

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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50¢

Capitalist credit crisis How banks take homes, jobs from workers

By Fred Goldstein

The gamblers and swindlers on Wall Street have put more than 2 million people at risk of losing their homes in the immediate future. But, bad as that is, they have done more than that.

Many millions of workers are at risk of losing their jobs if the collapse of the housing boom turns into a general recession in the coming period.

Headlines about the recent plunges in the stock market all rotate around the billions in bad debts held by the biggest banks and investment houses. The latest plunge on Wall Street was precipitated by the recommendation of Goldman Sachs investment bank that its clients sell their stock in Citigroup, the largest commercial bank in the United States.

The "sell" recommendation was based upon the determination that Citigroup will have to declare \$15 billion in bad debts in the first quarter of 2008, on top of the \$8 billion to \$11 billion in bad debts it will have to declare in the fourth quarter of this year. Furthermore, the analysts have no idea where and when this bad-debt crisis will end for the banks.

These bad debts mainly originated in the subprime mortgage swindle financed

by Citigroup and by front groups it set up to cheat workers by offering them loans to buy houses—mortgages—at low-interest teaser rates in the beginning. They promised that when the interest rates went up later on, the workers could refinance. This turned out to be a big lie. A prime target of these unscrupulous subprime loans was people of color, who had been denied more affordable loans because of racist lending practices.

Other giant investment houses, including Merrill Lynch and Bear Stearns, did the same thing and had to write off billions in bad debts. But while bank debt grabs headlines, other news about the capitalist economy deserves the attention of the working class.

Declining profits of suppliers and retailers

Lowe's, one of the largest suppliers to home builders, just announced a 4.3 percent drop in same-store sales and a 10 percent decline in profits in the third quarter. More threatening was the fact that it also announced a projected further decline in the fourth quarter.

Home Depot, the other big supplier of home building materials, announced a 27 percent drop in profits and a 6.2 percent

drop in sales. Home Depot also lowered its estimates for future profits.

FedEx, which is integral to U.S. corporate trade and production, has given Wall Street analysts warnings two months in a row that its profits would fall based on high fuel costs "and meager demand for U.S. freight, sending the company's shares lower and darkening the outlook for the world's largest economy." (Financial Times, Nov. 16)

FedEx's downward predictions came on the heels of the announcement that industrial production in the U.S. fell 0.5 percent in October—five times as much as the 0.1 percent predicted. It was the biggest decline since the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and confounded the experts.

Another corporate giant, Caterpillar, issued its own prognosis of the U.S. economy, declaring it to be "near to, or even in, recession." This assessment was accompanied by an announcement of a decline in North American sales of 11 percent or \$5 billion in the third quarter. Caterpillar dominates in trucking and construction. The drop in home building and the sale of heavy trucks, many of which use Caterpillar engines, led the company to project a 12 percent decline in machin-

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Clockwise, starting below: Final session of WWP conference; Hip-Hop artists Jay aka Tha Truth and Colleen Hall; Larry Hales, WWP and FIST; Berta Joubert-Ceci, WWP; Pam Africa, Int'l Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Dianne Mathiowetz, WWP.

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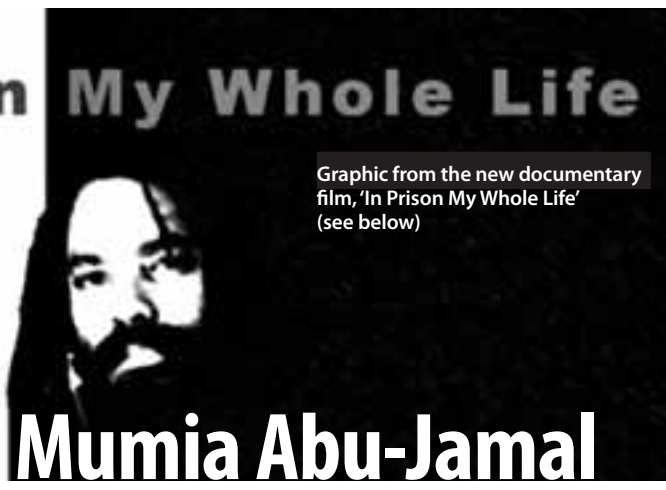
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Legal update & news on Mumia Abu-Jamal



Graphic from the new documentary film, 'In Prison My Whole Life' (see below)

Following are excerpts from information sent out by Attorney Robert R. Bryan, lead counsel for Mumia Abu-Jamal, on Nov. 14.

Dear Friends:

There are many developments on the legal and other fronts concerning my client, Mumia Abu-Jamal. The following are the highlights:

PEN membership—Mumia has been accepted into the membership of PEN, the worldwide human-rights organization of prominent writers. This is a great honor. He was thrilled upon learning that the application I filed on his behalf last spring was granted. The recognition from his peers is well deserved.

In a quarter of a century of being locked up in a small cell on Pennsylvania's death row, Mumia's literary output has been prodigious. He has written five outstanding books that are published in various languages, and also writes weekly commentaries that are published and broadcast internationally.

PEN was founded in 1921 to dispel national, ethnic and racial hatred, to promote understanding among all countries, and defend the freedom to write. PEN American Center, into which Mumia has been accepted, is the largest of the 145 centers in 104 countries of International PEN. It exists to fight for freedom of expression, represent the conscience of world literature, and foster friendship and intellectual co-operation among writers everywhere. It is the world's oldest human rights organization and also the oldest international literary group.

The support provided by Alice Walker, E.L. Doctorow, Bell Chevigny and other members of the PEN American Center, New York, was invaluable.

Bishop Desmond Tutu—On Oct. 23, Bishop Desmond Tutu met with Mumia. Later that afternoon Mumia expressed to me how touched and humbled he was by meeting with this wonderful person, who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 and the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism in 1986. Mumia is particularly grateful to Martha Conley, Esq., of Pittsburgh, who initiated and arranged the visit, drove Bishop Tutu and his assistant to the prison, and joined them in the visit on death row. Last week Bishop Tutu issued the following statement on Nov. 5 concerning Mumia and capital punishment: "I oppose the death penalty on principle in every case and I support the plea for a retrial for Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Legal developments—Last month the prosecution submitted a Notice of Supplemental Authority with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit, Philadelphia, arguing that a recent ruling and related decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court affects the pending issues pertaining to the death penalty and racism in jury selection. Consequently on Nov. 1, 2007, we filed a Reply to Notice of Supplemental Authority, explaining with legal analysis that the contentions of opposing counsel should be rejected because they are without merit and do not alter the

major constitutional violations that occurred in this case.

I remain in contact with the court. It is not known exactly when there will be a federal decision. If the court follows the law and the U.S. Constitution, we will win. In my experience of successfully litigating well over a hundred capital murder cases at trial and on appeal, I know that courts are not always just. They can make terribly tragic mistakes. Nevertheless, I have not seen a case more riddled with such significant constitutional violations, racism, fraud, and unfairness. My goal remains to achieve a reversal of the conviction, and at a new jury trial win a jury acquittal so that Mumia can go home to his family—a free person.

"In Prison My Whole Life," British film on Mumia—On Oct. 25, the new documentary film, "In Prison My Whole Life," premiered simultaneously at the London Film Festival and Rome Film Festival. It is a superb movie which does much to expose the many wrongs including racism and politics that have infected the case from the outset, the American legal system, and our society. Amnesty International is officially supporting the film. The picture is hard hitting and reveals the death penalty for what it is: legalized murder. Mumia and I are indebted to Colin and Livia Giuggioli Firth, along with Marc Evans, William Francome, Nick Goodwin Self, Katie Green, and the others who had the courage to make this film and tell the truth.

New French book on Mumia—An excellent book on Mumia was published on Sept. 15 in France. It is "Mumia Abu-Jamal, un homme libre dans le couloir de la mort," by Claude Guillaumaud-Pujol, with a foreword by Robert Meeropol, son of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and founder of Rosenberg Fund for Children. Claude is deeply involved in the Collectif, a group of over 80 French organizations that aggressively support our campaign for a new and fair trial for Mumia and his freedom. She knows Mumia well and last visited with him on Nov. 11. Claude has donated her book to help in the struggle for Mumia's freedom. Mumia says "the book is beautiful." It can be purchased through various booksellers in France.

Guardian (England) article: "I Spend My Days Preparing for Life, Not for Death"—Recently there was an excellent article in the Guardian newspaper. It concerns a fascinating death row interview with Mumia, and can be found at www.guardian.co.uk.

Tax-deductible donations to Mumia's legal defense—My office continues to receive extensive e-mail from people confused as to how and where they may send donations for Mumia's legal defense. With Mumia's authorization, a process exists which guarantees that all donations in the U.S. go only to the legal defense. The contributions are tax-deductible. Checks should be made payable to the National Lawyers Guild Foundation (indicate "Mumia" on the bottom left), and mailed to: Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 2012, New York, NY 10159-2012. □

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As more GIs resist

Supporters wrestle with courts in U.S., Canada

By Dee Knight

Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to publicly refuse deployment to the Iraq war, won a big victory on Nov. 10 when a federal judge issued an injunction blocking the U.S. Army from conducting a second court-martial against him. The judge said a second trial would violate Watada's constitutional rights by trying him twice for the same charges.

In February, Watada's first court-martial ended in a mistrial just before he was to take the stand in his own defense. Immediately before the mistrial was declared, Watada told the court that to him, leading soldiers into battle in Iraq "means to participate in a war that I believe to be illegal."

"This is an enormous victory, but it is not yet over," said Kenneth Kagan, one of Watada's attorneys. The charges against 29-year-old Watada remain in effect, and Army officials said they would file briefs in U.S. District Court to try to prevent the injunction blocking a new trial from becoming permanent.

Canadian ruling against resisters

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court of Canada dealt U.S. war resisters there a setback on Nov. 15, announcing it will not hear appeals for refugee status by Jeremy Hinzman and Brandon Hughey. These two Iraq war resisters have been in Canada since going AWOL from the U.S. Army in 2004.

The ruling was met by demonstrations the same day in cities across Canada, including Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury, Nelson and Vancouver, organized by the War Resisters Support Campaign.

The campaign has the support of the Canadian Labor Congress, the United Church of Canada, peace organizations and thousands of individuals and families. Nearly two-thirds of Canadians say resisters should be allowed to stay in Canada, according to a June 2007 poll.

The fate of hundreds of U.S. war resisters living in Canada now rests with the Canadian Parliament. "Following today's decision we call on Parliament to take a stand by enacting a provision that would allow U.S. war resisters and their families to stay in Canada," said actor and activist Shirley Douglas.

Lee Zaslovsky, a Vietnam-era military deserter and coordinator of the War Resisters Support Campaign, said the proposed provision has the support of two parties in Parliament—the New Democrats and the Bloc Québécois. Pressure is now focused on the largest opposition party, the Liberals. If the three parties unite to support the provision, they could override the refusal of the minority Conservative government of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, a Bush clone.

Zaslovsky said the campaign has generated massive Canadian media coverage and a "heavy wave" of e-mails and phone calls to Parliament from across the country.

