma of Take Back Our Transit System talked

Building grassroots solidarity, Sept. 25.

about the struggle of New York’s transit workers and riders against the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Williams described the open hostility of the people at recent hearings of the MTA board. Gemma said that of the 28 board members, who are supposed to represent the people’s interests, all but one is white. The transit system, she said, “is a cash cow for the banks.”

A stirring speech was given by Genghis Muhammad of Picture the Homeless, who described the struggle for “homes, not shelters.” Chevy Rivers of Help the People brought tears to everyone’s eyes as she told of the suicide of her 16-year-old daughter who had been rejected by a jobs program after budget cuts.

“Where has all the ‘stimulus’ money gone?” asked Owen Rogers of Operation Fightback, which has been struggling for years to get jobs for people of color in the construction industry. He showed how billions of dollars earmarked for New York projects “had no effect on our communities.” He called for a massive program to rebuild the infrastructure and provide jobs for communities with the highest unemployment.

No illusions about capitalism

Tony Gronowicz, the Green Party’s mayoral candidate in 2005, pointed out that Michael Bloomberg is the richest mayor in all history. He called for storming the turnstiles when a fare increase is announced.

A worker from Woodlawn Cemetery talked about the formation of the Band of Brothers to fight racist harassment on the job. No politicians represent these workers, he said. “That’s why we have to come together and represent ourselves.”

Charles Jenkins of TWU Local 100 said those present had “an opportunity to put our message in the national spotlight” at the Oct. 2 march in Washington, and told people how they could register to go on union buses.

After a break-out session for discussion on these various issues, reporters came back with recommendations for follow-up. This included going to the Oct. 2 march to demand jobs and immigrant rights and to continue building people’s assemblies as alternate sources of power.

No illusions about capitalism were expressed in this thoroughly working-class event. There was open discussion about how the popular movements need to prepare for a revolutionary overhaul of society.

Workers World Party had a literature table and speakers who were deeply involved in organizing many of the struggles described. □

The GOP, the Tea Party & the class struggle

By David Sole

The corporate media can't give enough coverage to the Tea Party movement and its relationship to the Republican Party. Little, however, gives any useful information about the real nature of these groupings in light of the class nature of U.S. society or the economic crisis.

With the huge growth of industry and finance after the Civil War, the Republican Party became (and continues to be) the established party of the Wall Street big-wigs. The Democratic Party based itself on the defeated southern racists and the millions of immigrant workers in the growing cities of the industrial north. But the leadership of the Democratic Party has always been firmly in the hands of a section of these same Wall Street moguls.

Franklin D. Roosevelt's election during the Great Depression began a long domination of the White House by the Democrats. From 1932 to 1968 the Democrats were the ruling party, except for two terms by Republican Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

The Republican Party was left as a minority party tightly linked to the big corporations and bankers. In an attempt to build a mass base, the Republicans embraced and drew in the most racist elements of the old Confederacy, ending the long-standing "solid South" of the Democrats.

The Tea Party continues this strategy. It provides a wider base for the inherently anti-populist Republican Party of the ruling class elite. Financed by massive funding from right-wing billionaires, the Tea Party movement reaches out to mainly middle-class elements who are worried about their financial security in this prolonged economic crisis. It attracts some working-class elements.

Instead of blaming Wall Street for the capitalist meltdown, the Tea Party targets those classes below them on the economic ladder. Anti-immigrant, racist,



Anti-racists outnumber Tea Party in NYC, Sept. 11

WWW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

anti-LGBT and anti-union sentiments are the driving forces of all Tea Party groupings. Many of their leaders flaunt their profound ignorance of history, economics or science. Their extremism often puts them in conflict with their own Republican Party creators.

Though the Tea Party has supplied a mass base for the Republican Party, it sometimes turns around and bites that party. It dislodged Republican stalwarts in some recent primary elections. The Republican leadership, for its part, has little choice but to accept the Tea Party extremism into its ranks if it is to succeed in the elections.

The Tea Party's future is limited by its complete lack of a program for the economic crisis. Ignorance and bigotry cannot substitute for jobs and economic growth. Corporate and banking profits might be going through the roof, but middle-class Tea Party-ers won't benefit from this "recovery."

How the economic crisis develops will determine the Tea Party's direction. At present the Tea Party's middle-class base

is worried, but not totally ruined. As such they will most likely remain an uncomfortable appendage to the Republican Party.

If the economic crisis deepens, destroying their investments, their pensions and their businesses, the Tea Party could break off from the Republicans with support from right-wing ruling class elements. It was under really desperate economic conditions in late-1920s and early-1930s Germany that Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party

(Nazis) attracted a mass fascist base.

While all the Tea Party groupings emit a strong whiff of fascism, they are not yet organized as a physical threat to the working class and oppressed peoples. They showed a glimpse of that option last year when they organized into gangs of thugs to disrupt Congressional meetings on the health care bill across the country.

Not all of the middle class flock to the right-wing Tea Party. Many of them are anti-racist, favorable toward unions and generally progressive. They can become allies of the working class in a struggle. What is most lacking — and most needed — is a working-class in motion to confront the capitalist economic crisis.

A powerful movement that pointed its fire at the billionaire ruling class could fight for a massive public jobs program, real national health care, a moratorium on foreclosures, ending the wars and using Pentagon dollars to pay for education, housing, social services and rebuilding the country's infrastructure.

Led by the vast working class and the oppressed people, such a movement would draw behind it much of the middle class. Those elements still favorable to a fascist program would have no chance against a militant working-class movement. Not only could this movement disintegrate the Tea Party, but it could challenge the ruling class itself. □

Activists refuse to back down

Denounce FBI raids

Continued from page 1

solidarity with the struggles of people around the world who are resisting occupation and dictatorship.

These organizers' reactions helped to mobilize a strong response to these police tactics intended to intimidate and demoralize the movement. Even as the FBI was seizing computers, files, cameras, passports, e-mails and mailing lists, neighbors came out in support while others came to film. Scanned copies of the search warrants and subpoenas were soon available on IndyMedia sites and videos of the raid were posted on YouTube.

Hundreds came to an emergency rally in Minneapolis that same evening, and supporters held press conferences the following day in Minneapolis, Milwaukee and Chicago.

Who should resist this attack?

The rapid and broad response from the progressive movement shows that many are aware of the need to join the resistance. Even a quick scan of the sweeping nature of the search warrant and the subpoena clearly shows that any opponent of U.S. wars should join the protests. This includes those organizations and individuals who participated in or supported a convoy or flotilla or a solidarity delegation to besieged and blocked Gaza, or a delegation to blockaded Cuba, or those who attended a conference or meeting with international representatives of peoples' movements throughout Latin America.

The FBI confiscated all paper circulation lists, e-mail lists, cell phones and electronic equipment. The broadest movement should resist this attempt to shut down the ability and means to communicate.

The subpoenas to appear before a grand jury demand all items, all correspondence, all documents and all phone records related to so-called "foreign terrorist organizations, including FARC of Colombia, PFLP of Palestine and Hez-

bollah in Lebanon, all pictures, videos and travel documents to Colombia, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine."

A united fightback can shut down the movement that is sweeping U.S. college campuses today to boycott, divest and sanction Israel and build solidarity with Palestine, and the movement in solidarity with the political change sweeping Latin America.

It is encouraging that all the major anti-war coalitions have joined to oppose these FBI attacks. Now, as opposition grows to the protracted wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — wars that have provoked dissension within the ruling political and military bodies because U.S. imperialism is facing a debacle — the government moves to wall off people in the U.S. from any knowledge, information or exchanges with people of the world. The movement is saying it won't let this happen.

Past raids and repression

The U.S. ruling class and state have used raids, entrapments, roundups and grand jury subpoenas throughout U.S. history to undermine many social movements. They were combined with anti-Communist ideology during the 1920s Palmer Raids and the 1950s McCarthyite period. The FBI also targeted the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement, such as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

The COINTELPRO effort — which also tried to disrupt the movements in solidarity with Central American peoples in the 1980s — carried out a special terror campaign against the Black Panther Party and other Black liberation organizations and other groups in the Latino/a and Native struggles in the late 1960s and 1970s. Since 2001 the now monstrous "Homeland Security" apparatus has been used to criminalize, entrap and demonize Muslim people.

