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Instead of saving people's homes

Gov't gives away billions to big mortgage bankers

Federal law needed to stop foreclosures now!

By Jaimeson Champion

Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson announced on Sept. 7 the government bailout of the two largest financial institutions in the world, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac.

Combined, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac own or insure almost half the \$12 trillion in mortgage loans in the U.S. The government takeover of management is the largest intervention in the affairs of a private company in history.

Paulson's announcement capped a tumultuous past few months at Fannie and Freddie, as mounting losses on mortgage-backed securities, coupled with an inability to raise new capital from investors, brought the financial giants to the brink of insolvency. Fannie and Freddie shares have plunged in value over the past year, falling from over \$60 a share to less than \$5 a share.

The rescue by the Treasury Department has been in the making since July, when Secretary Paulson quickly convinced Congress to hand the Treasury Department a blank check with which to cover the massive financial losses at Fannie and Freddie.

The bailout was made official this past weekend, as the heads of both companies formally signed over control to the federal government. Technically, the government has set up a conservatorship that has the option to buy almost 80 percent of the common stock at low prices and manages the business. About 20 percent of the stock is still privately owned, but its value has decreased drastically in the past year.

Many workers whose pension funds were invested in stocks in these two entities will have their retirement savings wiped out under the government's takeover plan.

Meanwhile, the financial tycoons who ran the companies into the ground appear to be escaping with golden parachutes. Former Fannie Mae CEO Daniel H. Mudd stands to receive a \$9.3 million severance package on top of the more than \$12.4 million in cash and stock compensation he has received since becoming CEO in 2004. Former Freddie Mac CEO Richard F. Syron stands to

receive a \$14.1 million severance deal on top of the \$17.1 million he has already banked since becoming CEO in 2003.

Government for the rich by the rich

In the past two years, millions of working families have lost their homes to foreclosure and eviction, as the worst housing crisis since the Great Depression continues to intensify by the day. Entire working-class communities have been destroyed as the tidal wave of foreclosures continues to surge across the country, leaving boarded-up windows and "for sale" signs in its wake. But the federal government has done absolutely nothing of substance to help the millions of workers affected by foreclosures.

Meanwhile, over the past year, the government has rushed to the aid of nearly every investment bank and financial institution affected by the housing market meltdown. The same financial institutions that helped spark the crisis by underwriting predatory subprime mortgage loans are being bailed out left and right.

The rescue of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac comes in a year where the federal government has already stepped in to rescue the fifth largest investment bank, Bear Stearns, take emergency control of Indy Mac, and provide constant monetary handouts to banks like Citigroup and Lehman Brothers through the Federal Reserve's recently invented Term Auction Facility.

The government tells workers there is no money for universal health care and no money to improve public education, but when a financial institution runs into trouble, billions of dollars in bailout funds instantly materialize. Billions that could have been spent on human needs like housing, healthcare and education will instead be used to clean up the financial mess created by Fannie and Freddie.

In his analysis of the state under capitalism, Marx asserted that the capitalist government is set up to manage the common affairs of the capitalist class. This fact has been evident over the past year, as the two ruling-

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DEMAND MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES!

Fight-back from L.A. to Michigan 6-7

WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

Here, a popular movement stops a foreclosure in Detroit. Marches will take place Sept. 17 in Lansing, Mich. and Los Angeles, Calif. to demand a moratorium to stop all foreclosures and evictions. For information on the Lansing march, to begin at the State Capitol beginning at 11 a.m., go to <http://www.moratorium-mi.org/> or call 313-887-4344. For information on the downtown Los Angeles march, call Rosie at 213-494-8314 or John at 310-677-6407.

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Open letter to Barack Obama

Symbolism alone will not bring change

I have watched with keen interest and renewed hope as your campaign has mobilized millions of Americans behind your message of changing a political system that serves a small economic elite at the expense of the peoples of the United States and the world. Your election as president of the United States, where slaves and Indians were long considered less than human under the law, will undoubtedly constitute a historic moment in race relations in the United States.

Yet symbolism alone will not bring about change. Our young people, Black and Native alike, suffer from police brutality and racial profiling, underfunded schools, and discrimination in employment and housing. I sincerely hope your campaign will inspire some hope among our youth to struggle for a better future. I am, however, concerned that your recent statement on the Sean Bell verdict, in which the New York police officers who fired 50 shots at a young man on the eve of his wedding were acquitted of criminal charges, displays a rather myopic view of the law. Until the law is harnessed to protect the victims of state violence and racism, it will serve as an instrument of repression, just as the slave codes functioned to sustain and legitimize an inhuman institution.

As I can testify from experience, the legal institutions of this nation are far from racial and political neutrality. When judges align with the repressive actions and policies of the executive branch, injustice is rationalized and cloaked in judicial platitudes.

As you may know, I have now served more than three decades of my life as a political prisoner of the federal government for a crime I did not commit. I have served more time than the maximum sentence under the guidelines under which I was sentenced, yet my parole is continually denied (on the rare occasions when I am afforded a hearing) because I refuse to falsely confess.

Amnesty International, South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, the Dalai Lama of Tibet, my Guatemalan sister Rigoberta Menchu, and many of your friends and supporters have recognized me as a political prisoner and called for my immediate release. Millions of people around the world view me as a symbol of injustice against the Indigenous peoples of this land, and I have no doubt that I will go down in history as one of a long line of victims of U.S. government repression, along with Sacco and Vanzetti, the Haymarket Square martyrs, Eugene Debs, Bill Haywood, and others targeted for their political beliefs. But neither I nor my people can afford to wait for history to rectify the crimes of the past.

As a member of the American Indian Movement, I came to the Pine Ridge Oglala reservation to defend the traditional people there from human rights violations carried out by tribal police and goon squads backed by the FBI and the highest offices of the federal government. Our symbolic occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973 inspired Indians across the Americas to struggle for their freedom and treaty rights, but it was also met by a fierce federal siege and a wave of violent repression on Pine Ridge.

In 1974, AIM leader Russell Means campaigned for tribal chairman while being tried by the federal government for his role at Wounded Knee. Although Means



Free Leonard Peltier and all political prisoners.

was barred from the reservation by decree of the U.S.-client regime of Richard Wilson, he won the popular vote, only to be denied office by extensive vote fraud and control of the electoral mechanisms. Wilson's goons proceeded to shoot up pro-Means villages such as Wanblee and terrorize traditional supporters throughout the reservation, killing at least 60 people between 1973 and 1975.

It is long past time for a congressional investigation to examine the degree of federal complicity in the violent counterinsurgency that followed the occupation of Wounded Knee. The tragic shootout that led to the deaths of two FBI agents and one Native man also led not only to my false conviction, but also the termination of the Church Committee, which was investigating abuses by federal intelligence and law enforcement agents, before it could hold hearings on FBI infiltration of AIM. Despite decades of attempts by my attorneys to obtain government documents related to my case, the FBI continues to withhold thousands of documents that might tend to exonerate me or reveal compromising evidence of judicial collusion with the prosecution.

I truly believe the truth will set me free, but it will also signify a symbolic break from America's undeclared war on Indigenous peoples. I hope and pray that you possess the courage and integrity to seek out the truth and the wisdom to recognize the inherent right of all peoples to self-determination, as acknowledged by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. While your statements on federal Indian policy sound promising, your vision of "one America" has an ominous ring for Native peoples struggling to define their own national visions. If freed from colonial constraints and external intervention, Indigenous nations might well serve as functioning models of the freedom and democracy to which the United States aspires.

Yours in the struggle,
Until freedom is won,

—Leonard Peltier # 89637-132 U.S.P.
Lewisburg, P.O. Box 1000, Lewisburg, PA
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Aug. 28

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Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

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Despite heavy police violence

No peace for war-makers at RNC

By Peter Gilbert
St. Paul, Minn.

John McCain spoke of combating "threats to peace and liberty" as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination Sept. 4. Meanwhile, thousands of demonstrators braved waves of riot-police attacks to charge that U.S. imperialism is the greatest threat to peace and liberty facing the world.

Workers, students and other activists held the streets for three hours to demand an end to the racist war on Iraq. Meanwhile, riot police attacked them repeatedly with pepper spray, tear gas, concussion grenades, rubber bullets and wooden clubs.

Police infiltrators also attempted to lead the activists into dangerous situations. Ultimately, the police arrested almost 400 people: legal observers, independent and corporate media, medical workers, workers who were swept up in the raids and activists.

The Anti-War Committee organized the "No Peace for the War Makers" demonstration on the final day of the Republican National Convention. The group had planned to march peacefully from the State Capitol to the Xcel Center, where McCain was speaking, to protest the celebration of imperialism war.

Meredith Aby, a leader of the Minnesota Anti-War Committee, explained: "The eyes of the world are on John McCain tonight. We felt it was imperative that his message of war did not go unchallenged. The police and the city of St. Paul decided to make downtown a Republican speech zone, but our demonstration challenged their decision."

Cops violate demonstrators' rights

Police ignored the right of the organizers to march from the beginning. The cops had refused to issue a permit to march for the requested time, even though permits had been issued for the same time and same march route for other days that week. Refusing to submit to unconstitutional police pressure, organizers deter-

mined to march regardless.

The permitted rally began with an inspiring performance by the band Junkyard Empire and speeches from youth leaders in FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and Students for a Democratic Society, as well as representatives from the Troops Out Now Coalition, the ANSWER Coalition and the Colombia Action Network.

Chanting "McCain says 100 years, we say, 'Out now'" and "End the occupation now," marchers started down Cedar Street at 5 p.m. Lines of riot police blocked the marchers, who then turned up 12th Street and onto the John Ireland Blvd. Bridge, where the riot police again blocked them. About 50 people heading the march, including many leaders of the Anti-War Committee, were arrested when they refused to move until the police allowed the march to pass.

Still determined, marchers turned back to Cedar, pursued by riot police on



Police assault on protesters at the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn.

horses. In a standoff that lasted another hour, protesters resisted rubber bullets and pepper spray, while dozens of others sat down and held the intersection of 12th and Cedar, the main access to two interstate highways from downtown St. Paul.

Riot police then encircled the marchers in groups so they could charge into the crowd and drag out dozens more leaders they had singled out for arrest. For instance, they shot Anti-War Committee organizer Mick Kelly at point-blank range with a rubber bullet as he held the lead banner in the center of the crowd.

