

From Athens, Ohio to Athens, Greece

What can stop austerity? Resistance!

By Sharon Black

At first glance it would seem that Athens, Ohio, and Athens, Greece, are worlds apart. Not only does language separate them, but more than 5,100 miles of land and ocean stand between them. The only thing they seem to have in common is a name.

But the workers in Ohio and throughout the U.S. have an amazing amount in common with the workers in Greece.

In cities, towns and states all across the U.S., workers have had their lives torn apart by draconian budget cuts, layoffs and foreclosures resulting from the loss of income and jobs, and more recently a right-wing assault to strip workers of union rights.

On June 26, with just the stroke of the pen, Wisconsin's Gov. Scott Walker dismantled state health assistance known as Badger Care, concluded the largest cuts to education in Wisconsin's history, and attacked public workers' pensions.

Greek workers resist austerity

In Greece workers are facing a second round of severe austerity measures that are slated to cut more than \$9 billion from their services, adding to massive unemployment and poverty.

The big business media has falsely portrayed the plight of the workers in Greece as their fault for "living beyond their means." This cruel distortion is meant to justify the resultant poverty that the Greek people will be forced to endure and justify the robbery by the banks and the IMF.

The struggle against austerity measures has ignited the mass of people in Greece.

PAME, the All Workers Militant Front, led a successful general strike on June 15. Tens of thousands of people filled Syntagma Square in Athens outside

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Greek unionists see the class struggle clearly.

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NY SAME-SEX MARRIAGE Right on! Fight on! 3

Imani Henry at NYC Trans march, June 24.

PHOTO: KATIA RUIZ



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BLOOMBERGVILLE

Camping out to battle
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Peter King's persecution of Muslims has historical roots

By Edward Yudelovich

U.S. Rep. Peter King, chair of the House Homeland Security Committee, held his second hearing to "examine the threat of Islamic radicalization" and scapegoat Muslims on June 15. At the hearing, King targeted one of the most oppressed groups in the United States — prisoners. He labeled Muslim prisoners a breeding ground for "terrorism."

Some of the greatest African-American leaders, like Malcolm X, became Muslims while incarcerated. King and his committee are not only attacking Muslims, but the entire Black community's liberation struggle.

At the first hearing on March 10, Rep. Keith Ellison, one of two Muslim Americans serving in Congress, broke into tears and accused King of being "McCarthyistic" in his approach to the Muslim community.

"We need to approach this through fair analysis and do no harm. I fear this hearing does not meet that standard," Ellison said to King. "When you ascribe the violent actions [of individuals] to an entire community, you assign blame to an entire community. This is the heart of scapegoating and stereotyping."

Ellison told the committee the story of Mohammad Salman Hamdani, a 23-year-old paramedic and Muslim American from Queens, N.Y., who died while responding to the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center. "He was one of those brave first responders, who tragically lost his life. ... After the tragedy, some people tried to smear his character solely because of his Islamic faith."

Ellison explained that there was unfounded speculation that Hamdani had disappeared because he was in league with the attackers. His remains were later found in the rubble of the Twin Towers.

What was McCarthyism?

"McCarthyistic" refers to a repressive period in U.S. history sometimes referred to as the witch-hunt.

After World War II, the U.S. and European imperialists launched a broad political, ideological and economic assault on the Soviet Union known as the Cold War, eventually including military encirclement by NATO forces.

In 1949, the victory of China's revolution sparked a wild witch-hunt against suspected communists in the U.S. In the same year, the Soviet Union tested its own nuclear weapon, sending a message that it would not be a defenseless victim of Washington's nuclear threats.

The anti-communist witch-hunt intensified in 1950 with the opening of the Korean War. The House Un-American Activities Committee and Sen. Joseph McCarthy's committee subpoenaed trade unionists, teachers, scholars, writers, actors, artists, journalists and even some government officials.

Some went to jail for refusing to testify. Others were forced underground or into exile. Many more were targeted for political repression, losing their jobs and livelihoods in a broad FBI sweep aimed at driving all leftists out of the labor and progressive movements.

This was the atmosphere in which Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg were arrested in 1950 and charged with having given the "secret" of the atomic bomb to the Soviet Union. The trial judge even blamed them for the Korean War!

To fend off accusations of anti-Semitism, the government arranged for a Jewish judge and prosecutors at the Rosenbergs' trial. One of them was attorney Roy Cohn, whose direct examination of Ethel's brother, David

Greenglass, produced testimony central to the Rosenbergs' conviction.

Greenglass later admitted that he lied during the trial at the prosecution's urging.

It was impossible for the Rosenbergs to get anything resembling a fair or impartial trial amidst the frenzy created by the media, Congress, the FBI and courts. They were executed on June 19, 1953, in the electric chair at Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, N.Y.

The Rosenbergs' conviction brought 24-year-old Cohn to the attention of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, who recommended him to Sen. McCarthy. McCarthy hired Cohn as his chief counsel, choosing him over Robert Kennedy, in part to avoid accusations of anti-Semitic motivation for his investigations.

King worked with Cohn

What does all of this have to do with Peter King's 2011 Congressional hearings?

As a young lawyer, King worked with Roy Cohn for 18 months at the firm Saxe, Bacon & Bolan, where Cohn maintained his private practice. When Cohn died in 1986, King told the Associated Press: "It was amazing to me the network of contacts he had. He seemed to have access anywhere — FBI agents, prominent senators, and the State Department. There seemed to be nobody he didn't know." (Politico, March 8)

If Roy Cohn seemingly impressed the young Peter King, who is King now having an impact on? Who may follow in his footsteps?

Why, it's none other than New York City Councilperson Dan Halloran. At a GOP fundraiser on May 14, 2010, Dan Halloran presented King with the Ronald Reagan Award. The same year, King returned the favor by encouraging Halloran to join his anti-Muslim crusade in Congress by running for New York's 5th District seat. Halloran had other priorities and declined the offer.

Halloran became the first elected official in New York City to publicly criticize the Cordoba House Park 51 Islamic Center project in lower Manhattan, near the World Trade Center site.

But Muslims aren't Halloran's only targets. He also opposed the City Council's bill to regulate so-called crisis pregnancy centers, which deceive women seeking reproductive health care by bombarding them with anti-abortion propaganda.

After a powerful winter storm dumped 20 to 32 inches of snow on the city last Dec. 26, New York sanitation workers toiled for weeks in 12-to-14-hour shifts to clear the drifts away. Despite these heroic efforts, reckless decisions by billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg's administration disrupted normal snow removal. Several New Yorkers died when ambulances failed to get through the snow-covered streets.

During the height of the storm crisis, Halloran and the right-wing, anti-labor New York Post made unsubstantiated claims that a "worker slowdown" had impeded the snow removal operations.

New York City's Department of Investigation looked into Halloran's accusations. On June 3, the DOI issued its findings, exonerating the sanitation workers and stating that, "In total, Mr. Halloran's information about city employee statements contributed no actual evidence about a possible slowdown."

In contrast, at a City Council hearing investigating the blizzard fiasco, Freedom Party gubernatorial candidate

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NEW YORK

Joy at same-sex marriage victory

By Shelley Ettinger

A massive crowd, estimated at 2 million people by Heritage of Pride officials, thronged the streets of Manhattan June 26 for the Lesbian Gay Bi Trans Queer Pride parade. Jubilation reigned.

Just over 36 hours before marchers stepped off at 12 noon, same-sex marriage was legalized in the state of New York.

People had been celebrating since the bill passed Friday night. Now, on Sunday, the thrill of victory electrified the crowds at the annual march marking the 42nd anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion.

Workers World joins the celebration. We salute the fighters whose struggle won this advance toward equality. And we demand full equality now: federal recognition of same-sex marriage rights, along with, finally, a federal civil rights law banning all discrimination against LGBTQ people.

It's appropriate that this win coincided with Pride weekend — because it is indeed the mass struggle for four-plus decades that won marriage rights in New York. The LGBTQ movement, which started with that great rebellion against the police at the Stonewall Inn 42 years ago, has mobilized, protested, marched, sat in, stood up time and time again since then.

This mass action against oppression has achieved something remarkable. It has changed consciousness. So now, in a breathtaking shift that couldn't have been predicted even a few short years ago, every public opinion poll shows that the majority of people in this country believe same-sex couples should have the right to marry.

Presecution of Muslims

Continued from page 2

and Councilperson Charles Barron told Deputy Mayor for Operations Stephen Goldsmith, "I think you and the mayor should be investigated."

Barron was right. Bloomberg and Goldsmith sabotaged the snow removal effort by failing to declare a snow emergency, failing to order major highways be salted before the snow started falling, and reducing the amount of snow removal personnel and equipment.

How can the people stop the Peter Kings and Dan Hallorans, who are cut from the same cloth as Joe McCarthy and Roy Cohn? With solidarity and resistance.

A prime example took place on Sept. 11, 2010 — the ninth anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Center.

Some 10,000 people gathered in City Hall Park, just blocks from the World Trade Center site, and marched through lower Manhattan to show solidarity with the Muslim community and condemn the racism and bigotry whipped up by Halloran and the right wing against the Cordoba House Islamic Center plan. □



The Lavender and Red series of articles by Leslie Feinberg, author of *Stone Butch Blues*, is now available online.

The series includes:

Rainbow Solidarity In Defense of CUBA

This groundbreaking book documents revolutionary Cuba's inspiring trajectory of progress towards liberation of sexualities, genders and sexes. Book available at Amazon.com

<http://www.workers.org/lavender-red/>

FIGHT ON FOR FULL RIGHTS

This doesn't mean inequality, discrimination and violence have been vanquished, especially not for LGBTQ people of color, trans people and youth. It doesn't mean that the forces of reaction are ready to surrender. There is much more struggle ahead, and there will be setbacks along with victories.

But mass support for LGBTQ rights is a fact, creating popular pressure for change. It's this pressure that drove the state of New York to legalize same-sex marriage.