The attorney for Hinzman and Hughey, Jeffrey House—himself a Vietnam-era war resister—said, "We're not giving up on any of the legal cases" of other U.S. war resisters in Canada. He said the current case means "we can't use international law [as our legal basis], but we have other things." Zaslovsky said there are another 25 to 30 refugee status appeals pending.

In the U.S., the organization Courage to Resist has organized a letter-writing cam-



Resister Ehren Watada has won a court victory.

campaign to Canadian government officials. The letter asks them "to make a provision for sanctuary" for U.S. war resisters, and cites Vietnam-era Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau's statement that "Canada should be a refuge from militarism." (To sign, go to CourageToResist.org.)

AWOL GI with PTSD arrested

As if to illustrate the claim that war resisters face persecution in the United States, on Nov. 13 Sgt. Brad Gaskins was arrested by Army officials and local police as he was preparing to turn himself in at Ft. Drum, near Watertown, N.Y.

Sgt. Gaskins had traveled almost 300 miles with his mother from his home in East Orange, N.J., to the Different Drummer Internet Café near Ft. Drum. He was waiting there while his attorney Todd Ensign telephoned the base to arrange for his return. When the MPs and local

police grabbed him, his mother screamed at them, "Why are you grabbing him?" "Because he's a deserter," they yelled.

Ensign said that Gaskins is suffering from Post Traumatic Stress disorder and severe depression after two tours in Iraq. He has been hospitalized for psychiatric problems and should be discharged from the Army for medical reasons, Ensign said. Following legal pressure and media attention, Gaskins was taken to a veterans' hospital in Syracuse after his arrest. On Nov. 16, he was transferred to Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington.

PTSD is reaching epidemic proportions among active-duty GIs and veterans of the U.S. imperialist occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. An Army report released Nov. 15 estimates that one in five active-duty soldiers, and as many as 40 percent of reservists, are in need of treatment for PTSD. It adds that soldiers suffer even more mental distress in the transition to life at home than they show on leaving Iraq.

According to the Army, more than 10,000 U.S. soldiers have deserted since the Iraq invasion started. Every year, the number has gone up. Official statistics say 3,196 went AWOL last year, compared to 2,543 the year before. But Iraq Veterans Against the War says the calls it receives suggest the real numbers are 10 times the official figures.

A large network of military counselors and lawyers across the United States is ready to help active-duty and AWOL GIs who need help. They can call the GI Rights Hotline at 877-447-4487. Also, a growing network of churches and community organizations offers sanctuary for soldiers who refuse to fight in the illegal U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. □

Hasan: 'Our struggles are the same'

Below is the third and final portion of an interview with political prisoner Siddique Abdullah Hasan conducted by mail by Martha Grevatt of Workers World Party and the Cleveland Lucasville 5 Defense Committee. The first two portions of the interview were published in the March 29 and Nov. 11 issues of Workers World.

MG: How does the struggle behind the walls tie in with the overall struggle of the anti-war, anti-racist, women's, labor, gay rights and general progressive movement?

Hasan: That depends on the mindset of the people behind the walls. Understandably, many prisoners are concerned only with their own release, and will forget about solidarity and the struggle against oppression, persecution and

exploitation the moment they are free. Others—like Mumia, Kunta Kenyatta, Ali Khalid Abdullah and Isa Abdur-Rasheed, aka Dennis S. Boatwright—have a broader view. They view both struggles as inseparable because the same capitalistic and racist government that is exploiting prisoners is also guilty of exploiting those outside the walls. The sooner those on the outside realize this, the sooner they will be inclined to establish bonds

with those of us behind the walls. Let no one fool you, our struggles are the same!

MG: Is it part of the struggle against capitalism?

Hasan: Absolutely yes. Historically, a society that places private profit ahead of all other goals has been an important source of violence against poor persons. In 18th-century England, a child could be executed for stealing a pocket handkerchief.

In the United States, slaves and free Blacks have historically been beaten and killed for similar trivial offenses, such as dropping a dish while served at the "master's table" or whistling at a young white woman, as in the case of Emmett Till.

MG: What is the current status of your case?

Hasan: My case is in the federal district court before

Magistrate Judge (MJ) Michael Merz. The MJ had made recommendations to Judge Susan Dlott that my request for discovery and an evidentiary hearing be denied. However, after a friend of the court brief was filed by Attorney Staughton Lynd and Jeffrey Gamsco, the legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Ohio, convincingly outlining my actual innocence, and after my federal attorneys, Laurence E. Komp and Alan M. Freedman, filed

an excellent motion opposing the recommendations, the MJ tried to recommend the case back to himself. But we opposed it because he had already lost jurisdiction once he made his critical recommendations. In sum, we did not wish to render him another opportunity to critique our work. He had already denied our motions for discovery and an evidentiary hearing on four separate occasions.

Seeing that there were eye-raising and possibly meritorious issues in my case, Judge Dlott remanded it. Thereafter, the MJ granted us ample time to file an additional briefing, which we completed on Feb. 15. The attorney general's office is now due to submit its filing opposing ours. We eagerly await their filing.

MG: What can activists do to help?

Hasan: Those truly wanting to help can purchase a copy of Lynd's book, "Lucasville: the Untold Story of a Prison Uprising," at Leftbooks.com.

They can also contact the following groups for contact names, phone numbers and e-mails of people who can provide more information and/or speak to the media:

Campaign to End the Death Penalty—Toledo Chapter, Free Siddique Abdullah Hasan Coalition, P.O. Box 20011, Toledo, OH 43610, 419-514-7634, Sherrell508@sbcglobal.net.

Cleveland Lucasville 5 Defense Committee, P.O. Box 5963, Cleveland, OH 44101, 216-481-6671, Pfcenter@sbcglobal.net.

To find out about forming a Lucasville 5 defense committee in your city, call the Cleveland number. □

PART 3



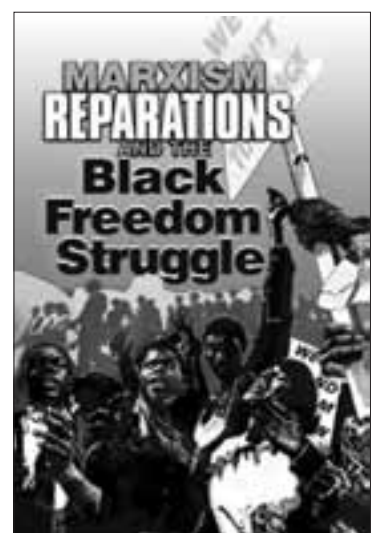
Siddique Abdullah Hasan

MARXISM, REPARATIONS and the Black Freedom Struggle

The following sections present an outline of the contents beginning with the Introduction:

- Black liberation & the working-class struggle
- The material basis for reparations in the U.S.
- Brief overview of racist oppression & heroic resistance
- What Hurricane Katrina exposed to the world
- Africa: A battleground against colonialism and for sovereignty
- Justice for the Caribbean
- A salute to women revolutionaries
- Why fight-back is inevitable
- Black labor and class solidarity

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Anti-racist March to Justice circles 'Justice' Department

By Steven Ceci
Washington

Thousands of people from around the country came to Washington, D.C., on Nov. 16 and marched to demand an end to police brutality, racial profiling and hate crimes. The call for the March to Justice came from Rev. Al Sharpton's National Action Network.

Organizers said that more than 100 buses came from as far away as Florida and Michigan for the march, which was on a workday. The marchers circled the huge Justice Department building.

One focus of the march was the case of the Jena Six—six Black youth from Jena, La. After a noose was hung from a tree at the local high school, the six were charged with attempted murder for a schoolyard fight in which they stood up against racist terror. One, Mychal Bell, is still in prison despite a nationwide campaign around the case.

Several marchers cited the death earlier this week in Brooklyn of 18-year-old Khil Coppin in a barrage of police bullets. "We're tired of Black people being targets for the police," said Page Sterling, 71, a marcher from Richmond, Va.

March to Justice in Washington, D.C. on Nov. 16.



Speakers at the rally included Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, Rev. Martin Luther King III and Rev. Al Sharpton. Rev. Lennox Yearwood of the Hip Hop Caucus linked the struggle against racism to the

struggle against the war in Iraq.

Marchers chanted "No justice, no peace—What do we want? Justice. When do we want it? Now!" The march was very spirited and militant. Many marchers said

they will be back and that the struggle against racism is growing into a new civil rights movement.

The march was organized in three weeks and the turnout was due in large part to announcements by Black radio disc jockeys such as Tom Joyner, Steve Harvey and Michael Baisden, all of whom have syndicated radio shows. This was similar to the way in which large sections of the immigrant population were mobilized to turn out in huge numbers for a march for immigrant rights in 2005. □

Signs multiply of coming economic downturn

Continued from page 1

ery and engines for the year in North America.

To round out the picture, Whirlpool, the world's largest household appliance maker, had forecast earlier that its North American sales would fall by 2 percent to 3 percent this year. It was particularly concerned about stoves, refrigerators, washing machines and similar appliances. (Financial Times, Feb. 7 and Oct. 23)

No cheer for the holidays

In addition to worrying about the bellwether transportation, appliance and construction companies, Wall Street is on edge about the holiday shopping season for retailers. Knowing the masses are stretched to the limit on credit and facing higher gas prices, a credit crunch on personal borrowing, low wages and escalating costs for health care and food, the giant retailers are all shaking in their boots.

The holiday season usually starts the Friday after "Thanksgiving"—called the Day of Mourning by Native people. But this year the retailers are starting early, slashing prices and trying every marketing device to pull people into the stores. Wal-Mart started weeks early by slashing prices on 15,000 items.

While Wal-Mart held its own, its sales increase was based upon "shopping down," as workers who are feeling the pinch abandoned stores like J.C. Penney, Kohl's and others, whose earnings went down. Penney's profits fell 8 percent and Kohl's were down 13 percent, reflecting a decline in sales in both chains. Mike Ulman, CEO of J.C. Penney, referred to the housing crisis: "It's hard to sell window coverings to homes that aren't being built." (Financial Times, Nov. 15)

Capitalist 'overproduction'



Milt Neidenberg, former steelworker, at WWP conference workshop on labor.

Having cheated millions of people out of their money by pushing bad loans on them, the banks now have bad debts. The workers are facing foreclosure on homes they rightfully thought were theirs, and the end result is a classic economic contradiction of capitalism, caused by overproduction of housing.

It is called overproduction, not because people don't need housing but because more was built than workers can pay for. The bankers and their agents pushed credit on the workers, making profit in the form of high interest on the mortgages. Now suddenly there are a mass of homeless people and a glut of houses that people cannot afford. This is capitalism.

Sales of new homes are at their worst level in a decade and sales of previously owned homes have fallen the most since records began. "The chief executive of Wells Fargo, the West Coast bank," wrote the Financial Times on Nov. 19, "last week said the housing slump was the worst since the Great Depression."

Builders and bankers are now using

every conceivable device to get people to buy, including incentives such as "upgrades worth \$30,000, offers to pay initial mortgage installments and gifts of Hummers and SUVs," but these enticements have failed to bring people into the market. Sure they're "giving away" Hummers and SUVs. Who can afford the gas for them?

