

# W50 years WORKERS WORLD

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## Call for Oct. 24-27 actions

# National Network fights to bail out people, not banks

By LeiLani Dowell

A national campaign against foreclosures, evictions and budget cuts is picking up steam. Under the umbrella of the Ad Hoc National Network to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions, community activists, trade unionists, students and youth, and anti-war activists have come together to prevent workers from being thrown from their homes, as well as to build a people's movement demanding money for people's needs.

In cities like Detroit and Boston, affiliate groups of the Network have successfully blockaded eviction proceedings. In Los Angeles and Detroit, groups are pushing their legislators to enact a moratorium on home foreclosures and evictions, using laws enacted during the Great Depression to justify their claim.

Most recently, the Network is focused on regional days of action from Oct. 24 through 27. The Network's Web site ([www.stopforeclosuresandevictions.org](http://www.stopforeclosuresandevictions.org)) describes the sense of urgency: "The stock markets are crashing, the world economy is headed into a deep recession or even depression, and the U.S. government and its top bankers, along with their counterparts around the world, are giving what's going to amount to trillions of dollars to bail out the richest 1 percent of the people while doing nothing to rescue ordinary working and poor people! We must stand up and say no to this injustice! Now is the time to act."

In addition to mobilizing for actions in

the streets, the Web site hosts an online petition to President George W. Bush, presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain, members of Congress, Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson, Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke, and members of the media demanding a bail-out of the people, not of Wall Street.

Other initiators of the Oct. 24-27 actions include the Moratorium Now! Coalition To Stop Foreclosures and Evictions in Michigan; Labor/Community Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions (Los Angeles); Service Employees International Union, Local 721; Latino Caucus, SEIU Local 721; Gloria Saucedo, Hermandad Mexicana Nacional; BAYAN USA; New York May 1 Coalition for Immigrant and Workers Rights; Women's Fightback Network; Frantz Mendes, president, United Steelworkers Local 8751 (Boston School Bus Drivers Union); Action Center for Justice (North Carolina); the youth group FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together); and the Troops Out Now Coalition.

### Organizers speak out

WW asked organizers in several cities about their plans for Oct. 24 through 27.

Philadelphia FIST organizer Tyneisha Bowens said: "In Philadelphia we are first holding a community planning meeting. We want community members and community-based organizations to work with us to create a plan for how Philly will participate in the nationally coordinated

*Continued on page 5*

## Supreme Court denies Troy Davis appeal



Oct. 14—The Supreme Court has outraged death penalty opponents by refusing to allow a new hearing in the case of Troy Davis. Davis, an African American on death row in Georgia, was convicted in the 1989 killing of a police officer despite what Amnesty International calls "overwhelming doubts of his guilt."

At Davis's trial, no physical forensic evidence was presented to implicate him in the killing. His conviction rested solely on the testimony of nine witnesses. However, since that time, seven of the nine have recanted their testimony, with at least two saying that they were pressured by police to finger Davis as the killer.

Without comment—only a one-line order rejecting Davis's appeal—the Supreme Court has abetted another legal lynching of a Black man. Reports indicate that the execution could take place within the next two weeks.

—LeiLani Dowell

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PHOTO: NATIONAL JERICO MOVEMENT

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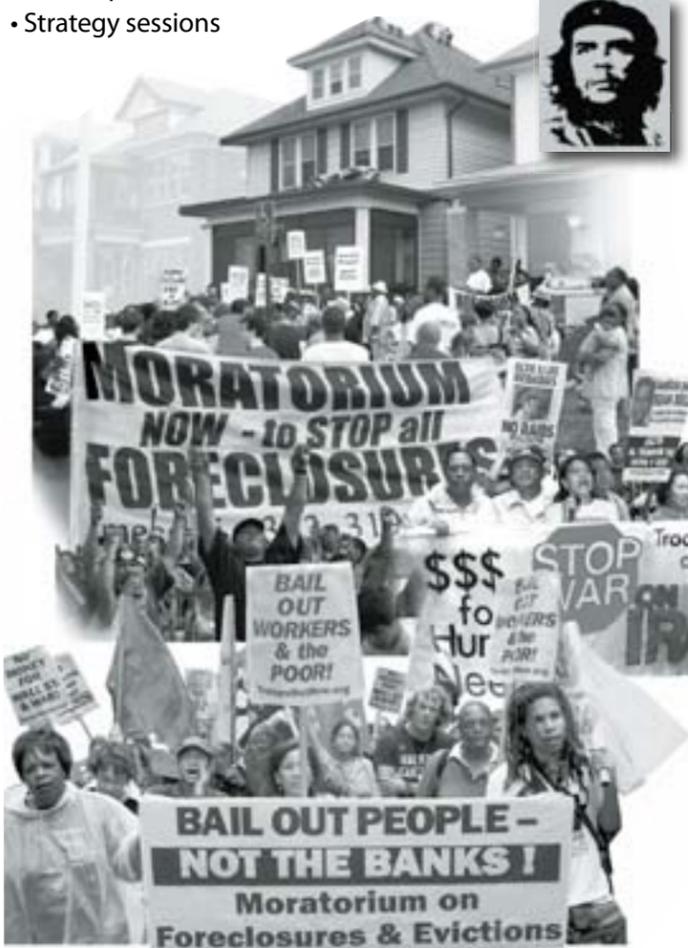
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**HELP TO PUBLISH—**