Not only leaders were arrested, but also students from numerous local universities at their first protest, who were enraged that the war makers were celebrating attacks on the peoples of Iraq while their tuition bills and student loan interest rates keep rising. FIST activist and videographer Elena Everett documented police soaking a person in a wheelchair with pepper spray as he tried to escape mounted police.

At first the demonstrators focused on solidarity with the people of Iraq and the demand for troops home now. But after three hours of police attacks, many of the students and young workers began to connect the violence of the St. Paul police with that perpetrated daily against the people of Iraq and Palestine and with the daily police violence faced by immigrants and African Americans in the U.S.

Chanting "We all live in a racist police state, a racist police state" and "F—k the police," the marchers eventually tried to escape the continual barrage of concussion grenades and tear gas. Riot police on horses and motorcycles followed, surrounding the demonstrators on the Marion Street Bridge over I-94, and unlawfully arrested some 300 remaining demonstrators.

The three-hour march had disrupted the war-makers' celebration of imperialism and exposed the true nature of the police as protecting not people, but profit and empire.

Legal fightback planned

The Anti-War Committee, the Troops Out Now Coalition and other organizations plan to work together to fight back against the intense repression of the police through lawsuits and political pressure. The ACLU of Minnesota agreed to represent some of the more than 800 demonstrators unlawfully arrested. The National Lawyers Guild and the Center for Constitutional Rights may also be involved.

In response to city residents' outrage, members of the Minneapolis City Council have called for an independent commission to investigate the police department's attacks on activists throughout the week.

The writer spoke at the opening rally on behalf of FIST and the Troops Out Now Coalition and was arrested on the Marion Street Bridge. He was charged with two misdemeanors: failure to obey a lawful order and participation in an unlawful assembly.



Job losses signal change for the worse

By Betsey Piette

All the campaign slogans for "change" can't hide the reality of a U.S. economy rapidly spiraling toward a recession that neither McCain nor Obama can stop. Workers were still sweeping up the confetti at St. Paul's Xcel Energy Center after the Republican convention when the latest U.S. Department of Labor unemployment report sent the stock market plummeting.

According to the report released Sept. 5, the official U.S. unemployment rate jumped to 6.1 percent in August with employers shedding jobs for the eighth consecutive month, while revised numbers for earlier months showed even greater losses.

Over 84,000 workers lost their jobs in August. These job losses occurred across broad sectors of the U.S. economy, from manufacturing to retail and construction. Automakers and auto parts suppliers alone cut 38,000 jobs.

Economists predict things will likely worsen. Ken Goldstein, an economist with the Conference Board, which reports on

consumer confidence, said, "We've seen declines every month, all year long ... but the declines have started to intensify, and will continue through the end of the year, very likely into the first months of 2009."

Economic Policy Institute economists Jared Bernstein and Heidi Shierholz say the jobless figures clearly show "the engine of job growth is not merely stalled, it is solidly operating in reverse, and the job market's deterioration in August suggests these problems are deepening." Bank of America economist Peter Kretzmer noted, "The rapid rise in unemployment points to a U.S. recession." (McClatchy)

The Labor Department reports that over 2.2 million people have been added to jobless rolls over the past 12 months, with a total of 9.4 million U.S. workers unemployed as of Aug. 31, 2008. The number of long-term unemployed—those workers jobless for 27 weeks or more—rose by 589,000 over the last 12 months.

But government figures don't tell the whole story. Labor Department statistics count involuntary part-time jobs as full-time work. The new report excludes farm-workers and undocumented-immigrant

labor and at least 1.6 million "discouraged workers" who have given up looking for jobs that no longer exist. It excludes 2.3 million prisoners, many who toil in slave labor conditions for pennies a day.

The 6.1 percent unemployment figure represents a national average, but for Latin@ and African-American workers, jobless rates are officially in double digits. In August, unemployment for Black workers reached 10.6 percent, with over a half million more workers unable to find work than a year ago. This increase is almost exclusively due to job losses among Black women.

The reported unemployment rate for Latin@ workers reached 8 percent in August. A large number of Latin@ workers were employed in the construction industry, hard hit by the collapse of the housing market.

The number of all single mothers who are unemployed but receive no welfare assistance has grown to over 33 percent. Many women with children have stopped looking for work, unable to afford child care or transportation costs due to low-paying jobs.

Youth unemployment has risen by an alarming 555,000 individuals over the past three months, according to the Labor Department. Even official statistics—which deliberately understate U.S. job losses—can't hide the miserable fact that youth in the U.S. are losing their jobs at an unprecedented rate. Washington, D.C., New York City, Detroit and Chicago all have youth jobless rates over 80 percent.

While jobless rates for youth have consistently been the highest, the latest job losses have mainly impacted adults 25 years and older. The unemployment rate for college graduates rose to 2.7 percent. For adults with less than a high school diploma, the jobless rate jumped to 9.6 percent, the highest increase since May 1996.

A change is coming indeed, though not because of the empty promises of campaigning capitalist politicians. Record high unemployment, coupled with the housing and foreclosure crisis along with rising prices of food, fuel and other consumer goods, is bound to ignite a firestorm of rebellion among the working class. □

School bus drivers mobilize to win historic contract

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Militant rank-and-file action combined with a recognized struggle history and solidarity between labor and the community has resulted in an historic contract victory for USW Local 8751, the Boston School Bus Drivers union. The victory includes over \$6 million in wage and benefit enhancements, significant improvements in working conditions and an historic agreement restricting the use of Global Positioning Systems (GPS), Homeland Security's high-tech supersurveillance incursion into the workplace.

The contract battle was characterized by full militant rank-and-file participation throughout. It succeeded in beating back all concessions and cuts demanded by the company, winning new benefits like long term disability insurance and protections against reductions in force and abuse of global positioning systems, and resolving a five-year backlog of grievances.

Workers made these gains during a time of economic crisis, when concessions and givebacks are the rule. Such a victory showed how workers can fight back, relying on rank-and-file mobilization and militancy.

On the final day of negotiations on Aug. 20, over 200 drivers filled the parking lot of the Local 8751 union hall where the negotiations were taking place, and stayed throughout the day to support the negotiating committee. The negotiators for the company, backed by representatives of the city, the School Committee and the mayor, all had to walk through the militant crowd of drivers to get to the negotiating session.

The same struggle mood filled the negotiating sessions at the end of June and in early July. On June 21, hundreds of drivers rallied at the site of the company's route assignment process for summer runs with the slogans "No contract, no work!" "No cuts, no concessions!" and "Will strike if provoked!"

Community support was strong for the drivers' struggle for a fair contract. The driver workforce is over 85 percent of Haitian origin. The Black community radio station TouchRadio 106.1 hosted several shows featuring the drivers, who exposed the greed of First Student, the British transportation monopoly that has a sweetheart multimillion dollar contract with the School Department plus \$8 million in signing bonuses.

City Councilors Chuck Turner and



BOSTON Drivers rally in June in show of strength. WW PHOTO: ED CHILDS

Charles Yancey have been strong supporters, speaking at the solidarity rally the union held on June 21 and on other occasions. Community activists including members of the Labor Solidarity Committee of the International Action Center and the Work for Quality parent coalition have shown consistent support.

Labor support was evident all along the way, organized by allies Tony Hernandez, organizer for District 35, Painters and Allied Trades, AFL-CIO, and IBEW local 2222 leader Miles Calvey. Over 250 supporters from 15 countries and 35 states sent in an IAC Labor Solidarity Committee online petition to the mayor, the transportation director and the company vice president supporting the drivers.

The drivers' struggle was organically connected to the community's struggle to defend access to quality education for oppressed communities. Together they confronted a racist attack by the mayor and racist forces on the Boston City Council. The union spoke out strongly at

hearings where access to equal education was under attack. Their contract struggle was also a strong factor setting back the racists' plans.

Drivers won important protections against abuse of global positioning systems (GPS). These protections can serve as a model for other unions fighting this homeland security type high-tech attack on the workers. The union made significant gains in restricting the abuse of GPS for cutting drivers' wages and hours and disciplining drivers.

This big-brother style high-tech surveillance represents a clear and present danger to workers in every industry throughout the country, from letter carriers to tow truck operators to taxi drivers. The school bus drivers broke ground by challenging Homeland Security and the state's spying on the workers and thus becoming part of management.

The full text of the agreement on GPS can be found on the union's Web site at www.bostonschoolbusunion.org. □

Labor cannot rely on the Democrats!

Dear Editor,

Summer is ending, leaves are falling and kids are going back to school. Labor Day has come and gone, and with seasonal regularity, union members are once again being urged by their leaders to work for the candidates of the Democratic Party. Tens of millions of dues dollars will wind up going to support these so-called "friends of labor."

Yet time and time again the Democrats act against the interests of the working class. Who can forget NAFTA, the destruction of welfare and the bipartisan support for wars against Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq again and (unless we stop it) Iran?

Another example of the Democratic Party's subservience to Big Business just occurred in Ohio last week.

Early this year the state's various unions joined forces to collect the hundreds of thousands of signatures needed to place a proposal—compelling employers with 25 or more employees to provide seven paid sick days—on the ballot in November. Union volunteers, including me, took petitions to their union meetings and union picnics, to their churches, and out in the community. The petition drive was successful and polls suggested the measure would pass by a wide margin.

Needless to say, Ohio's corporate elite were dead set against the Healthy Families Act. Democratic Gov. Ted Strickland, elected in 2006 with broad labor support, at first appeared lukewarm on the matter, but in the end lined up solidly behind the capitalists. "Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher," according to the Sept. 5 Cleveland Plain Dealer, "said that behind

the scenes he and Strickland told SEIU officials that their opposition 'would not be cosmetic. We were going to actively oppose it and actively campaign against it.'"

Perhaps Fisher, a career politician, never had to go to work sick because he couldn't afford to lose a day's pay. Perhaps Strickland, an ordained minister, never had to worry about being fired by the flock if he stayed home with a sick child.

As a UAW activist for 21 years I would have liked to see, for once, some anger on the part of the union leadership. Unfortunately Service Employees International Union 1199 has done the exact opposite and—without input from the rank-and-file or even the other unions that campaigned for Healthy Families—withdrawn the ballot initiative. "We respect the governor's wish to avoid a negative and divisive fight that could hurt Ohio," stated Becky Williams, president of SEIU District 1199. Apparently 1199 feels obligated to the governor for his purported support last year for the union's effort to organize home health care workers in Ohio.