The U.S. State Department has spuriously labeled as "terrorist" the popularly elected and legitimate governments in Gaza and Nepal and the mass-based Hezbollah

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Durham, N.C./Kosta Harlan, a target of FBI, at protest.



Boston



New York, Sept. 28.

Outraged by FBI raids

U.S. activists call emergency actions

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Progressive activists and organizations across the U.S. began immediately to galvanize a struggle upon learning of the outrageous attacks carried out against solidarity activists by federal agents and the Obama administration. Demonstrations have been called in at least 32 cities and towns from coast to coast.

The day after the Sept. 24 multistate raids and grand jury subpoenas, a broad range of progressive activists and community members denounced the FBI at a rally at the federal building in downtown **Milwaukee**.

"The FBI is trying to round people up and scare activists from doing solidarity work with people in other nations, oppressed nations around the world. They're trying to scare us into silence," said Natasha Morgan of the Colombia Action Network and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Morgan and another Milwaukee activist in Students for a Democratic Society were contacted by the FBI via phone on Sept. 24. They told the FBI that legal counsel was being retained and immediately ended the calls.

The rally was sponsored by SDS Milwaukee and was attended by representatives of the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-American Federation of Teachers Local 2169; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82; the Latin America Solidarity Committee; Workers World Party; and other organizations.

On Sept. 27 in **Minneapolis**, more than 500 demonstrators gathered at the FBI headquarters. They chanted, "From Colombia to Palestine, solidarity is not a crime!" and spoke out against the raids.

Speakers included activists whose homes were raided, as well as representatives of the labor, anti-war and social justice move-

ments. Speaker after speaker expressed support and solidarity with their fellow activists who had been targeted.

"This is an attack on our ideas," stated Jess Sundin of the Anti-War Committee, whose home was raided. "These actions by the FBI will not intimidate us nor will they silence us. ... Standing up for truth and justice is not a crime!"

Clyde Bellecourt, founder and national director of the American Indian Movement, urged support for those facing the grand jury. He recalled the brutal FBI repression suffered by Native Americans in the 1970s during the occupation of Wounded Knee.

In **Detroit**, the Sept. 27 weekly meeting of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice heard from Tom Burke of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, one of the subpoenaed activists who now lives in Grand Rapids, Mich.

"What this centers around is our international solidarity work and the fact that we are all deeply internationalist," said Burke. "The FBI agents told us directly that their goal is to find evidence to support charges of terrorism. They won't find it." Burke said he attended a demonstration against the raids earlier that day in **Kalamazoo, Mich.**

In downtown **Durham, N.C.**, more than 50 community members and activists rallied Sept. 27 in support of Kosta Harlan, a Durham anti-war activist with the Colombia Action Network and Students for a Democratic Society, and to oppose the FBI's targeting of other activists across the country.

Four FBI agents visited Harlan on the



Detroit / Tom Burke, FRSO, speaks.

morning of Sept. 24 and attempted to intimidate him.

"I believe that I am being targeted for my anti-war activism," said Harlan. "Everyone who believes in ... basic democratic freedoms should be concerned by the FBI's disgraceful actions. All of my organizing work is public and perfectly legal. I call on all people of conscience to speak out against these violations of our fundamental rights."

Black Workers for Justice; the Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation; NC Peace Action; Raleigh Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST); members of UE Local 150, NC Public Sector Workers Union; and people from other progressive organizations attended the rally, which was followed by a "Know Your Rights" training session provided by the National Lawyers Guild.

In **Raleigh, N.C.**, dozens of social justice, anti-war, and immigrant rights activists gathered the morning of Sept. 28 in front of the New Bern Avenue Federal Building to denounce the raids and harassment. The protest included members of FIST, SDS, MASFF, NLG and Black Workers for Justice.

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, representatives of more than a dozen organizations came out Sept. 27 on short notice to a demonstration at the FBI Building. The loud and enthusiastic crowd, which included youth and longtime activ-

ists, expressed determination not to be intimidated and never to be silenced. The protest was called by the Western New York International Action Center.

A rally was held in **Atlanta** in front of the Richard Russell building Sept. 28. Activists represented the IAC, ACLU, SEIU, UNITE HERE and Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition.

A spirited demonstration in **Boston** picketed and chanted outside the JFK Federal Building the afternoon of Sept. 27. The protest was co-sponsored by the Boston Mayday Committee and the International Action Center.

Activists from many organizations in the anti-war movement participated, as well as civil liberties and immigrant rights activists. Chants and slogans demanded an end to the raids, and that all confiscated materials be returned. Immigration raids were linked to the FBI raids on activists.

Speakers brought up the history of state repression going back to the Palmer Raids and emphasized the importance of standing up in solidarity, uniting and fighting back.

Ellie Dorritie, Leslie Feinberg, Peter Gilbert, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Dianne Mathiowetz, Frank Neisser and Scott Williams contributed to this article. Information on the Minnesota action was taken from www.fightbacknews.org.



Buffalo

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN PFEIFER, RALEIGH FIST, STEVE KIRSCHBAUM, ELLIE DORRITIE, GREG BUTTERFIELD

organization in Lebanon. Opposition to the longest war in U.S. history is being labeled sympathy with the Taliban and al-Qaida, as is any contact with the government of Iran or the people's movement in Pakistan. Contact with Cuba and Iran, Sudan and North Korea is also sanctioned and blockaded.

All the more reason that all those who want these movements to continue should unite to stop the latest sign of growing government repression. On the very day of the raids, the National Lawyers Guild issued at their national convention in New Orleans an important report entitled, "The Policing of Political Speech: Constraints on Mass Dissent in the U.S."

The NLG report dealt with the very issues of the raids: guilt by association, stigmatizing activists as "terrorists," pre-event arrests and raids of independent media and activists, and the use of grand juries for information gathering.

The raids came only four days after a scathing report by the Department of Justice inspector general that soundly criticized the FBI for targeting domestic groups such as Greenpeace and the Thomas Merton Center from 2002 to 2006.

The majority of those who have been targeted by these new FBI raids had participated in anti-war protests at the 2008

Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., which resulted in hundreds of beatings and arrests. After a long legal struggle, the government had to drop almost all the fabricated charges.

Two activists subpoenaed from Minneapolis, Jess Sundin and Mick Kelly, were key organizers of the Sept. 2008 RNC protests. Both recently spoke at a news conference to announce plans for organized mass protests if Minneapolis is elected to hold the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

"This is really about trying to intimidate the anti-war movement, and we won't be silenced," said anti-war activist Stephanie Weiner, whose home was raided.

Steff Yorek, another activist targeted, called the searches "an outrageous fishing expedition. ... Activists have the right not to speak with the FBI and are encouraged to politely refuse."

The FBI also subpoenaed Tom Burke, who is involved in humanitarian solidarity work with labor and popular movements in Colombia. Burke explained: "The government hopes to use a grand jury to frame up activists. The goal of these raids is to harass and try to intimidate the movement against U.S. wars and occupations, and those who oppose U.S. support for repressive regimes." (quotes

from fightbacknews.org)

This sweeping attack on all constitutional rights is taking place under the Barack Obama administration, which came into office with promises to end the wars and open a new era of dialogue and openness.

On taking office President Obama made few changes in the Bush Justice Department, replacing only a few of the top personnel and keeping much of the racist, right-wing apparatus intact. A Bush appointee, U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, heads the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, where the grand jury that has issued the subpoenas is seated.

Under the cover provided by Attorney General Eric Holder, this repressive agency has had an ever-freer hand, for example, to go after Black elected officials with all manner of spurious charges of corruption. Preventive detention and outrageous entrapment and frame-ups of Muslims have accelerated along with the continued campaign to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Regardless of the political changes on top, the capitalist state exists to repress the political movements that fight in the interests of the working class. Every struggle for political rights comes up against

this repressive apparatus.

To quote the unanimously passed San Francisco Labor Council resolution: "The nationally coordinated dawn raids and fishing expedition mark a new and dangerous chapter in the protracted assault on the First Amendment rights of every union fighter, solidarity activist or anti-war campaigner."