## Low-Wage Capitalism:

### Colossus with feet of clay

World View Forum announces the coming publication of an important new book, "Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay" by Fred Goldstein.

This work is essential reading for all who want to understand how the new phase of globalized high-tech imperialism is creating worldwide wage competition and impoverishing the multinational working class in the U.S.

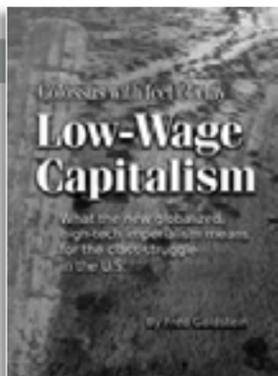
Using Marxist analysis, this work explains the social forces behind the current economic crisis and through historical examples points the way to future class struggle.

The 320-page book contains a bibliography, endnotes, graphs, and charts; its contents are fully indexed.

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# The ultra-right & the McCain/Palin campaign(s)

By Fred Goldstein

The capitalist media have been filled with reports of Republican candidate Sen. John McCain being booed by his own supporters and of extreme racist outcries at campaign rallies, including threats to African Americans and reporters. These incidents reflect the fact that, within the McCain electoral camp, there are two different but overlapping campaigns going on simultaneously.

On the one hand, there is the McCain campaign's opportunistic drive to win the presidency by whatever means necessary. On the other hand, there is the campaign by the right wing and the ultraright wing to promote their racist, sexist, militaristic and chauvinist ideology and program.

The McCain campaign turned into two campaigns with the nomination of Sarah Palin, governor of Alaska, to be the vice presidential candidate.

McCain was booed twice at his own rally in Lakeville, Minn., on Oct. 10 when he tried to tone down ultraright, racist attacks on Sen. Barack Obama.

The first time he was booed during the so-called town hall meeting was when a right-wing man in the audience talked about his fear of raising his child "under a president who cohorts with terrorists like Ayers." When McCain told the man that Obama was a "decent person" and that he did not have to be scared, the crowd booed loudly.

Later, McCain was again confronted. "I don't trust Obama," a racist woman said. "I have read about him. He's an Arab." McCain parried that Obama was "a decent family man" and called for respect. Again he was booed.

McCain was publicly dissociating himself from these two racist remarks. But in fact they had been incited by him and his running mate, Sarah Palin, over the previous 10 days, beginning before the second presidential debate in Nashville. In fact, at the same moment that McCain was admonishing the crowd, his campaign was sending out statements justifying the attacks on Obama, using his association with Bill Ayers to attach the "terrorist" label to Obama and also calling him "a liar."

[Bill Ayers was a member of the Weather Underground. Founded in 1969, the group grew out of the militant resistance of hundreds of thousands of youth, soldiers and veterans to the ruthless 13-year imperialist war of extermination against the people of Vietnam. Three million Vietnamese and 57,000 U.S. soldiers died in the war. The land was carpet-bombed, bombarded with napalm and phosphorous bombs, and covered with the poisonous pesticide Agent Orange. Millions of Vietnamese, as well as many U.S. GIs and their families, are still suffering from its effects. Civilians were massacred, on the ground and from the air. Operation Rolling Thunder—the bombing campaign during which McCain, a pilot and true war criminal, was shot down and captured—killed 182,000 Vietnamese civilians, according to U.S. estimates. (pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/timeline)]

[Some of the young anti-war militants in the U.S. resorted to bombings as an act of resistance. Although these methods completely isolated them from the masses and were ultimately ineffective, they were motivated by outrage over the murderous imperialist war that was trying to destroy a heroic national liberation struggle.]