This quid pro quo arrangement exemplifies corporate model business unionism at its worst. It's time to abandon these regressive strategies and organize the masses of unorganized workers who hunger for a living wage, paid health care and the basic job security that is nonexistent without a union contract.

Hooray for papers like Workers World and candidates like Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente, who represent a genuine voice for workers and oppressed.

—Martha Grevatt

Real scandal behind

The removal of Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire
Detroit

On Sept. 4 Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick pled guilty to two felony charges and resigned from office. The criminal case against Kilpatrick flowed from testimony delivered by him and his former chief-of-staff, Christine Beatty, during a civil suit that went to trial in 2007.

In the civil trial the city was found guilty of dismissing two high-ranking police officers who claimed they were terminated after investigating alleged wrongdoings by the mayor, Beatty and others within his Executive Protection Unit. A \$8.4-million settlement was approved by the Detroit City Council as "damages" to the fired cops.

This past January, the Detroit Free Press obtained text messages from the mayor's communication provider suggesting that Kilpatrick and Beatty had lied under oath during the civil trial.

Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy filed criminal charges against Kilpatrick and Beatty. Consequently, the entire political establishment—the City Council, the state attorney general and the governor of Michigan—became involved.

The mayor has been sentenced to 120 days in the Wayne County Jail and five years probation and ordered to pay \$1 million in restitution to the city of Detroit. Detroit City Council President Kenneth V. Cockrel Jr. will assume Kilpatrick's duties on Sept. 18 until a special election can be held in 2009.

The corporate-controlled media have made it appear that the major reason for Detroit's worsening economic and social conditions was Kwame Kilpatrick. This could not be further from the truth.

Detroit, southeastern Michigan and the entire state have been suffering for years from capitalist economic restructuring. Before the current crisis, the city's growth was fueled by the emergence of the automotive industry during the early and middle decades of the 20th century.

Detroit played a major role in the rise of industrial unions, setting trends for many other struggles against the bosses. The efforts of the trade union movement developed alongside, and in conjunction with, the national struggles of the African-American population who fought segregation and institutional racism for decades.

In 1967 the African-American working class in Detroit rose up in rebellion. In the aftermath of that rebellion, African Americans, under largely working-class leadership, fought to gain access to employment, housing, education and various political offices and structures. Since the 1970s the owners of capital have strategically relocated outside the region into areas where a higher rate of profit could be accrued through the super-exploitation of labor.

Detroit's population was nearly 2 million at the beginning of the 1950s. The census bureau now predicts that approximately 800,000 people reside in the city. Vast areas of land are vacant as a result of razed homes, commercial structures, former industrial facilities and apartments. Many of the former city-owned institutions such as the Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit Historical Museum, Detroit Receiving Hospital and Detroit Zoo have been turned over to private interests.

Detroit's first African-American mayor, Coleman A. Young, who governed from 1974 to 1993, built his political reputa-



Protest at Mayor's Conference on Foreclosures, November 2007 in Detroit. Writer Abayomi Azikiwe is fourth from left.

tion through grassroots involvement as a left-wing trade union organizer with the National Negro Labor Councils during the 1940s and early 1950s.

Young was brought before the Legislative Committee on Un-American Activities during the early 1950s. He stood up to right-wing Congressional members, challenging their racist remarks and refusing to answer questions related to his membership and ties with the communist left.

Deepening economic depression

In 1973 Young, with support from a broad alliance of African-American political forces, along with progressive and liberal whites, became the first Black mayor of Detroit. He immediately set out to rid the city of racist cops and other municipal employees, instituting an affirmative action program that was challenged by law-enforcement and other reactionary political forces.

However, compromises were necessary to maintain capitalist investments in Detroit. At the close of the Young administration, the city was suffering from massive job losses, an inadequate and declining public transportation system and the collapse of the municipal infrastructure.

The second African-American mayor, Dennis W. Archer, pursued a more moderate line and instituted policies that reversed some of the gains made under Young, especially affirmative action programs.

After Kilpatrick took office in 2002, investments were made in downtown Detroit, including the construction of permanent casino hotels, tourists and entertainment attractions and the emergence of high-priced real estate developments. The city hosted the All-Star Baseball game in 2005 and the Super Bowl in 2006.

However, the surrounding neighborhoods continued to decline. In recent years, the foreclosure crisis struck Detroit with devastating impact. In fact the overall economic conditions throughout the entire metropolitan area, including both city and suburbs, have been in constant decline. It has been reported that approximately half a million jobs have been lost in Michigan since the beginning of this decade.

A recent economic report released by the U.S. Census Bureau indicated that

in 2007 incomes fell for the third year in a row. The state poverty rate is officially designated as 14 percent, one percentage point higher than the national level. It is estimated that one in three people living in Detroit are impoverished, making it the poorest large U.S. city. Flint and Kalamazoo, Mich., each have a poverty rate of 35.5 percent, higher than that in Detroit.

Michigan's income level has fallen to 27th in the country. It had been 19th in 2003. "Michigan was the only state that saw both a rise in poverty and a decline in income." (Detroit News, Aug. 27)

As a result of the surge in the poverty level in Michigan, it is estimated that 48.8 percent of children in Detroit live below the official poverty line, which is \$21,027 for a family of four with two children. In 2006 the city's child poverty rate was 43.9 percent. The proportion of children living in poverty statewide rose to 19.4 percent, above the national level of 18 percent.

The massive downsizing in the automobile industry has contributed immensely to the increasing poverty rate. In a Sept. 5 Detroit Free Press article, Justin Hyde writes, "Automakers and parts suppliers shed 38,000 jobs in the past 30 days, and the industry has lost 127,800 jobs over the past year, losses that powered the national unemployment rate higher according to federal data released."

"The job cuts in auto manufacturing, combined with 14,000 job cuts from car dealers and auto parts vendors, were the largest contributors to the 6.1 percent unemployment rate for August, according to the U.S. Department of Labor. The rate is the highest since September 2003."

Michigan's current official unemployment rate stood at 8.5 percent in July, the highest in the country, though the real rate is actually much higher.

Fightback movement much needed

Although the deepening capitalist crisis is clear in Detroit and throughout the state of Michigan, working class and oppressed people know these enormous difficulties can in no way be placed solely at the doorstep of outgoing Mayor Kilpatrick.

Nonetheless, the spokespeople for the interests of capital are seeking to blame Detroit's political leadership and the city's population for the economic failures

of the ruling class. A recent editorial written by Michigan Chronicle Publisher Sam Logan reprinted in the Detroit Free Press attempted not only to blame the African-American masses for the current crisis but to call for the removal of the current leadership in order to replace them with white middle- and upper-class elements from outside the city.

In a fierce response to Logan's editorial, Andrea Egypt, a leading member of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice and a long-time municipal employee, published a rebuttal in the Aug. 10 Michigan Citizen which exposed the real agenda behind the advocacy for the mass relocation of African Americans from Detroit.

Egypt says in the editorial entitled "Sam Logan's Recipe Will Breed a Worse Disaster," "He [Logan] forgets the key ingredients—that if left out—would not describe accurately the real reasons for the city's decline."

"The billions spent to date on targeting Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan in the so-called war on terror. This military spending has stripped federal funding from the City of Detroit."

Egypt also points to the "trickle-down economic seasonings of the Bush-Cheney administration and Congress that continues to appropriate more war funding until we win, whatever that really means."

She continues, "The criminal banking subprime lending crisis has caused massive foreclosures in Detroit and throughout the metropolitan region, putting working families and property taxpayers out of their homes, which gives them no choice but to leave the City and further erode the tax base."

On Sept. 6 the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions wrote an open letter to incoming Mayor Cockrel and the Detroit City Council as a whole, challenging City officials to petition Governor Granholm.

The letter reads in part: "During the past year, while city government has been consumed with the mayoral crisis, thousands of Detroiters have lost their homes due to the foreclosure epidemic that has hit our city. Our neighborhoods are being destroyed. Property values have plummeted. Last Sunday, the New York Times reported that 18 percent of Detroit's homes are empty, the highest percentage of any city except New Orleans."

"The people of Detroit cannot stand to wait one more day for the imposition of an Emergency Moratorium to stop foreclosures. ... We are formally requesting that as your first acts of this new period, Mayor Cockrel and Detroit City Council both formally apply to Governor Granholm to declare a State of Emergency in Detroit and demand she use her police powers to place a two-year Moratorium on Foreclosures in the city."

"This action will spur passage of Senate Bill 1306 by the Michigan Legislature, which would place a two-year Moratorium on Foreclosures throughout the state."

The letter concludes with a request to support the Sept. 17 mass demonstration at the State Capitol in Lansing to demand passage of SB 1306.

Efforts aimed at ending the wars abroad, resulting in the mass removal and slaughter of people in the so-called developing countries, must be linked with building a strong fightback movement aimed at ending the continuing cycle of poverty and oppression that is affecting growing numbers of people in the U.S. □

Labor, community coalition fights foreclosures in California

By John Parker
Los Angeles

Wednesday, Sept. 10, won't be a day of "business as usual." Day after day newspapers advertise the "wonderful opportunity" of buying bargain-basement-priced homes at various auctions. And, so far, this mid-September week was no exception.

But that Wednesday a block association and representatives of SEIU's second largest union local in California, along with the large and influential community organization Hermandad Mexicana, will be challenging the insensitive celebratory nature of these events. These organizations will protest at one of the major outdoor auctions of Los Angeles County homes.

Organizers plan to shame the auction organizers outside of the Norwalk Courthouse for acting like vultures. They believe that instead of trying to find a solution to this state of emergency disaster in California, these auctioneers are cashing in on and exacerbating the misery of others.

According to realtytrac.com, California already has 338,000 foreclosures filed in 2008, making it the number one U.S. state in foreclosures, with one-quarter of the 1,348,000 filed foreclosures countrywide this year. The crisis in California prompted the union and community organizations to create a Labor/Community Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions, which meets at the SEIU Local 721 office located in downtown Los Angeles.

This action will contribute to the building of a major press conference and protest at the Los Angeles downtown Federal Building on Sept. 17, where the Labor-Community Coalition will demand an immediate national state of emergency be declared along with a national moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. To help mobilize for this and future actions, contact the Labor-Community Coalition at 310- 677-6407.