The Committee to Stop FBI Repression has three demands that will help to focus the national effort:

1. Stop the repression against trade union, anti-war and international solidarity activists.
2. Immediately return all confiscated materials: computers, cell phones, papers, documents, personal belongings, etc.
3. End the grand jury proceedings and FBI raids against trade union, anti-war and international solidarity activists.

The committee's advice to activists is: Keep on alert! Know your rights! Don't talk to the FBI!

Flounders is co-director of the International Action Center, which has organized protests and a petition campaign — www.iacenter.org/stopfbirepression — to defend the activists.

Layoffs, poverty deepen during 'recovery'

It's time for workers to fight Election won't bring jobs or justice

By Fred Goldstein

Sept. 28 — Everyone by now has heard that the recession is over. The government says it ended in June 2009.

Yes, it ended for businesses. Their production and profits began to rise. It ended for the giant transnational FedEx. Its profits just doubled. But FedEx also announced it is going to lay off 17,000 workers in the U.S. It ended for General Motors and Chrysler. They are showing a profit after getting an \$85 billion bailout and terminating more than 100,000 workers.

The downturn in business lasted 19 months, the longest since the Great Depression. But since then, in the last 14 months of "recovery" for big business, unemployment has been going up.

Altogether, the capitalist class laid off more than 8 million workers from 2007 to 2009 and cut the wages and benefits of many more.

The downturn has continued for millions who cannot live on government statistics. The gross domestic product may have gone up, starting last June, but there is no recovery for the 30 million workers without jobs or on short hours.

Just last week the first-time filings for unemployment jumped by 12,000 — from 453,000 to 465,000. The layoffs keep on coming.

There is no recovery for the 2.3 million families who have lost their homes to foreclosures or the millions more facing future foreclosures and evictions. There is no recovery for the 45 million people living at or below the official poverty level — which includes one in every five children in the United States. Or for the 45 million people living on food stamps. Or for the 50 million people without health care.

Statistics confirm that this downturn reinforces racial, national and gender inequality because it hurts the African-American, Latino/a, Asian and Native communities and women disproportionately. Youth have the highest unemployment rate of all, especially racially oppressed youth.

What the workers, communities, youth and students are facing is not a recovery but a wholesale breakdown of the capitalist profit system — with no end in sight. The working class and the oppressed will never get out of this crisis by relying on politicians wedded to the capitalist system.

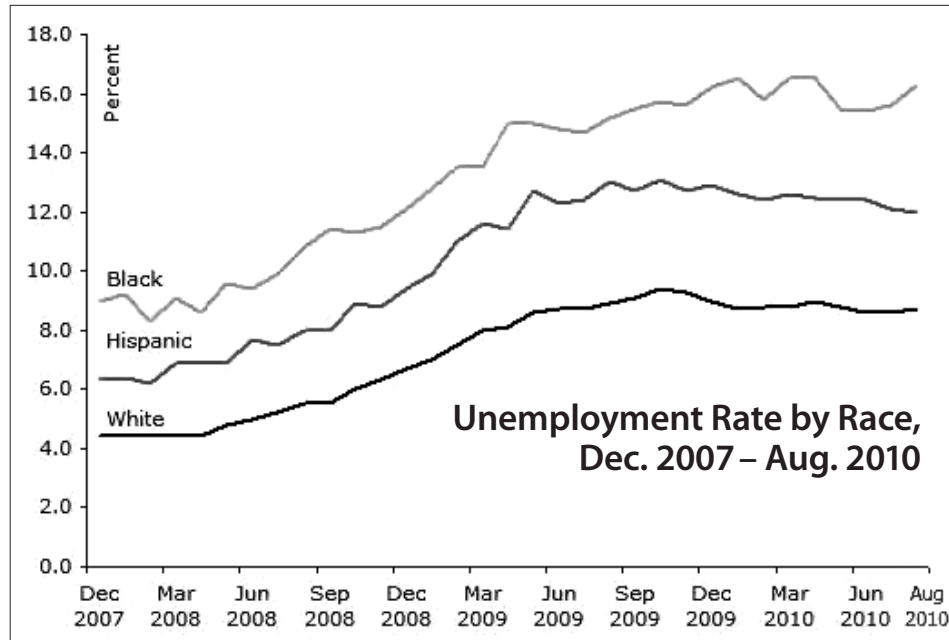
The only way out is for the workers to organize and fight on their own, independently, by means of militant mass struggle.

This is a gigantic jobless recovery. And things are about to get worse. The stimulus package, inadequate as it was, is running out. State budgets are about to suffer further cuts in jobs and services.

Election promises versus reality

It is election season. All the politicians of both capitalist parties are on the stump talking about jobs and blaming each other.

The Republicans openly show their racism and contempt for the working class.



SOURCE: BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS, CURRENT POPULATION SURVEY

They block every proposal that would give even the smallest relief to the masses. They are trying to stop the trickle-down "jobs" bill that the Democratic Party leadership put forward.

But what does that bill do? It gives \$50 billion to the bosses in tax cuts and easier terms for their business loans.

This is not a jobs bill. It is a handout to the capitalists in the hope that the bosses will create some jobs.

That's been tried already — and failed. The \$787 billion stimulus bill left 15 million workers officially unemployed. Millions more have dropped out of the workforce and aren't counted. Giving the bosses \$50 billion more in tax breaks and loans will hardly make a dent in the massive unemployment. It's growing every month.

But meager as the Democrats' bill is, the Republicans oppose it. So the strategy of the Democratic Party leaders is to tell the workers to vote for them — because the Republicans are even worse.

Most workers already see the Republicans for the right-wing, racist reactionaries they are. They hold hands with the ultra-rightist Tea Party. They inflame anti-Muslim sentiment. They scapegoat undocumented workers for the unemployment crisis. They are largely rejected by the workers and the Black, Latino/a, Asian and Native communities, and rightfully so.

But Democratic Party leaders are trying to divert attention from the fact that they gave the bankers trillions of dollars in bailouts when they should have been giving jobs to the millions being laid off. They gave the auto barons another \$85 billion to shut down factories and lay off workers.

The Democratic Party leaders let the Employee Free Choice Act go down the drain. They didn't even pretend to fight. EFCA would have made it easier for workers to get a union when a majority signed union cards. Instead, they have to go through the cumbersome National Labor Relations Board electoral process and face years of challenges by the company. EFCA was the most important piece

of labor legislation in a decade since the anti-sab bill that the Clinton administration let die.

Yes, the Republican Party is racist. But since the Democratic Party took over Homeland Security, it has surpassed the Bush administration in carrying out deportations of undocumented workers. It has sent troops to the border of Mexico and allowed fascists like Sheriff Joe Arpaio of Phoenix, Ariz., to brutalize undocumented workers and prisoners.

The Obama administration has also fostered the charter school movement. This so-called "race to the top" would let most of the already run-down public schools go all the way down and then privatize a section of the school system. Part of the program is to break teachers' unions all over the country.

The Obama Justice Department has just authorized the FBI to make simultaneous raids on the homes and offices of anti-war activists in Minneapolis and Chicago and in Michigan and North Carolina. FBI SWAT teams broke down doors, ransacked apartments and seized documents, computers and other material based on trumped-up charges of aiding "terrorism."

This is a McCarthyite, COINTELPRO-style frameup/fishing expedition. It is an attempt to suppress the anti-war and anti-imperialist activities of the Minnesota Anti-War Network, Students for a Democratic Society and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Both are war parties

Suppressing anti-war activity is in line with the aims of the Pentagon. The Democrat-led Congress has voted \$800 billion this year to carry out wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan and fund the occupation of Palestine by the Israelis and the Zionist war against Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.

This money could be used for jobs, for restoring people to their homes and for keeping services from being cut. Instead, it is spent to keep the giant oil companies in control of the Middle East; it is used to spread U.S. corporate influence in Latin America and around the world.

This is nothing new for the Democratic Party.

It is an imperialist party that defends capitalism at home and abroad. Its leadership is tied to the giant monopolies, the banks and the military-industrial complex.