## Racists boo McCain at his own rallies

McCain was forced into making his minimal, mild disavowal of ugly racism after a series of fascist-like outbursts during rallies where he appeared with Palin. The

**While McCain publicly dissociated himself from some racist remarks at his campaign rallies, they had in fact been incited by him and his running mate, Sarah Palin.**

most publicized was the one in Clearwater, Fla., where Palin attacked Katie Couric of CBS News and the "kinda mainstream media," as well as Obama and Ayers.

The crowd menaced the reporters covering the rally, shouted racial slurs and "Kill him!" One man shouted racial epithets at an African-American sound man and told him to "Sit down, boy." (Washington Post, Oct. 7)

The same day Sheriff Mike Scott of Lee County, Fla., introduced Palin at a rally in Fort Meyers. Scott worked the crowd up into a racist frenzy by referring to the Democratic nominee as Barack Hussein Obama in tones dripping with contempt. Scott was in full police uniform at the time. McCain made the perfunctory disavowal and Palin's campaign made a mild statement about how Obama's name was not the issue.

Rep. John Lewis, an African-American member of Congress and former civil rights leader from Georgia, has said that McCain and Palin are playing with fire. AFL-CIO President John Sweeney has warned against racist attacks. AFL-CIO Vice President Richard Trumka has been campaigning among white workers, urging them to reject the kind of racism that is being spouted by the McCain campaign.

Other progressive forces as well as moderate voices from within the bourgeoisie have sounded the alarm. This pressure may force the McCain campaign to pull back somewhat.

Most of the warnings about the racism of the McCain-Palin campaign have been within the framework of promoting the electoral campaign of Obama. To the extent that those warnings help to counter racism among whites, they are totally progressive. The McCain-Palin campaign has allowed the racist forces to surface and the working-class movement, the anti-war movement and the progressive movement in general should give these racists a firm rebuff and mobilize to stop the progress of the ultraright before it spreads. In particular, everyone should be on the alert for a campaign of racist intimidation leading up to the election and particularly at the polls at election time.

But one does not have to be an electoral supporter of Obama in order to join in the struggle against the racists and fascists who are attacking him. For example, many people are supporting the campaign of Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente, two women of color who have put forward a broad, progressive program for the people.

## Palin galvanized the right wing

Capitalist electoral politics are a totally ineffective framework within which to fight the ultraright and fascist elements. On the contrary, the ultraright is now using that arena to galvanize its own movement.

What has become evident is that the McCain campaign and the Palin campaign are going on simultaneously. It started from the night of Palin's acceptance speech, when she wowed the Republican right wing and referred to McCain as "my running mate." Three weeks later Palin referred to the "Palin-McCain administration" at a campaign rally.

Palin was brought onto the McCain ticket because he was weak within the

Republican Party. McCain was not based in the moderate, so-called Rockefeller wing, of the party. But he was also distrusted and downright despised by the extreme right.

McCain has pursued a generally reactionary policy, is a militarist, a tool of big business and a racist. But he is distrusted by the Republican right wing because on occasion he has departed from a strictly right-wing agenda.

On occasion he has collaborated with Democrats, for example, with Sen. Russ Feingold on campaign finance reform. He also held out for a compromise on immigration reform that would allow a "guest worker" program and a complicated, arduous, so-called "path to citizenship" for some undocumented immigrants.

He mildly differed with Bush on torture. And he has pulled back on using anti-abortion and anti-same-sex marriage as wedge issues in his campaign. During his primary race and up until Palin got into the campaign, his mantra was "reaching across the aisle" and bipartisanship "to get things done."

All this is anathema to the right and the ultraright.

The main contenders on McCain's short list for vice-presidential picks had been Mitt Romney and Joe Lieberman. Romney is a Mormon, a former governor and a former supporter of a woman's right to choose. He has been dubbed a moneyed Eastern "elitist." Lieberman was a right-wing Democrat who turned independent. But at crunch time McCain lurched to the right by picking Palin. His campaign at this point is heavily submerged in the campaign of the right and ultraright.