The subprime mortgage crisis is part of the general indebtedness of the masses of workers and the middle class. Its origin is in the need of the ruling class to avoid the crisis of overproduction which is inherent in capitalist production.

Each capitalist grouping tries to produce enough to capture the widest possible market and make the greatest mass of profit. At the same time, they try to get rid of workers or lower their wages in order to increase their rate of profit. The end result is that production eventually outstrips the ability of the masses to consume. Then production slumps or stops altogether, because no boss is going to sell without making a profit.

Pumping credit into the economy is a method the financial overseers of capitalism use to try to postpone the crisis. When the economy went into a recession in 2000, Alan Greenspan, then head of the Federal Reserve Board, lowered interest rates for the banks so it was cheaper for them to borrow and they could have more money to lend in order to earn interest.

Greenspan lowered the interest rates all the way down to 1 percent. Huge amounts of credit were pumped into the banking system. Some of this money was used for loans to corporate investors. But massive amounts of it went into promoting mortgage lending, subprime lending, credit card lending, personal loans, payday loans, and every type of loan that could be used to squeeze money out of the workers.

Marx on the credit system

Karl Marx, in his monumental work "Capital," described the credit system under capitalism long ago: "The credit system appears as the main lever of overproduction and over-speculation in commerce, solely because the reproduction process [of capital], which is elastic by nature, is forced to its extreme limits."

He explained that "the self-expansion of capital"—using profits for new investment, which expands production—"based on the contradictory nature of capitalist production permits an actual free development only up to a certain point, so that in fact it constitutes an immanent fetter and barrier to production, which are continually broken through by the credit system."

This leads, wrote Marx, "to the purest and most colossal form of gambling and swindling, and to reduce more and more the number of the few who exploit social wealth."

Thus, Greenspan and the fraternity of swindlers on Wall Street contrived to push capitalist production beyond its extreme limit, a limit set by the inability of workers' wages to keep up with expanding capitalist production. They did this by pumping money into the banks, who in turn used it to suck the masses dry with fraudulent and exorbitant interest charges.

This rush to get rich by lending and speculating always ends up in a crisis. While the rich may lose some money, they have billions more to keep them going. They always shift the crisis onto the masses.

The only way to prevent this is for the workers to organize resistance—to stop the foreclosures and stop the layoffs that the big capitalists are planning right now, as their profits fall. □

WWP NATIONAL CONFERENCE: For International Solidarity & Socialism

'Declare war on all that divides our class'

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Larry Holmes to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

No matter what happens to the economy, or when it happens, it's already a crisis for the workers. Imperialist globalization has reorganized the working class worldwide. With this new world division of labor it has made geographical boundaries irrelevant. It is beginning to level the living standard of workers all over.

General Motors, Chrysler and Ford want the workers to earn one third of their wages with no benefits, because that is what they pay workers in Mexico.

This knocks away an ideological pillar of capitalism in the U.S., the middle class myth. Let's face it, a lot of workers have held up their homes as proof of it. "I have

a home, I have a car, that is why I am different." But this is substituting credit for crumbs. They are now using their houses as credit cards. Now that temporary opium is being taken away.

The ruling class did everything to keep the myth alive.

I believe the crisis we are facing raises anew the need for a workers' party. I'm not just dusting off something from a book in the past.

A working class party can't just be proclaimed, there's no quick solution. You can't just put out a magazine. It can only be built by engaging in the struggles of the workers.

Now that the situation is changing, one of the things we will have to do is go to the ones who want to have a working class party. Nothing is more important than young militants, Black, white and Latin@. And that youth movement must



Larry Holmes

be oriented to the working class.

WWP is discussing what to do about the elections. The Democrats can't win anything for the workers. The workers need to speak in their own name.

The biggest political problem is how to defend immigrant workers and keep them from being divided from the workers born here. Look at the Democrats—they want

the Latin@ vote, but they don't want it bad enough even to defend the right of the undocumented to have drivers' licenses. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama can't be depended on.

The immigrant workers brought back May Day and conducted what was really a general strike. The working class needs to emulate them, not out of sympathy but out of solidarity. The first thing we must do is declare war on everything that fragments and divides our class.

The working class must stand unconditionally with those workers who are more oppressed and exploited. When that happens, then you have unity.

We need more anti-racist mobilizations. There's a class struggle over Martin Luther King's birthday. We must take that day back and combine the struggle against racism with the struggle for immigrant rights. □

Support immigrants, fight global warming

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Teresa Gutierrez to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

If ever there was a need for the revolutionary movement in the U.S. to raise high the banner for socialism, it is now.

The attacks against the international working class are fierce. We are obliged to examine each and every social, economic and political development in order to develop a strategy for struggle.

Fighting racism will be at the top of our agenda. We will also take up build-

ing the struggle against the war and how to respond to the growing economic crisis illuminated by the wave of housing foreclosures.

The struggle for immigrant rights continues to be a top priority for our party. And in light of the increased attacks against immigrants together with the looming economic crisis, the party's perspective of reaching out to U.S.-born workers to unite with immigrants and our perspective of Black/Brown unity is not only important, it is decisive. The Lou Dobbs-ization of the immigrant debate must be defeated if the working class in this country is to advance.



Teresa Gutierrez

There is another issue I want to bring to the forefront as a working class issue: global warming and the destruction of this planet by the ruling capitalist class. This

issue not only faces every single worker in the world today but it affects future generations of workers as well.

The world may indeed face a major catastrophe in the years ahead. It has already—Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, aggravated mainly by Hurricane Bush.

Have we not already seen the AIDS crisis and witnessed how the capitalist system handles such a crisis, allowing it to ravage Africa and devastate mainly the gay and people of color communities in this country?

But our future is one of hope and struggle, of vast unrest but tremendous social

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WWP conference draws activists from all over

By Jaimeson Champion & Brenda Ryan
New York

The Workers World Party national conference held here on Nov. 17-18 drew hundreds of people from all over the country, many of whom had never been to a party conference before. They were moved by the party's linkage of the immigrant struggle to the economic crisis and rising racism and its commitment to the unity of the class struggle.

"The over-riding theme of the conference is for people to unite," said Sandra Hines, an African American from Detroit. "This is a people's fight to unite against capitalism, imperialism and racism. As an activist I have to pass this message along, to bring people into the movement. It's our job to enlighten other people." The experiences of others at the conference "fired me up to be an activist," she said.

Hines engaged in a fierce battle this year, running for Detroit's public school board in the Fifth District against Joyce Hayes-Giles. Hayes-Giles is vice president of the school board and vice president of Detroit's gas and light company, DTE Energy. As part of her grassroots campaign, Hines successfully fought to keep one of the neighborhood schools from closing. Of the 15,000 votes cast, Hines got more than 5,000 to some 6,000 votes for Hayes-Giles. She is now fighting for the right of students to take schoolbooks home to study.

Many young activists and students attended the conference, sharing their experiences in the struggle and discuss-



PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO
Mike Martinez of Bolivarian Youth in Miami. Namibia Donadio with LeiLani Dowell and Tyneisha Bowens of FIST.

ing ways to build class solidarity for a socialist future.

Mike Martinez, a Cuban from Miami and a leader of the Bolivarian Youth organization, said he came in order to "meet other people from around the country involved in the struggle against imperialism." In the conference discussion groups, Martinez described the struggle against police brutality and racism in Miami and for affordable housing in a city filled with high-priced condominiums. He also spoke about building solidarity with revolutionary Cuba and Venezuela and about the need to step up the fight to free the Cuban Five.

Namibia Donadio, a Panamanian member of FIST (Fight Imperialism-Stand Together) and student organizer at Rutgers, said Larry Holmes' speech about the importance of building a revolutionary workers' party made a big impact on her. "It really hit me how important it is



right now as a broader number of people are developing consciousness," she said.

Donadio noted that rallies for the Jena 6 occurred all over the country and students who had never before been active have taken part in these protests. And the immigrant rights marches in the last three years and organizing against the raids have drawn more people into political action. "We have to explain to people that what's happening is a result of the class struggle and imperialism," she said. Donadio played an active role in several workshops, which she said was valuable to her as a youth leader.

Cassandra Rice, an anti-war activ-

ist from West Virginia, found out about the conference at the Troops Out Now Coalition encampment to stop the war in Washington, D.C., in September and immediately made plans to attend. She said that her main reason for coming was in order to learn more about socialism. She said at her college "socialism and Marxism were kind of glossed over" and she wanted to come to the conference to gain a more in-depth perspective.

Linda Gomaa from Chapel Hill, N.C., an organizer with Student Action with Workers, said she heard about the conference on the social networking website

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WWP NATIONAL CONFERENCE: FOR INTERNATIONAL

Faced with mortgage crisis

Mich. must declare moratorium on foreclosures

Excerpts from a speech by National Committee member Jerry Goldberg to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

In Michigan, we are currently attempting to develop and apply transitional demands to the struggle against the massive foreclosures that are threatening millions of families nationwide with the sudden loss of their homes, and which are affecting the stability of the entire capitalist system.

In the United States, home ownership is widespread among the working class. Some 69 percent of U.S. adults were homeowners as of 2003.

In recent years, the finance capitalists, through predatory lending practices, bombarded workers with offers to have the equity they had built up in their homes be the collateral for all sorts of loans. Faced with the decline in real wages for most workers over the past few years, these offers were irresistible. The problem was that the home you had been paying on for years was put at risk.

The finance capitalists developed two especially notorious loan practices to effectuate this scheme. One was the replacement of the traditional fixed-rate mortgage with variable mortgages. These are characterized by low interest rates for the first year or two and then a dra-



Jerry Goldberg

matic and consistent rise in interest rates, wherein your monthly mortgage payment suddenly doubles or triples. In 2005, 63 percent of new mortgages were interest-only and adjustable-rate mortgages. The interest-only mortgage is the most notorious, because for years all your payments go to interest and none to build up any equity in your home.

The second method is called subprime loans, loans with high interest rates. Subprime mortgages are usually tied to variable mortgages—they just start at a higher rate and go up even more quickly. A 2006 study demonstrated that African Americans with good credit ratings that should have qualified them for low-interest mortgage loans were 37 percent more likely than whites with similar incomes to receive a subprime loan, and Latin@s were 28 percent more likely than whites

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Confront Pentagon with global workers' solidarity

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Sara Flounders to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

War criminal George Bush has called a "peace meeting" in Annapolis, Md., for next week. It is essential that we expose this phony meeting as part of a war against a heroic and continuing Palestinian Liberation Movement, fought under the most onerous conditions.

In his forthcoming book, "Colossus with Feet of Clay," Fred Goldstein explains that there is an aggressive new organization of labor on a global scale that has transformed capitalist production and services in the almost two decades since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the opening of China to the world capitalist market.

Not since the Industrial Revolution has there been a transformation of this magnitude. This process was brutally imposed every step of the way—using every mechanism, political, financial and military—by U.S. imperialism.

The IMF and World Bank made unilateral demands on every developing country to open their economies to imperialist penetration. Some 1.5 billion new workers were dragged into the orbit of international finance capital.

How does the Pentagon see this development and its role?

These generals, their think tanks and military planners have looked at the changing political situation, new developments in technology and where the new centers of super-profit would be.