It was the administration of Harry Truman that dropped the atom bomb on Japan and launched the Korean War. It was

the Kennedy and Johnson administrations that started and escalated the Vietnam War. The failed attempt to invade Iran was under Jimmy Carter. The Clinton administration invaded Yugoslavia and at the same time destroyed welfare, instituted NAFTA and passed the first "anti-terrorist" law, as well as the Effective Death Penalty Act.

All were Democrats.

What can be done?

Under capitalism, workers can't survive without a job. So the fight for a job is the fight for life.

Workers must oppose racist, divisive tactics and open up a struggle to make a job a right for every worker who needs one. Take the trillions of dollars spent on bank bailouts, the bosses' wars and occupations and spend them on a real jobs program.

The politicians are running around talking about how much they care about jobs. But they won't talk about the big issue: that the capitalists are not hiring. The government can shovel money at the banks, but they won't lend unless they are guaranteed a profit. The government can give tax breaks to companies, but they won't hire unless they can make a profit.

But if the capitalists won't create jobs, the government can.

This is what happened in the 1930s. The workers battled until they won the Works Progress Administration and other government jobs programs. No capitalist bosses were involved. If a worker needed a job and was qualified, he or she got a job. No one had to beg a boss to be hired. No one had to make a profit before the workers could be hired.

The wages were at prevailing levels. More than 8 million workers were hired from 1935 to 1943 to build roads, dams, parks and public buildings; to plant trees; to create art and theater; to collect oral histories about slavery, among many other projects.

People might say a WPA program now is "pie in the sky." Congress will never do it.

The way to get the pie out of the sky and onto the table is tried and true: Mobilize masses of people to go to Washington and shut it down until the government comes up with the money.

The politicians have been giving money to billionaires on Wall Street and corporate owners. It can be the workers' turn if they organize to fight instead of being herded into a futile election campaign.

The right to organize a union and the eight-hour day were once called pie in the sky. Civil rights and affirmative action were pie in the sky. So were Social Security, unemployment insurance and many other things workers are now entitled to. But they were made real by great mass struggles.

Demanding these basic necessities also puts the working class in a stronger position to fight for an economy run on a planned, cooperative basis to meet human need and not capitalist greed. A social system that serves people instead of profits. That can really end war and exploitation. It's called socialism and it also doesn't have to be pie in the sky.

Goldstein is author of the book "Low-Wage Capitalism," a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on the U.S. working class. He has also written numerous articles and spoken on the present economic crisis. For more information, visit www.lowwagecapitalism.com.

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

Low-Wage Capitalism

IN COLOMBIA:

U.S.-backed forces assassinate revolutionaries

By Gene Clancy

On Sept. 22, Jorge Briceño, better known as “Mono Jojoy,” was assassinated along with another 20 guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People’s Army (FARC-EP). Colombian government forces, financed and trained by the U.S., conducted a bombing raid on a FARC camp in an area known as La Macarena, in the Meta department south of Bogotá, in Colombia.

More than 30 planes and 27 helicopters supplied by the U.S. participated in the operation. The attack, which involved the saturation bombing of the area, is reminiscent of the “beheading” operations being conducted by the U.S. against the peoples of Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere. There were no initial reports of any civilian casualties. So far, only Colombian military units have visited the area.

This latest attack against the FARC-EP comes a few days after another guerrilla leader, Sixto Cabañas, was shot dead

along with 27 other rebels along the border with Ecuador. In 2008, Colombian forces actually invaded Ecuador, breaking international law and leading to a suspension of diplomatic relations with both Ecuador and Venezuela.

President Barak Obama congratulated Colombia’s puppet president, Juan Manuel Santos, calling the killing “a big day for those who are seeking peace in the region.” Over the past few years the U.S. has supplied over \$6 billion in military aid to Colombia. Santos, who was defense minister before taking his current post as president, was jubilant: “This was Operation Welcome” he boasted in New York. “To the rest of the FARC — We are going after you.” (AP, Sept. 24)

Santos has another reason to be jubilant. Analysts in the U.S. had recently reported that the FARC-EP was regrouping, and wondering aloud whether Santos was up to the job of carrying on the fight against the guerrillas. Santos knows full well that the U.S. has a long history of discarding

puppets that do not perform adequately.

Jorge Briceño and the other slain FARC-EP leaders are of course heroes, both in Colombia, and to the revolutionary movements around the world. Briceño literally spent his entire life in the struggle, joining the FARC-EP guerrillas at age 12. He and the others will be sorely missed.

Most imperialist media worldwide quickly hailed the killing as a blow to FARC-EP, and predicted its imminent demise. Most of these sources misunderstand the role of leadership in revolutionary movements and organizations. Leaders are certainly important, but they are not the source of the movement. Indeed, just the reverse is true.

Aaron Mannes, a “counterterrorism expert” who once was director of the Middle East Media Research Institute, a Washington, D.C., think tank founded by a former member of the Israeli intelligence group Mossad, had this to say about the FARC-EP:

“Decapitation strategies (that is target-

ing the leaders of terrorist organizations) have a mixed record. More robust organizations (such as the FARC or Hezbollah) can readily replace their leaders — and worse carry out revenge strikes. Israel learned this lesson in 1992 after assassinated Hezbollah secretary — Gen. Abbas Musawi. Only a month later Hezbollah responded by blowing up Israel’s embassy in Buenos Aires. For its credibility the FARC will almost certainly have to carry out a counterstrike and its still formidable resources mean that it could be deadly.” (terrorwonk.blogspot.com)

Mannes had earlier urged the U.S. to utilize the right-wing death squads, which are still very active in killing Colombian peasants, union leaders and other civilians.

The U.S. and a few of its allies, like the Israeli state, have become infamous for the use of the tactic of political assassination from aircraft or drones, without regard for civilians, as a means of carrying out national policy. □

Mexican electrical workers cry for economic justice

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

This year, countries throughout Latin America have been commemorating 200 years of freedom from Spanish colonialism. People throughout the region are remembering the independence feats of Simón Bolívar in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela; José de San Martín in Argentina; and Miguel Hidalgo in Mexico. The people are holding these celebrations, however, as Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has said, while the Americas still struggle for their “second emancipation,” this time from the voracious appetite of U.S.-based transnational corporations.

Nowhere in the region are these celebrations of emancipation as filled with contradictions as in Mexico. The Mexicans held their festivities under a formidable display of 25,000 government security forces, including federal agents, army and navy troops; 4,000 police patrolled in Mexico City alone, with the same number staying on alert.

A people ripped by sheer poverty and government-sanctioned violence coming from mafias and paramilitary groupings aligned with sectors of the oligarchy has seen — and criticized — its government’s spending of \$200 million in celebrations for the bicentennial.

But resistance to this government and its political system is also growing. On Sept. 15, the Grito de Dolores (Cry of Dolores) that initiated the independence war 200 years ago is remembered. As is traditional for each sitting Mexican president, this year the neoliberal pro-U.S. president, Felipe Calderón, pronounced this grito. But there was another from the people’s resistance.

Earlier in the day, Secretary General of the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) Martín Esparza pronounced the Grito de los Insurgentes (Cry of the Rebels) from the balcony of the SME’s headquarters in the capital.

The SME is a militant and class conscious union founded in 1914. It has been in constant struggle against Calderón’s government since Oct. 11, 2009, when the Mexican president ordered by decree the closure of Luz y Fuerza del Centro, the national electrical company that served five states, covering a population of more than 20 million people.

This closure immediately laid off more than 42,000 electrical workers with no previous notice nor any due payment. Since then, the SME has been organizing together with other unions and social organizations to fight the layoffs.

On Sept. 15, the SME reaffirmed its pledge to fight not only for the re-establishment of the contractual obligations by the government, but also, and most importantly, for a society with social and economic justice. In a fiery speech echoed by hundreds of SME members and their families, Esparza summoned the names of the heroes of the Mexican independence struggle, ending with the traditional ¡Viva México!

Below is part of that speech (On video in Spanish at sme1914.org).