The right wing knows Palin and her choice transformed the campaign. Take, for example, the shift by James Dobson. He is a right-wing evangelical figure, founder of Focus on the Family and the Family Research Council. He spews his sexist, racist bigotry throughout the country on television programs, radio broadcasts and through books. He speaks the mind of many of the extreme right-wing social conservatives in the country.

During the Republican primary, he said he could never vote for McCain "as a matter of conscience." Once Palin was nominated, however, he decided to back the campaign. Except for George W. Bush in his second term, no president was ever right wing enough to get Dobson's endorsement, not even Ronald Reagan.

## Palin's ultraright supporters

The reasons are clear. Palin is from the ultraright. She was brought up in Alaska politics to become mayor of Wasilla, population 7,000, under the tutelage of Mark Chryson, a leader of the extremely right-wing Alaska Independence Party, and Steve Stoll, a John Birch Society activist. The Birch Society is a true fascist organization. The AIP is so racist and right wing that it considers the Civil War in the U.S. an act of Northern aggression. (Salon.com, Oct. 10)

Palin is militantly anti-abortion, promotes creationism in the schools, has tried to ban books in the library, is a tool of the oil companies and is an enemy of the Indigenous population of Alaska.

As governor of Alaska she has nego-

tiated an agreement for Exxon, BP and Conoco-Phillips to build an oil and gas pipeline across the state into Canada and got them a \$500-million subsidy to build it. She is for opening up the Alaska National Wildlife Refuge for oil drilling, a position even McCain has backed away from.

While the whole world has watched polar bears floating around on melting slabs of ice as their habitat disintegrates around them, Palin filed suit to stop the federal government from classifying the polar bear as an endangered species. Her suit questioned science and claimed the classification would harm the development of oil and gas in the state. (The Nation, Sept. 10)

## Settler-state racism

Alaska is a settler state in which the rights of Indigenous people have been disregarded ever since Secretary of State William Seward purchased it from Russia in 1867. Not only were the numerous tribes of Indigenous peoples not consulted at the time, but the racist language of the agreement stated that "the uncivilized tribes will be subject to such laws and regulations as the United States may from time to time adopt in regard to aboriginal tribes in that country."

Palin governs in that same chauvinist, racist spirit. Alaska has a population of about 670,000, of whom 80,000 or more are Native Alaskans—15 percent of the population. They were pushed off much of their land over the years by settlers, especially after oil was discovered in 1968. They have fought to retain their traditional rights to hunting and fishing. It is a matter of survival, especially for the many villages with no roads to the outside.

Palin has brought legal actions at every turn in order to override the rights of Alaskan tribes to subsistence fishing, subsistence hunting, tribal sovereignty and the teaching of their languages.

In other words, Palin was the candidate of the ultraright. She gave them a new lease on life. The right wing in this country has grown more and more isolated. The Republican Party has grown more openly split as a result. The Bush years have resulted in misery and suffering for the masses and the general population is demanding solutions. "Free market" ideology and social reaction provide no answers.

The new climate in which the Obama candidacy has arisen has promoted an element of desperation among the right, and that has now surfaced around the Palin candidacy. The Palin forces want to win the White House, but not at the expense of inhibiting their poisonous politics of racism, sexism, bigotry, militarism and other forms of reaction. That is their priority.

When McCain gets booed for even weakly separating himself from the racist mobs at campaign rallies, it is the Palin supporters who are leading the booing. They come with "Palin-Power" tee shirts—McCain's name isn't even there. Many of them merely tolerate McCain for the opportunity to promote Palin and their racist agenda.

It is a mark of progress that the racist attacks, while they rev up the tiny minority of right-wingers, have not won over large numbers of white voters. McCain's poll numbers have been dropping among white workers and Obama's have been rising.

Eight years of Bush, climaxed by a profound economic crisis, have laid the foundations for an advance of Black-white unity and unity among all the oppressed and the workers, who will have to come together to fight back against the capitalist crisis. Hopefully, in that process, they will push the fascist and racist elements back into their holes. □

# From Workers World of Oct. 29 and Nov. 12, 1987

As part of our archival series, we publish below excerpts from two articles by Sam Marcy written after the stock market crash of 1987. The reader will be amazed at how many features of that crisis were remarkably similar to today's market panic, including the cries by big banks and brokers for a government bailout. Marcy pointed out that,

even if there were a recovery, the crash was sure to result in lower real wages for the workers—which it did, as the capitalist government printed more money to cover the bailout and stimulated inflation. The main differences between then and now are the much greater magnitude of debt today and the worldwide character of the crisis.