The groups chose Sept. 17 to coincide with a mass protest action at the Michigan state capital of Lansing, which will demand the voting on and passage of a moratorium bill in that state.

The growing activism and influence of various communities of color is reflected in this latest struggle against economic injustice here in Los Angeles—the city that saw the largest demonstrations for immigrant rights. Some of the major organizations that led those events, like Hermandad Mexicana Nacional led by Gloria Saucedo, are participating in the auction protest and the Sept. 17 action. The SEIU Local 721 grouping initiating the Labor/Community coalition was the Latino Caucus led by Rosie Martinez, who is also the executive board member of the Local.

Also participating in both events are the organizations

HAMTRAMCK UNITED

Fights attack on human rights ruling

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Hamtramck, Mich.

A growing coalition called Hamtramck United Against Discrimination is fighting back against right-wing forces intent on repealing the city's recently enacted and very progressive Human Rights Ordinance. The coalition is receiving widespread support from many Hamtramck residents as well as numerous organizations, including Michigan Equality and the Triangle Foundation.

In June 2008 the city council passed by a 6-1 vote a Human Rights Ordinance with the support of Mayor Karen Majewski. The ordinance expanded resident protections to include sexuality and gender identity and expression. The ordinance ensures that all residents in this city of 23,000 are protected from discrimination in areas including housing, employment and use of public facilities.

Hamtramck is a municipality located within the city of Detroit. It has a sizeable lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) population and is also the most multinational city in Michigan. At least 22 languages are spoken in Hamtramck's K-12 schools.

Shortly after this progressive vote, right-wing forces backed by the Thomas More Legal Center and the American Family Association of Michigan and its presi-

BAYAN-USA, representing the Filipino community; the South Asian Network; and the African American Committee of SEIU Local 721. Rev. Richard Estrada of La Placita Church in Los Angeles and Rev. Meri Ka Ra Byrd of KRST Unity Center for African Spirituality will also participate.

Given the disproportionate effect the foreclosure crisis has had on people of color—Black and Latin@ communities have lost over \$200 billion combined in personal wealth as a direct result of the crisis—their rising influence in the movement to stop foreclosures comes as no surprise.

Who's responsible?

On Sept. 6 the Mortgage Bankers Association told the Los Angeles Times that "the one-two punch of declining home prices and resetting adjustable-rate loans in California and Florida is largely responsible for unprecedented national foreclosure numbers." The bankers added that although California and Florida account for 18 percent of the nation's population, they account for 39 percent of the nation's foreclosure starts, which occur once a lender turns a delinquent loan over to lawyers.

Gov't gives away billions to big mortgage bankers

Continued from page 1

class political parties have quickly come together to rubber-stamp the nonstop bailouts concocted by the Treasury and the Fed. Indeed, the U.S. Congress essentially handed over its constitutionally designated power of the purse by giving the Treasury Department a blank check for Fannie and Freddie.

Developing a movement for workers by workers

During these excruciatingly tough economic times for workers, the federal government's handouts to the banks and financial institutions are blatantly criminal. Despite claims that the U.S. government is a democracy run by the people for the people, it is painfully clear that the rich and their hirelings run the government for the benefit of the rich.

Workers cannot afford to wait for another federal "stimulus" package or other band-aid solutions to lessen the economic suffering. Workers must unite in their own common class interest and take the fight to the capitalists and their representatives in the government. The working class must use this period of capitalist instability to

Why California and Florida? Well, according to the Mortgage Bank Association, you can blame the lenders and banks for that. As paraphrased by the Times: "Tricky pay-option adjustable-rate mortgages, which allow borrowers to pay so little that their loan balances rise, were more common in California and Florida." And these adjustable rate schemes, according to the bank association, were made to borrowers with decent credit scores.

In addition, subprime adjustable mortgages were offered to "highest-risk" borrowers more frequently in California.

So, if these banks admittedly created this crisis here in a state where it supposedly never rains, why is money raining down to bail out Freddie, Fannie, Indy and many more to come, allowing them what Treasury officials called "breathing room," while homeowners and tenants are gasping in debt and foreclosure.

Given that California also suffers from high unemployment rates of over 7 percent compared to the nation's average of 6.1 percent in August, according to the latest federal labor statistics, the crisis of foreclosures and evictions is far from over and will inspire more workers and their unions here to come up for air and join the struggle against this government's latest war on the poor. □

take the offensive and advance working-class demands.

With the government now assuming the day-to-day management of the two mortgage giants, working-class and community organizations have the opportunity to call on that same government to place a moratorium on all foreclosures of mortgages held by or guaranteed by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac. Paulson has announced a bailout of the rich. It is an outrage that there is no government aid for workers and poor people to keep a roof over their heads.

Coalitions in Michigan and California are holding protests on Sept. 17 (see articles pages 6-7) to demand such a moratorium on a statewide basis. The national bailout of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac cries for a call for a national moratorium on foreclosures to protect people's right to a home. □

DETROIT MORATORIUM ON FORECLOSURES AND EVICTIONS, WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK; LONGEST WALK 2 PHOTO: LAURA AYERS; NEW YORK DEMONSTRATION AGAINST U.S. INVASION OF IRAQ, WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



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Michigan activists demand moratorium on foreclosures

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

People from around Michigan will demand the state legislature enact a two-year moratorium or freeze on home foreclosures and evictions. As activists and victims of home foreclosures and evictions rally at the state Capitol Sept. 17 for Senate Bill 1306, they will do so against a backdrop of economic devastation that has engulfed this Midwestern state for over a decade.

Michigan leads the country in plant closings, unemployment and poverty. It is one of the leading states in terms of home foreclosures caused by predatory lending and the avarice of the banks and mortgage companies. For those who are current on their house payments, property values are plummeting as neighborhoods fill with abandoned and stripped homes.

SB 1306 allows homeowners to go to court for an automatic stay to delay the sheriff's sale for two years or extend the redemption period from six months to two years. The court would set a reasonable repayment plan for the two years based in part on the borrower's income and ability to pay. The moratorium provides a reprieve for a long-suffering population whose economic prospects grow dimmer with each passing day. It gives people emergency relief while the struggle continues for a long-term solution to the crisis brought on by the banks.

Activists on Sept. 17 will demand that SB 1306 be moved immediately out of the Senate Banking and Financial Services Committee, where it has languished since its introduction by Sen. Hansen Clarke in May, and that public hearings immediately be held around the state on the foreclosure and eviction crisis.

Economic crisis results in fightback

Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice (MECAWI) activists in early 2007 recognized that the foreclosure epidemic then in full swing in Michigan was the result of two important factors: racist subprime mortgages and predatory lending, already severely impacting workers, the poor and people of color nationwide, coupled with a long-term economic depression in a state where over 460,000 jobs have vanished in the last eight years.

MECAWI organizers began to popularize the demand for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions. In February 2007 activists rallied outside the governor's state of the state address in Lansing. They demanded Gov. Jennifer Granholm utilize her executive powers under Michigan law to declare an economic emergency and impose a moratorium on foreclosures statewide.

In March 2007, at a town hall meeting called by the governor to discuss the economic crisis in Michigan, MECAWI leader and people's attorney Jerry Goldberg was heard on statewide media citing relevant case law in support of such measures and challenging Granholm to use her executive powers to alleviate the crisis. Although she then acknowledged her ability to do so, Granholm to this day refuses to even recognize the foreclosure epidemic.

In November 2007 MECAWI organizers began a broad campaign for a declaration of a state of emergency and a moratorium. Organizing meetings were held and activists began mass leafleting and outreach.

They went to phony "prevent foreclosure" forums put on by the state attorney general, where lenders and bankers came to supposedly assist people behind in their house payments or in foreclosure. When they were thrown out of Cobo Hall in Detroit, where the forums were held, attorneys took the city and the attorney general to federal court, where they won a First Amendment victory guaranteeing the right of moratorium activists to leaflet and petition at these events.

MECAWI called another protest outside the governor's state of the state speech on Feb. 6 of this year. Some 150 people joined in a militant action demanding Gov. Granholm declare a state of emergency and a moratorium. Victims of foreclosure and eviction and those facing foreclosure spoke on the steps of the Capitol demanding relief.

Activists held demonstrations targeting the federal department of Housing and Urban Development for violating its own regulations by not allowing continued occupancies by tenants of FHA-backed homes after foreclosure. Progressive attorneys sued in federal court and won the right of Detroit's Thelma Curtis to stay in her HUD home.

MECAWI activists worked closely with state Sen.

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Hansen Clarke of Detroit to draft legislation for a two-year foreclosure moratorium similar to the Michigan Moratorium Act in place during the Great Depression. The Michigan Supreme Court upheld that law as constitutional, basing its ruling on the U.S. Supreme Court decision in Home Building & Loan Association v. Blaisdell, which upheld a foreclosure moratorium passed in Minnesota in the 1930s. During the 1930s foreclosure moratoriums were in place in 25 states.

Moratorium NOW! Coalition launched

In April 2008, after a press conference announcing the introduction of Clarke's moratorium bill in the Michigan Legislature, MECAWI offered its next moratorium organizing meeting to launch a statewide coalition. The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions was formed. Among the coalition's multinational corps of activists and leaders are people who have faced foreclosures and evictions themselves, including many women in the forefront of this struggle.

The coalition has held numerous rallies, demonstrations, meetings and speak-outs. It successfully stopped the foreclosure and eviction by Countrywide Bank of a disabled senior in Detroit. Activists have protested outside banks and at residences facing foreclosure. They have engaged in several direct actions to move people's belongings back in after bailiffs enforced the lenders' repossession of their homes.

The coalition's legal team has represented dozens of individuals with predatory loans and illegal evictions and stopped many foreclosures. Attorneys are challenging the legality of the Mortgage Electronic Registration System (MERS) in carrying out foreclosures. MERS, a recording service, holds no interest in home loans, yet it is the foreclosing party in tens of thousands of foreclosures in Michigan and millions nationwide.

Coalition activists have distributed over 50,000 leaflets and have done outreach throughout Michigan. Organizers have gone to Flint, Saginaw, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Battle Creek, Cheboygan, Ypsilanti and other cities, building a grassroots movement in support of SB 1306 and a moratorium on foreclosures.