“Today, in this Avenida de los Insurgentes, as 200 years ago, a group of men

and women who remember history decided to continue the struggle to defend this great institution called SME, comrades. In this 2010, the Mexican people have nothing to rejoice about but much to commemorate: those men and women who gave their lives to have a homeland with liberty, justice and democracy.

“Today, 200 years later, those of us who had the task of visiting all 32 states, have realized that the country’s existing conditions are similar to those 200 years ago. Indigenous and peasant people are being stripped of their lands, and these lands given to transnational corporations so that they can exploit all the natural resources.

“Today, as 200 years ago, the conditions of inequality should make obvious that the SME struggle will define what the route for our nation will be. And I ask you comrades, since we received the ‘Senti-

ment of the Nation’ medal from the Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Guerrero, if we are ready to defend our homeland, to end inequality, poverty, to leave for our children and grandchildren a country that will better distribute its wealth?

“We have the richest man on earth but 60 million poor. ... That is why today ... let all of us make a pledge, to maintain the unity of the SME so we can push forward the unity of the people of Mexico. To call on the Indigenous, the students and civil society to end this economic system; this savage capitalism; because today the decisions are not made by the resident of Los Pinos [Calderón], the decisions come from the exterior.”

When Esparza asked: “Are we afraid to defend our homeland?” a resounding response was heard throughout the crowd: “No!”

U.N. report condemns Israeli attack

By Kathy Durkin

Israeli naval commandoes intercepted and attacked the humanitarian Freedom Flotilla, aimed at breaking the blockade of Gaza, on May 31. Eight Turkish activists and one Turkish-American were killed on board the Mavi Marmara, a Turkish ship, which was in international waters.

Israeli forces “gravely violated international humanitarian and human rights laws” when they attacked this aid flotilla, according to the United Nations Human Rights Council’s fact-finding mission in a report issued Sept. 22.

The report revealed that forensic evidence showed that 19-year-old Turkish-American Furkan Dogan and five Turkish citizens were killed execution-style by the Israeli commandos.

The Turkish government gave the autopsy report on Dogan, a U.S. citizen, to the U.S. government in July. Nothing was done nor has the U.S. press reported this.

The scathing 56-page report puts the blame squarely on Israel for the fatal commando assault. It said that the Israeli military’s conduct “towards the flotilla passengers” showed “unnecessary and incredible violence” and “an unacceptable level of brutality. Such conduct cannot be justified or condoned on security or any

other grounds.” (UN.org, Sept. 23)

The report cited “clear evidence” of violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention, including “willful killing, torture or inhuman treatment and willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health.”

The report strongly recommends prosecution for violations of international law. Israel must provide “prompt” and “adequate compensation” to “those who suffered loss as a result of the unlawful actions of the Israeli military,” said the panel.

It also called the situation in Gaza a “humanitarian crisis” and said the blockade of Gaza is “totally intolerable and unacceptable.” While Israel claims to have eased the blockade, many essential goods are still not allowed into Gaza. Residents are not allowed to freely exit or visitors to enter, including relatives.

The U.N. panel criticized the Israeli government for not cooperating with its inquiry. Israel has belligerently opposed any independent investigation into the lethal raid and held its own bogus inquiries in the face of international criticism.

The report will be presented to the 57-member U.N. Human Rights Council.

The mission’s stance reflects the international outrage expressed toward Israel for its lethal assault on the flotilla. Millions of people worldwide protested

and many governments issued condemnations after the May 31 attack. The response showed strong, widespread support for Gaza’s people and opposition to Israel’s blockade.

The big-business-owned U.S. press has barely covered the news of this report, which is not surprising since the U.S. government is closely aligned with Israel and refused to condemn the fatal raid.

Another convoy to Gaza

The Viva Palestina Lifeline 5 solidarity convoy is now underway. Kevin Ovenden and Nicci Enchmarch, both survivors of the attack on the Mavi Marmara, are leading this caravan to bring urgent medical aid to Gaza.

Joining them are representatives from organizations in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and Malaysia, along with volunteers from the U.S., Britain and the north of Ireland. Participants will join from France, Italy, Greece and Turkey as the convoy proceeds.

Since the Mavi Marmara attack, more people than ever are determined to bring humanitarian aid to Gaza. According to Viva Palestina, “This is the biggest and most international convoy set to break the siege of Gaza so far.” (vivapalestina.org) Check the group’s website for updates. □

A tale of injustice

U.S. imperialism is losing its attempt to occupy and control Afghanistan. It is beginning to lose control of client state Pakistan. Now the Pentagon — in collaboration with federal courts — has gotten a little piece of revenge for its setbacks in the “Afghanistan-Pakistan” theater. It has imposed a grotesque injustice on a Pakistani woman after the corporate media demonized her.

All NATO’s power can’t force the Afghan resistance to submit. But a judge can impose a sentence of 86 years on Aafia Siddiqui, a 38-year-old neuroscientist trained at Brandeis and MIT, whom the Pentagon separated from her children for five years.

Her alleged crime? While in military custody in occupied Afghanistan, U.S. witnesses testified, this diminutive Pakistani grabbed a rifle and fired at U.S. troops. But she was the only one with gunshot wounds.

Why had she been in custody? The court allowed no evidence to be presented to explain this.

It is hard to imagine a greater travesty of justice, brought by the same forces that imposed Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo prisons on the world.

Pakistani reactions further prove the injustice. The current government is the friendliest to and most dependent on U.S. imperialism in Pakistan’s history. Yet even this regime has to pay attention to the protests that greeted Siddiqui’s sentencing. Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani called Siddiqui “the daughter of the nation” and promised to work to get her sent from the U.S. to Pakistan. (Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 24)

Along with the Pakistani people, we are outraged by the sentence. But we are not surprised by the complete lack of justice. The only surprise is that the

Pentagon is willing to publicize a story — however its lies may color it — that is an allegory of U.S. imperialism’s failing attempt to occupy and conquer the countries of West and Central Asia.

First the George W. Bush gang seized on the pretext of 9/11 to invade Afghanistan. Then it invented the “weapons of mass destruction” pretext to justify the invasion of Iraq. The Democratic administration, despite its promises and hesitations, is continuing these illegal and murderous occupations, has spread the war to Pakistan, and is threatening a conflagration in Iran.

The Iraq war is not over, nor is there a stable regime there, but the country and its formerly cohesive society lies in ruins. In Afghanistan the war is growing, along with more NATO casualties and more Afghans killed monthly, including civilians and resistance fighters. Drone flights, hired mercenaries kindly called “contractors,” and the massive NATO technological advantage have killed Afghans and Pakistanis, but that has only increased recruits to the resistance.

The Pentagon constantly underestimates the courage, the competence and the willingness to sacrifice of the people it is trying to conquer. It can take out vengeance on the people. But in doing so, it creates more enemies. As Aafia Siddiqui’s fable of injustice shows, even under the worst odds, people threatened with foreign rule find a way to fight back.

For the progressive and workers’ movement in the U.S., there is only one position to take. Oppose the U.S. government and the Pentagon. Oppose the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. Oppose any attack on Iran.

U.S. troops out!
Free Aafia Siddiqui! □

Two sides of the same coin

As activists continue the fight to repeal “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” — the U.S. military’s bigoted policy against lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer service members — the law is being volleyed about by the three branches of the U.S. capitalist government.

On Sept. 9 a California federal judge ruled that the policy violates the free speech and due process rights of LGBTQ service members. The Obama administration immediately responded by demanding that the ruling not be enforced.

On Sept. 21 Republicans in the Senate blocked a \$726 billion defense spending bill that included a provision to repeal DADT. Three days later another federal judge in Tacoma, Wash., ruled that a former U.S. Air Force flight nurse, who was expelled under DADT after revealing that she is a lesbian, should be reinstated “at the earliest possible moment.” (Reuters, Sept. 24)

Workers World doesn’t want anybody in the U.S. military, LGBTQ or straight. But we support the right of LGBTQ people to serve in the military

free of discrimination — particularly during an economic downturn, when many face few other options for economic survival.

Like women in the armed forces, LGBTQ people face the worst kinds of abuse, discrimination and harassment in the military, all stemming from a culture that encourages rape, torture and other forms of violence against the “other” — within the military, in other countries and occasionally at home.