The collapse of the Soviet Union did not bring an end to militarism. With such a



Sara Flounders

stupendous expansion of U.S. corporate power, there was no possibility of a "peace dividend." New capitalist industries that are spread over the whole world must be protected by an unprecedented expansion of U.S. bases, troops and interventions.

Today there are more U.S. bases around the world than at any time in history. They are located in and surrounding the very countries where a super-oppressed working class has grown the most dramatically.

Pentagon planners busily making blueprints for future wars and threats to imperialist profit take note that these are many of the same nations and peoples where there is a history of revolutionary anti-colonial, anti-imperialist struggle.

At this moment the workers are not yet organized to take on the international capitalist bosses. But it is important to remember that in great proportion they have a recent history of revolutionary organization.

Does the Pentagon forget for a minute that China, despite all its dangerous capitalist market inroads, still has the largest

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Why mass struggle, not corporate profit, is Green

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Deirdre Griswold to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

There's so much news about climate change that many people are either numb or depressed by it all.

We all have seen what happened to the people of New Orleans and the Gulf after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Southeast is having its worst drought on record. The city of Atlanta, Ga., with more than 5 million people in the metro area, is running out of water.

Climate change can't be denied any more. So the big corporations have come up with a new strategy. Today, big business is trying to take over the Green movement.

Instead of funding organizations that deny global warming, some of the biggest corporations, including the oil companies, are funding groups that say, "Yes, climate change is a big problem, but the only way to deal with it is through the capitalist market."

This is why Al Gore got the Nobel Prize this year. Gore comes from Big Oil—his family fortune is with Occidental Petroleum. When he was in the Clinton White House, he and then Energy Secretary Bill Richardson pushed through deals for Oxy in Colombia. Now Gore is seen as a great environmentalist and says the answer is the market.

What's wrong with relying on the market? Isn't it good if auto companies develop more fuel-efficient cars? Isn't it good that there's a whole section of the stock exchange called "Green Finance" because companies that trade there focus on more energy-efficient products?

There are three things to look at in this argument.

First, is this about solving the problem of global warming, or is it all about selling new products and making more profits? The automobile market is glutted. So, convince people they have to buy new cars that burn ethanol—even though ethanol, distilled mostly from corn, takes cropland away from food production and drives up food prices.

Second, huge corporate lobbies now are focused on getting government funds to develop new products. But private industry will make the profits.

This, of course, is how the U.S. entered the nuclear age. The government developed nuclear bombs and nuclear energy, then let private companies make money off both of them. That, too, was supposed to solve the energy problem.

The billionaire mayor of New York, Michael Bloomberg, proposes a carbon tax that will raise the price of gasoline. He says: "Green energy is going to be the oil gusher of the 21st century."

Who supports Bloomberg's tax? "Business groups and even the companies that emit carbon dioxide and would be the most directly affected." (New York Times, Nov. 2)

When companies have to pay higher taxes, they pass the cost on to consumers—the workers, who are already paying high gas prices but have to drive to work because there's no decent public transportation.

Schemes like these boil down to how capitalists can make money off this global crisis and shift the cost of cleaning the



Deirdre Griswold

environment away from the corporations responsible and onto the workers.

Will all this turn back global warming? Or is it too little and too late?

Things are going to change a great deal. Will it mean the end of life on this planet, or the end of human history? No, no, no. The history of the planet is one of great changes—not usually this sudden, but ones with profound effects, yet humanity survived. Human beings are the most adaptable species on the globe. But global warming will cause great suffering. The poorest will suffer the most.

Global warming is a class issue and an issue of national oppression. Those most affected are the workers and the oppressed nations, including the oppressed Black, Latin@ and Native nations inside the U.S. As long as we live in a capitalist society, the wealthy will be better equipped to avoid its worst consequences.

Global warming will add more fuel to the explosion of class struggle that is coming.

And it's a class issue for another reason. The perilous state of the earth's health happened because of capitalism. The earth has been degraded because, for 200 years, technology and industry have expanded wildly, without restraint, without a plan, purely to grow the profits of the capitalist owning class.

We need the rebuilding of our cities with fuel-efficient, well-insulated affordable housing, and parks and green space to cool us in the summer.

We need a three-day workweek! Think how much commuting that would save. We need public transportation and bike paths, instead of wars to control the world's oil.

Some want to go back to a pre-industrial era. You couldn't do that without killing off most of the earth's people. We have to take technology out of the hands of private owners and use it for the good of humanity and the earth. The answer is socialism.

Socialist Cuba is the only country in the world that is both making progress and protecting its environment, according to the Global Footprint Network.

Is there time to heal the planet before catastrophe? In just two decades, the imperialists have totally restructured the global economy in order to reduce wages and exploit workers all over the globe. In a workers' world, a socialist world, our class can beat their record and turn this disaster around. Global warming will be a major factor in convincing all forward-thinking people that the destruction of capitalism and the revolutionary reorganization of society is an absolute necessity. □

INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY & SOCIALISM

The working class must fight back

From an opening talk to the WWP national conference given by Tyneisha Bowens, a leader of Fight Imperialism-Stand Together youth group and a candidate for membership in Workers World Party.

Hello comrades and guests, I want to welcome you to the Workers World Party conference.

I know that people give speeches and say, "Oh, I'm so glad you're here," without really explaining that compassion, so I want to make mine clear. I'm going to tell you why I'm glad we're all here. I'm glad we're here because our presence today at the School of the Future gives me hope for the movement, hope for liberation but most of all hope for the revolution. Our presence here proves that the state can repress people but the state can't repress THE people.

We will continue to rise because for us, the exploited working class, there is nothing else to do but revolt and destroy this fucked up system. And the system I'm talking about is the system by which we are all oppressed, and that system is capitalism.

We cannot ignore the real issues here with distractions of reforms and bourgeois politicians. None of them have worked a day in their lives and if they were ever a part of the working class they have left us in a cloud of dust as they rushed away to do the bidding of the ruling class.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. So I'll step back for a minute to talk about why I think we're really here. We're not here just to talk about socialism—we're always talking about socialism—we're communists and that's what we do. But we are here to discuss and emphasize the necessity for international class solidarity through a socialist perspective. This means unifying the working class across race lines, across gender lines, across sexuality lines, and especially across the bourgeois legal lines of immigration status.



Tyneisha Bowens

These lines are the creations of the ruling class and we must do away with them in order to fight the real enemy. We must realize that an attack on all people of color is an attack on the working class; an attack on women is an attack on the working class; an attack on the queer community is an attack on the working class; an attack on the homeless, an attack on the youth are all attacks on the working class.

And we as the working class must fight back!

No boss can or will liberate us; no politician, Republican or Democrat, can or will liberate us. We are the only ones who can realize our liberation and we must do it now! We must fight now in honor of those who struggled before us, those who gave their lives and those who still dedicate their lives to revolution. We must struggle now out of necessity for ourselves; we are the ones who need food, homes, health-care and education. We must struggle out of love for our future, because I do not want to have children who are never allowed to truly love.

I am here to incite a revolution and I will not stop kicking the system's ass until it has crumbled at my feet and paid reparations to all the people who deserve it. All power to the people! ☐

Imperialist globalization transforms working class

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Fred Goldstein to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

It will take a mighty force to root out a capitalist class that exploits hundreds of millions of people to enrich itself while its Black and Latin@ communities sink deeper and deeper into poverty and generations of youth fill the prisons or die by police bullets.

But Workers World Party uses the revolutionary science of Marxism to look at the destiny of capitalism and imperialism and see a revolutionary future.

The U.S. working class is now poorer, more downtrodden, more insecure, more in debt, more Black, Latin@ and Asian, more women, more lesbian, gay, bi and trans. It is more under attack and is composed of greater and greater numbers of the oppressed.

Imperialism in its new stage of globalization is slowly and systematically transforming the working class. The giant monopolies have set up factories, offices, call centers, research centers and back-office banking operations in every corner of the globe. It is a new stage of imperialism. They have conjured up an entirely new layer of workers in the oppressed

countries around the world.

One to two billion workers have been added to the imperialist sphere of super-exploitation. The bosses in the U.S. use their technology to create global networks of production and exploitation, fragmented into different operations in different countries and all coordinated to rake in the super-profits garnered from low-wage, oppressed workers all over the world.

This is transforming the global working class and specifically the working class in the U.S. Millions of workers in the U.S., whether on the assembly line or in the office, whether computer programmers or welders, now know that their jobs can be outsourced to some area of low wages. Office workers at IBM or Citibank must compete with office workers in India or the Philippines. Auto workers in Michigan must compete with auto workers in Mexico or Thailand in a race to the bottom.

Workers' wages in the U.S. have been going down since at least the late 1970s. The destruction of manufacturing has destroyed higher-paying jobs. This has had a profound effect on the unions and the entire working class. Because of "last hired, first fired" racist practices, millions



WW PHOTOS: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Fred Goldstein

of Black workers have been driven out of decent-paying union jobs, which had health benefits, pensions, raises, work rules, etc. This has greatly added to the poverty and devastation in the central cities.

In the global search for low-wage workers, the bosses in the U.S. have thrived on the massive immigration of Latin@ workers, mainly Mexican, and also large numbers of Filipino and South Asian workers, forced to migrate because of the

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Lessons of Jena 6

Right to self-defense against racist terror

Excerpts from a speech by Secretariat member Monica Moorehead to the WWP national conference on Nov. 17-18. The full text will be available at www.workers.org.

The status of Black workers is so terrible for so many reasons, including historical racism, but the main underlying reason is the three-decades-long capitalist restructuring that has caused significant, disproportionate numbers of layoffs of Black workers, a steep decline of Black workers in unions and the growing poverty rate.

There is the struggle to free Black political prisoners like our brother Mumia Abu-Jamal, the MOVE 9 and many, many others. There is the epidemic of police brutality and killings of young Black people like the fatal shooting of a Black 18 year-old, Khiel Coppin, in Brooklyn Nov. 12, who was shot at least 15 times by five cops. These developments and many more are not just isolated incidents but are tied to 400 years of injustice and racist repression that Black people have faced in this country from the time the first Africans were brought here in chains.

The rest of my talk will be focused on the case of the Jena 6—Mychal Bell, Carwin Jones, Theo Shaw, Robert Bailey Jr., Bryant Purvis and Jesse Beard. What has happened to the Jena 6 is nothing new in terms of how Black youth are demonized and criminalized under capitalism.

A 2004 Justice Department study conveyed that there are more young Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 years old in prison than in college. The Jena 6 are a handful, out of close to 6 million Black people, mainly youth, who are shackled in one way or another to the criminal justice system. They are either in jail, prison, "boot camp"—a polite word for juvenile detention—on or parole. Mychal Bell, one



WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

Monica Moorehead

of the Jena 6, was put back in jail recently, after being released for a short time, for an "old drug charge." Black youth are convicted and sentenced forever for possession of marijuana or crack cocaine, compared to some white youth who get a slap on the wrist for heroin possession.

Add to that statistic the fact that close to 50 percent of the 2.2 million prison population in the U.S. is Black while the general population is only 13 percent, then you are talking about genocide based on one's nationality and also one's social status.