Struggle to win moratorium continues

State Sen. Randy Richardville, chair of the banking committee, has refused to move SB 1306 out of his committee, where it has languished since its introduction. Activists recently demonstrated outside the senator's home in Monroe, Mich., after Richardville failed to answer the coalition's certified letter calling for public hearings on the bill.

In an interview with journalist Diane Bukowski, Richardville said the coalition used a "terrorist approach" by protesting at his residence. He claimed there was no recession in Michigan and that "nobody forced people to take out mortgages."

Bukowski listed some of the financial contributors to Richardville's last election campaign: HSBC North America, an international financing and mortgage corporation; the political action committees of Michigan Realtors, Comerica Bank, J.P. Morgan Chase and the Michigan Chamber of Commerce; Michigan Manufactured Housing; Michigan Land Title Association; and the Mortgage Bankers Association of Michigan. (The Michigan Citizen, Sept. 7)

Coalition organizers say they will continue to demand Sen. Richardville and the banking committee call public hearings on SB 1306 around the state. They will demand the new administration in Detroit make a formal application to the governor for a state of emergency and a foreclosure moratorium in the city. They will continue to build a grassroots movement to stop all foreclosures and evictions.

The dual catastrophe of economic crisis and mass foreclosures has now spread to every part of the United States. Michigan activists have inspired people elsewhere to begin organizing in response, such as in Los Angeles, where a new union-led movement is demanding a moratorium on foreclosures in California. A victory won in Michigan will have important repercussions nationwide in the struggle to stop the crisis devastating poor and working families everywhere. □

A study in contrasts

Who's developing more wind power—U.S. or China?

By Deirdre Griswold

The technology for harvesting clean power from the wind has improved greatly in the last few years. That's the good news. It offers hope to countries all over the world that are reeling from the effects of climate change directly linked to the burning of fossil fuels for energy.

But in the United States, the country most responsible for global warming, the prospect that wind power will replace dirty fuels on a meaningful scale any time soon is very dim. What's the problem?

Capitalist competition and lack of planning are holding back the rationalization of the national power grid, to the point where existing wind farms have to be turned off just because transmission lines are inadequate.

By contrast, the People's Republic of China is forging ahead, moving in two years from 10th to fifth in the world in production of wind power. And its plan to greatly increase the pace of production over the next 10 years or so is boggling the minds of environmentalists and engineers everywhere. China's plan is comprehensive, expanding not only the generation

of electricity from wind power but the infrastructure to transmit the power from high-wind regions to areas of great population density.

An article entitled "Wind Energy Bumps Into Power Grid's Limits" sums up the problem in the U.S.: "Wind advocates say that just two of the windiest states, North Dakota and South Dakota, could in principle generate half the nation's electricity from turbines. But the way the national grid is configured, half the country would have to move to the Dakotas in order to use the power." (New York Times, Aug. 26)

Many of the transmission lines are old and weren't built for modern demand. More electricity just can't be squeezed onto them.

The article continues: "[E]xperts say that without a solution to the grid problem, effective use of wind power on a wide scale is likely to remain a dream.

"The power grid is balkanized, with about 200,000 miles of power lines divided among 500 owners. Big transmission upgrades often involve multiple companies, many state governments and numerous permits. Every addition to the grid provokes fights with property owners.

"These barriers mean that electrical generation is growing four times faster than transmission, according to federal figures."

This problem also applies to solar power. Some states, especially in the arid West, get abundant sunshine and are well suited to be sites for vast solar-power farms. But that sunny prospect is being dashed because they won't be able to transmit their power very far, either, without a major upgrade in the power grid.

And who wants to invest in making that happen? Here's where all the wrangling and poisonous competition come in. Privately owned power companies don't exist to provide more power to the people. They exist to make money, profits. They're interested in the bottom line—this month, this year, not 10 or 20 years from now. They don't want to put their profits into upgrading the grid.

Competition prevents long-term planning

The more complex modern society becomes, the greater the need to take into consideration not only demand and supply for a particular product, but the envi-

ronmental impact and how each element in the web of industry fits with the others. And that takes long-term planning.

What kind of planning is possible when 500 different companies are competing with each other to make the most profit out of the power grid? What kind of planning is possible when each private capitalist interest has its own bought politicians, who think only of how to please the corporate lobbyists who keep them in office?

Meanwhile, many workers can't pay their bills for heat, transportation, lights and other essentials based on energy. The oil and "defense" companies have foisted on the people a cruel war to control the oil-rich Middle East that has already cost 20 or 30 times what it would take to fix the electric grid.

Nothing less than a mighty upheaval of the working class in this country can cut through the straightjacket of corporate greed that is strangling this economy.

To see what is possible, let's look at China. In 2006, only 1 percent of its energy came from wind—the same percentage that the U.S. gets today. But it was already number one in the world in the production of off-grid wind turbine generators, each of which could produce from 100 watts up to 10 kilowatts of energy. These were being supplied to communities that otherwise might get no electricity at all.

China had begun building wind farms—it had 59 such farms with 1,854 wind turbine generators. It was number 10 in the world for in-grid installed wind power capacity, generating 1.26 gigawatts. (EcoWorld, July 15, 2006) A gigawatt is 1 billion watts.

Just two years later, China has moved up from 10th to fifth place in the world. Its installed wind capacity is now at least 6 GW. (treehugger.com)

And this is just the beginning. "In April 2008 the National Development and Reform Commission revised its 11th Five Year Plan Period plan for wind power development from 5 GW to 10 GW by 2010. ... More impressively, wind power industry statistics show that by the end of 2008 China's total installed base of wind power production will have already reached 10 GW, two years ahead of the revised plan. Some experts are estimating that by 2010, the total installed capacity for wind power generation in China will reach 20 GW and that by 2020 China's installed base of wind power will total 100 GW." ("China's Wind Power Industry—Blowing Past Expectations," Renewable Energy World, June 16, 2008)

"China will likely achieve its target of getting 15 percent of its energy from renewable sources by 2020" (ecogeek.com), much of this from wind.

Just 60 years ago, China was an impoverished, underdeveloped country. Today it has shown its remarkable prowess in the Olympics while also showing the world how to move toward sustainable development.

What made this possible was a mass, revolutionary movement led by Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist Party that, in 1949, broke the power of the capitalist and feudal ruling classes who had prevented the Chinese people from reaching their true potential. □

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U.S. attack in Pakistan widens Asian war

By Gloria Rubac

The U.S. military carried out a pre-drawn commando raid in Pakistan by helicopter-borne Special Operations ground forces on Sept. 3, the first admitted incursion into Pakistan by U.S. ground troops since the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

The ground assault was on the village of Angor Adda in South Waziristan on the Afghan border. Pakistani officials said around 20 people were killed in the attack, which drew a furious response from the Pakistani government.

The Pakistani foreign minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, told Parliament on Sept. 4 that the U.S. raid into South Waziristan violated Pakistan's national sovereignty. He also said the raid failed to attack any so-called Taliban militants.

Pakistan is the sixth most populous country in the world, with over 172 million people, and has the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia.

Until this ground attack, NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan have carried out numerous air strikes and artillery attacks in the border region of Pakistan. The U.S. occupiers of Afghanistan claim that Al-Qaeda and pro-Taliban fighters live in sanctuaries in northwest Pakistan's Pashtun tribal areas where they organize attacks in Afghanistan.

The Bush administration has criticized Pakistan recently for not doing enough to stop attacks against NATO and U.S. forces in Afghanistan from bases inside of Pakistan.

This raid could signal the beginning of a broader campaign by Special Operations inside Pakistan, a secret plan that U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has reportedly been advocating for months

inside Bush's war council.

Even though the U.S. troops in Afghanistan function under a NATO chain of command, the Special Operations forces that carried out this attack answer only to U.S. commanders.

In the days following the ground raid, several strikes from remotely piloted U.S. aircraft were carried out on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border.

According to Al Jazeera, on Sept. 4 four Taliban fighters were killed and five wounded in a missile attack in North Waziristan.

On Sept. 5 a missile strike from reconnaissance aircraft killed a dozen people in a group of houses in northern Afghanistan. Residents from the Pakistani village of Miran Shah said the strike hit two residential compounds in Al Must, less than a mile from the Pakistani border. According to Ahsan Dawar, a journalist in Miran Shah, among the dead were two women, three children and several men of Arab descent.

On Sept. 6 Asif Ali Zardari was elected president of Pakistan. Zardari is co-chair of the Pakistan People's Party, formerly led by his late wife, Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated in December 2007.

Zardari will take charge of a country that has been used, disrupted and divided by the U.S. war in Afghanistan. Nearly 1,200 people in Pakistan have been killed in bombings and suicide attacks in the past year.

Reuters reported on Sept. 5 that health officials were seeing an outbreak of cholera in refugees in northwest Pakistan. An estimated 300,000 people have fled the fighting in the area, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

"The most immediate need remains access to clean water and sanitation. No food, health care or shelter is going to be of any good if people get water-borne diseases," said Pascal Cuttat, a Red Cross official reporting at a Sept. 5 news briefing.

During Saturday's voting, the problem was underscored in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshwar when a suicide car-bomber rammed a police checkpoint, killing 16 people and wounding more than 80, according to Al Jazeera.

Zardari succeeds Pervez Musharraf, who resigned last month under threat of impeachment. Before that, Zardari spent 11 years in jail on corruption

charges. Though these charges have never been proven, he grew rich while Benazir Bhutto was president and was given the nickname of "Mr. 10 percent," implying he was taking a cut from many business deals.

A White House spokesperson said Sept. 6, "President Bush looks forward to working with him, Prime Minister Gilani and the government of Pakistan on issues important to both countries, including counter-terrorism and making sure Pakistan has a stable and secure economy." (International Herald Tribune, Sept. 7)

On Sept. 8, five missiles hit a compound allegedly belonging to one of Pakistan's most prominent Taliban leaders in North Waziristan. The missiles killed 23 people, including eight children, and injured 18. Reports say Srajuddin Haqqani, son of Jalaluddin Haqqani, ran the compound. Neither Haqqani was at the compound

during the attack.

Washington accuses the elder Haqqani of organizing recent attacks against U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan. He is also accused of an assassination attempt against Afghan president Hamid Karzai. During the time Soviet Union troops were helping defend the revolutionary Afghan government in the 1980s, U.S.-armed fighters were allied with Haqqani. According to the recent book, "The Bin Ladens" by Steve Coll, at that time Haqqani aided and protected Osama bin Laden.