Anti-war activists should demand an end to DADT as a step forward in forging unity in struggle. Keeping service members divided among lines of sexuality and gender helps prevent them from uniting against the military apparatus that daily represses them all.

Not only do we want an end to Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell — we want civilian jobs for all LGBTQ people and straight people too. We don’t want legislation to repeal DADT to be tacked onto a bill that provides the resources to kill and exploit people around the world. Moreover, we want the entire U.S. military-industrial complex to be dismantled. □

U.S. activists meet with Iranian president

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
New York

More than 100 activists and journalists from a variety of organizations, religious groups and media outlets attended a gathering with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the Warwick Hotel here Sept. 21. The leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran was in the city to attend the annual United Nations General Assembly.

These prominent leaders of grassroots social justice and human rights movements within the U.S. consciously rejected a well-funded campaign to demonize Iran and whip up a pro-war climate. Ahmadinejad’s visit had been preceded by incendiary billboards, ads in buses and newspapers, hostile media coverage and demonstrations against Iran, much of it funded by the CIA-connected U.S. Agency for International Development and private corporations.

After an Iranian-style dinner, the gathering moved to a conference room where representatives from various organizations spoke on the plight of people inside the United States. The displacement of African Americans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, the burgeoning prison-industrial complex, conditions facing political prisoners, the crisis in U.S.-Iranian relations and the overall economic crisis dominated the discussion.

Among the individuals and organizations in attendance were Cynthia McKinney, a former U.S. House of Representatives member from Georgia and the Green Party’s presidential candidate in 2008; poet and activist Amiri Baraka; MOVE Minister of Information Ramona Africa; International Action Center co-director Sara Flounders; Ardeshir and Eleanor Ommani, co-founders of the American-Iranian Friendship Committee; former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Million Worker March Movement organizer Brenda Stokely; Shafeah M’balia of Black Workers for Justice; Phil Wilayto of Virginia Defenders for Freedom, Justice and Equality; Larry Holmes of Bail Out the People Movement; Don DeBar of WBAI.org; Ryme Katkhouda of the People’s Media Center; Michael McPhearson of United for Peace and Justice; and Rev. Graylan Hagler.

After listening for an hour and a half to 22 different speakers, President Ahmadinejad addressed the guests for approximately 45 minutes. He touched on the in-

ternational struggle for peace and justice, saying that “trying to build peace is the most important and comprehensive struggle that mankind can have.”

He added, “Those who are opposed to justice are a few, a minority.”

At the same time that the corporate media were strongly criticizing the Iranian government on human rights, the state of Virginia was carrying out the execution of a mentally disabled woman, Teresa Lewis, despite outcries from human rights organizations both inside the U.S. and abroad.

Iran enhances relations with Africa

A week before the U.N. General Assembly meeting in New York, Iran hosted a forum on African-Iranian relations. Leaders from various African states gathered in Tehran for serious discussions on ways to enhance economic cooperation.

Ahmadinejad, in an address to this Iran-Africa Forum, had said: “We are ready to welcome our brothers and sisters for an African Union summit in Tehran. We have the honor to declare that we are ready to share all our experiences and power with Africa to build the future.” (Fars News Agency, Sept. 14)

During the two-day conference four working committees examined ways to build relations in the areas of health and medication, industries and mines, politics and trade and economics.

Malawian President Bingu wa Mutharika, current chair of the African Union, affirmed at the gathering that “the relations between Iran and Africa will grow remarkably in the next five years and many Iranians are due to establish a large number of industries in Africa.”

There has been virtually no improvement in U.S.-Iran relations since the ascendancy of the Obama administration. Even though President Barack Obama had hinted at a willingness to reopen dialogue with Iran, U.S. State Department officials have continued with threats and accusations in regard to the Middle Eastern nation’s nuclear technology program, as well as its ongoing support for the Palestinian struggle for national liberation.

The Iranian masses rose up in 1979 and overthrew the U.S.-backed regime headed by the Shah. The Shah had been installed in 1953 after the CIA engineered a coup against Iranian nationalist leader Mohammad Mosaddegh, who had announced plans to nationalize the country’s oil industry. □

Millions strike in France and Greece

Three million French workers walked out in a one-day general strike Sept. 23 to keep retirement at age 60 and marched in 237 demonstrations throughout the country. There were significantly more people out than in a Sept. 7 protest on the same issue.

French Prime Minister François Fillon said that though he respected the rights of the French citizens to protest, his government will not renounce extending the number of years people have to work.

All the major union confederations in France, which have been solidly united in protecting the current retirement system, answered Fillon by calling for two new actions.

One is for Oct. 2 with demonstrations and protests scheduled; the other on Oct. 12 will be for strike actions.

On Sept. 24, the day after the French strike, Greek truck drivers attacked trucks crossing a picket line at the main Greek port of Piraeus and fought with the cops protecting the scabs. Under tremendous pressure from the big banks and the European Union, the Greek government has abolished license restrictions for truck drivers. This means that the permit for transporting goods for which the current truckers paid \$380,000 is now worthless.

The actions by the truck drivers basically shut down exports and imports throughout Greece and have been going on since Sept. 13. Gasoline is still available but supplies on some of the Aegean islands and areas like Thessalonika are running low.

Other workers are also protesting with and alongside the truckers.

— G. Dunkel

Cuba, Venezuela advance with social planning

By Cheryl LaBash

More than 130 countries of the United Nations met Sept. 20-22 to review progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. In 2000 the U.N. established eight modest MDGs with measurable targets to be achieved by 2015: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing child mortality; improving maternal health; combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability; and developing a global partnership for development.

In the U.S., the richest imperialist country in the world, working-class living standards are diving. If global statistics show any improvement, it would likely be due to advances in China, the globe's most populous country, which still retains strong elements of socialist planning.

The U.N. funding plan for achieving the MDGs is based on the unrealized — and unlikely, especially in the case of the U.S. — projection that industrialized countries

will contribute 0.7 percent of their gross domestic product. Cuba Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez pointed out, “Those same countries are also mostly responsible for a worldwide military spending that amounts to U.S. \$1.4 trillion, equivalent to 2.4 percent of the world's GDP.”

Socialist Cuba has shown these goals are achievable when the capitalist drive to maximize profits is thrown overboard. Juventud Rebelde, in a Sept. 24 article called “Millennium goals only attainable with new economic order,” reported: “Rodríguez said that Cuba has achieved many of the MDGs, while reaffirming the country's commitment to support third world nations in moving forward to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

“He said the nation's progress towards reaching the millennium goals has been possible thanks to a socialist revolution that prioritizes the well-being of citizens, in a climate of equity, social justice and solidarity. ‘Cuba has made great achievements, despite the half-century U.S. blockade.’”

At the MDG summit, Venezuela's Vice-

Minister of Foreign Affairs for North America, Jorge Valero — who also serves as Venezuela's ambassador to the U.N. — highlighted the social achievements of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

A press statement from the Venezuelan Mission to the U.N. stated, “From 1999 to 2009, 60 percent of all revenues of Venezuela have gone towards investment in social programs.”

According to VenGlobal News, Valero affirmed: “Our levels of poverty exceeded 49 percent in 1998 and dropped to 24.2 percent in 2009. And our levels of extreme poverty decreased dramatically from 29.8 percent in 2003 to 7.2 percent in 2009. ... The U.N.'s Economic Commission on Latin America and the Caribbean has recognized that Venezuela is the country that has most diminished inequality in our region.”

Valero said unemployment in Venezuela fell more than 50 percent from 1998 to December 2009, when it reached 6.6 percent.

“He explained that Venezuela has advanced in the promotion of gender equal-

ity and the rights of women. ‘Four of the five branches of government in Venezuela are run by women. ...’

“Venezuela succeeded in eradicating illiteracy in 2005, an achievement recognized by UNESCO. Venezuela will reach universal primary education, a significant reduction in the maternal mortality rate and a decrease in the spread of HIV/AIDS, amongst other objectives yet to be achieved, prior to 2015, he stated.