Don't thank Cuomo

No credit is due to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. No one should hail him as the hero of this story. Cuomo is a vicious union-busting, anti-worker, anti-poor, program-cutting reactionary. The way he maneuvered himself into position as the great man who handed the LGBTQ community this law is the most brazen display of demagoguery by any politician in a long time.

Cuomo signed the law right after forcing the state employee unions to accept a raft of terrible givebacks. He's just cut budgets and raised tuition at the State University of New York and City University of New York, closing off access to the state and city university systems for many working-class students, especially immigrants and people of color. He is gutting social programs right and left, pushing the kind of racist assault against the working class and oppressed of New York that not even the last Republican governor could get away with. All this hurts LGBTQ people, who after all are, like most people, part of the working class.

Yet, lo and behold, he portrays himself as the great liberator. He is not. Cuomo may have signed the law. He may have carried out the parliamentary maneuvers necessary to get it passed — and, by the way, agreed to an outrageous series of exceptions permitting all manner of religious and quasi-religious entities to continue discriminating against same-sex couples. And he may even have wooed moneybags donors to fund the final lobbying efforts. None of this was decisive.

The struggle was decisive.

With each blow against inequality, the working class as a whole is strengthened. Now, in New York, there is one less tool with which the boss class can try to divide

the workers and oppressed, one less artificial wedge blocking unity.

A matter of equal rights

The institution of heterosexual marriage is rooted in class society and based on the subjugation of women. Its original purpose was to codify paternity, ensure patrilineal inheritance and enforce male ownership of women. Marriage has traditionally functioned as part of women's oppression.

But modern marriage is also a compendium of more than 1,000 legal rights and privileges. Same-sex couples are denied access to these rights and privileges. This is sheer discrimination. Thus, the fight to win marriage equality is a basic civil-rights issue. For this reason, and because it is part of the overall class struggle, every socialist should support this fight and applaud each gain along the way.

At the same time it should be understood that in New York and every state where marriage equality is won, the gain is largely symbolic. Symbolism certainly matters; just ask the joyous couples who were celebrating at Pride. Every battle, in every city and state, matters — especially the current court battle to throw out Proposition 8, which bars same-sex marriage in California.

But more than 35 states currently ban same-sex marriage. Nationally, the Defense of Marriage Act, signed by President Bill Clinton in 1996, bars any rights for same-sex couples even if they are legally

married. All this must be overturned on the federal level.

It will take continued struggle to win change nationally. Most national politicians, from the White House to the Congress, remain unwilling to take a stand for full rights. At a June 23 LGBT Democratic Party fundraiser in New York City, President Barack Obama offered vague generalities about his ostensible support for LGBT rights but refused to endorse marriage equality.

Fight on!

A state-by-state strategy cannot win full rights. This is a national fight, and ultimately it's a national movement that will win all rights on the federal level.

There are important lessons to be drawn from the African-American Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. There were struggles in many locations, each vitally important — but it was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that was the decisive victory.

As for marriage, at a time when many states still barred so-called miscegenation — marriage between Black and white people — it was the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 Loving vs. Virginia ruling that struck down those racist laws once and for all. In a June 2007 statement marking the 40th anniversary of that decision, Mildred Loving herself came out in support of same-sex marriage, a year before she died.

Now, as we pause to savor the sweetness of winning same-sex marriage in New York and congratulate all who choose to claim this new right, let's also look forward to the next stage in the struggle. Let's fight on to win full federal rights for LGBTQ people. □



Workers World Party at Pride parade

PHOTO: WALTER BLUMENTHAL

Standing strong for Palestine

In an ugly incident that briefly marred the day's spirit of solidarity and joy, several young Israeli men attacked the Workers World Party contingent as it lined up and prepared to march in Manhattan's LGBTQ Pride parade on June 26.

WWP's lead banner read: "Stonewall Means Fight Back, From Wisconsin to NYC to Palestine." Placard slogans included "LGBTQ Solidarity with Palestine" and "Stop Pinkwashing Israeli Apartheid."

Both WWP and a gay Israeli group had been assigned gathering spots on the same block. There were several other groups and at least half the block and two floats between the two contingents. But suddenly four or five Israelis rushed into the WWP contingent, taunting, thrusting themselves and their signs in front of the Palestine solidarity messages, body-checking the WWP supporters in an apparent attempt to physically block them

from hoisting their signs or marching.

They failed. Everyone in the WWP contingent raised the signs higher, chanted "Viva, viva Palestina," and joined together to move forward, demanding the racists get out. In the course of the brief struggle, the Israeli belligerents knocked down a 68-year-old woman and knocked the glasses off another woman. Most of those in the front line pushing against the attack were Jewish.

After a few minutes, a half-dozen official parade marshals intervened, dragging the racist attackers away. Several marshals came back to say how appalled they were at what the Israelis had done and to thank WWP for the signs and for holding fast.

Then Workers World Party marched down Fifth Avenue, as it has every Pride Day since 1971.

— Shelley Ettinger

Arizona school official on hot seat over Ethnic Studies

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

Arizona State Superintendent of Schools John Huppenthal held a press conference June 15 where he announced that the popular Tucson Ethnic Studies Program violated state law HB2281. He said the city's Unified School District would have its budget reduced by 10 percent unless it complied with the law within 60 days. The penalty amounts to close to \$15 million and would disable the TUSD.

The very next day Huppenthal's office released the results of a state-commissioned audit of the Tucson Ethnic Studies Program. The independent audit, ordered by Huppenthal and conducted by a company that he chose, found that the program did not violate state law in any way.

In fact, the audit contradicted every statement made by Huppenthal at the press conference and concluded on page

50: "No observable evidence was present to suggest that any classroom within Tucson Unified School District is in direct violation of the law, A.R.S. 15-112(A). In most cases, quite the opposite is true." (The audit is available online at scribd.com; search for "TUSD ethnic studies audit.")

Huppenthal now claims that the \$110,000 audit by Cambium Learning and National Academic Educational Partners is "limited in its usefulness." (Arizona Daily Star, June 17)

The audit report is dated May 2, which means that Huppenthal's office sat on the report for more than a month before releasing it. His dismissal of the audit findings makes it absolutely clear that the attack against Ethnic Studies is racist, politically motivated and has nothing to do with education.

These audit findings give a boost to the struggle to support Ethnic Studies. The Defend Ethnic Studies movement, led by

the youth group UNIDOS and consisting of students, teachers, parents and community supporters, has been demanding that the Ethnic Studies Program be left as is and that the local Tucson School Board actively defend the program.

In response to the failure of the board to respond to the community, UNIDOS youth courageously pre-empted a board meeting on April 26, preventing the introduction of a plan by board member Dr. Mark Stegeman to relegate Ethnic Studies classes to electives.

The student action had an effect. On June 17 the TUSD board voted to appeal Huppenthal's decision, with Stegeman casting the only "no" vote.

McCain fans flames of racism

Arizona's militarist, anti-immigrant U.S. Sen. John McCain held a press conference June 18 to make the absurd claim that the wildfires which have damaged much of southern Arizona were started

by undocumented border crossers. This unsubstantiated statement received wide media coverage. It has not only distracted attention from Huppenthal but has also whipped up anti-immigrant hostility.

Cochise County Sheriff Larry Dever, who allows the racist Minutemen to roam the U.S.-Mexico border, backed up McCain, as did Arizona Sen. Jon Kyl and the notorious racist Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

The U.S. Fire Service, however, has stated that there is absolutely no evidence to back McCain's claim.

While McCain's racist statements are peddled as truth by the corporate media and attempts are made to take the spotlight off criminals like John Huppenthal, those dedicated to saving the Ethnic Studies Program and defending the right to learn your own history from the point of view of the oppressed have vowed to continue fighting. From the courts to the school boards to the streets, activists are demanding, "Hands off Ethnic Studies." □

State workers' unions win agreements but attacks on students, poor still on

By Joseph Piette
Philadelphia

Just days after hundreds of state workers rallied in Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Pa., state workers represented by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 13 and the Service Employees union came to a tentative agreement with Pennsylvania government officials.

SEIU Local 668 President Kathy Jellison stated, "The proposal that the commonwealth initially put on the table called for a 4-percent wage decrease, a significant reduction in employee leave, rolling furloughs and huge give-backs in health care, which would have severely hurt our members, their families and retirees. Through hard work and determination our team was able to significantly ratchet back the demands of the commonwealth and maintain the status quo in many cases ... The tentative agreement includes a 10.75-percent wage increase over four years, no significant increases to health care contributions and no rolling furloughs." (www.seiu668.org)

While contracts with 17 state employee



Pennsylvania unions fight cutbacks. Philadelphia, June 21.

WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

unions expire June 30, the AFSCME and SEIU settlements traditionally are used as a template for agreements with smaller unions in Pennsylvania.

The four-year agreements were won de-

spite give-back contracts forced on public workers in nearby states. In New Jersey, Gov. Chris Christie and legislators of both parties sharply increased state and local workers' contributions for their health

insurance and pensions, suspended cost-of-living increases to retirees' pension checks, raised retirement ages and decreased union bargaining rights.

In addition to demanding a new contract without givebacks, a major demand of the June 21 labor march and rally in Philadelphia was, "No cutbacks in state services." Hundreds of state workers listened to speakers in Love Plaza before taking over the streets around Philadelphia's City Hall.

SEIU Local 668, which represents state social workers and units for developmentally disabled people in the Philadelphia area, organized the protest rally.

Speakers at the rally criticized Gov. Corbett's massive cutbacks, calling them unnecessary, especially if taxes were fairly applied to corporations. Some 70 percent of corporations currently avoid any tax payments.

The unionists also called for enacting taxes on the gas-drilling industry.

Betsey Piette of the International Action Center asserted that the money communities need is there but the rich are unwilling to spend those funds to serve the working class. She called for ending the

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Union-busters shut down 100 percent



More than 500 militant Boston school bus drivers from Steelworkers Local 8751 and supporters achieved 100-percent shutdown of First Student, Inc.'s union-busting "summer bid" and ramped up the struggle for contract justice. Supporters included City Councilor Charles Yancey, the Greater Boston Labor Council, Massachusetts AFL-CIO, UNITE-HERE Local 26, International Action Center and others. Local 8751 once again demonstrated to First Student and their City government co-conspirators the unbeatable power of "old school" union solidarity!