U.S. imperialist destruction in the region has inflicted terror in both Afghanistan and Pakistan where U.S. troops are supposedly fighting terrorism. The people of Afghanistan and Pakistan have already shown their hostility to Western occupation, and there is no reason to think this hostility will diminish as U.S. and NATO military incursions kill more Pakistani and Afghan civilians. □

U. of Arizona linked to war on immigrants

By Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Ariz.

The university is using its proximity to the border to strengthen its ties to the war machine and expand its relations with corporations like Boeing and Raytheon. Meanwhile, it tosses workers aside and raises the tuition for students. While Arizona state cuts back needed social services and prepares to lay off workers in other state agencies, the federal government is handing out millions for scientists to develop new devices for terrorizing and hunting down people.

As the capitalist economic crisis deepens there are more and more towers, surveillance cameras, always-on stadium lights, and brutal ICE and Border Patrol Agents occupying the communities as well as the border areas in this state. These developments show the need for protests to demand that the millions of dollars squandered on technology for repression be used for jobs and human needs, not for war and occupation. In Arizona in particular the militarization of the Southwest border is an issue that directly impacts both documented and undocumented workers and all students. □

Workers' solidarity has no borders



The May 1 Coalition, which fights for rights for undocumented immigrants, sent a delegation to the Sept. 7 Labor Day march in New York City along with tens of thousands of unionized workers.

—Report and photo by Anne Pruden

Pakistani imprisoned in U.S.

Protesters demand: 'Free Aafia Siddiqui!'

By Heather Cottin

U.S. troops in Afghanistan shot Dr. Aafia Siddiqui and took her into custody in July. She lies in solitary confinement in the Manhattan Detention Center, with an open scar from her sternum to her lower abdomen. She has not seen her lawyer, Elizabeth Fink, because if she leaves her cell she faces an excruciating strip search.

Aafia Siddiqui is a 36-year-old Pakistani national who is a graduate of MIT and holds a Ph.D. in neuroscience from Brandeis University. On a visit home to Karachi in 2003, she was disappeared along with her three children. Her family believes the U.S. government captured, tortured and incarcerated her.

The U.S. government claims Siddiqui is an Al Qaeda terrorist. Federal officials deny knowledge of her whereabouts for the last five years. But on July 17, U.S. troops arrested her outside the governor's office in Afghanistan's Ghazni province after police searched her handbag and allegedly found documents on making explosives as well as descriptions of New York City landmarks. This story is at odds with the one the Afghan police tell. According to the Afghan officials, Siddiqui was arrested with maps of Ghazni, a city in central Afghanistan, including one of the governor's house.

When U.S. troops requested Siddiqui be handed over to them, Afghan police refused, so U.S. soldiers disarmed them. The U.S. troops, "thinking that she had explosives and would attack them as a suicide bomber, shot her and arrested her." The U.S. troops claimed she somehow managed to grab an M-4 rifle in a police station and shot at them. (Reuters, Aug. 14)

Human rights groups said they believe Dr. Siddiqui had been secretly detained since 2003, much of the time in U.S. custody at the Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. Dr. Siddiqui's 12-year-old son is still in



WWW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN

New York's Pakistani community protests treatment of jailed Dr. Aafia Siddiqui.

prison in Afghanistan. No one knows where her two youngest children are.

"We believe Aafia has been in custody ever since she disappeared," said one of her lawyers, Elaine Whitfield Sharp. (New York Times, Aug. 5)

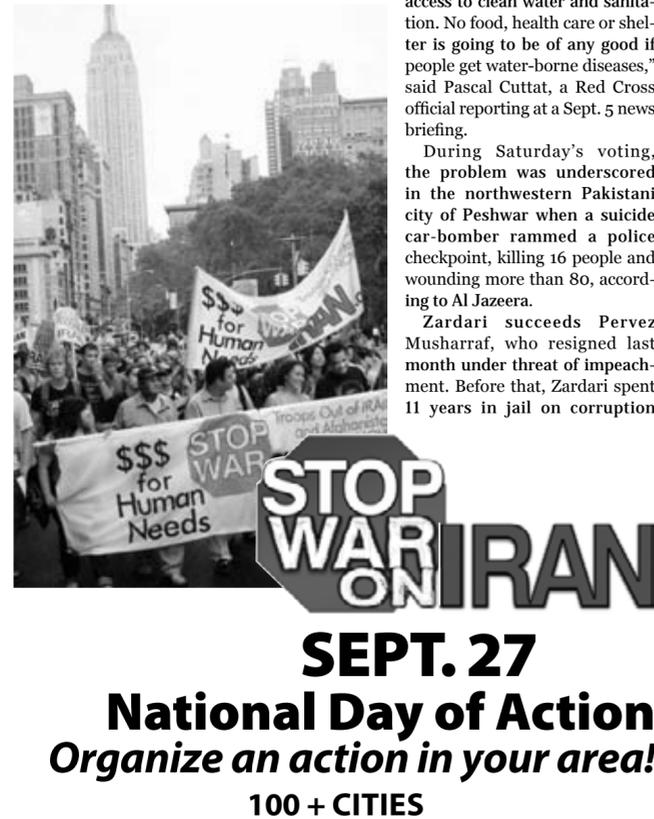
In Pakistan and the U.S., scores of protesters have condemned the detention and torture of Siddiqui and demanded her release. If there was to be a trial, Pakistanis claim that, "She should have faced a court of law here in her own country." (Daily Times, Pakistan, Aug. 11)

Pakistan has been a client state of the U.S. for decades. Ex-dictator Musharraf allowed the U.S. and NATO to bomb civilians in its northern provinces, along with permitting the arrest, disappearance and detention of thousands of Pakistanis. Many Pakistanis are enraged over the U.S. claims of extraterritorial jurisdictions, which violate international laws.

After Dr. Siddiqui was shot, she was flown to the U.S. in the custody of FBI agents, in agony and confused. Her law-

yer, Elizabeth Fink, explained at a trial on Sept. 4 in Manhattan that Dr. Siddiqui could not appear for trial because the strip search she must undergo each time she leaves her cell is physically unbearable. When Fink last saw her, on Aug. 11, Dr. Siddiqui was disoriented and begged Fink to send food she was given to her son in his prison in Afghanistan.

Hundreds came to the trial on Sept. 4 and gathered afterward to protest the unjust treatment of Dr. Siddiqui. Chanting, "Free, Free Aafia Siddiqui!" Pakistani, African-American and north American speakers called for an end to CIA torture prisons in Pakistan, Iraq, Afghanistan, Guantánamo in Cuba, and Somalia. They denounced the policies of the U.S. that have placed this young mother literally in the crosshairs of U.S. imperialism. □



October 1 marks the beginning of a new fiscal year, with draconian budget cuts at the federal and state level. We need money for education, health care, housing, and other human needs, not endless war for empire!

For information or to endorse, go to www.StopWarOnIran.org



Hurricanes, Cuba and U.S. imperialism

Within the last few weeks three destructive hurricanes—Gustav, Hanna and Ike—have ripped across the Caribbean before hitting the U.S. All three did substantial damage to revolutionary Cuba as well as devastating Haiti and causing hundreds of deaths there. Ike, which hit all along the island from Santiago to beyond Havana, even left four people dead, fatalities that the socialist organization within Cuba had previously been able to avoid even while absorbing the punishment of these powerful storms.

That Cuban leader and former President Fidel Castro would make these hurricanes the topic of one of his messages is itself a sign of their importance. Fidel called attention to the great losses of fruit, vegetables and grains, exhorted his fellow citizens and especially political cadres to self-sacrifice and thanked friendly countries like Venezuela, Russia, China, Vietnam and even tiny East Timor for offering aid.

Along with the human solidarity we feel for our brothers and sisters, whether in Cuba, Haiti or on the Gulf Coast of Mexico and the United States, there is a political dimension to any natural disaster that must be taken into account. U.S. imperialism has attempted to take advantage of the damage caused by Gustav and Ike to offer “humanitarian assistance” to be preceded by an “assessment team.”

We should remind readers here that when New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina three years ago, Cuba offered to send medical teams for immediate field-hospital-type assistance—something the Cuban medical system has great experience in—and Venezuela offered to pay to fly the Cuban doctors in—and all this was rejected by the U.S. government without regard for the well-being of the mostly Black New Orleans survivors.

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Movement grows to free the Cuban 5

By Cheryl LaBash

Ten years ago on Sept. 12 five heroic Cuban men were brutally torn from their homes and families in Florida, subjected to a trial that even U.S. federal judges called “a perfect storm” of prejudice, and then unjustly condemned to prison terms ranging from 15 years to double life sentences.

The call to free the Cuban Five, as they are known, spans the globe and is growing inside the United States, too. This struggle pierces the fabricated media campaign against Cuba and exposes Washington's 50-year-long dirty war to undo the Cuban revolution, recolonize Cuba and rob the Cuban workers of the better life they have built through socialist planning.

The Five have endured periods of isolation in “the hole” and separation from their family members. Washington has denied entry visas eight times to Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, spouses of Gerardo Hernández and René González, two of the Five. On July 16, Adriana Pérez was denied a visa for the ninth time and notified that the denial is permanent.

But the Five receive the love of the Cuban people, who demonstrate in the millions for their return to their homeland, and widespread respect and support as diverse as from Amnesty International to an engineering college in Nepal that hosted a meeting of 200 students and professors on Aug. 31. The bushels of letters and cards sent to the Five let prison administrators know these prisoners have millions of friends.

Who are the Cuban Five?

The Cuban Five, who include Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, came to Florida following a wave of terror bombings at Havana hotels during the 1990s, bombings designed to threaten Cuba's tourism industry. The Five's mission—a mission against terrorism aimed to peacefully monitor counterrevolutionary attackers organizing from U.S. territory.

Although headlines characterized them as “spies,” the U.S. government admitted during their trial that no classified documents were used by any of the Cuban Five. As appeal attorney, Leonard Weinglass has often stressed, “None of the charges involved violence in the U.S., the use of weapons or property damage.”