“Valero highlighted the support Venezuela has given other countries in the region so that they can reach their objectives under the [MDG], through initiatives like the Bolivarian Alliance of the People of Our Americas — People's Trade Agreement (ALBA-TCP), Petrocaribe and the Bank of the South.”

These initiatives are all cooperative economic tools for exchanging skills and human and natural resources based on the ability and need of each country. Both Cuba and Venezuela provided assistance to Haiti before and since the devastating January earthquake. □

Tijuana conference

Uniting workers in the Americas

For the seventh consecutive year, workers, union leaders, and immigrant rights and social movement activists will gather in Tijuana, Mexico, for a U.S./Cuba/Venezuela/North America/Latin America/Caribbean Conference at the Hotel Palacio Azteca on Dec. 3, 4 and 5. Registration and hotel information are available online at laborexchange.blogspot.com.

Each year the basic theme, “There are no borders in the workers' struggle — uniting America's working class and increasing its influence,” is filled in different ways with the living struggle and important developments that go largely unreported in the U.S. big business media.

The Friday, Dec. 3, dinner and program will focus on the case of the Cuban Five, unjustly held in U.S. jails, and the global struggle to free them. A never-before-viewed display of Gerardo Hernández' political cartoons is planned and more. On Dec. 4 developments in international relations, especially between the U.S., Cuba and Latin America, will be discussed and particularly the imperialist free trade agreements imposed on workers throughout the Americas and the growing alternative to them in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas (ALBA). On Dec. 5 discussion will focus on immigration and migration.

International participants will include Carmen Godinez and other representatives of the Cuban Workers Confederation; Jacobo Torres from Venezuela's Fuerza Socialista Bolivariana de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras; Roberto Caraspe and Rolando Semprum, representing Sindicato Metro Caracas; João Batista Lemos, Sec. Adjuntos de Relaciones Internacionales of Brazil's CTB; and from Mexico in the 200th year of its independence, the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas, which is battling privatization and more. Other labor representatives from Haiti, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua, Colombia and coordinators of Encuentro Sindical Nuestra América have also been

invited. ESNA is a new development that involves the largest and most militant labor federations throughout Latin America.

Tijuana is just across the U.S./Mexico border from San Diego. Passports are required to return to the U.S. The conference is sponsored by the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, the Federación Sindical Mundial, Unión del Barrio, the International Action Center and the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. For more information write to laborexchange@aol.com or laborexchange@gmail.com or call 313-575-4933 or 313-355-8566.

— Cheryl LaBash

Haiti: The catastrophe continues

By G. Dunkel

The situation for the homeless in Port-au-Prince is so grim that a 10-minute rain storm with high winds on Sept. 24 left at least five people dead, hundreds injured and thousands of shelters — tents, tarps and sheets — destroyed. As of Sept. 26 the government had not reported the toll for towns outside of the capital.

The Haitian Solidarity Network of the North East had called the Sept. 25 protest before this latest episode in the Haitian catastrophe, but all of the 150 people who participated in this march from the Haitian Consulate to the United Nations had it on their minds.

Standing in mud, Yvrose Chery told French TV: “We have been here for nine months. But the tents are only good for three months. The government is not responsible for the earthquake, they could at least show some compassion. ... We are all human beings.”

Eight months after the earthquake that struck Port-au-Prince on Jan. 12, between 1.5 and 2 million people are still living in temporary shelters in over 1,000 and sites scattered throughout the city. Rain leaves many sites filled with mud, with large

pools of standing water. Sanitation — garbage disposal and waste facilities — are hit or miss. Many homeless in Port-au-Prince have trouble finding drinkable water and enough food for themselves and their families. Jobs are few and far between.

While the government and Minustah, the U.N.'s occupation force, put out claims that “humanitarian needs of the people are being met,” a survey this summer by Mark Schuller and his students found only one family in eight had tents and three in five have tarps. This means that most families have to share space or use sheets and branches.

Schuller is an anthropologist at York College with long experience in Haiti. His team found only 70 percent of the camps had toilets and only 60 percent had water, but according to people just back from Haiti conditions have drastically deteriorated since the summer.

People with enough political clout to claim to be the landlords or owners of a tent site — though much proof of ownership was lost in the government buildings collapsed by the earthquake — have started evicting the homeless from their mud



Demanding justice for Haiti, NYC, Sept. 25.

patches or charging them rent.

The figure for tent-site evictions some nongovernmental organizations use is 20 percent. The most common rent, according to a speaker at the Sept. 25 protest, is 55 gourdes a week or \$1.50. This may look like little in the U.S. but for a Haitian family with no regular income it is a big effort to pay this much for a mud patch.

The HSNNE demonstration was focused around the question, “Where's the money?”

Over \$11 billion was pledged to Haiti

after the earthquake by various governments. Donations to charities like Oxfam, the Red Cross, UNESCO and so on amounted to another \$1 billion.

Only 3 percent of the \$11 billion from governments has been dispersed and about 60 percent of the private contributions.

Kim Ives, a journalist with Haïti-Liberté, pointed out that a large amount from the private contributions has gone to supporting the staffs of the 10,000 NGOs currently in Haiti. When Ray Laforest, a Haitian labor organizer in New York spoke, he demanded that Haitians control all the aid that is spent in their country to serve their own needs.

Haitians have a proud history, filled with bravery and courage in resisting tyranny and oppression that at the time seemed overwhelming. They smashed the French army that Napoleon sent to re-enslave them. They resisted the 1915-1934 U.S. occupation. They resisted the U.S.-backed Duvaliers. They elected Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990.

Reconstructing Haiti after the devastation of Jan. 12 is another epic challenge for the Haitian people. □

EDITORIAL

Cuba y nuestra tarea

¿Cómo deben reaccionar quienes en los Estados Unidos apoyamos a Cuba en su lucha para continuar libre de la dominación imperialista, a las noticias de que el gobierno cubano ha tomado la dolorosa decisión de recortar centenares de puestos de trabajos estatales?

Workers World/Mundo Obrero dice que esto debe estimular una mayor solidaridad con la Revolución y aumentar los esfuerzos para terminar el destructivo bloqueo económico a la isla por parte del imperialismo estadounidense.

La revolución cubana ha producido las políticas sociales más iluminadas y humanas en el hemisferio occidental.

No hay personas sin techo en Cuba. Bajo la ley de reforma urbana del 1960, el 85 por ciento de los/as cubanos/as poseen sus propios hogares y no pagan ningún impuesto por la propiedad o intereses en sus hipotecas. Los pagos de hipoteca no pueden exceder el 10 por ciento del ingreso combinado de la familia.

Nadie pasa hambre en Cuba. A la población se le garantiza una dieta básica subsidiada que proporciona 2000 calorías al día.

La alfabetización es universal — 99,8 por ciento entre la población adulta, más que en EEUU. La educación es gratis, desde preescolar, hasta la escuela universitaria y el postgrado.

La tasa de mortandad infantil es de 4,7 por cada 1.000 nacidos vivos, mucho mejor que la tasa en EEUU de 6,0 muertes infantiles.

Imagínese si alguien en el establecimiento político de EEUU fuera a proponer alimentos subsidiados y vivienda y atención de salud universal y educación gratuitas aquí. ¡Qué grito darían los dos partidos capitalistas! Sus primeras palabras serían: “¿Quién va a pagar por todo esto?”

¿Es costoso? Claro que sí. Sin embargo, incluso un país pobre que está tratando a duras penas de desarrollar su economía, lo ha hecho. Lo que es más, Cuba ha hecho enormes contribuciones materiales a países que son aún más pobres, enviando brigadas médicas y equipos de asistencia para desastres para quienes tienen extrema necesidad en todo el mundo. Tropas cubanas derramaron su sangre en la lucha para acabar con el sistema racista del apartheid y liberar a los países del sur de África.

Sin embargo, al mismo tiempo, el pueblo cubano ha tenido que luchar contra los efectos dañinos de casi 50 años de un embargo económico — en realidad un bloqueo — que no sólo impide que las mercancías de los EEUU lleguen a la isla, sino que también penaliza a otros países que comercian con Cuba. Cada año, casi todos los países del mundo votan en la Asamblea General de la ONU para poner fin al embargo estadounidense. Las encuestas muestran que la mayoría aquí en los Estados Unidos quisiera terminar el bloqueo. Sin embargo, recientemente el gobierno de Obama no sólo reafirmó el bloqueo, sino que reforzó algunas de sus disposiciones.