— Report and photo
by Steve Kirschbaum

Wal-Mart case

Supreme Court joins attack on women workers

By Kathy Durkin

The U.S. Supreme Court recently dealt a brutal blow to women workers employed by Wal-Mart. On June 20 the justices dismissed the Dukes v. Wal-Mart lawsuit, decreeing that these workers cannot sue their employers as a class for sex discrimination.

Unsurprisingly, the high court handed corporations a big victory. In a unanimous decision of conservatives and liberals alike, the nine justices rejected class-action certification for the 1.5 million past and current women workers at Wal-Mart. This case would have been the largest employment discrimination class-action lawsuit in U.S. history against the biggest corporate employer.

The court said that the Wal-Mart workers must file individual lawsuits and not seek billions of dollars in damages as a class. The ruling will make it more difficult, time-consuming and costly for the women to pursue legal remedies, as they are low-wage workers who are suing for small amounts of money in back pay.

Moreover, five justices, the court's more right-wing majority, severely restricted the criteria for future employee-class-action lawsuits against corporations. This will harm millions of women, low-wage, service-sector and other workers, making it harder for them to seek legal remedies from employers for unfair policies. It will stymie workers who seek to join together as a class to sue employers for sexist, racist or other discriminatory policies in any company.

By siding with the country's largest corporate discriminator, the Supreme Court gave Wal-Mart the green light to squeeze millions of workers even more and to keep wages low for women, the majority of the company's hourly employees. This was also a signal to other companies that they can continue to do the same without concern about large, national lawsuits.

Ten years ago, lead plaintiff Betty Dukes, a Wal-Mart worker, together with other workers filed a lawsuit charging the company with national gender discrimination in pay and promotion. They sought to end the company's biased policies, establish equitable ones and recover bil-

lions of dollars of lost wages for the class of current and former women employees.

The plaintiffs presented evidence showing a corporate culture of sexism at Wal-Mart, where women are 70 percent of the hourly employees, yet only 33 percent of managers, and where executives deal with women in a demeaning way. However, the court's majority claimed they hadn't proven discrimination.

Part of capitalists' war on working class

The pro-corporate court shot down one of the weapons in the workers' arsenal to oppose corporate inequities, demand fairness, seek redress of their grievances and win financial compensation. Class-action lawsuits have been a helpful legal tool for workers to fight corporate discrimination; this ruling now denies this avenue to millions of workers.

In fact, plaintiffs' attorney Joseph M. Sellers explained that the court's majority reversed 40 years of legal precedents that "allowed for company-wide cases to be brought" challenging discriminatory practices against women and other workers. (New York Times, June 21)

This ruling is an extension of the capitalist class's war on the working class, which aims to take back every right and benefit won through struggle and prevent any redress of grievances and inequities. It's another manifestation of the corporations' rampage to wrench back whatever they can from workers, to increase the level of exploitation — and profits — and to obstruct legal rights and recourse with which workers can fight back.

The capitalists' offensive against workers is being carried out by state governments, backed in some cases by state courts, as in Wisconsin, where they have assaulted public sector workers' collective bargaining rights and union protections and torn up union-negotiated wage, health care and pension benefits.

This ruling shows clearly that the courts are part of the capitalist state apparatus, not neutral bodies that hear the grievances of working people and make decisions based on fundamental fairness. The main purpose of the court system, especially the Supreme Court, is to protect the property, profits and reign of the capitalist class — the owners whose interests are antagonistic to those of the workers. Many of this court's decisions of late have reinforced and advanced the financial and political interests of the super-rich, the banks and corporations.

Wal-Mart: huge profits, low wages

Wal-Mart's revenue in 2010 was \$408.2 billion. The world's largest retailer, it is the number one Fortune 100 company. The average hourly wage for sales associates is \$8.81, says the Food and Commercial Workers union blog, Making Change at Wal-Mart. The company can well afford to pay higher wages to all its workers. Yet their incomes are so low that many employees must use food stamps to feed their families and resort to Medicaid health care coverage.

By creating and maintaining poverty-level jobs and keeping wages low by all manner of inequities — super-exploiting its workforce here and worldwide — the corporate Goliath is able to make mega-profits. The company has operated in such defiance of workers' rights that it has been sued and forced to pay hundreds of millions of dollars to U.S. workers for breaking state wage-and-hour laws.

This conglomerate has ferociously and ruthlessly fought all attempts at union organizing, at home and abroad. However, Wal-Mart's workers need unions to fight workplace discrimination and inequities and to bargain for better wages and benefits. Women in unions get better wages and benefits than do their non-union counterparts.

Making Change at Wal-Mart says that despite the court's ruling the struggle will go on: "[This] decision will not stop millions of Wal-Mart associates from joining together to demand justice and more from their employer." It promised to continue to work with them "to ensure women at Wal-Mart can never be discriminated against."

Dukes and the other plaintiffs, with the help of their attorneys, are already forming new strategies and have adamantly vowed to continue their fight to press this corporate giant to end its unfair policies.

With this restriction of what has been a key legal avenue for workers to challenge corporate discrimination, it is now more imperative for leaders in the working-class movement to shift their focus and move to more class-wide direct action. It will take a strong, militant working-class struggle to push back the corporations. This will help women workers at Wal-Mart and elsewhere.

What will also aid them in their fight is for all progressive groupings and individuals to stand up and show solidarity with these workers at every opportunity and in every arena. □

Attacks on state workers, students

Continued from page 4

wars against Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya and spending those funds instead on providing union jobs in working-class communities.

Slashing funds for social needs

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett may have wanted to concentrate his efforts on slashing funds to programs that benefit the working class, rather than directly attacking the state workers' unions, which are a better organized sector of the workers.

His administration is close to finalizing a state budget agreement that may slash as much as \$471 million from the budget for the Department of Public Welfare, including \$280 million in Medicaid cuts. (Philadelphia Inquirer, June 21)

The cuts would end Medicaid coverage for 100,000 Pennsylvanians, says Sharon Ward, executive director of the Pennsylvania Budget and Policy Center. Medicaid provides health coverage for 2.3 million low-income, elderly, and/or disabled Pennsylvanians, 50 percent of whom are under 18 years old.

Additional cuts include about \$37 million in cash grants — welfare — to the poorest Pennsylvanians, and \$38 million from programs that help low-income people afford child care while they work, or train for work, so they can afford to survive without welfare. It's also proposed to cut by nearly \$400,000 the state's food-purchase program for the food pantries frequented by the needy.

The cuts in programs for the poor are in addition to severe cuts in education. Higher education cutbacks include 19 percent, or a total of \$130 million, for Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Temple University and Lincoln University, as well as cuts of 18 percent, or about \$90 million, from the 14 universities in the State System of Higher Education.

Corbett also wants to reduce public school aid by \$550 million and eliminate \$259 million in subsidies for programs such as all-day kindergarten.

The state's budget deadline is June 30. □

Women unionists protest Wal-Mart ruling



Women retail workers from Department Store union Local 338 held a news conference June 21 outside New York's City Hall to protest the Supreme Court's decision

a day earlier disallowing the Dukes v. Wal-Mart class action suit against the giant retailer for discrimination against women.

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden

Bloombergville protesters say: 'No deal! Struggle must continue'

By Dee Knight
Bloombergville, N.Y.

Participants in a two-week-long encampment known as "Bloombergville" protesting New York City budget cuts rejected a "deal" made June 24 between billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg and the City Council because it leaves too many cutbacks in place when no cutbacks are necessary. Activists quickly called for a mass demonstration on June 28 at 12 noon when the City Council is supposed to vote to ratify the deal.

Bloombergville protesters loudly chanted "Shame" as City Council members left the Department of Education headquarters next to City Hall after approving the tentative deal on the city's \$63 billion-plus budget for 2012. Initial reports indicated 4,000 teacher cuts were avoided, though 2,600 teachers will be eliminated through attrition, which will increase class size. Threatened closings of 20 fire stations were apparently avoided.

New Yorkers Against Budget Cuts, which mounted the 24/7 Bloombergville during the budget debate, said in a statement: "More than 1,000 city jobs in health care will still be cut. City libraries, which thousands of New Yorkers rely on for job help and computer access, will still face cutbacks."

Tuition for City University of New York students is set to rise continually for years. This hits not only current CUNY students but younger ones too. Dinae Anderson, a high school student, told Workers World that young people are demanding a future and an end to the "school-to-prison pipeline," with military service as the only alternative. She argued that if all young people currently in prison for victimless crimes were released, there would be enough money to provide free tuition — or a job — for all youth in the state.

Bloombergville residents shout, 'Shame!' at City Council members who agree to deal with NYC mayor.



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

The NYABC statement denouncing the deal continued: "With a \$3.1 billion surplus in the city's coffers, not one job or service should be cut. ... Billionaire Bloomberg intends to give banks money for interest — money they collect for doing nothing — that isn't even due yet."

"All of this while Wall Street enjoys record bonuses and salaries. The New Yorkers on the receiving end of these devastating cuts must not be forgotten as politicians pat themselves on the back and help billionaire Bloomberg give the banks everything they want. We will stay in the streets and keep fighting — both [June 27] at 4 p.m. and [June 28] at noon before the City Council votes."

Michelle Keller, a leader of NYABC and vice president of Local 375 of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37, told WW that the public service job losses "have been going on from the beginning. We have to find a new way to organize to stop it." DC37's delegates assembly is meeting this week to evaluate the situation, she added. The United Federation of Teachers also has a delegates assembly this week.

Ramon Jimenez, of the South Bronx Community Congress and 2010 Freedom Party candidate for New York state attorney general, told WW, "It was people's struggle that helped avoid some of the threatened cuts. Now we just have to keep fighting."