## Behind the anarchy of the stock market

Oct. 21, 1987—The stock market collapse of 1987 is bound to have the most profound economic effects and will surely transform the political situation as well.

The loss of half-a-trillion dollars inside of 36 hours is in itself such an enormous factor that it is not possible to “make up for it” on the basis of a subsequent rebound of the stock market. Even if a considerable amount is recouped, there is the other half-a-trillion dollars which was slowly lost between Aug. 25 and Oct. 19 [1987].

It is sheer nonsense to say that these are mere paper losses. If that were the case, the heads of the central banks and of the capitalist governments, the financiers, brokers, money managers and the hordes of economic and financial consultants, let alone the stockholders and bondholders themselves, would not have panicked. ...

No, these are real losses. The rebounding of the market, if it continues, does not take into account those who have been completely eliminated. It doesn't take into account the millions who have depended on the value of their stocks and the price they could have elicited.

What does the prolonged character of this cataclysmic collapse demonstrate? What is it that Marxists have to look at?

First of all, it confirms the Marxist conception of capitalist economics. It shows that, in the final analysis, all the most skillful manipulators and financial wizards on a global basis, with all the most sophisticated technological communications, cannot control the forces of capitalist anarchy and chaos. These were the very words they used to describe the tumultuous drop of the capitalist stock markets.

The spontaneous character of capitalist production manifests itself first and most violently in the financial markets, the most sensitive area in the mechanism of the capitalist system of production and exchange.

But how did the market suddenly begin to rebound? Was it all under its own steam? Was it also due to the spontaneous character of the sale and purchase of stocks?

### 'Free market' boosters beg for government intervention

No, it wasn't. It was caused by the intervention of the capitalist states—the U.S., West Germany and Japan. Assurances from the central bankers of each of these imperialist countries came swiftly on the heels of the collapse.

The one thing they all dreaded, the one thing they all said they would avoid, was for the capitalist government to come to their rescue. For years they've been boasting that the market does so well on its own, it needs no regulators, doesn't need a policeman over it, doesn't need bureaucrats telling them what to do.

But how quickly they all changed their minds! From the most liberal of the capitalist newspapers to the most conservative, they all demanded action.

The new chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, Alan Greenspan, a right-wing conservative Republican, had been most vociferous in promoting a policy of no intervention by the government to support or regulate the financial markets. How quickly he changed his tune!

### Federal Reserve bails out bankers and brokers

Greenspan's statement pledging that the Federal Reserve would see to it that there was liquidity in the markets was what led to Tuesday's rally. What's liquidity? It's a code word for printing money

and handing it over to the most powerful, the most favored of the bankers and brokers to rescue them.

Just how was this done? The banks can apply for loans from the Federal Reserve, as everyone knows, at a discount rate. But there is also another way. The Fed's

## The next phase of the crisis

Nov. 2, 1987—How broadly does the financial crisis reach? “As of the early 1980s, three out of four men, women and children in the U.S. either owned shares of corporate stock or stock mutual funds directly in their own names or had an indirect stake through their pension funds, insurance policies, savings accounts or other forms of institutional investments.” (From the *Money Encyclopedia*, 1984, edited by Harvey Rachlin.)

The stock market, which had been an example of capitalist prosperity, now will turn out to be the instrument to facilitate the wholesale expropriation of millions of workers and middle-class people through the loss of their savings, pensions and other retirement funds, insurance funds and other institutions, all of which have played the stock market.

The onus is put on the yuppies, but their numbers have been greatly exaggerated in the capitalist media during the period of capitalist stability, so as to take the heat off the giant multinationals, banks and the stock exchanges and divest them of responsibility.

Before going further, it is necessary to put in historical perspective the role of the stock market in the capitalist economy, without either embellishing it or denying its vast significance.