The difference between the Jena 6 and their counterparts is that there is a mass movement supporting them, especially Black college students. It was not only a spontaneous massive outpouring in support of these six heroic young men who stood up against unimaginable racist terror in their high school, but it was implicitly an indictment against the criminal justice system which is inherently anti-poor and racist to the core.

This case has created a debate in this country on whether Black people have the right to defend themselves by any means necessary against racist terror. Our Party's answer to this, without hesitation, is "Hell, yeah!!"

The Jena 6 were not only standing up for themselves and for Black people everywhere but they were standing up against 400 years of racist terror including untold lynchings of Black people and this is why we have to stand up for them and to keep mobilizing in the streets until all of the bogus charges are dropped and Mychal Bell is freed.

The major drawback to what happened on Sept. 20 is the fact that an equal number of whites did not come out to Jena and stand shoulder to shoulder with their Black sisters and brothers against racism. This type of solidarity against white supremacy would be a big step forward in building broader class unity.

There were Latin@s who also came to Jena to show solidarity with the Jena 6, which is noteworthy considering the racist war that has been declared on them, especially the undocumented, by this racist government with all of the raids, deportations and racist demonization from extremists like Lou Dobbs to Democrats like New York Gov. Eliot Spitzer.

Youth like the Jena 6 don't need repression or incarceration. They need jobs and a bright future like any other human being. They need to be in unions enjoying a living wage with good health care

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Solidarity messages to WWP

A workers' party in U.S. is key

By John Catalinotto
New York

International messages of solidarity sent to the Workers World Party National Conference, held this Nov. 17-18, beyond expressing solidarity and wishes for success, also provide insight into the conditions of the world's people and workers' movements in different regions and countries.

For activists in the U.S., perhaps most humbling and at the same time empowering is the importance the world's people give to any sign of workers' struggle inside the United States, and the special attention revolutionaries worldwide give to the need for a revolutionary party "in the belly of the beast" that is clearly anti-imperialist. (See workersworld.net for the full statements.)

The **Cuban Communist Party** writes that "despite the economic blockade our people has advanced dramatically in building a new and better society and cooperating closely with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela, Bolivia, and helping many others in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and Asia to improve their lives. ... In this regard, we appreciate your unconditional solidarity in our struggle for independence and justice in the face of the imperialist aggressions that our people have been resisting and defeating, heroically and successfully for over 47 years."

The **Workers Party of Korea** (DPRK) sends its wishes that, "The National Conference of your Party will be an important occasion in your activities to further strengthen the party organizationally and ideologically and to build the party as the popular party supported by the broad masses."

The **Socialist Front** of Puerto Rico writes that it "has witnessed the solidarity of the WWP in all our struggles, in particular to the cause of bringing an end to the U.S. colonization of our nation, the struggle to free Vieques from the U.S. Navy, the struggle against the privatization of public services in the people's strike."

Importance of struggle within the U.S.

From Prof. Jose Maria Sison, chairperson, **International League of Peoples' Struggle** (ILPS), we read that "The U.S.-instigated policies of neoliberal globalization and global war of terror (including state terrorism and wars of aggression) have inflicted the worst forms of exploitation and oppression on the people on an unprecedented scale. ... We are ever desirous of the growth in strength and advance of the anti-imperialist and democratic movement among the American people. This has a far-reaching consequence of great benefit to the working class and oppressed peoples of the world in their resistance to imperialism and all reaction."

From the **Party of Liberation** (PL) in Argentina, we read that "the better the organization and political activism of Marxist-Leninists in the United States and the other imperialist countries, the more it helps and fortifies the struggles of the peoples of the Third World, as is Argentina's case."

And from the **Bolivarian Continental Coordinator** (CCB), an organization of anti-imperialist unity in Latin America, "We well understand the importance of the action of the people of the United States in the anti-imperialist



FIST (Fight Imperialism--Stand Together) members spoke on the legacy of Che Guevara at WWP National Conference. At podium is Dante Strobino, a union organizer.

struggle and we recognize your great effort in the international struggles as well as the class struggle within your own country."

From the **Socialist Unity Center of India** (SUCI) comes the message that "Your brave persistent struggle against U.S. imperialism, the worst enemy of mankind of the time, has been a source of inspiration to all building up anti-imperialist movements round the globe."

Need for a revolutionary party

The **Union of the Galician People** (UPG), within the Spanish state, raises the difficulties: "We are all aware of how difficult it is today for the people to carry out their struggle for sovereignty and for socialism, and we know that in the heart of the empire the conditions in which this struggle develops has even more complex characteristics."

How to deal with these complexities? The **All India Anti-Imperialist Forum** (AIAIF) sums it up: "On the one hand the capitalist oppression and exploitation of the working class have become more intense, and the imperialist powers led by USA have perpetrated barbaric aggression on many countries of the world, and on the other hand people's resentment towards capitalist system is also increasing. The people's anti-capitalist struggle can emerge victorious only if it has a firm ideological base of Marxism-Leninism."

From the **Workers' Party of Belgium**, we read that "In every country of the world, the building of a Leninist party, loyal to the road mapped out by the October Revolution, remains a primary task. ... Never will coordinations, networks or factions without a clear conviction be able to replace working class parties based on democratic centralism." In addition, "Proletarian internationalism is a fundamental element that distinguishes the communist and workers' parties from all others."

The **Red Current** (CR) in the Spanish state writes that, "Workers of all lands, unite! signals our immediate task. ... Comrades of WWP: your struggle and your role are transcendental in this task. The communists of the USA have the most difficult work and at the same time the most decisive in the common struggle of the workers and peoples of the entire world. Together with the resistance in Iraq, Cuba, Venezuela and Colombia, your struggle is the focus of the hopes of the world."

Specific conditions of workers' struggle

The **Union of African Workers of Senegal** (RTA-S) writes that their country "is directly and economically dominated by French imperialism, still. But American imperialism is doing its best to find ways and means to establish a military base somewhere in West Africa for its own interests. We feel happy to have you as revolutionary anti-imperialist forces in the belly of the beast."

The **Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party** (CMKP) of Pakistan appeals that, "We are in the midst of a struggle for democracy against a U.S.-backed military dictator. In this context the solidarity of our two fraternal organizations is of vital importance. Any protest in the U.S. against the government's policy of supporting Musharraf is invaluable to our movement, given the fierce repression inside Pakistan."

From **Red Norway** and from the **Danish Communist Party** we learn that now the struggle to withdraw these Scandinavian NATO members' troops from Afghanistan has priority, with a protest set at the Norwegian Parliament for Nov. 24. Denmark also has sent troops to Iraq and the former Yugoslavia. In Denmark also, "during the last one-and-a-half years, there has been an upsurge in the class struggle [here]. ... There is a growing consciousness among broad sections of the Danish people that the 'welfare system,' i.e. their social, democratic and trade union rights, is seriously threatened by the neo-liberal and pro-EU [European Union] policy of the government, and that it is necessary to take the road of class struggle in order to defend these rights."

From the **Basque Union L.A.B.** we learn of the struggle in the Basque Country, that behind the reports of violence "there exists a conflict of undeniable political character, a conflict based on the negation of the Basque people's democratic rights. ... In a country of 3 million inhabitants in the heart of Europe, there are more than 600 political prisoners, men and women, and more than 2,000 people exiled—the numbers only indicate the breadth of the political conflict."

The **International Democratic Federation of Women** (FDIM), more than 210 women's organizations that take actions to promote peace, equality of rights and social justice, now based in Brazil, writes that, "The experience of the

peoples of our continent—electing presidents committed to democracy, sovereignty and cooperation among nations—indicate the advances on our continent. ... The socialist experience of Cuba with Fidel and the construction of socialism in Venezuela under the command of President Hugo Chávez can only fortify in us the certainty that Latin Americans and North Americans will have to unite an America with prosperity and equality for all."

The **Communist Party of Brazil** (PCdoB) also writes that "Latin America is experiencing a special moment for progressive and revolutionary forces. In the last period a cycle of progressive governments are attempting to bring about economic development and national sovereignty, social development and an increase of democracy in the region. The end of the unhappy neoliberal cycle, the previous period, now allows the Latin American peoples to ... defend peace, development and multipolarity and struggle against imperialism."

The **Peasant Association of the Valley of Río Cimitarra** (ACVC) and the **Rural Press Agency** write that they are active "in the region of Magdalena Medio in Colombia. On Sept. 29, four of our leaders were accused of rebellion and arrested by the narco-paramilitary government of President Alvaro Uribe Vélez. There is a warrant for the arrest of 14 more members of our association. Now we begin the campaign to win political freedom of our people held in custody and the many other prisoners in the country. We invite you to support our campaign and to publicize within the U.S.A. the extreme repression that exists in Colombia."

From the **Palestinian American Congress**, Boston Chapter, we read that, "The imperialists are ... so desperate they are trying to create more Karzai's in the Middle East, from Iraq to Lebanon to Palestine. It did not work out in Afghanistan and it will not work out in the rest of the Arab world. Let's unite workers, peasants, students and all revolutionaries of the world. Let's bring this beast to its knees."

Due to organizational problems, messages from the **New Left—Caamañist Circles** in the Dominican Republic and from the **SINALTRAINAL** union in Colombia arrived too late to be included in this article, but will be on the web site.

Dangers of war against Iran

The **Pole of the Communist Renaissance in France** (PRCF) writes that, "At a time when [French President] Sarkozy has begun to turn French foreign policy toward putting our country in U.S. imperialism's orbit, we feel, more than ever before, close to the progressive militants of the United States in their combat to stop U.S. aggression against Iraq and the threats weighing against Iran."

The **Anti-imperialist Camp** (CAI), with chapters in Italy, Austria and other European countries, writes that the Bush regime "is switching up another gear in its pre-emptive war. To solve the problems of their global rule they want to attack Iran. More than any battle since 1991 this forthcoming one will decide the future of the world. ... We are sure that as with Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon, Venezuela, Cuba and Iraq we will once again co-operate in supporting this struggle" against imperialist military intervention. □

Annapolis 'peace conference'

No solution for Palestine, no end to occupation

By Sara Flounders

Nov. 19—A week before the Bush administration's grand Middle East peace conference is scheduled to begin in Annapolis, Md., there is still no confirmed list of attendees, no confirmed date and no agenda. Up to 50 countries were to be invited.

The event, if it takes place at all, has now been downgraded from a three-day conference to a one-day meeting to set a "framework" for later talks—in other words, an empty photo-op.

That the hated war criminals in the White House could even propose such a fraudulent gathering while in the midst of brutal wars in Iraq and Afghanistan has made many of their collaborators in the region nervous about accepting an invitation. They fear that the failure of such a gathering to reach any agreement will only further isolate the U.S. in the region and weaken their own position.

Every question of substance has already been declared off-limits by Zionist forces. These include the status of Jerusalem, the borders of a Palestinian state, the return of millions of Palestinian refugees, the dismantling of illegal fortress settlements that house more than half a million Israelis in the West Bank and Jerusalem, the vastly unequal distribution of water, the continued building of an apartheid wall and thousands of other barriers and police checkpoints that carve the West Bank into tiny encircled cantons, and the release of more than 10,000 Palestinian political prisoners.