Part of global pattern

The New York City austerity budget follows a pattern set in New York state as well as in Wisconsin, California, Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Tennessee and other states. Worldwide protests against the economic crisis provoked from Tunisia and Egypt to Greece and Spain have helped inspire the fightback here in the U.S.

The similarities point to the need for a broad strategic alignment to fight the austerity onslaught. As in Wisconsin and most of the North African and European countries, the protests in New York included participation by labor unions along with mass initiatives by community and student groups.

On March 24 thousands marched from City Hall to Wall Street and back. On March 30 another thousand workers occupied the state capitol in Albany. On

May 12 there was a more massive march, organized by the UFT and its allies, as well as NYABC and other groups.

On June 14, DC37 mobilized thousands of public sector workers, and the next day the NYC Building Trades Council staged a giant march of construction workers. This march was the first large labor march in decades to break through police barricades intended to hem them in and blunt their message.

NYABC launched Bloombergville in the midst of this upsurge of labor-community-student protests. On June 22, after maintaining a 24/7 protest encampment since June 14, Bloombergville speakers received thunderous applause at a National Nurses United rally on Wall Street. One such speaker was Genghis Mohammed of Picture the Homeless. The other was Ilya, a student who helped organize a "People's Town Hall" meeting of 360 people on Staten Island a week earlier.

Workers passing the Bloombergville campers near City Hall have given cash contributions; drivers of cars, buses and sanitation trucks have honked their horns in solidarity; and different unions have provided food to sustain the protesters during the two-week encampment.

While the city budget protests continued, a large statewide effort has focused on rent law reforms. Tent cities known as "Cuomovilles" — for New York's Gov. Andrew Cuomo — sprang up in many places. As the state legislative session ended, housing groups called the minor reforms superficial and inadequate, and warned they would lead to an increase in homelessness.

When the state legislative session passed the bill legalizing gay marriage, Bloombergville's "General Assembly" — a nightly meeting to debate, decide and carry out all aspects of the long-term protest — called on all to join the New York City Pride demonstration June 26 and to march with Queers for Economic Justice, sponsored by the United Auto Workers.

The general assembly also decided to welcome an anti-war rally on June 27 that will say: "The bombs fall both on Libya and NYC — we say No!" The rally, sponsored by the United National Anti-War Committee, cited a call by the U.S. Conference of Mayors last week to "redirect the billions now spent on war toward urgent domestic needs."

Gavrielle Gemma, who worked on a union organizing drive of NYC telephone operators in the early 1970s, told WW of the importance of connecting these issues: "The right of unions to exist is being challenged, and immigrant rights are under attack. Foreclosures and unemployment continue to devastate working-class communities and youth, hitting people of color twice or even three times as hard."

"It is not just a moral question to connect these issues — it is a necessity for the working class in the fight on economic issues," said Gemma, who wrote "The union struggle & the imperialist war machine" in WW's June 30 issue.

Many activists believe that as the movement continues and expands, general assemblies can become a feature of the people's movement, with people's assemblies at neighborhood, borough or county, city, state and national levels. They should encompass broad sectors of the people's movement, with the goal of forging a unified agenda that can ultimately challenge and later replace city councils, state assemblies and Congress itself — all of which are bought and paid for by bankers, war profiteers and large corporations.

For more information, see BloombergvilleNow.org and NoCutsNY.wordpress.com.

Bloombergville's Larry Hales talks about what's next

Larry Hales, a leading Bloombergville activist, founder of the CUNY Mobilization Network and a New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts leader, spoke with Workers World writer Dee Knight about the struggle experiences in different countries and looked to the future:

The struggle in the U.S. has not reached the pitch of what we have seen around the world in response to a neoliberal agenda that is now being imposed even in the imperialist nations. The mass response in Wisconsin was the high-water mark here so far, and had not been seen in many years. Despite the size and militancy of the struggle there — which included the occupation of the state Capitol — Gov. Scott Walker's bill seeking to dismantle public sector unions passed.

Instead of opening up a struggle at the workplace or in the streets, the union leadership has been using the courts to fight Walker. Walker's attack requires the unions in Wisconsin and nationally to mobilize all their forces. This is becoming increasingly important, as from Ohio to Michigan to New Jersey, both Democrats and Republicans are attacking public sector unions on behalf of the banks and the ruling class.

These attacks, which include massive cuts of social services and privatizations, reflect the current period. It can be seen even in Europe, especially Greece, that the

capitalist governments, doing the bidding of the ruling class, are hell-bent on their program, which is similar to structural adjustments forced on Third World nations by the IMF and World Bank decades ago.

Greece has seen numerous general strikes and large-scale actions by the working class in the millions, yet the austerity being forced on Greece by European banking interests continues and has intensified.

The struggle in the U.S. has waned a bit since workers and students in Wisconsin inspired the working class here. It was clear before then, and even more so now, that protests alone, whether they be the normal rally, assembly and march or something more creative, have an end time and are not enough.

"A mass movement is needed: one that understands that these attacks are aimed at permanently destroying public sector unions and vital social services, one that unites all sectors of the working class and uses many tactics with the goal of pushing back this assault."



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO
Larry Hales speaks at general assembly of Bloombergville on June 24.

"Such a struggle also needs demands that put it on the offensive. It can call for a massive jobs program; an end to imperialist war; abolishing the Pentagon; education, housing and healthcare for all — a progressive program that is in solidarity with oppressed people here and abroad." □

Solidarity essential

What workers in the U.S. & Greece have in common

Continued from page 1

the Parliament, and thousands of workers marched in cities across Greece. Youth and workers held their line despite attacks from riot police, who fired volleys of tear gas canisters into the crowds.

On BBC World News a medical doctor participating in the protests alongside workers and students in the square pointed out: "People will die from these measures. Many will no longer be able to get medical care."

General Secretary Aleka Papariga of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), also a member of the Greek parliament, put austerity measures in perspective when she declared, "The people must with their own hands take back what they are owed and what belongs to them. [The capitalists] owe the people because of the surplus value they steal in the process of production." (www.kke.org)

The KKE has gone on the offensive, declaring that the working class should sever itself from the European Union, the IMF and the bankers and fight for power.

Same enemy, same fight

The question of power and where this crisis comes from is an important one for workers worldwide, particularly in the United States.

Whether you are a worker in Wisconsin or New York or Athens, Greece, you have nothing in common with the bankers or billionaires wherever they reside. If the present government, regardless of place or type, cannot protect and defend the people, then the issue of workers' and people power should be placed firmly on the agenda.

The deficit is a fraud. The underlying issue is how the wealth created by the working class is distributed and the inherent contradiction of how production is organized under capitalism, creating a crisis of "overproduction" and resulting in structural and permanent unemployment.

In reality the people of Greece and the



PHOTO: KKE

Greek communists call for international solidarity in May 2010.

United States are fighting the same enemy: the global capitalist system.

In a June 18 article called "Euro Jitters Ricochet Across U.S.", the Wall Street Journal showed how interconnected the capitalist economy is, with some small towns and major cities in the U.S. already feeling the reverberation of what is happening in Greece through sharp increases in interest on municipal bonds (especially those funded by the Dexia company), resulting in layoffs and cuts.

"We are far from Wall Street or Greece, but the impact is being absorbed to the core in small-town America," said Kate Reardon, a spokeswoman for Everett, Wash., a city of 104,000 people, where interest costs are rising on a local rink and concert arena. In the Perris Union High School District in Perris, Calif., which already was furloughing workers and considering pay cuts, borrowing costs have risen by \$30,000 a month, or

about two-thirds of the cost of a first-year teacher, who earns about \$46,700."

New call for general strike — two days

The Greek Parliament is poised to pass more austerity measures on June 28 to satisfy the demands of the European finance ministers and the IMF, so the banks and the rich can receive the next installment of a bailout package due on July 2.

In response, PAME called for a 48-hour general strike, along with resistance to the cuts. Given recent events, tremendous resistance is expected. Regardless of the outcome, it will be an important chapter in the ongoing history of the workers' struggle in Greece.

And there will be tremendous lessons for workers here in the U.S. The Greek struggle has rightfully placed on the agenda the question of whose crisis this is and who holds the power. PAME noted

in its statement: "We call on the working people, the youth, the unemployed and the women to carry out a people's uprising. We struggle along with the peoples all over the world against the capitalist barbarity." (inter.kke.gr)

Workers in Greece are resisting the same capitalist bankers and bosses who are threatening workers here and ultimately endangering the planet. The capitalist system is global. In May 2010 the KKE knew they were facing the combined strength of the European bankers when they hung a banner on the Acropolis ruins in Athens that read: "Peoples of Europe, rise up."

On June 30 in Britain 750,000 teachers, lecturers and civil servants are set to strike over pension cutbacks. The call on the Greek banner should also be heard in the United States. International solidarity is needed more than ever for the people of the world to prevail. □

Hundreds protest Wisconsin budget

Hundreds came out to denounce and protest the signing of Wisconsin's 2011-13 budget by Gov. Scott Walker June 27 in Green Bay. The \$66 billion two-year budget slashes funding for public schools, the University of Wisconsin system and local governments, along with expanding taxpayer support for private voucher schools and cutting taxes for corporations and banks.

"This budget will result in a major loss to the quality of life for the people of Wisconsin by crippling economic support systems for middle income and working class families," said Phil Neuenfeldt, president of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO in a June 26 statement. "We are seeing the deepest cuts to education, health care and local communities ever passed in state history, at a time when we should be investing in our state and its people."

Protests and resistance across the state continue to oppose the attempted union-busting and anti-people attacks by Walker and his banking, corporate and Pentagon backers. For more information and how to help, go to www.wisafcio.org, www.vdlf.org, and www.wibailoutpeople.org.

— Bryan G. Pfeifer



In Puerto Rico

A repeat of the farce?

Last April, the U.S. House of Representatives approved HR 2499 RFS, ironically known as the "Puerto Rico Democracy Act of 2010." This allows for a plebiscite on the island, which, in Congress' own words, will "provide for a federally sanctioned self-determination process for the people of Puerto Rico."