### Engels on the stock exchange

As long ago as 1894, Frederick Engels, in supplementary notes updating Volume III of [Karl Marx's] “Capital,” said about the stock exchange:

“The position of the stock exchange in capitalist production in general is clear from Vol. III, Part 5. ... But since 1865, when the book was written, a change has taken place which today assigns a considerably increased and constantly growing role to the stock exchange, and which, as it develops, tends to concentrate all production, industrial as well as agricultural, and all commerce, the means of communication as well as the functions of exchange, in the hands of stock exchange operators, so that the stock exchange becomes the most prominent representative of capitalist production itself.”

Engels also provided valuable insight into the relation of foreign investment to the stock exchange, in England as well as the U.S. At that early stage of the imperialist epoch, when it was still on the very edge of the transformation of competitive capitalism into expansionist monopoly capitalism, Engels already discerned that colonization was “purely a subsidiary of the stock exchange!”

It was in the interests of the stock exchange, wrote Engels, that the European powers partitioned Black Africa and the French conquered parts of northern Africa and Vietnam. “Africa [was] leased

directly to companies (in Niger, South Africa, German South-West and German East Africa), and Mashonaland and Natal [were] seized by [Cecil] Rhodes for the stock exchange.”

How many bourgeois historians of the colonial era ever show this connection between the stock exchanges and the exploitation and enslavement of the colonized peoples? Today the hundreds of billions in indebtedness of the oppressed countries are a continuation on an immense scale of what was merely in embryonic form when Engels noted it.

How prophetically Engels put it, almost 100 years ago!

### Stock exchange concentrates production

The stock exchange even then was becoming increasingly more important. Why? Because it tends to concentrate all industry, agriculture, commerce and the means of production in the hands of stock exchange operators. They should be understood not in the narrow sense of stock exchange officials alone, but more broadly as encompassing the heads of the biggest banks (particularly the central banks such as the Federal Reserve in the U.S.), the heads of other exchanges and the governmental agencies like the Securities and Exchange Commission. All these make up the network of what is nowadays referred to as the financial industry.

So that the stock exchange has indeed become the most prominent representative of capitalist production itself.

### Temporary ups and downs in market

Of course, it should be stated that not every stock market plunge results in a capitalist economic crisis. Some just reflect the temporary gyrations of the moment and may be due to one or two financial disasters, such as when Lockheed or New York Central went bankrupt. An individual industrial or financial collapse, even of such a large corporation, may have only limited significance for the economy as a whole. ...

In understanding the nature of the present crisis, it helps to examine the summary provided by Engels in “Socialism, Utopian and Scientific” that describes how a capitalist crisis develops, bearing in mind that each crisis occurs in a specific historical setting.

When a crisis does occur, says Engels, “Commerce is at a standstill, the markets are glutted, products accumulate, as multitudinous as they are unsalable, hard cash disappears, credit vanishes, factories are closed, the mass of the workers are in want of the means of subsistence, because they have produced too much of the means

Open Market Committee can purchase the very securities that may be collapsing and advance money that way. These open market operations have for years been regarded as one of the most important functions of the Federal Reserve Board and one of the means for regulating the currency. ...

of subsistence, bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy, execution upon execution.

“The stagnation lasts for years; productive forces and products are wasted and destroyed wholesale, until the accumulated mass of commodities finally filters off, more or less depreciated in value, until production and exchange gradually begin to move again. Little by little the pace quickens. It becomes a trot. The industrial trot breaks into a canter, the canter in turn grows into the headlong gallop of a perfect steeplechase of industry, commercial credit, and speculation which finally, after breakneck leaps, ends where it began—in the ditch of a crisis. And so over and over again. We have now, since the year 1825, gone through this five times, and at the present moment (1877) we are going through it for the sixth time.”

We challenge the innumerable bourgeois economists who have been awarded Nobel prizes for “economic science” since this was written to present a clearer exposition of the capitalist cycle of development! Don't they instead try to obscure it?

### Relation of stock market to capitalist economy

How do we relate the current truly historical market crash to the classical Marxist concept of an economic crisis?

The stock market is an integrated element of the entire financial services industry, as it is now called, and is intimately bound up with all the credit institutions—the pension funds, the multitude of banks, credit unions, insurance companies, mortgage associations and so on.

In the outline of a general economic crisis depicted by Engels, the financial crisis comes at the very height of the capitalist cycle. The collapse of the market brings about the period of stagnation.