Since their sentencing in 2001, the struggle to free the Five has been both in the streets and in the appeals court. This Sept. 2, the 11th Circuit Court in Atlanta denied a request for reconsidera-

New Yorkers hear about Latin America

The Alberto Lovera Bolivarian Circle sponsored an event on Sept. 5 in New York highlighting the growing leftist movement in Latin America.

The well-attended meeting, with about 300 people in the audience, was held in the Great Hall of Cooper Union and featured special guest speakers from Bolivia, Nicaragua, Ecuador and Venezuela. The Cuban ambassador was invited but missed the meeting because of an approaching storm.

Bernard White, program director for WBAI, moderated the event, and the speakers included Bolivian ambassador to the U.N. Hugo Silves Alvarado,

thereby affirming a June 4 decision by a three-judge panel that upheld all convictions, but found that the sentencing for three of the Cuban heroes was excessive. The court ordered the original Miami judge, Joan Lenard, to resentence Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando González, letting the outrageous sentences of the unjustly convicted Gerardo Hernández (two life sentences plus 15 years) and René González (15 years) stand.

Even the appeals court had to recognize the impact of the violent anti-Cuba paramilitary organizations headquartered in Miami. On Aug. 9, 2005, a three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned all the convictions because a change of venue to a nearby Florida city had been refused in the original 2001 trial. This decision was later reversed by the entire 11th Circuit, but opened an official window on the case.

U.S. favors terrorist bombers

Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles, two of the architects of the violent attacks on Cuba, walk free on the streets of Miami today. George Bush Sr. pardoned Bosch. Venezuela wants to try Posada Carriles for the 1976 midair bombing of Cubana 455 out of Barbados that cost 73 civilians their lives. The U.S. refuses to honor Venezuela's extradition request and refused to obey the Montreal Treaty that requires Washington to either extradite Posada or try him in the U.S.

Before Posada illegally entered the U.S. in 2005, he and two co-conspirators were convicted in Panama of preparing to bomb a full university auditorium in 2000 to kill Fidel Castro at the Iberio-American Summit. Panamanian President Mireya Moscoso pardoned the three, then left office and moved to Miami. On June 30 the Panamanian Supreme Court overturned this pardon.

In a move that may forestall removing Posada to Panama to serve out his prison term, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on Aug. 14 to reinstate charges against Posada for entering the U.S. illegally and lying to a federal agents. It will allow Posada to continue the good life in Miami until he is called to court in El Paso, Texas, at some point in the future.

According to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision, which outlined his history as a CIA operative, Posada's bloody career is well known in the upper echelons of the U.S. government, which continues to back this terrorist bomber.

Ecuadorian ambassador Maria Fernanda Espinosa, Nicaraguan ambassador Maria Rubiales De Chamorro, and Venezuelan ambassador Aura Mahuampi De Ortiz.

Two participants in the Bolivarian Circle's July trip to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Larry Hales of the youth organization FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and Robin Garcia, gave reports about their experiences in Venezuela.

The night ended with a musical performance from Yerba Buena, while participants and the speakers mingled and enjoyed refreshments.

—Workers World New York bureau

Haiti reels from hurricanes; U.N. occupiers fear rebellion

By G. Dunkel

Hurricane Ike brushed by Haiti Sept. 7, dumping major rainfall that forced the residents of Gonaïves to flee to higher ground or climb up on their roofs once again. Hurricane Hanna a week earlier had also flooded the city, the fourth largest in Haiti.

In late August, Hurricane Gustav left 77 people dead in Haiti. Hurricanes Hanna and Ike left over 500 dead and all land routes to Gonaïves cut, according to the U.N.'s Humanitarian Affairs Commission.

Alta Jean-Baptiste, head of Haiti's Civil Protection Office, told Agence France Presse on Sept. 5 that large portions of the city remained under floodwaters, and up to 70 percent of its 300,000 residents have been without water or food since Sept. 1.

Children in a Gonaïves orphanage were so hungry that U.N. troops, mainly from Argentina, reportedly gave them their own rations. According to the Associated

Press, children followed U.N. trucks, crying out, “I'm hungry! I'm hungry!”

Another, unnamed official told AFP that convoys attempting to take food to the affected areas have been “attacked by famished people.” There is no power across most of northern Haiti, largely cut off from the rest of the country by landslides and flooding.

The video clips on YouTube from Gonaïves show people swimming and wading through waist- or neck-high water, while U.N. troops with body armor and helmets watch. A number of foreign aid workers and reporters have made it clear that “social unrest” by people who are desperately famished was considered extremely likely.

Last April, revolts over the high price of food led to the collapse of the government. A new government with its cabinet ministers was only formed on Sept. 5, the same day the U.N. was finally able to repair a wharf in Gonaïves and get a relief ship in with some supplies.

The criminal invasion of Grenada

Pentagon prepared aggression for over two years

Following are excerpts from a report that first appeared in the Nov. 3, 1983, issue of Workers World. WW editors planned three different front pages for that issue. First was a scientists' protest of U.S. first-strike missiles in Western Europe. This was pushed aside as a bomb strike in Lebanon killed 241 Marines occupying that country. Then the U.S. invasion of Grenada became a last-minute lead story as well as a war crime. See www.workers.org to read the entire article.

By Deirdre Griswold

Oct. 26—In less than a day, the Reagan administration's cover story for its brutal and unprovoked invasion of Grenada has unraveled. The tragic internal struggle inside Grenada was merely seized on by Reagan as a pretext for sending in troops to overpower the people of a small but revolutionary Black state struggling for self-determination.

Within hours of the start of the invasion, President Reagan was telling the world that its main purpose was to safeguard the lives of 1,000 U.S. citizens in Grenada.

The Pentagon has barred newscasters from Grenada while the invasion is going on. Even though it is only 50 miles from Barbados and accessible by boat in a few hours, no reporters have been allowed to file stories from the island.

Charles Modica, the chancellor of St. George's University School of Medicine in Grenada, where there are 650 U.S. students, has said that he felt there was no danger to the safety of the students. (ABC-TV Nightline, Oct. 25)

The Parents Network, a group of relatives of U.S. students in Grenada, had sent a telegram to Reagan on Monday urging him not to take “precipitous or provocative action at this time.”

Moreover, the Grenadian Revolutionary Military Council had been assuring the U.S. that it could absolutely guarantee the safety of Americans there. Today's Philadelphia Inquirer reports that Grenada had learned of the U.S. invasion

plans two days beforehand and sent a cable to the U.S. Embassy in Bridgetown, Barbados, that said:

“Grenada has not and is not threatening the use of force against any country, and we do not have any such aspirations. We reiterate that the lives, well-being, and property of every American and other foreign citizen residing in Grenada are fully protected and guaranteed by our government. ... There is absolutely no basis whatsoever for any country launching an invasion of our beloved country and homeland.”

A second “justification” given by the Reagan administration for its massive military intervention is that it was asked to “restore order” by countries of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States. To give the operation a “multilateral” cover, 300 soldiers and police from six Caribbean countries were flown into Grenada after the U.S. troops had taken over the island's two airports.

But, in fact, even according to the Charter of the OECS, such an invasion is illegal. Moreover, the U.S. is not a member of the OECS, while some member nations of the organization, like Trinidad and Tobago, refused to go along with the invasion.

These fabricated excuses used by the Reagan-Pentagon clique for their criminal action assume that the invasion was planned only in the last few days, since an internal political struggle resulted in the tragic death of Prime Minister Maurice Bishop and other Cabinet members on Oct. 19 and the seizure of power by the military.

However, there is evidence that not only did the U.S. line up its Caribbean puppets for the invasion before the death of Bishop, but that the plans for an invasion were actually drawn up over two years ago!

In August 1981, U.S. Marines and Army Rangers staged a “mock” invasion of a Caribbean island code-named “Amber” and belonging to an island chain called the “Amberdines.” The scenario followed by the Defense Department involved “rescuing” U.S. nationals from a “Marxist”



regime and installing a new government friendly to the U.S. These “war games” were staged on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques.

Grenada protested to the U.S. that this “exercise” was in fact a dress rehearsal for an invasion of Grenada. It pointed out that an area of southern Grenada is actually called “Amber,” while the island chain is known as the “Grenadines.”

Two days before the death of Maurice Bishop, Vice President George Bush was visiting Jamaica and its right-wing leader, Edward Seaga, who was elected after a CIA-financed campaign of destabilization brought down his predecessor, Michael Manley.

Bush chaired the Crisis Management Group meeting in the White House Situation Room on Oct. 20 that recommended the launching of the invasion force. It is obvious that his Jamaican trip was not an innocent excursion but part of the preparations for the intervention.

Professor Wendell Bell of Yale has advanced the theory that CIA agents in Grenada “were scheming to overthrow Bishop and egged on Bishop's detractors.” (Philadelphia Inquirer, Oct. 26)

The Pentagon refuses to release Grenadian casualty figures and speaks of “scattered pockets” of resistance, but, according to the Grenadian representative at the UN, the dead and wounded



Gonaïves, Haiti.

The U.S. financed, politically supported and helped organize the Feb. 29, 2004, coup against President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had been democratically elected by the Haitian people. Aristide and his party Fanmi Lavalas wanted justice and real economic development, which would have uncovered the rapacious murders and repressive thievery that the U.S. utilized to control Haiti for its own purposes.

So Aristide was removed and the U.N. brought in to carry out the U.S. mission. The U.S. had more demanding tasks at hand that required great resources, like the invasion, occupation and ongoing war in Iraq. Since that time, with U.S. interests no longer threatened in Haiti, the desperate situation there has received little attention in the major U.S. media.

La lección de los arrestos de ICE en Laurel, Mississippi

Los ataques contra l@s inmigrantes perjudican a tod@s l@s trabajador@s

Por Teresa Guetiérrez

Al mismo tiempo en que el Partido Demócrata hacía promesas a la gente de este país durante su convención en Colorado, la redada migratoria más grande hasta la fecha ocurría en Laurel, Mississippi.

El 25 de agosto la Agencia de Inmigración y Aduanas (ICE, siglas en inglés) llevaba a cabo otra de sus redadas racistas en la fábrica de equipos eléctricos, Howard Industries.

Más de 595 inmigrantes fueron arrestad@s. Inmediatamente 475 de los trabajadores fueron llevados al centro de detención en Jena, Luisiana aproximadamente a 120 millas de Laurel.