The colony's representative in the U.S. Congress, Pedro Pierluisi, who has speaking rights but no voting rights in the House, introduced HR 2499 RFS. Pierluisi is Puerto Rico's resident commissioner in Washington under the island's pro-statehood administration of Gov. Luis Fortuño. Pierluisi introduced the plebiscite bill on Fortuño's behalf.

Adding to the contradictions and falsehoods about colonial status, Fortuño belongs to the right wing of the Republican Party in the U.S. and to the New Progressive Party (PNP) on the island. Pierluisi is also from the PNP, but is a member of the Democratic Party in the U.S.

Many plebiscites and referendums on the status have been conducted in Puerto Rico, but this is the first time that the island's government seeks the formal approval of its master in the empire. This



Rafael Cancel Miranda

plebiscite, if approved in the U.S. Senate, will legally authorize Puerto Rico to conduct a plebiscite. This itself is proof of Puerto Rico's colonial status.

Although the pro-independence forces on the island are very clear about this farce, some doubts remain in the minds of some people. In order to put those to rest, Puerto Rican patriot and former political prisoner Rafael Cancel Miranda wrote an open letter on June 21, which is reprinted here.

A repeat of the farce?

Recently a reporter asked me about a so-called plebiscite on the future of Puerto Rico in which the foreigners [who reside on the island] who swear citizenship could participate, but not the Puerto Ricans who reside outside Puerto Rico.

I responded that any plebiscite in the colony would be illegal and fraudulent because the colonial power and their servile ones control the sociopolitical and economic life and even the psyche of the Puerto Rican people. And, besides, to which citizenship do they refer? To which citizenship would a foreigner swear? The Puerto Rican or the one of the U.S.? We already know which side those foreigners would be on and why. The United States' citizenship by itself constitutes an illegally imposed foreign citizenship in Puerto Rico. On the other hand, Puerto Ricans, no matter where they are, continue being Puerto Rican.

In 1952, the government of the United States tried to deceive the world with an alleged "plebiscite" for

the creation of the so-called Free Associated State. They declared then that by virtue of that "plebiscite" Puerto Rico had stopped being a colony. Now, almost 60 years later, everybody knows that that was a sham since even committees appointed by the White House have affirmed that Puerto Rico continues being a colony, thus confirming what Lolita Lebrón, Andrés Figueroa Cordero, Irvin Flores Rodriguez and I went to denounce in the Congress in Washington, D.C., the 1st of March of 1954.

We could extend, but I will not do it. I will simply say that the Yankees did not have any plebiscite in 1898 in order to invade us. So why would they have to conduct one in order to leave? It is the same gimmick, with the same words, to justify before the world the colonialism which they have imposed on us. Many Puerto Ricans were deceived in 1952. Let us not fall into the same trap. Besides, the right of the peoples to their independence is not a question of numbers, and only those who are free can vote freely. There is no power that can alter that truth. □

WikiLeaks confirms it

Tiananmen Square 'massacre' was a myth

By Deirdre Griswold

How many times have we been told that the U.S. is an "open" society and the media are "free"?

Usually such claims are made when criticizing other countries for not being "open," especially countries that don't follow Washington's agenda.

If you live in the United States and depend on the supposedly "free" and "open" commercial media for information, you would without a doubt believe that the Chinese government massacred "hundreds, perhaps thousands" of students in Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. That phrase has been repeated tens of thousands of times by the media of this country.

But it's a myth. Furthermore, the U.S. government knows it's a myth. And all the major media know it too. But they refuse to correct the record because of the basic hostility of the U.S. imperialist ruling class to China.

On what do we base this assertion? Several sources.

The most recent is a WikiLeaks release of cables sent from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing to the State Department in June 1989, a few days after the events in China.

Second is an assertion in November 1989 by the Beijing bureau chief of the New York Times, an assertion that has never again been referred to by that newspaper.

And third is the account of what happened by the Chinese government itself, which is corroborated by the first two.

Only one major Western newspaper has published the WikiLeaks cables. That was the Telegraph of London on June 4 of this year, exactly 22 years after the Chinese government called out the troops in Beijing.

Two cables dated July 7, 1989 — more than a month after the fighting — related the following:

"A Chilean diplomat provides an eyewitness account of the soldiers entering Tiananmen Square: He watched the

military enter the square and did not observe any mass firing of weapons into the crowds, although sporadic gunfire was heard. He said that most of the troops which entered the square were actually armed only with anti-riot gear — truncheons and wooden clubs; they were backed up by armed soldiers."

A following cable stated: "A Chilean diplomat provides an eye-witness account of the soldiers entering Tiananmen Square: Although gunfire could be heard, he said that apart from some beating of students, there was no mass firing into the crowd of students at the monument."

It should be remembered that Chile at that time was ruled by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, who had come to power in a violent, anti-socialist, U.S.-supported right-wing coup in which thousands of leftists, including President Salvador Allende, had been killed. The "Chilean diplomat" referred to would have been no friend of China.

Not one U.S. newspaper, television or radio outlet has reported or commented on these cables released by WikiLeaks, nor on the Telegraph story about them. It is as though they fell into a bottomless chasm.

Is it because the media here don't believe the report is credible? Hardly.

They knew the truth in 1989

The New York Times knows it's credible. Their own Beijing bureau chief at the time, Nicholas Kristof, confirmed it in an extensive article entitled "China Update: How the Hardliners Won," published in the Sunday Times magazine on Nov. 12, 1989, five months after the supposed massacre in the square.

At the very end of this long article, which purported to give an inside view of a debate within the Chinese Communist Party leadership, Kristof stated categorically: "Based on my observations in the streets, neither the official account nor many of the foreign versions are quite correct. There is no massacre in Tiananmen Square, for example, although there is plenty of killing elsewhere."

Even though Kristof's article was harshly critical of China, his statement that there was "no massacre in Tiananmen Square" immediately drew howls of protest from China bashers in the U.S., as reflected in the Times' letters column.

Had there been fighting in Beijing? Absolutely. But there was no massacre of unarmed students in the square. That was an invention by the West, intended to demonize the Chinese government and win public sympathy for a counter-revolution.

The turn toward a market economy under Deng Xiaoping had alienated many workers. There was also a counter-revolutionary element trying to take advantage of popular grievances to completely restore capitalism.

The imperialists were hoping the struggles in Beijing would bring down the Chinese Communist Party and destroy the

planned economy — similar to what was to happen two years later in the Soviet Union. They wanted to "open up" China, not to truth, but to the looting of the people's property by imperialist banks and corporations.

After much wavering at the top, the army was called out and the uprising crushed. China was not broken up like the Soviet Union; its economy has not imploded nor has the standard of living declined. Quite the opposite. Wages and social conditions have been improving at a time when workers elsewhere are being forced backward by a severe capitalist economic crisis.

Despite deep concessions to capitalism, foreign and domestic, China continues to have a planned economy based on a strong state-owned infrastructure.

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Congress won't authorize, but continues war on Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

As the U.S./NATO war against the North African state of Libya entered its fourth month, the House of Representatives voted on June 24 to withhold authorization for the bombing campaign. In a resolution to support the war, members of Congress turned down the Obama administration's military strategy by a vote of 295 against and 123 in favor.

This vote reflected the broad opposition to the war inside the United States and internationally as well as the failure of NATO to gain a quick victory. Members of both political parties inside the government opposed the vote to authorize the war, with 70 Democrats rejecting the administration's argument that the War Powers Act of 1973 does not apply to current operations in Libya. This act, passed during the Vietnam War, supposedly limits the powers of the executive branch of the U.S. government during wartime.

Despite the failure of the vote to authorize the war against Libya, the House rejected a resolution to withhold funds geared toward continuing the U.S./NATO war that began on March 19, after the Western-backed rebels faced imminent defeat by the Libyan government.

According to the New York Times, "The second measure rejected by the House would have essentially prohibited money for direct combat activity, financing only support operations like search and rescue, aerial refueling, operational planning, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. Only 180 House members supported the measure, while 238, including 89 Republicans, voted against it." (June 24)

At the same time, other members of the House and Senate have supported the administration's policy of war against Libya. Sens. John McCain and John Kerry have drafted a resolution defending the bombing and regime-change strategy against the oil-producing North African state.

NATO's war strategy

Even though it was made to appear that the second resolution would have withdrawn support for the Libya war, the fact that language in the resolution still provided for the continued military involvement — including refueling, operational

planning and intelligence — exposes that neither political party supports a just settlement to the conflict in Libya. The arguments have been exclusively centered on procedural issues over who can legally declare war, the administration or Congress — not on unprovoked attacks against a sovereign state and the war's impact on the civilian population of Libya, where hundreds of thousands of people have been displaced and thousands killed.

The only response from the White House was to reiterate that the war against Libya does not constitute "hostilities." Jay Carney, the Obama administration's spokesperson, said, "We are disappointed by that vote. We think now is not the time to send the kind of mixed message that it sends when we are working with our allies to achieve the goals that we believe are widely shared in Congress." (New York Times, June 24)

Carney said that the administration is concerned about imposing a no-fly zone as authorized by U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973. Yet the war has gone far beyond this pseudo-legal rationale for the military onslaught against Libya. U.S./NATO operations have resulted in the imposition of a naval blockade; the freezing of governmental assets of over \$50 billion; the dispatching of Central Intelligence Agency operatives; the bombing of schools, houses and government buildings; and targeted assassinations against Muammar Gaddafi, his family and associates in ongoing efforts to topple the state and institute a puppet regime.

In fact, NATO Joint Operations Commander and U.S. Admiral Samuel Locklear admitted in a briefing to a Congressperson recently that the military operation against Libya is committed to assassinating leader Muammar Gaddafi. The Atlantic reported that "Rep. Mike Turner, a Republican and member of the House Armed Services Committee, revealed the conversation to reporter Josh Rogin, confirming what many observers had long suspected about the U.S. and European air strikes. ... After all, NATO's bombs have fallen on, among others, the Bab al-Azizia military compound in Tripoli, which members of the Gaddafi family sometimes used as a home." (June 27)

The author, Max Fisher, continues by asking the question of whether these targeted assassination attempts are escalat-

ing the war in Libya or bringing it to a close.