The Bush administration has barred the participation of Hamas, the Islamic-based political party that won democratic elections in both the West Bank and Gaza.

In the latest indignity and insult, Palestinian negotiators on their way to a meeting with Israeli forces to prepare for the Annapolis meeting said they were blocked at an Israeli checkpoint. The session had to be called off.

Just a month ago, after meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice announced with great fanfare: "Frankly, it's time for the establishment of a Palestinian state.... The United States sees the establishment of a Palestinian state and a two-state solution as absolutely essential for

the future, not just of Palestinians and Israelis but also for the Middle East and indeed to American interests.... Ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a top priority of the Bush administration."

And so a conference to finally establish this limited Palestinian state was announced for Annapolis in mid-November.

But the doubtful fate of the grandly projected "peace conference" reflects U.S. imperialism's total inability and unwillingness to provide solutions to any of the burning problems of the region.

The Annapolis meeting was always intended to further divide the Palestinian movement by isolating and excluding the democratically elected Hamas government in Gaza. It was never intended to solve or even open substantive negotiations on any of the real problems that U.S. imperialism has created.

Resistance undefeated

Rice, during her eight visits to the region this year, has held a series of meetings with Washington's shaky allies and with the increasingly unstable Zionist fortress created by U.S. arms and money. These meetings dealt more with how to isolate the resistance forces in the region, including Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in Gaza and Syria. On the top of the U.S. agenda was how to increase pressure, threats and preparations for war on Iran. Discussing the Palestinians' stateless plight, now six decades old, was just a cover for the meetings.

The unsolvable problem is that every effort by U.S. imperialism to dominate the region has run into organized popular resistance.

Their brutal efforts to re-colonize Iraq have failed despite massive bombing, the overthrow of the Iraqi government and five years of military occupation, on top of 13 years of a starvation embargo and sanctions.

Meanwhile, Israel, despite billions of dollars in U.S. military aid and the latest high-tech weapons, was unable to defeat Hezbollah or to occupy even a mile of Lebanon in last summer's war.

Iran has continued to develop economically and industrially despite years of ever-increasing U.S. sanctions and sabotage.

But the greatest thorn in Washington's

plans has been the steadfast courage of the Palestinian people. Israel was forced to withdraw its apartheid settlements from Gaza two years ago.

In internationally monitored democratic elections, the Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza overwhelmingly voted for Hamas, the Islamic-based political party with the most intransigent attitude toward Israel. Israel and the U.S. have always conspired to divide the Palestinian movement, playing one group against another.

In an effort to destroy Hamas, Israel totally encircled and cut off Gaza. A small sandy strip of undeveloped land with a population of 1.5 million, less than Brooklyn, Gaza has been turned into a walled ghetto. Deprived of funds even to pay civil servants, doctors or teachers, it is holding out under the most onerous conditions. Israel has increasingly cut off basic foods and fuel. There's little electricity for cooking, pumping water or eliminating sewage. Israeli planes and helicopters continue to bomb apartment buildings and markets in an effort to terrorize the population.

Canadian police Taser immigrant to death

By Frank Neisser

Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers repeatedly Taser-shocked Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski at Vancouver International Airport on Oct. 14 and continued to shock him after he fell to the ground, resulting in his death. A witness captured the entire incident on videotape.

Dziekanski had just arrived in Vancouver as an immigrant to join his mother, who already lived in Canada. He spoke no English and became distraught when he couldn't find her. The RCMP were called and, within 25 seconds of their arrival, they Tasered him.

The videotape, available on the Internet, clearly shows Dziekanski Tasered again as he lay screaming on the ground with one of the cops kneeling on his neck. Nothing in the video shows Dziekanski posing any danger to the police.

The RCMP attempted to cover up their conduct in this incident. They confiscated the videotape, releasing it only under threat of court action. Their description of what occurred is clearly refuted by the tape, which has been made public.

Public safety officials in Canada have been inundated with mail and e-mails calling for independent investigations and a moratorium on the use of Tasers. Some call for banning them altogether. The Polish government called in the Canadian ambassador to discuss the incident, and the Polish Foreign Ministry has called for prosecution of the police in the case.

Since the incident, police in Canada's eastern province of Newfoundland have suspended the use of Tasers. So far Federal Public Safety Commissioner Stockwell Day has resisted calls from the opposition demanding an independent prosecutor in the case.

On the same day that Dziekanski was killed, Quilem Registre, a 38-year-old resident of Montreal, was Tasered by police. She died three days later.

There have been 18 Taser-related deaths in Canada since July 2003. In the

This unrelenting pressure, while it has reopened divisions between Fatah and Hamas in the Palestinian movement, has not ended the resistance.

Popular resistance committees in Gaza continue to dig long tunnels under the now barricaded Rafah crossing into Egypt to bring in supplies and weapons. Hardly a day passes without Palestinian youth firing homemade rockets into Israel.

With Gaza under complete siege and all of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan under brutal occupation, it is up to the broad international movement that has long stood in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for liberation and sovereignty to raise their voices, denounce this phony meeting, demand its cancellation and demand an end to U.S. occupation and war.

In the U.S., the Troops Out Now Coalition has helped initiate a broad statement of opposition to the Annapolis meeting, available at: www.TroopsOutNow.org. Hundreds of individuals and groups have added their names. The statement also calls for protests around the country if the meeting is actually held on Nov. 27. □

CHAD

Students protest French demands

By G. Dunkel

Several thousand high school students demonstrated in N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, on Nov. 14 against France's continued insistence that six French citizens in prison since early October on charges of kidnapping 103 Chadian children be moved to France for trial.

They threw shoes at the French Embassy and rocks and bottles at cars driven by foreigners, shouting "Foreigners, child thieves" and "Sarko out of Chad." "Sarko" refers to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, who flew to Chad in early October, stayed for two hours, and brought back home with him three journalists and four Spanish airline attendants who had been involved in this attempted abduction by a group called Zoe's Ark.

The police broke up the demonstration

with tear gas and baton charges.

Albert Pahimi, Chad's minister of justice, responding to Sarkozy's insistence on a trial in France, said: "There is no chance that the trial will take place elsewhere. It will be held here in Chad."

Djadda Oumar, an organizer of the demonstration, told the French newspaper *Le Monde*: "It's like Chad is a big town for him. It is regrettable that a French head of state says stuff like that about the people of Chad." France is the former colonial power in Chad, one of the poorest countries in Africa, and still has a number of bases there.

Details about the six French nationals held in Chad continue to emerge. French television has reported that one of them is a former French Foreign Legionnaire and another has had to be treated in a French military hospital for a drug overdose. □

United States, the figure is much worse: 280 deaths since 2001.

In September, a student in Florida was Tasered at a campus forum when he asked Sen. John Kerry why no one has tried to impeach Bush. This incident gained widespread public attention. However, as of October 2004, Tasers had been sold to over 6,000 police departments in the United States and abroad, and over 200 U.S. police departments had purchased Tasers for every officer on the force. In 2003, they were used in 354 incidents by the Phoenix Police Department alone.

Tasers have been used on very young children, on diabetics and epileptics, on the elderly, and on people already under restraint. While statistics are not available, racist police conduct supports the assumption that African-American, Latin@, Asian and Native youth, who are the target of an epidemic of police brutality, are also receiving a disproportionately large amount of this widespread new type

Lessons of Jena 6

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and benefits. If the leadership in the AFL-CIO and the split-off group, Change to Win, really cared about what is happening to Black youth, who are the victims of 50 percent unemployment right here in Harlem, they could take just 1 percent of the \$100 million that they are pouring down the rat-hole to elect Hillary Clinton and instead organize Black youth in the thousands to march on Washington and stay there to demand "Jobs, not jails!" and unconditional amnesty for all Black youth as well as Latin@, Indigenous and poor white youths in jail.

What the multinational working class needs, including oppressed youth and white youth, is a revolutionary workers' party that not only talks the talk but walks the walk. Free the Jena 6! Free our youth! Jail killer cops! Smash racism, national oppression and class oppression! □



Rebuilding New Orleans—for whom?

A majority white City Council has been elected in New Orleans for the first time in more than two decades. The election was held just when the demolition of 5,000 public housing units in the city had been projected to begin. Two seats in the Louisiana Legislature and a state court judgeship, previously held by Blacks, were taken by whites as well.

Not only did substantially more whites than Blacks vote in the elections, but the total number of votes decreased sharply—by more than 60,000—from the mayoral election in 2006. One explanation for this, according to the Nov. 20 New York Times, is the large number of absentee ballots that came in during the 2006 election as well as the effort made then by many displaced people who drove back to New Orleans to vote.

“The weekend election,” said the Times, “appeared to confirm what many had predicted immediately after the storm in 2005: New Orleans became almost overnight a smaller, whiter city with a much reduced black majority.”

This is exactly what organizers in the Black community have been warning of—that the white power structure wanted to make it as difficult as possible for Black people to come back in order to have unchallenged political control of the city.

The actual storm is only a small factor in the reduction of the Black population in New Orleans. Stronger factors include the continued neglect of the survivors and a push for gentrification that takes only the interests of the white elite into consideration.

Workers World reported on Nov. 15: “Other developments related to this racist gentrification conspiracy include the privatization of schools, which has led to the massive layoffs of thousands of public school teachers; the lack of health care, especially for the poor; an alarming increase in the homicide rate in the Black community; and more police brutality.”

A local demographic analyst, Gregory

C. Rigamer, suggests in the Times article that “the lower voter turnout would indicate that some people ... have lost interest.” Yes, blame the victims. More likely, the struggle to survive for these mostly Black, low-income survivors has not abated, making voting extremely difficult for them. Indeed, in the 2006 elections it took a major grassroots effort to organize displaced persons across the country to vote.

However, protests have recently been held in New York, New Orleans and other cities where displaced Katrina survivors live, denouncing the federal go-ahead of the public housing demolition. A short reprieve may have been won due to these efforts, but the demolitions are still slated for sometime in December. Attorney Bill Quigley, who plans to continue fighting the demolitions, said they will “permanently displace thousands of long-term New Orleanians from their community and erase nearly 70 years of New Orleans culture and history.” (Times-Picayune, Nov. 16)

In light of the majority-white City Council development, Malcolm Suber—a well-known Black activist and a leader of the People’s Hurricane Relief Fund who ran for the City Council member-at-large seat this past October, representing the newly formed Reconstruction Party—has called for “the need for revolutionary/progressive Black working class leadership in the fight for the future of New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.”

His platform called for a “way back home” and real reconstruction for the people of the area, opposition to the privatization of education, jobs and living wages. He stated, “My ‘Six-Point Platform for the Recovery of New Orleanians’ is for the people, not the special interests of developers and political insiders.”

The struggle for the dignity, respect and right to return of Katrina survivors should be of great interest to all those interested in building anti-racist, class-wide solidarity. □

Michigan must declare moratorium

Continued from page 6

Today, at the same time that workers are being hit with layoffs and wage cuts, their monthly house payments are doubling and tripling. At the same time, housing values, which were artificially inflated in part by the banks and credit companies writing these new mortgages, are now declining nationwide. As a result, workers who expected to get out from under the higher payments by refinancing their homes are losing them to foreclosure in record numbers.