The capitalist economists put the shoe on the other foot. They have been telling us that since there has been no economic collapse, the economic fundamentals, as they put it, are still sound. Only the rate of growth has slowed; therefore there cannot be an economic collapse and the Marxist criteria don't apply. ...

But the stock market is an integral part of the financial industry, and its crash is a forerunner of the economic situation, not the aftermath. This is what the bourgeois economists are deliberately confusing.

Of the many bourgeois economic analysts who have made pronouncements since the crash, only one of them, Alan Sinai from Shearson Lehman Brothers, in a report during congressional testimony covered on CNN, said of the stock market crash that it reflects not the past performance of the economy as much as “what the future holds in store.” ...

To read the full articles, go to [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

## ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

### 'No contract, no school'

A Wayne County Circuit Court judge ordered that more than 800 Wayne-Westland teachers should return to their classrooms on Oct. 10 because their four-day work stoppage defied a Michigan law forbidding strikes by public workers. In a tremendous show of solidarity, hundreds of high school students came to their teachers' defense.

Chanting "No contract, no school," the students protested outside John Glenn High School in Westland on Oct. 10. They knew firsthand why the teachers were demanding a reduction in class size. Student Katie Burns told detnews.com there were 47 students in her biggest class and no supplies in her art class. Parent Kim Powers suggested that the students "should go on strike. The classes are too big."

On Oct. 9, more than 500 teachers and allies had picketed outside the Board of Education demanding the school district resume collective bargaining. This happened two days after a Michigan Employment Relations Commission administrative law judge ruled that the district had not bargained in good faith with the Wayne-Westland Education Association. The commission will rule Oct. 16 on whether the district engaged in illegal bargaining.

The Wayne County judge ordered the district not to penalize the teachers and to resume bargaining on Oct. 13. Meanwhile, detnews.com reports that teachers in a dozen other "cash-starved districts" are equally worried about holding onto their salaries and benefits "amid a school funding crisis."

Case in point: the Grand Rapids Press reported Oct. 6 that 225 teachers and their supporters had held a picket line at a Board of Education meeting there demanding a new contract. The teachers have been working without one for over a year.

### Talks resume in Boeing strike

The 27,000 members of the International Association of Machinists on strike at Boeing in Washington, Oregon and Kansas agreed to resume collective bargaining on Oct. 14. On strike since Sept. 6, the workers are demanding a 13 percent pay raise over three years and a fully staffed union shop. Management is offering an 11 percent raise and wants to use nonunion contractors both inside and outside the plants. With losses of \$100 million a day, it's estimated that Boeing has already lost \$3 billion in revenue. (New York Times, Oct. 9) The company can't make a dime without the workers' labor.

### Foxwoods Casino workers talk contract

Although workers at the Foxwoods Casino in Connecticut voted to join the Auto Workers nearly a year ago, they've been thwarted in their efforts to negotiate their first contract. But on Oct. 10 an agreement was reached between the UAW and the Mashantucket Pequot Gaming Enterprise to begin discussions for 30 days. They will consider how to bargain under tribal law without either party waiving any of their rights or legal positions under the National Labor Relations Act. (UAW press release, Oct. 10)

### Writers demand better contract

The Writers Guild has instructed its members not to work without a decent contract on the new Fox TV variety show about Ozzy Osborne and family that's being produced by FremantleMedia, North America. The proposed contract would pay reduced fees to writers of skits, interview material and scene outlines. The Guild has tangled with Fremantle before. This summer the Guild protested about poor and illegal working conditions at many sites of regional auditions for the new season of "American Idol." Eight former FremantleMedia employees have filed claims totaling more than \$250,000 for unpaid overtime and other violations of labor law. (New York Times, Oct. 10)

### Brooklyn supermarket 'cheated workers'

Two executives at the Associated supermarket in the Bushwick section of Brooklyn were arrested Oct. 8 on charges of cheating workers out of more than \$300,000 and falsifying business records given to New York State officials. Baggers were paid no wages; they only received tips that ranged from \$12 to \$30 a day for up to 11-hour days. Other staff received \$300 for 70-hour weeks, which comes to \$4.29 an hour. That's way below the state's minimum wage of \$7.15. On top of the criminal charges, a civil suit is demanding that the supermarket pay \$600,000 in back wages and penalties to more than 30 workers who were cheated out of pay from 2004 to 2008. (New York Times, Oct. 9) □

# Protest demands mayor declare 'state of emergency'

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

This city has been devastated by high unemployment, mass foreclosures, abandoned homes and widespread poverty. About 20 protesters gathered outside the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center in downtown Detroit on Oct. 10 to demand that interim Mayor Kenneth Cockrel Jr. declare a state of economic emergency and formally apply to Gov. Jennifer Granholm for a moratorium on foreclosures.