Although NATO airstrikes continue to result in deaths and casualties, the Western-backed Transitional National Council has accused the imperialist states now bombing the country of not doing enough to remove the Libyan government. The rebels fighting on behalf of the TNC continue to be trapped in the port city of Misrata in the West and are being contained in sections of the Nafusa Mountains on the border with Tunisia.

Outside the rebel-held city of Benghazi, TNC forces have been met with determined resistance from the Libyan army. Even according to CBS News, "The rebels are still stalled to the east in Misrata, complaining NATO doesn't coordinate air strikes to provide adequate air cover so they can punch through Gaddafi's forces and move towards Tripoli." (June 27)

U.S. militarists urge greater involvement

U.S. militarists are demanding greater involvement by the Pentagon with the deployment of more fighter aircraft and ground troops. Former Assistant Secretary of State Jamie Rubin stated: "Once we've decided to use air power alone, rather than ground troops — and that's a perfectly logical decision by the president — we have to be patient. Air power doesn't work like ground troops the way we, say in the first Gulf War, just took over the Iraqi forces and threw them out of Kuwait in a few days." (CBS News, June 27)

Rubin continued, "But if you want to succeed here, having started this, I think there is a way for the United States to get involved from the front, rather than just supporting the British and the French, and that means more U.S. aircraft, more U.S. missiles and directing the fire much more carefully."

On June 27 the judges from the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, announced warrants for the arrest of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi and other top government officials. Several weeks ago the ICC chief prosecutor had announced that an investigation was underway to indict the leadership of the country.

A statement read out by presiding ICC judge Sanji Monageng said there were "reasonable grounds to believe" that three leaders — Muammar Gaddafi, Saif

al-Islam, his son, and intelligence chief Abdullah al-Sanussi — were "criminally responsible" for killing civilians inside the country. Nonetheless, there was no mention of the nature of the crimes committed by the U.S. and NATO forces inside Libya.

This politically motivated provocation by the ICC is designed to support the imperialist war against Libya aimed at the destabilization of the entire North African region through the assassination of the national leadership of Libya in order to expropriate its resources and install a client regime that will totally serve the interests of Western capitalism. The fact the ICC has never addressed the war crimes committed by the U.S./NATO forces in Afghanistan and Pakistan or the U.S./British atrocities in Iraq, let alone the plight of the Palestinians, illustrates clearly that it is a tool of the imperialist states.

Build opposition to war on Libya

There is widespread opposition to the U.S. military involvement in Libya, as well as the other wars taking place in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq. A new Gallup poll indicated that 39 percent of the U.S. population supports the bombing. (USA Today, June 24)

Figures released by the U.S. government said that over \$700 million has already been spent on the Libyan operation. By September, the cost will be above \$1 billion.

The U.S. economy is feeling the impact of the failure of capitalist-driven policies that finance wars of occupation, military bases in many countries around the world, the bailout of the banks, and the rising rates of unemployment, homelessness and poverty.

Community rallies against the war have been held in Detroit, Los Angeles and New York. A national tour features former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, Nation of Islam Minister Akbar Muhammad, December 12 Movement spokesperson Viola Plummer, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, and Answer leader Brian Becker.

On June 27 a demonstration in New York organized by the United National Anti-War Committee was held against the war with the slogan: "No to trillions for war and destruction of jobs and services!" □



WW PHOTO: ELLEN CATALINOTTO

U.S. protests condemn war on Libya

Anti-war activists held protest rallies against the U.S./NATO war on Libya on June 27 in several cities.

A picket in front of Philadelphia's City Hall during rush hour traffic received a very positive response from passersby.

In New York, the anti-war protest was held at Bloombergville, an area on the sidewalk near City Hall where demonstrators had been camping for two weeks to protest severe cuts

to education and social services in the city budget. The protesters turned the action into a strong street meeting, where two dozen speakers — from sponsoring organizations and from Bloombergville — connected the struggle against imperialist war with the demand to fund people's needs.

The demonstrators drummed and chanted for nearly two hours. One 17-year-old woman, who was only seven when the war on Afghani-



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

stan started, described growing up watching more and more wars accompanied by attacks on workers in the U.S.

Demonstrators included members of the United National Anti-war Committee, Workers World Party, International Action Center, Phila-

delphia Greens, ANSWER Coalition, Socialist Action, Philly Against War, International Socialist Organization and many other organizations involved in Bloombergville.

— Joe Piette in Philadelphia,
Sara Flounders in New York

Why Alice Walker sails to Gaza

Right now — that is, on June 28 — in the strike-closed harbor of Athens, Greece, there are 350 courageous individuals ready to sail on a dozen ships to deliver aid and solidarity to the people of Gaza. The mostly North American and European passengers have boarded ships from the U.S., Algeria, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Britain, France and Norway.

Many participants have been active in the anti-war and solidarity movement. They all know that last year the Israeli warlords ordered their marines to storm the Turkish ship Mavi Marmara delivering humanitarian aid to the Palestinians under siege inside Gaza. With no provocation, the Israeli killers mowed down nine people of Turkish origin.

Since then, understanding has spread and deepened about the Israeli state's oppressive role and its alignment with every reactionary imperialist offensive in the region and in the world. And from the other direction there is solidarity with and appreciation for the liberating uprisings in North Africa and Southwest Asia, overthrowing or threatening imperialist puppet regimes from Tunisia and Egypt to Yemen and Bahrain. Cairo's Tahrir Square has inspired struggle from Puerta del Sol in Madrid, Spain, to the Capitol in Madison, Wis.

Among those ready to sail are writers and intellectuals known far beyond progressive circles. Swedish author Henning Mankel, a favorite of mystery fans, is on the flotilla as he was last year. Santiago Alba Rico, author, philosopher and screenwriter, is spokesperson for the Gernika, the ship from Spain. And on the U.S. ship, The Audacity of Hope, is African-American author and Pulitzer Prize winner Alice Walker, whose words explaining her reasons for sailing are worth excerpting here:

"[T]here is, for me, an awareness of paying off a debt to the Jewish civil rights activists who faced death to come to the side of black people in the American south in our time of need. I am especially indebted to Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman who heard our calls for help — our government then as now glacially slow in providing protection to non-violent protesters — and came to stand with us."

"They got as far as the truncheons and bullets of a few 'good ol' boys' of Neshoba County, Miss., and were beaten and shot to death along with James Chaney, a young Black man of formidable courage

who died with them. So, even though our boat will be called The Audacity of Hope, it will fly the Goodman, Chaney, Schwerer flag in my own heart.

"And what of the children of Palestine, who were ignored in our president's latest speech on Israel and Palestine, and whose impoverished, terrorized, segregated existence was mocked by the standing ovations recently given in the U.S. Congress to the prime minister of Israel? I see children, all children, as humanity's most precious resource, because it will be to them that the care of the planet will always be left. One child must never be set above another, even in casual conversation, not to mention in speeches that circle the globe."

Washington, Tel Aviv and the subservient regime in Greece are doing all they can to sabotage the flotilla. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has already supported Israeli use of force. But there is a different reaction from the people. The workers in Greece in the midst of a general strike pledge to load the freedom ships, and the "indignant ones" in Syntagma Square are following the progress of the fleet on massive TV screens.

Long live Freedom Flotilla II.
Long live the Mavi Marvara.
Long live the people of Gaza. □

Sign petition for Angola 2!

By Deirdre Griswold

Albert Woodfox, now 64, and Herman Wallace, 69, have been held in solitary confinement in Louisiana State Penitentiary for 40 years. That's being in a 6 1/2-by-9-foot cell for more than 23 hours a day, 365 days a year, for 40 years. They are allowed out of their cells for only four hours a week.

LSP is a modern version of the chain-gang prisons so notorious in the South. The vast majority of those held behind bars are African American, as are Woodfox and Wallace. And although solitary confinement was ruled ineffective and cruel in the U.S. as long ago as 1913, it has been restored today, with more than 80,000 men and women suffering the torture of prolonged isolation.

Known as the Angola 2, Woodfox and Wallace are suing the penitentiary, saying their imprisonment is "cruel and unusual" and therefore violates the U.S. Constitution, as well as international law.

California's Pelican Bay prisoners plan hunger strike

Prisoners in California's Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit plan to go on hunger strike beginning July 1 to protest the cruel, inhumane conditions there. The following excerpted call for support was written by prisoner Mutope Duguma. For more information, visit www.prisons.org.

This is a call for all prisoners in Security Housing Units (SHUs), Administrative Segregation (Ad-Seg), and General Populations (GP), as well as the free oppressed and non-oppressed people to support the indefinite July 1 peaceful Hunger Strike in protest of the violation of our civil/human rights here at Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit, short corridor D1 through D4 and its overflow, D5 through D10.

It should be clear to everyone that none of the hunger strike participants want to die, but [the] state of California has sentenced all of us on Indeterminate SHU programs to a "civil death" merely on the word of a prison informer (snitch). The purpose of the Hunger Strike is to combat both the Ad-Seg/SHU psychological and physical torture. Those subjected to indeterminate SHU programs are neglected and deprived of the basic human necessities while withering away in a very isolated and hostile environment.

Prison officials have utilized the assassination of prisoners' character to each other as well as the general public in order to justify their inhumane treatment of prisoners. The "code of silence" used by guards allows them the freedom to use everything at their disposal in order to break those prisoners who prison officials and

correctional officers (COs) believe cannot be broken.