There were 705,000 foreclosures in 2004 compared to 114,000 in 1980 (a recession year). This year, from July to September alone, 446,726 homes nationwide were targeted with foreclosure activity, twice as many as the year before. And we haven’t seen anything yet: 2 million homes are scheduled for dramatic interest rate hikes in the next two years as higher variable rates reset.

The foreclosure crisis is threatening to bring on a generalized capitalist downturn. The banks and major financial institutions like Merrill Lynch, which hold the mortgages, are losing hundreds of billions of dollars as people can no lon-

ger pay their mortgages. The loss in real estate wealth from declining home prices is estimated to range between \$2 trillion and \$4 trillion.

In Michigan, where we are already in the worst economic crisis since the depression, with 336,000 industrial jobs having left the state in the last six years, the foreclosure rate is unimaginable. In the predominantly African-American city of Detroit, where 85 percent of the mortgages are subprime, over 30,000 homes are currently in foreclosure. That means over 10 percent of the population is faced with imminent homelessness.

In the face of this crisis, our party is putting forth a simple but revolutionary transitional program. We are calling for the implementation of an emergency moratorium to halt all foreclosures in Michigan. Every state invests in the governor the power to declare a state of disaster or emergency. The Michigan statutes refer to man-made as well as natural disasters. The governor has broad powers to protect the health and welfare of the people.

We are demanding that the governor utilize her emergency powers to impose a moratorium on foreclosures and utility

Support immigrants, fight global warming

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change, where the workers and oppressed will take center stage in a historic mass struggle.

Our future is socialism, not just in Cuba or elsewhere, but right here in the United States.

I remember the first time I heard about the environmental issue. It was in the mid 1970s. It seemed a luxury issue that only the privileged few could get involved in. A 12-year-old Chicano boy had just been killed by the Houston police and dumped in the bayou. What relevance did the ozone layer have on our lives?

At that time too, the government, the media and the multinational corporations denied or lied about the problem. It took decades for there to be a general recognition that this planet was in trouble.

Now there is no doubt that the capitalist system is ruining the environment. The corporations are working feverishly to co-opt this struggle. Do we really believe that the very corporations that ruined the environment will honestly fix it up?

It is a danger that the recent series “Planet in Peril” on CNN was sponsored by British Petroleum and BMW!

Two days ago in Bangladesh we saw on television once again the terrified faces of oppressed people forced to flee their homes as a result of yet another disaster. Thousands died.

Fires in southern California, a hurricane in Mexico, just in this month alone.

Confront Pentagon with global workers’ solidarity

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communist party in the world and a revolutionary history? Aren’t they concerned that India, with its large communist parties, strong anti-colonial tradition, mass anti-imperialist movements and militant peasant movements, has millions of new workers in vital industries? Do they forget their own ignominious defeat in Vietnam at the hands of millions of organized workers and peasants? Don’t they remember Mexico’s own revolutionary traditions and recent massive demonstrations?

U.S./NATO bases have been established in every country of Eastern Europe

If humanity is to progress, we must reach for and build socialism, here and around the world.

Only a socialist U.S. will have the necessary political will to deal with each environmental crisis. We will begin with reparations for the Third World to get rid of the condescending charity of celebrities and the fake material aid of U.S. government agencies. We will return what was stolen from the continents of Africa, Latin America and Asia so that the people themselves will have the means to rebuild their countries, including the infrastructures to address environmental concerns.

Unbridled imperialism—so-called globalization—has caused one of the greatest waves of migration from the homelands of the oppressed to the developed capitalist countries. It has forced an unprecedented mass movement of workers in search of a job. We can see that the struggle to demand a driver’s license for undocumented workers has become a revolutionary demand.

A socialist U.S. would mean that workers from Mexico or India or the Philippines would no longer be forced to migrate. But they also will be welcome if they come and they can stay here if they want.

We demand that the billions spent on war be used to repair the environment, to do whatever it takes to assure that humanity is safe and warm, fed and housed no matter the weather. □

and a growing number of former Soviet republics. Each country that joins NATO is forced to further indenture itself to equip its military with U.S. weapons and to send its troops as “volunteers” to fight U.S. wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. NATO bases now surround and encircle Russia.

Two U.S. wars against Iraq have resulted in a whole series of bases in the Persian Gulf, while the war on Afghanistan was an excuse for new bases in Central Asia.

There are new bases in South Asia, where there had not been any since the Vietnam War, and now the U.S. military is back in the Philippines. All this is part of the Pentagon plans to ring China.

These are now 700 U.S. bases around the world in over 100 countries. This means more bases and more deployment than at any time in U.S. history.

The Pentagon and the largest corporations considered the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq as a win-win undertaking, but they are losing.

The whole world has been enslaved by corporate power, backed up by U.S. military force. The whole world owes a tremendous debt to the courageous Iraqi resistance.

In Afghanistan, despite all the publicity more than six years ago, when U.S. forces moved in with barely a casualty, there is now protracted struggle. The entire world also owes a debt to the Afghan resistance.

The Pentagon’s problems don’t end in Iraq and Afghanistan. In Pakistan they armed and supported General Musharraf, providing \$10 billion in aid. Now there is fear that their hold on Pakistan is slipping in every direction.

Today, solidarity is still our most powerful weapon in fighting the class that expropriates everything as its private property. Solidarity is an expression of class consciousness on a global scale.

Building solidarity is reflected in conduct, in organization, in focus and in attention. A working class party in the U.S. must give building solidarity the highest priority. □

FRENCH RAIL STRIKE

Workers battle attack on pensions

By G. Dunkel

A majority of striking French rail workers have voted to continue a strike that began Nov. 14 and will now last beyond Nov. 20, when teachers and civil service workers will also walk out to demand higher pay. All may join with students in mass protests against the latest anti-worker attacks from the rightist government of President Nicolas Sarkozy.

The French ruling class has come to the conclusion that its control and influence over the mass media—newspapers, radio and television—isn't enough to break the strike. Sarkozy's party has taken the extraordinary step of ordering 2 million leaflets printed with anti-union propaganda and having its party functionaries distribute them in the streets. The workers who have severely disrupted transportation and the students who have blockaded or struck over half of France's universities have clearly been winning public support.

The ruling party is attempting to make rail workers pay into their retirement fund for 40 years before getting full pensions, instead of the current 37.5 years. This would end a feature of railroad pensions that was introduced in 1855. The government refuses to negotiate with the unions on strike unless they agree to accept this pension "reform" and suspend their strike.

These special pensions cover 1.6 million workers, of whom 500,000 are cur-

rently working and 1.1 million are retired. They allow workers in dangerous and strenuous outdoor jobs to retire 2-1/2 years early with a full pension. Or they can retire at age 50 with a smaller but adequate pension, which many do.

The government is also trying to explain why it wants to let each French university set its own level of student stipends. In France, there is generally no tuition for higher education. Each student gets a small stipend from the state.

Gas and electricity workers are also on strike. Their walkout creates little disruption unless they start cutting off service.

Two unions, which represent a small proportion of the workers in the railroad system and the Paris metro, have accepted the government's proposal, called off their participation in the strike and will negotiate how much the workers they represent will get for giving up their "special" pensions.

Equality for whom?

Sarkozy justified his attack on these special pensions by appealing to the principle of equality. But the left has responded by pointing out that equality could be better served by extending the earlier retirement to all workers.

Though the rail companies claim 70 percent of their workers have returned to work, still only one of three high-speed trains are running, regional service is only at 15 percent, some lines in the Metro have no service and others are running

only once every 25 minutes.

In France, every worker has a constitutional right to strike. On the railroads, unions have to file notice that they are going to go out, but once that is done, even workers who are not in that union but work for the railroad can legally strike.

According to the French newspaper Rouge, published by the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), many supervisors and managers walked off the job Nov. 14 when the strike began, but have gone back gradually since then. But 50 percent to 100 percent of the operating workers—train drivers, conductors, switch operators, ticket sellers—have stayed out and firmly support continuing the strike. This is a higher percentage of operating workers out than in 1995, when workers defeated a similar attack.

Rouge also interviewed Hassen, a young RATP bus driver on strike in the Paris suburbs. He pointed out that these

pension "reforms" would set up a two-tiered pension system for bus drivers and that they could also be changed to force workers to work years longer for a full pension.

While strikes are called by the union leadership, in France they are continued by "general assemblies" at each site. These assemblies are open to members of all the unions involved in the strike and also to the non-unionized workers who walk out. They generally meet every day and discuss issues, such as continuing the strike and setting up picket lines or blockading services, and they have voted overwhelmingly to continue the strike at least through the seventh day.

French workers have shown that they are willing to fight hard to defeat their ruling class's attempts to cut workers' benefits to U.S. levels. Whatever happens next, it is clear that there is a tremendous class struggle going on in France. □

WWP conference draws activists from all over

Continued from page 5

Facebook. After speaking with members of the Raleigh, N.C., branch of FIST, she decided to attend the conference. She said she was interested in "learning about the Bolshevik Revolution and how lessons from it could be applied to struggles today."

Two sisters from Michigan State University, who had first learned about WWP from their aunt, were also enthusiastic about the conference. Lauren Spencer, a junior, ran for Michigan State's Board of Trustees last year on a "Stop the War" joint slate of WWP and the Green Party. LGBT issues are of primary importance to her. She works with an MSU panel program that provides speakers about queer to a

women's psychology class, reads for CD versions of "Lesbian Connection" magazine, which are produced for the visually impaired, is a member of a queer caucus for people of color, and is a member of the Lansing Association for Human Rights.

"It's nice to see people who are not LGBT-identified as allies," Lauren said, to see "the struggle of people of color, poor people and LGBT people showing solidarity and showing that the struggles are all the same."

Meghan Spencer, a freshman, is on the women's counsel, a feminist student organization at MSU. She said one of the talks that most moved her was on communism and climate change and "our responsibility to act on it." □

Imperialist globalization transforms working class

Continued from page 7

impoverishment of their countries by U.S. big business. The entire undocumented crisis is a product of this reverse form of globalization.

Women workers have been driven into the work force, not as a way of achieving economic independence but because men's wages have been falling. It is impossible for a household with children to live on one or often even two incomes. There are now 70 million women in a workforce of 150 million, and most work at low wages.

Thus the working class in the U.S. is being transformed by technological pressure, union busting and world-wide wage competition. Its privileged layer is being whittled down year after year.

General Motors at its height had over 600,000 workers. Now it has 70,000. Today the largest employer in the U.S., with 1.2 million workers, is Wal-Mart—rabbidly anti-union and low-wage with low to no benefits. Wal-Mart grosses \$300 billion a year and is only exceeded in revenue by Exxon.

There is only one way out of this situation for the workers: reject the capitalist argument of competitiveness and insist on the right to a job. The present workforce will have to develop a new class struggle approach. They must say no to the idea that the workers, who have created all the wealth of the bosses, must guarantee their profitability.