Jena ha sido el lugar de una serie de ataques racistas en contra de la comunidad negra. Allí en septiembre del 2006, tres horcas fueron colgadas de un árbol después de que seis estudiantes negros osaran sentarse bajo un árbol al que infamemente se le conocía como “el árbol blanco.”

Los ataques iniciaron un movimiento masivo por la justicia para los 6 de Jena, incluyendo una de las más grandes manifestaciones en contra del racismo en décadas.

Las redadas son estrategias para dividir y conquistar

Defensor@s de los derechos inmigrantes temían que los trabajadores en Laurel enfrentaran cargos similares a aquellos impuestos contra los trabajadores empacadores luego de la terrible redada por la ICE en Postville, Iowa, en mayo de este año.

En Postville, los trabajadores no recibieron cargos de violación a las leyes migratorias sino cargos de robo de identidad—el cual es una felonía, mucho más seria que cualquier violación de inmigración.

Sin embargo, como resultado de la indignación pública por la redada en Postville, hasta ahora solo unos pocos de los inmigrantes de Laurel han recibido cargos de robo de identidad, lo cual ya es demasiado.

Y como en Postville, la ICE preparó la redada reservando muchas habitaciones

en moteles. Esto hizo que l@s activistas alertaran al movimiento sobre la redada antes de que ocurriera.

La Howard Industries es actualmente la fábrica más grande de transformadores de distribución. Es la empresa más grande en Laurel así como en el estado, empleando cerca de 4.000 trabajador@s de todo el estado. Su valor neto es de mil millones de dólares. Este año la OSHA, (organización que supervisa la seguridad en los lugares de empleos), condenó a la Howard con \$193.000 en cargos por 54 violaciones de seguridad.

En 1997, bajo la necesidad constante de expansión capitalista, la compañía abrió la Howard Technology Park en Ellisville, Mississippi.

Esta planta recibió grandes subsidios del estado, cerca de \$30 millones, pero para el año 2007, ningún inquilino se había mudado. Los 5.000 empleos prometidos por la división de computadores de la compañía en 1997 nunca se materializaron.

La redada del 25 de agosto en la Howard dejó una corriente de suspicacia en la comunidad inmigrante, la cual es primordialmente latina. Activistas laborales y pro derecho para l@s inmigrantes reportan que l@s latin@s tienen ahora temor de salir de sus casas; las tiendas y los restaurantes que sirven a la comunidad latina se ven casi vacías.

Algunas de las noticias sobre la redada han sido calculadas para profundizar la división entre l@s trabajador@s estadounidenses y l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, especialmente l@s indocumentad@s.

Los reportajes en la televisión y los periódicos, tanto en inglés como en español, dicen que la redada supuestamente ocurrió como resultado de una denuncia a la ICE por un miembro de un sindicato. El sindicato en la fábrica es la Internacional Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Telemundo, una importante estación nacional de televisión en español, reportó que algunos de los trabajadores en la fábrica aplaudieron cuando la ICE capturó a los inmigrantes. También reportó que la ICE separó a l@s trabajador@s

negr@s en un área, l@s blanc@s en otra y l@s latin@s en otra.

Se precisa movimiento de masas

Sin embargo, las noticias de la redada en Laurel, Mississippi, no son totalmente negativas. El rumor de que ICE había lanzado la redada en la fábrica como resultado de una llamada del sindicato puede ser precisamente eso: un rumor. Puede ser totalmente falso. Algunos reportes noticieros dijeron que la supuesta llamada fue hecha hace dos años.

El hecho es que Howard Industries ha estado en medio de una campaña organizativa sindical. Ha sido una campaña sindical muy progresista, en la cual los organizadores han luchado por incluir a l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, documentad@s e indocumentad@s, al sindicato.

L@s trabajador@s african@-american@s sí aplaudieron pero lo hicieron cuando algunas de las familias latinas llevaban a cabo una protesta frente a la planta el 30 de agosto demandando los cheques salariales de l@s trabajador@s detenid@s en Jena. L@s trabajadores negr@s salieron para estrechar la mano de las familias latinas.

Much@s de l@s trabajador@s de Howard, negr@s y blanc@s, salieron a estrechar la mano de las familias latinas.

David Bacon, un periodista progresista que ha escrito mucho sobre las condiciones de vida de l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, escribió en Truthout.org el 31 de agosto: “Las tensiones entre la compañía y el sindicato incrementaron después de que el acuerdo de las negociaciones colectivas se acabó a principios de agosto. Según un trabajador inmigrante ... el sindicato estaba pidiendo un incremento salarial de \$1,50 la hora y una mejora en los beneficios por vacaciones. Los beneficios médicos también son un tema de discusión ... porque el costo del seguro médico familiar es más de \$100 a la semana.

“Mississippi es un estado con leyes anti-sindicales”, sigue Bacon, “y los contratos colectivos no pueden requerir que los trabajadores de una empresa pertenezcan al sindicato. En vez de esto, los sindicatos

tienen siempre que intentar inscribir a los trabajadores como miembros del sindicato. Para mejorar su posición para negociar un contrato, el Local 1317 comenzó a trabajar fuertemente para inscribir a trabajador@s inmigrantes.

“Fue entonces cuando ocurrió la redada”, observa.

¿Qué será necesario?

Miles de oficiales sindicales asistieron a la Convención Nacional Demócrata. ¿Cuáles fueron los pensamientos sobre las redadas en Laurel o Postville?

Las dos redadas fueron abiertamente antisindicales.

¿Hubo un esfuerzo durante la convención para pasar una resolución condenando estas redadas antiobreras y racistas? ¿Se produjo un grito de protesta y por justicia que posiblemente no fue mencionado en los medios masivos de comunicación? ¿Fue sofocado este grito, como fueron sofocadas las protestas afuera de la convención en contra de la guerra y a favor de los derechos inmigrantes?

El movimiento sindical enfrenta enormes problemas ahora que una profunda crisis económica capitalista se desarrolla. La respuesta a estos problemas está frente a nosotr@s: enfocarnos en forjar solidaridad entre tod@s l@s trabajador@s, para que puedan resistir mejor el asalto de los empresarios. Esa ha sido la lección de todos los grandes períodos de luchas y victorias sindicales.

Hay much@s militantes sindicales hoy que están intentando hacer esto precisamente. Mientras los sindicatos celebran el Día del Trabajo, sus líderes tienen que saber que a menos que tiendan lazos de solidaridad a todos l@s trabajador@s inmigrantes, documentad@s e indocumentad@s, y provean no solo apoyo verbal, sino ayuda material a l@s incontables activistas que trabajan sin cansar y heroicamente, mayormente sin un salario para defender los derechos inmigrantes, la clase dominante de este país y los capitanes de la industria como los de Howard Industries seguirán ganando la guerra en contra de tod@s l@s trabajador@s. □

Es la pobreza, no Gustavo, quien trae la muerte al Caribe

Por G. Dunkel

Mientras Gustavo era todavía una tormenta tropical con vientos menos de 70 millas por hora pero con fuertes lluvias, rozó ligeramente la República Dominicana. Luego se fortaleció hasta ser un huracán de categoría 1 — de 5 posibles — mientras pasaba por el sureste y el suroeste de Haití. Se fortaleció más mientras pasaba por Jamaica y las Islas Caimanes.

Al llegar a Cuba la tempestad ya había alcanzado ser un huracán de categoría 4 con vientos de 140 millas por hora. En el pueblo de Paso Real de San Diego en el oeste de Cuba, las rachas alcanzaron las 212 millas por hora, un nuevo récord nacional, según un portavoz del Instituto Cubano de Meteorología. (MSNBC.com)

La furia del huracán pasó por la Isla de la Juventud en Cuba, luego por la parte oeste de Cuba pero no por la Habana, de lo cual se salvaron sus dos millones de habi-

tantes, antes de dirigirse al norte hacia los Estados Unidos por el Golfo de México.

De las aproximadamente 90 muertes que fueron reportadas durante la trayectoria de Gustavo por el Caribe, alrededor de 75 fueron en Haití, ocho en la República Dominicana y ocho en Jamaica. Ninguna muerte fue reportada en Cuba, aunque algunas personas fueron heridas por escombros lanzados por el viento.

El número de muertes reportado en Haití puede subir. “Hay regiones afectadas por el huracán donde nuestros equipos no han podido penetrar,” dijo la directora de protección civil, Alta Jean-Baptiste a reporteros en Port-au-Prince, añadiendo que la mayoría de muertes ocurrieron en el sureste de Haití.

“La mayoría de las víctimas murió cuando se cayeron sus casas, o fueron matados por árboles que les cayeron encima. Otros se ahogaron cuando trataron de cruzar ríos acrecentados,” dijo

ella. Aludes de lodo, muy comunes en las zonas deforestadas del campo haitiano, sin duda resultaron en muchas víctimas.

Haití es decididamente el país más pobre de todos los que fueron azotados por Gustavo. Aún si el gobierno hubiera querido hacer una evacuación, no hay autobuses para mudar a la gente ni suficientes caminos pavimentados para acomodar los autobuses. Y aún si tuviera los caminos y los autobuses, necesitaría edificios para resguardar a las masas de gente y proveer un lugar donde pudiera alojarles y distribuir alimentos, cosas que Haití no tiene.

Los países capitalistas más desarrollados, Estados Unidos y Europa, han castigado intencionalmente la economía de Haití desde hace muchos años cuando una revolución exitosa de esclavos derrotó allí al régimen colonial francés a principios del siglo XIX.

La mayoría de la gente en Cuba tam-

bién era muy pobre en el pasado. Pero luego de su revolución socialista en 1959, Cuba se ha enfocado en la salud y el desarrollo de su pueblo. Antes de que llegara el huracán, evacuó a 250.000 personas como una precaución. Comités de defensa civil visitan a cada familia para anunciarles que viene una evacuación, y luego vuelven a visitarlas para asegurarse de que tod@s hayan salido, incluyendo l@s de la tercera edad y l@s discapacitad@s.

Las comunidades son evacuadas juntas y saben a dónde van para que las familias no estén separadas. L@s doctor@s en la comunidad van con sus pacientes para garantizar que las medicinas como la insulina y otras estén disponibles.

Cuba sufrió significativos daños físicos a sus cosechas y edificios en esta tormenta extremadamente violenta, pero hasta el mediodía del primero de septiembre, ninguna pérdida de vida había sido reportada. □