It is this mentality that set in motion the establishing of the short corridor, D1 through D4 and its D5 through D10 overflow. This mentality has created the current atmosphere, in which COs and prison officials agreed upon a plan to break indeterminate SHU prisoners. This protracted attack on SHU prisoners cuts across every aspect of the prison's function: food, mail, visitations, medical, yard, hot/cold temperatures, privileges (canteen, packages, property, etc.), isolation, cell searches, family/friends, and socio-cultural, economic, and political deprivation. This is nothing short of the psychological/physical torture of SHU/Ad-Seg prisoners. It takes place day in and day out, without a break or rest.

The prison's gang intelligence unit was extremely angered at the fact that prisoners who had been held in SHU under inhuman conditions for anywhere from 10 to 40 years had not been broken. So the gang intelligence unit created the "short corridor" and intensified their attacks on the prisoners housed there. The object was to use blanket pressure to encourage these particular isolated prisoners to debrief (i.e., snitch in order to be released from SHU).

The COs and administrative officials are all in agreement and all do their part in depriving short corridor prisoners and its overflow of their basic civil/human rights. None of the deliberate attacks is a figment of anyone's imagination. They are deliberate and conscious acts against essentially defenseless prisoners.

It is these ongoing attacks that have led the short corridor and overflow SHU prisoners to organize themselves around an indefinite Hunger Strike in an effort to combat the dehumanizing treatment we prisoners of all races are subjected to on a daily basis. Therefore, on July 1, we ask that all prisoners throughout the state of California who have been suffering injustices in General Population, Administrative Segregation and solitary confinement, etc., to join in our peaceful strike to put a stop to the blatant violations of prisoners' civil/human rights. As you know, prison gang investigators have used threats of validation and other means to get prisoners to engage in a protracted war against each other in order to serve their narrow interests. If you cannot participate in the Hunger Strike, then support it in principle by not eating for the first 24 hours of the strike.

I say that those of you who carry yourselves as principled human beings, no matter your housing status, must fight to right this and other egregious wrongs. Although it is "us" today (United New Afrikans, Whites, Northern and Southern Mexicans, and others) it will be you all tomorrow. It is in your interests to peacefully support us in this protest today, and beware of agitators, provocateurs and obstructionists, because they are the ones who put 90 percent of us back here because they could not remain principled even within themselves. □

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Report from Cairo

Hundreds gather to found Egyptian Socialist Party

By Joyce Chediac
Cairo, Egypt

June 18 — The Egyptian Socialist Party was founded here today before a packed auditorium of more than 400 Egyptians and international guests. What made such an assembly possible was the enormous mass revolution of last Jan. 25 that removed the U.S.-backed dictator Hosni Mubarak and made the name "Tahrir Square" an inspiration for popular revolt worldwide.

Composed of Marxists and non-Marxists, the party is centered around a perspective that capitalism has plundered Egypt and impoverished its people, and that the only way to develop Egypt and raise the standard of living is through socialist economic measures.

Speakers affirmed the Arab character of Egypt, their support for a Palestinian state, the opening of the Rafah border with Gaza, and opposition to Zionism and imperialism.

The party described the impoverishment of two-thirds of Egypt's people as the root cause of the mass Jan. 25 Revolution that deposed Mubarak, who had ruled Egypt for more than 30 years. The Egyptian Socialist Party sees itself as a continuation of that revolution because it seeks to address and rectify the poverty and to fight against repression and for democratic rights. Members referred to the fertile grounds for socialist ideology in Egypt at this moment.

The new party emphasized that it was part of a "socialist front" with like-minded left parties that would fight together on common issues and defend the Jan. 25 Revolution. The other four parties are the Popular Democratic Alliance — made up of a majority of the former "loyal-left" Tagammu party — the Democratic Labor Party, the Socialist Revolutionary Party and the Egyptian Communist Party.

The Egyptian Socialist Party sees itself as part of a long history of Egyptian socialists fighting for the rights of the poor and challenging colonialism and neocolonialism since the 1920s.

Economic demands

Among the economic measures that the party advocates right now are decreasing the disparity between urban and rural areas, since 87 percent — seven of every

eight — of Egypt's poorest people live in rural areas; and affirming the right of workers and the unemployed to freely form independent, democratic unions without interference from the state and winning unions with nothing more than notification of the workers' intent.

Other immediate demands include guaranteeing the right to work for every citizen who is capable and desires to work; guaranteeing the right to sustainable unemployment benefits to each unemployed person; and raising the minimum wage and pensions to 1500 Egyptian pounds on the condition that the disparity between the minimum wage and the wage ceiling not exceed 1:15.

Among other economic demands are tying wages to prices to maintain support related to an increase in commodity prices; canceling temporary hires for permanent jobs; and gaining popular participation in the oversight of the markets and the distribution of bread. (For more details, see The Egyptian Socialist Party Political Perspective at www.tinyurl.com/egyptsocialism

Perspective on Egyptian women, keeping Egypt secular

The party recognized the leadership role that Egyptian women have played in the trade unions and the role they played in the Jan. 25 Revolution. Speakers pointed out that economic deterioration and rising prices in Egypt over the last



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Some of the founding members of the Egyptian Socialist Party, (L to R) Dr. Salwa Antary, an economist and former general manager of the National Bank of Egypt, Saad Taweed, engineer, Ahmed Bahaa, agricultural engineer and head of the party.

decade have made women the country's most vulnerable group, with little access to education.

Ahmed Bahaa raised a burning issue at the moment for the Egyptian left — keeping Egypt a secular country. He said the Egyptian Socialist Party opposes a constitutional amendment declaring Egypt an Islamic country. At the same time, Bahaa said, the party "perceives Christianity, Islam and Judaism as part of the Egyptian spirit, and we extend our hand to enlightened religious leaders who share the same ground as us." His words were followed by a chant raised from the audience of "Moslems and Christians are joining hands!"

New election rules favor the rich

Bahaa explained that new rules for new parties to run in the upcoming September

elections are meant to "ensure new parties are only for the rich," and that they "restrict those who would build a new system in Egypt and challenge those with money."

To be on the ballot, new parties must have 5,000 registered members, and then take out prohibitively expensive ads in the two major Egyptian daily newspapers listing all 5,000 names.

According to Mamduh el Habashi, the new party's immediate plans include consolidating its line and reaching out to people in other parts of Egypt as well as to those in Cairo. (Most of the participants at the meeting were from the Cairo area, but there were also some from the countryside and other industrial cities.) While the party will not officially be on the ballot, el Habashi said they plan to run candidates in the upcoming elections in order to make their program known.

International speakers

From the Arab world, solidarity statements to the Egyptian Socialist Party were delivered from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Iraqi Communist Party. Solidarity speakers from Europe included Johanna Bussemer, a member of the European Parliament representing Die Linke (the Left Party) in Germany, and Len Leroy from the French Communist Party.

From the U.S., this reporter delivered a solidarity statement from Workers World Party and the International Action Center.

Other international guests included representatives from the Spanish Communist Party, the French Left Party, the Red-Green Alliance of Denmark, and the Korean Democratic Workers Party (south Korea).



WW PHOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

Egyptian women bear the brunt of the economic downturn. The deteriorating infrastructure can be seen in the rubble-strewn street.

Workers World Party salutes Egyptian socialists

The following is from a Workers World Party solidarity statement given by Joyce Chediac in Cairo on June 18 to the founding conference of the Egyptian Socialist Party.

On behalf of Workers World Party, I wish to extend warmest salutations to the Egyptian Socialist Party at this truly historic occasion of your founding. I also bring greetings from the International Action Center.

The Egyptian people have stepped onto the stage of history, and your struggle has inspired the world. Your example showed U.S. workers how people's power can make change.

On Feb. 15 in the U.S. state of Wisconsin, when you were still in Tahrir Square, the government launched an all-out attack on trade unions in the public sector.

Hundreds of thousands of trade unionists and their supporters — students, farmers, retirees — took to the streets and occupied the Capitol for three weeks.

It was your example that gave Wisconsin workers and youth courage in their own strength. Wisconsin workers stood in the snow carrying signs that read, "Fight like an Egyptian." This action reinvigorated the trade union movement from the bottom up.

Watching the news, people in Wisconsin saw people in Tahrir Square carrying signs in solidarity with them. People in Egypt went online and ordered pizza to feed the Wisconsin worker/youth encampment.

For three decades, U.S. aid to Egypt, now standing at \$2 billion a year, has gone to the rich and to the military establishment, while neoliberal policies imposed by Wall Street banks cause 40 percent of your

population to live on \$2 a day.

Workers in the U.S. gain nothing from strengthening an Egyptian military meant to protect U.S. oil company profits and undermine the Palestinians' right to return.

Wall Street banks now seek to impose on U.S. workers the same neoliberal policies they have imposed on Egypt. In the U.S. less than 1 percent of the population owns 40 percent of the wealth. They want us to live on \$2 a day, too.

Workers in the U.S. and Egypt struggle against the same system of injustice and repression. We have a common enemy — U.S. imperialism and all its agents around the world.

We demand that U.S. imperialism get out of Egypt, the Middle East and Africa,



Joyce Chediac

Afghanistan and Iraq and that the U.S. and NATO stop bombing Libya. We demand a stop to all U.S. economic, military and political intervention in Egypt, overt and covert. We support the right of the people of Egypt and the entire region to determine their own lives free from imperialist intervention. Let any U.S. aid to Egypt come in the form of reparations, to be administered by people's committees.

As a working class party in the U.S., we share your socialist perspective. The Egyptian people have helped start something in the U.S. In turn, we hope to build a serious class struggle which would be of assistance to struggles worldwide.

Down with imperialism, down with capitalism! Long live the solidarity between Egyptian and U.S. workers! □

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Lecciones de Wisconsin:

Sólo la lucha de clases funciona

Por Fred Goldstein

La lucha vanguardista en Wisconsin frente a la ofensiva capitalista que se quiere imponer contra los/as trabajadores/as y a favor de las medidas de austeridad, sufrió un duro revés legal el 14 de junio. La Corte Suprema revocó una orden judicial permanente contra el proyecto de ley antisindical que fue convertido en ley el 11 de marzo por el reaccionario gobernador racista, Scott Walker.