Furthermore, international class solidarity is the practical answer to international wage competition. A genuine working class leadership must strive to bring representatives of workers from around the world into the discussions about demands. It must be clear that the workers' leaders in the U.S. are going to help fight for all the workers, from Mexico to Thailand to Brazil, and not just for U.S. workers. The old slogan of "an injury to one is an injury to all" must be a cross-border slogan.

Once this ideology of genuine class consciousness takes hold among the workers, it will be possible, for example, to send mass multinational worker defense guards to meat packing plants in Tar Heel, N.C., or Des Moines, Iowa, to defend undocumented workers against Homeland Security raids.

And maybe neighborhood committees could go to foreclosures and put people back in their houses, the way they did during the Great Depression.

As Marxists we believe that being determines consciousness. Consciousness may lag behind, but in the end conditions make it catch up. The working class in this country will be forced by capitalism itself to become aware of its condition. □



Workers demonstrate in Ljubljana.

Slovenian workers demand higher wages

The following report was sent to WW by Rudolf Baloh of the Revolutionary Bureau for Public Information in Slovenia.

Some 70,000 protesters took the streets of Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, on Nov. 17. Trade unionists, retired workers and students, left-wing and anti-war activists, communist and Marxist groups marched together to demand higher wages for workers. The protest was organized by the Freedom Unions of Slovenia (SSS).

The average pay in Slovenia is about 1,200 euros (\$1,700) per month, but 75

percent of the workers earn less than this amount. Some 80,000 work for the miserable minimum salary, which is only 350 to 400 euros per month. Slovenia has the highest inflation rate in the European Union, 5.2 percent, caused by using the euro as its new currency.

About 20 percent of the 2 million people in Slovenia live in poverty. Food prices and electricity rates jumped 25 percent to 30 percent during 2007.

Slovenia was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until 1991.

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EDITORIAL

Los incendios del capitalismo

Los críticos del socialismo frecuentemente ignoran los ejemplos como Cuba, que provee vivienda adecuada y cuidado de salud gratis a cada persona que vive en la isla — a pesar del bloqueo estadounidense que ha costado tanto a la economía cubana.

Sin embargo, un ejemplo de lo que puede pasarle al pueblo de un país donde la planificación y las instituciones socialistas han sido destruidas por la contrarrevolución, puede verse en el artículo del 7 de noviembre del New York Times, titulado originalmente “Incendios mortales revelan defectos en el resurgimiento de Rusia,” pero que luego fue re-titulado “Incendios mortales exponen desorden en la Rusia de [presidente de Rusia] Putin.”

Al describir una de las muchas tragedias recientes, el artículo reporta: “El rápido incendio del 2 de octubre, y el panorama grotesco de desesperación, heridos y muertes que lo acompañó, subrayaron el desorden persistente bajo la restauración parcial de Rusia.”

En ese incendio, en el Instituto Moscovita de Gobierno y Administración Corporativa, una institución privada, muchos estudiantes y trabajador@s saltaron por las ventanas después de encontrarse que las puertas de salida estaban cerradas. Tanto las ambulancias como los bomberos llegaron tarde. Once personas han muerto mientras que 30 quedan internadas en el hospital.

En el año 2006 más de 17,000 personas murieron a causa de los incendios. Ajustando esta cifra en proporción a la población, pone la tasa de muerte debida a incendios, a más de 10 veces las de Europa del Oeste y los Estados Unidos. Este año el número de muertes ronda las 40 por día.

Algunos factores mencionados por el NY Times para este número de víctimas incluyen “sistemas anticuados de electricidad y calefacción en las viviendas públicas y rurales; equipos para combatir incendios destartalados; y la violación extensa de los códigos de seguridad. ... Caminos obstaculizados por el aumento del tráfico — debido al aumento en la tasa de posesión de automóviles y a la planificación irregular urbana — han retrasado el tiempo de respuesta de los bomberos.”

Más tarde el artículo admite que: “La prevención eficaz de incendios y su combate han sido problemas en Rusia desde el colapso de la Unión Soviética.” Ese colapso fue una fortuna para los aspirantes a capitalistas en Rusia y para las corporaciones transnacionales que llegaron rápido para explotar sus recursos. El número de ricos ha subido desmesuradamente. Pero fue un desastre para el pueblo trabajador, quienes viven en viviendas públicas y en casas rurales.

El ejemplo de Rusia destaca los peligros que el capitalismo — un sistema económico y social que tiene a las ganancias como su meta final— otorga a la gente trabajadora y oprimida.

Mientras tanto, un sistema económico y social que está planificado con el objetivo del bienestar humano — un sistema socialista — puede impedir el sufrimiento y el daño innecesario. Cuba prueba esto durante cada estación de huracanes, cuando se arregla para evacuar a casi todas las personas a lugares seguros mientras que en países vecinos, sube el número de víctimas por los desastres. Eso es el porqué tantas personas ahora están mirando al socialismo como la solución a la opresión y el caos capitalista. □

El espiral crediticio: ¿Un descenso cíclico o algo más severo?

Por Jaimeson Champion

La economía global capitalista está mostrando crecientes señales de inestabilidad. Una pregunta que está en la mente de muchos miembros de la clase obrera multinacional aquí en Estados Unidos y en todo el mundo es cuán severa será la crisis capitalista que se aproxima.

¿Están los trabajador@s enfrentando un proceso cíclico de expansión y contracción de la economía del mismo tipo que se ha visto varias veces durante el camino del desarrollo del capitalismo? O, ¿es éste el preludio a una crisis mucho más severa? ¿La actual inestabilidad en Wall Street irá en rumbo a una caída del mismo tipo de la del año 1987, o será el comienzo de una crisis a gran escala?

Las crisis cíclicas en las economías capitalistas

El ciclo de expansión y contracción es inherente al modo de producción capitalista. En el capitalismo, los períodos de rápida expansión y producción son seguidos de severas caídas y recesiones. Este proceso cíclico resulta de las crisis regulares de sobreproducción.

Como escribió en “Teorías sobre la Plusvalía,” Karl Marx dice, “la sobreproducción está específicamente condicionada por la ley general de producción de capital: producir hasta el límite impuesto por las fuerzas productivas, o sea, explotar la máxima cantidad de trabajo con el capital dado, sin ninguna consideración a los límites actuales del mercado o a las necesidades respaldadas por la capacidad de pagar.”

La sobreproducción conduce a mercados inundados. Los mercados inundados llevan a la caída de ganancias para los capitalistas. Esto causa que los empresarios intensifiquen sus campañas de recorte de salarios y empleos, aumentando el dolor y el sufrimiento de la clase obrera durante los períodos de recesión.

Hoy en Estados Unidos ya se ven señales de una caída cíclica como resultado de una crisis de sobreproducción. Desde el año 2000 al año 2006 el sector de viviendas era el motor principal de una expansión económica en Estados Unidos. La burbuja de producción de viviendas en esos años estaba caracterizada por una elevación sin precedente en la construcción de nueva viviendas.

La rápida expansión en la producción de nuevas casas produjo una explosión de ganancias para la clase

capitalista. La construcción de nuevas casas es una industria multiplicadora, por lo que la explosión significó un incremento en la venta de mercancías en muchas otras industrias. Este incremento en las ventas de mercancías se vio en todo, desde electrodomésticos hasta camionetas y materiales de construcción usados por los trabajadores de la construcción.

El esfuerzo por aumentar la producción y las ganancias sin tener en cuenta los límites del mercado, o la capacidad de los obreros de poder pagar los artículos por ellos mismos producidos, quedó ilustrado por la proliferación de los famosos préstamos hipotecarios conocidos como préstamos sub-preferenciales que se dieron durante la explosión en el sector de bienes y raíces. Estos préstamos depredadores resultaron ser impagables por millones de familias obreras en todo el país. La imposibilidad de pagos de las mensualidades ha alcanzado unos niveles altos sin precedente.

El mercado de viviendas está saturado con millones de casas sin vender mientras que olas de ejecuciones hipotecarias han devastado comunidades enteras de clase trabajadora. Empleos están siendo eliminados y los salarios están siendo reducidos drásticamente con más intensidad en industrias que varían desde la producción de automóviles hasta las de ventas al detal.

¿Es más severa esta crisis?

Históricamente, la clase dominante capitalista ha bregado con las crisis de sobreproducción incrementando la disponibilidad de moneda en un esfuerzo concertado para subir el nivel de liquidez — acceso más fácil a créditos — en la economía e incrementar así el poder colectivo adquisitivo de los consumidores. Las respuestas a las crisis capitalistas recientes como la del 1987 y 1997, destacan esta estrategia. Ambas crisis fueron enfrentadas recortando las tasas de interés por la Reserva Federal de los EEUU y otros bancos centrales, inundando así la economía mundial con liquidez y eventualmente estabilizando los mercados.

No sorprende que la clase dominante capitalista haya intentado otra vez hacer la misma estos últimos meses, desde que las bolsas comenzaran a girar violentamente. Lo que hace esta situación aparentemente más severa es cuán poco efecto las infusiones masivas de liquidez han tenido en términos de estabilizar los

mercados.

Por meses, los banqueros de los bancos centrales y los ministros financieros en los EEUU y en países alrededor del mundo se han apurado a inyectar miles tras miles de millones de dólares en liquidez en los mercados. La Reserva Federal de los EEUU ya ha recortado las tasas de interés varias veces.

Hasta ahora, cada intento de frenar la creciente crisis parece que ha fallado. Los índices más importantes de las acciones no se han recuperado, las ejecuciones hipotecarias y las bancarrotas siguen sin disminuir, el dólar sigue cayendo a nuevos e históricos valores bajos, y el precio del petróleo sigue subiendo a niveles sin precedente.

La crisis económica que actualmente se está desarrollando parece contener en sí profundas contradicciones que no ceden fácilmente a una solución por parte de la clase capitalista o de su estado. ¿Qué significa esto para el futuro?

Es importante recordar las palabras que pronunció el revolucionario ruso V.I. Lenin en su discurso al Segundo Congreso de la Internacional Comunista en julio de 1920. Lenin recordó a los camaradas que ninguna crisis capitalista se comprobaría jamás como “terminal” sin el trabajo de revolucionarios comprometidos dedicados a organizar y movilizar a la clase trabajadora.

En su discurso, Lenin dijo, “Camaradas: Hemos llegado a la cuestión de la crisis revolucionaria como base de nuestra acción revolucionaria. Por un lado, los economistas burgueses presentan esta crisis como un simple “disturbio”, según la elegante expresión de los ingleses. Por el otro, los revolucionarios a veces procuran demostrar que la crisis no tiene ninguna solución. Esto es un error. ... la práctica solamente puede servir como verdadera “prueba” en ésta y en similares cuestiones. Por todo el mundo el régimen burgués está atravesando una tremenda crisis revolucionaria. Los partidos revolucionarios ahora deben demostrar con la práctica que tienen suficiente grado de entendimiento, organización, contacto con las masas explotadas, determinación y habilidad de utilizar esta crisis para llevar a cabo con éxito la revolución victoriosa”.

Las palabras de Lenin tienen la misma relevancia hoy, mientras los revolucionarios se preparan ideológicamente para levantamientos en el futuro, que la que tuvo cuando él las pronunció. □