Debido a esto, Cuba carece de muchas importaciones necesarias, así como de mercados en donde vender sus exportaciones. Los alimentos en Cuba, aunque suficientes para mantener a la población sana, es de variedad limitada. La vivienda pertenece al pueblo, pero es muy difícil conseguir madera, pintura, muebles y electrodomésticos. El sistema médico es de primera clase, pero Cuba no puede obtener medicamentos o equipos médicos de los EEUU o de los países que obedecen el bloqueo.

El gobierno cubano estima que el bloqueo

ha costado a la economía 751 mil millones de dólares en los últimos 50 años. Esta vengativa persecución de la isla revolucionaria por la superpotencia imperialista se debe a que Cuba ha estado tratando de construir una sociedad socialista en la que el Estado posee y controla los medios de producción para que se suplan las necesidades del pueblo primero, en vez de ganancias para unos pocos.

Cuba es una isla pequeña en un mundo hostil dominado por el imperialismo. Su situación se hizo aún más precaria por la caída de la Unión Soviética, que había sido el principal socio comercial de Cuba. La URSS intercambiaba su petróleo y otros productos por el azúcar y el níquel cubano en condiciones mucho más favorables que lo que Cuba hubiera podido obtener en el mercado mundial capitalista.

En el “período especial” después de la caída de la URSS, la economía cubana prácticamente hizo implosión por varios años. Sin embargo, como todos/as en el país compartieron el sufrimiento, incluidos los funcionarios más poderosos, no hubo falta de confianza en el gobierno o una crisis política. ¡Imagínese la situación para el gobierno de aquí si la producción económica se redujera por la mitad! Pero Cuba luchó con dificultades, mostrando un crecimiento modesto cada año y, finalmente, impulsada por la ayuda de Venezuela en el sector de la energía.

Sin embargo, la crisis capitalista de los últimos tres años ha impedido el desarrollo económico en todo el mundo y Cuba no está inmune, a pesar de su sistema socialista.

El objetivo del socialismo es claro: erradicar las divisiones de clase en la sociedad mediante la eliminación de la propiedad privada de los medios de producción con fines de lucro. El socialismo se ha convertido en una meta alcanzable para la clase obrera mundial debido al enorme desarrollo de la tecnología y los medios de producción bajo el capitalismo. Pero cuando bajo el capitalismo las nuevas tecnologías y una mayor productividad significan despidos, recortes salariales y finalmente, una crisis del sistema, en el socialismo significa un aligeramiento de la carga de trabajo en la producción para que más personas puedan obtener empleo en los servicios, la cultura y en otras necesidades sociales. Los beneficios revierten a la sociedad en su conjunto, no a propietarios multimillonarios.

¿Pero qué sucede cuando un país que trata de construir el socialismo no puede tener acceso a las nuevas tecnologías? Cuando la transición mundial a un sistema socialista se encuentra aún en sus primeras etapas y los países que han tenido revoluciones están saliendo de un subdesarrollo grave causado por el colonialismo y el imperialismo. Cuba, Vietnam e incluso China todavía están tratando de “alcanzar” a los países capitalistas que han acumulado riquezas durante siglos — en gran parte saqueadas a ellos. Se han visto obligados a suspender algunos de los objetivos del socialismo, sólo para poder sobrevivir.

Una vez esto se comprenda, la responsabilidad de los/as progresistas y revolucionarios/as en los países imperialistas debe quedar clara. No disminuimos nuestra propia lucha por el socialismo ni un ápice cuando decimos: “Ahora es el momento de redoblar nuestra solidaridad con Cuba. Para que Cuba logre su objetivo socialista, debemos construir la unidad en la clase multinacional trabajadora de aquí y luchar contra los rapaces patronos capitalistas dondequiera que intenten imponer su dominación”. □

Condenemos los allanamientos por el FBI de los domicilios de activistas contra la guerra y por la solidaridad

El International Action Center - Centro de Acción Internacional condena las redadas del FBI en contra de activistas de solidaridad y contra la guerra el 24 de septiembre y apoya el derecho de todos/as los/as activistas por la justicia social a defender los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as aquí en Estados Unidos y de estar en solidaridad con nuestras hermanas y hermanos de todo el mundo que resisten ocupación y dictadura militar. El IAC-CAI pide el pleno apoyo de los/as activistas en la mira del FBI y la amplia distribución de la siguiente declaración emitida por los/as activistas objetivo de las redadas.

*Solidariamente,
Sara Flounders, Co-directora del International Action Center - Centro de Acción Internacional*

*Para publicación inmediata
24 de septiembre de 2010
Contacto: Tom Burke, 773-844-3612
Steff Yorek, 612-865-8234*

Activistas denuncian al FBI por redadas en casas de activistas del movimiento anti-guerra y de solidaridad

Citatorios de corte, cateos y visitas del FBI se realizan en varias ciudades de EEUU

Denunciamos al Buro de Investigaciones Federales por el hostigamiento a los activistas del movimiento anti-guerra y de solidaridad en varios estados a través de país.

El FBI comenzó visitando seis casas en Chicago y Minneapolis esta mañana, viernes, 24 de septiembre de 2010, a la 08:00 a.m. Tiempo del Centro. El FBI entregó citatorios de corte para testificar ante un gran jurado federal a cerca de una docena de activistas en Illinois y Minnesota. Ellos además intentaron intimidar a otros activistas en California y en Carolina del Norte.

“El gobierno espera usar un Gran Jurado para tender una trampa para acusarlos falsamente de actividades ilegales. El objetivo de esas redadas es hostigar y tratar de intimidar el movimiento contra las guerras y ocupaciones militares de EEUU y a los que se oponen al apoyo de EEUU a regímenes represivos”, dijo el activista de solidari-

dad con Colombia Tom Burke, uno de los que recibió un Citatorio de Corte por el FBI. “Ellos están diseñados para suprimir la oposición y la libertad de expresión, dividir el movimiento por la paz y despejar el camino para más intervenciones militares de EEUU en el Medio Oriente y Latinoamérica.

Esta supresión de los derechos democráticos está dirigida hacia aquellos quienes dedican mucho de su tiempo y energía para apoyar las luchas de los pueblos de Palestina y Colombia contra la ocupación y guerras financiadas por EEUU. Los activistas están asociados a conocidos grupos anti-guerra, incluyendo muchos de los líderes de las grandes protestas en contra de la Convención Nacional de los Republicanos en St. Paul, Minnesota en septiembre de 2008. El FBI enfatiza que el gran jurado iba a investigar a los activistas por posibles cargos de terrorismo. Esto es un intento del gobierno de EEUU para silenciar a quienes apoyan la resistencia a la opresión en el Medio Oriente y Latinoamérica.

Los activistas involucrados no han hecho nada ilegal y están rechazando ser llevados a conversaciones con el FBI acerca de sus puntos de vista políticos o la organización contra las guerras y ocupaciones. Los activistas están involucrados con muchos grupos, incluyendo el Grupo de Solidaridad con Palestina, Estudiantes por una Sociedad Democrática, el Comité Anti-Guerra Ciudades-Gemelas, Red de Acción por Colombia, la Organización Socialista Camino de Libertad y el Comité Nacional por la Libertad de Ricardo Palmera (un prisionero político colombiano).

Steff Yorek, un activista anti-guerra por mucho tiempo y uno de los activistas a quienes sus casas fueron cateadas, llamó las redadas “Una indignante expedición de pesca”.

Nosotros urgimos a todos los activistas progresistas a mostrar solidaridad con estos individuos señalados como objetivos por el gobierno de EEUU. Los activistas tienen el derecho a no hablar con el FBI y les urgimos a negarse cortésmente, decir solo “NO”.

Por favor contactarse: info@colombiasolidarity.org ó info@fightbacknews.org si le gustaría proveer apoyo a los activistas.

(Traducción por Las Luchas del Pueblo)

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