El tribunal del Condado de Dane, después de una gran presión popular, había emitido una orden de medidas cautelares contra el proyecto de ley el 26 de mayo. Sin embargo Walker, el arquitecto del llamado "proyecto de ley de reparación del presupuesto", tenía el apoyo de la clase capitalista y se impuso en el tribunal superior.

El problema no es sólo la decisión judicial. La pregunta básica que se deben preguntar sindicalistas, líderes de las comunidades oprimidas y estudiantes y jóvenes militantes, todos/as quienes impulsaron esta gran lucha hacia adelante, es la siguiente:

¿Cómo puede el movimiento obrero organizado y sus aliados permitir que una decisión por un pequeño grupo de jueces en una corte capitalista anule las acciones y exigencias de cientos de miles de trabajadores/as de Wisconsin — organizados/as o no, empleados/as y desempleados/as, inmigrantes, agricultores/as, jóvenes y estudiantes, organizaciones comunitarias — que han estado en un alto estado de movilización desde la ocupación del Capitolio el 14 de febrero?

Esta ley draconiana acaba con la negociación colectiva de los/as trabajadores/as del sector público. Establece las mismas disposiciones [antisindicales] que prevalecen en los llamados "estados con derecho al trabajo" del sur de los EE.UU. Bajo las disposiciones del presupuesto asociado, se tomarán \$800 millones o más de los servicios para el pueblo — incluyendo de la educación, salud, alimentación y asistencia de vivienda. Cientos de millones de dólares se les darán a los ricos en recortes de impuestos y en contratos.

La movilización de los/as trabajadores/as de Wisconsin durante cuatro meses, fue uno de los mayores actos de fuerza y organización continua de los sindicatos en las últimas décadas. Inspiró solidaridad nacional e internacional, y un aumento en el apoyo público hacia los sindicatos.

Los 18 días de ocupación del Capitolio y de concentraciones de masas alcanzaron su punto máximo el 12 de marzo, cuando se estima que 185.000 personas rodearon al Capitolio en Madison.

¿Cómo puede un conjunto de leyes im-

populares imponerse a millones de personas frente a esto?

Esto no ha terminado

No es muy tarde para hacerse estas preguntas. Un capítulo en la lucha de Wisconsin puede haber concluido, pero los ataques todavía persisten. La posibilidad de reabrir la batalla puede volver a aparecer pronto.

La respuesta corta es que la lucha tenía que pasar de la presión puramente política de las manifestaciones de masas, a la lucha de clases directa, donde el gobierno, los empresarios y los banqueros tendrían que detenerse en seco o hacerles pagar un alto precio.

Gran entusiasmo y esperanza se produjo cuando la Federación Sindical Centro-Sur de Winsconsin, que representa 45.000 trabajadores/as, votó a favor de las medidas adoptadas por los sindicatos afiliados para prepararse hacia una huelga general si la ley fuese aprobada. Este voto se dio después de una manifestación de 100.000 personas dos días antes en el Capitolio.

La mención de una huelga general en Wisconsin afectó al movimiento obrero del país. A menudo, grupos radicales exigen al movimiento sindical que convoque a una huelga general sin consideración alguna hacia las condiciones reales. Pero por primera vez en muchos años, parecían estarse dando estas condiciones e incluso una federación sindical importante la discutió.

La próxima semana, el 26 de febrero, las manifestaciones en Madison aumentaron en tamaño alcanzando las 150.000 personas. Se celebraron manifestaciones solidarias en los todos los 50 estados. Llegaron delegaciones a Madison desde lejos, incluyendo un avión lleno de sindicalistas desde Los Ángeles.

Con una maniobra parlamentaria ilegal, los republicanos aprobaron la ley antisindical y el 11 de marzo el gobernador Walker la aprobó firmándola. Al día siguiente se dio la manifestación más grande hasta la fecha, en la cual el AFL-CIO estimó que 185.000 personas habían participado, incluyendo una gran delegación de agricultores/as de Wisconsin en sus tractores.

En ese momento se vio muy claro que ningún tipo de presión política iba a mover a Walker, los republicanos o la clase dominante que está detrás de ellos.

Las manifestaciones alcanzaron intensidad máxima. La ley fue aprobada. Las bases y los/as dirigentes sindicales de nivel inferior esperaban a ver, ahora que se había aprobado el proyecto de ley, cuál sería el siguiente paso.

Una opción era volver a ocupar el

Capitolio con concentraciones masivas. La ocupación había terminado antes por una combinación de mentiras y engaños por funcionarios estatales y sindicales, quienes ayudaron a convencer a los/as estudiantes y trabajadores/as a salir del edificio.

¿Habría ánimo o una propuesta para una huelga general? El proyecto de ley no se detuvo. Ni se anuló. La lucha debía intensificarse.

El sitio web de la Federación Sindical Centro-Sur de Wisconsin publicó una explicación detallada de cómo el movimiento obrero en Ontario, Canadá, había llevado a cabo entre 1995 y 1998, once días de acciones. Estas huelgas generales habían derrotado un duro programa de austeridad y de medidas antisindicales. (scfl.org)

Líderes de la lucha de Ontario describieron en detalle cosas como la forma de superar las divisiones entre los sindicatos y la creación de alianzas con organizaciones comunitarias y movimientos sociales. Mostró cómo establecer comités de huelga con dirigencia conjunta de los sindicatos y la comunidad. Esto es muy importante en Wisconsin porque, mientras que el centro de la lucha era en Madison, los/as negros/as, latinos/as y las comunidades de inmigrantes documentadas/os e indocumentados, serán fundamentales para el éxito de cualquier lucha estatal contra el gobierno.

Educar a los/as trabajadores/as blancos/as sobre la solidaridad con las comunidades oprimidas será clave. Los/as dirigentes sindicales de Ontario mostraron cómo llevar a cabo una prolongada campaña para educar a los/as miembros del sindicato en salones, casas, bares y cafeterías locales. Explicaban cómo superar los diferentes estilos de organización entre los grupos comunitarios y los sindicatos, cómo tratar con el gobierno, la policía, los patronos, los medios de comunicación, etc.

Describían cómo arreglar servicios de transporte, de emergencia y servicios médicos; cómo entrenar para líneas de piquete; dividir la ciudad en zonas; crear planes de corto y largo alcance y cómo establecer un cuerpo de administración para organizar y dirigir la huelga.

Más importante fueron los ejemplos de cómo el movimiento canadiense rehusó reconocer que la violación de los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as era "legal" y en vez de eso declaró que la lucha sí era legal.

Así, mientras que el liderazgo sindical en este país básicamente no tenía experiencia en convocar a una huelga general, una abundancia de información sobre cómo hacerla estaba disponible.

Sin embargo, en el sitio web de Wisconsin, al lado del documento sobre la huelga general, había un memorándum sobre los

derechos legales que virtualmente declaraba que cualquier acción en favor de una huelga general o cualquier otra huelga contra el estado, era ilegal y pudiera poner al sindicato y a sus miembros en riesgo de multas y detenciones.

El liderazgo sindical en Wisconsin, en esta situación difícil, mantuvo silencio sobre la huelga general. En cambio, volteó la atención hacia el movimiento para revocar a los/as legisladores republicanos/as y a la posibilidad de que las cortes anularan la ley.

Todo el peso de la decisión para llamar a una huelga general no puede ser dejado solamente en los hombros de los/as líderes estatales. Para tomar una decisión tan importante, el liderazgo estatal y local debe saber que están desafiando a la clase dominante entera. Era obligatorio para el liderazgo sindical nacional el declarar abiertamente que apoyaba fehacientemente una lucha tan crucial en la cual la suerte de los/as empleados/as públicos/as estaba en juego. Mientras que el presidente del AFL-CIO Richard Trumka apareció en asambleas para apoyar a los/as trabajadores/as, nunca señaló hacia la dirección de la lucha de clases, manteniendo en vez, la línea de apoyo para el Partido Demócrata.

Los/as trabajadores/as no fueron derrotados/as en ninguna gran batalla de clases con el estado capitalista. El revés fue resultado de la falta por los líderes sindicales de usar la fuerza, energía y determinación mostradas por los/as trabajadores/as, para vencer los falsos reclamos de "legalidad" capitalista decididos por los/as legisladores/as y las cortes. En su lugar, los líderes aceptaron las decisiones capitalistas.

En principio, no hay nada malo con el uso de las medidas de revocación para eliminar a legisladores reaccionarios/as, ni usar las cortes en ciertas ocasiones para hacer valer los derechos de la clase trabajadora.

Lo que sí es un error, sin embargo, es depender solo de estas medidas. Los métodos parlamentarios y judiciales no pueden ser más que secundarios cuando la lucha es con la clase capitalista y su estado. Solamente la lucha de clases, la cual desafía el poder de clase de los patronos y su estado, puede resultar en una victoria significativa y de larga duración.

La única manera de lograr esta victoria es que los/as miembros de base del movimiento sindical organicen desde abajo hacia arriba, construyendo comités para promover la lucha de clases contra la patronal y su estado y forzar a los/as líderes sindicales a luchar o de lo contrario, empujarlos al lado y hacerse cargo de los sindicatos desde abajo. □



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¿Quiénes son los Cinco Cubanos?

Los Cinco Cubanos están cumpliendo largas e injustas sentencias en prisiones de EE.UU. por defender a su patria – Cuba – de grupos terroristas del exilio Cubano en Miami. Los Cinco Cubanos fueron arrestados en 1998 por monitorear las actividades de esos grupos violentos e informar a Cuba sobre sus planes. Por casi 12 años, estos cinco hombres han permanecido en prisiones de EE.UU. y como un castigo adicional, a dos de ellos se les ha negado el derecho humano básico de recibir visitas de sus esposas. Únase a personas de todas partes del mundo – parlamentarios, Premios Nobel, sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios – que se han pronunciado contra el injusto encarcelamiento de los Cinco Cubanos y continúan demandado su libertad. Para más información visite: www.thecuban5.org