A delegation of activists from the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions then went inside to the mayor's office to deliver a second letter demanding he take immediate action to alleviate the suffering. Cockrel had ignored an earlier letter from the coalition sent before he assumed office in mid-September.

The letter stated in part: "The people of Detroit cannot stand to wait one more day for the imposition of an emergency moratorium to stop foreclosures. Under MCL 10.31, et seq., upon application of the mayor of a city, or on her own volition, the governor may proclaim a state of emergency and designate the area involved. We are requesting



WW PHOTO: ALAN POLLOCK

that you 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."

The letter asked Cockrel to respond within one week. Coalition organizers are planning further actions to ensure that the mayor answers their demands. They will hold a mass demonstration in Detroit on Oct. 27 and are preparing to take the struggle to the next level.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition

is also demanding passage of State Senate Bill 1306, which would call for a two-year moratorium in Michigan. The coalition will hold a statewide organizing conference in Detroit on Dec. 6 to further broaden the struggle against foreclosures and evictions.

Inquiries and donations can be sent to the coalition at 23 E. Adams, 4th floor, Detroit, MI 48226. Call 313-887-4344, e-mail moratorium@moratorium-mi.org or visit www.moratorium-mi.org for more information. □

## Call for Oct. 24-27 actions

# Nat'l Network seeks to bail out people, not banks

Continued from page 1

Oct. 24-27 demos. It's clear from conversations on the streets, on radio programs, and at social events around the city that the people of Philadelphia are grappling with questions and concerns about the economy." See [www.iacenter.org/philly-iac](http://www.iacenter.org/philly-iac) for more information.

Kris Hamel of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions in Michigan stated: "On Oct. 27 we'll be demonstrating at City Hall to demand that the interim mayor apply to the governor for a declaration of a state of emergency in Detroit and to use her emergency powers to impose a two-year moratorium on foreclosures. We're also demanding the mayor ask the federal government for bailout money to help rebuild our city.

"Just a tiny fraction of what the banks are receiving could be put to good use teaching people job skills that could refurbish all the abandoned, vandalized and stripped homes throughout Detroit. Our city has 18 percent abandoned homes—that's second only to New Orleans. We've been living with our own Hurricane Katrina here for years, and the neglect from the federal government is just as bad as what's been visited on the displaced people from the Gulf." See [www.moratorium-mi.org](http://www.moratorium-mi.org).

Dante Strobino, a member of Raleigh FIST and an organizer with UE Local 150—the N.C. public service workers' union—described both the hardships and the resistance to the economic crisis in the South: "The economic crisis has had a particularly bad effect on public

sector workers, who are facing drastic budget cuts. North Carolina's Gov. Easley is ordering agencies to cut their budgets by 3 percent. Virginia's Gov. Kaine is projecting a 4 percent budget cut in 2009 that will reduce funding to higher education institutions by 5 to 7 percent, delay the salary increase for public workers, execute about 570 layoffs, and other cuts.

"Workers and students will be mobilizing for demonstrations at Bank of America headquarters in Charlotte to express their rage at the government supporting the bank's profits while the people's suffering deepens," he concluded. The mass rally and march will take place on Oct. 25 at 1 p.m. Visit [charlotteaction.blogspot.com](http://charlotteaction.blogspot.com).

In New York, workers, students and youth will converge on Wall Street on Oct. 24. Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer of Teamsters Local 808, told WW: "It is important that workers turn out on Oct. 24 to let our government know that it is the workers of this nation that create the wealth that Wall Street squanders away. The only way to rescue the nation is to rescue the working class. It is important that workers display their power and make their demand for redress during this critical time in our lives. We must protect our jobs, wages, health benefits and pensions. We must mobilize and fight to protect our share of the wealth of the nation."

Brenda Stokely of the Million Worker March Committee and the N.Y. Solidarity Coalition for Katrina/Rita Survivors, said: "This economic crisis has exposed so

many things, including the fact that there were those who were benefiting from an economic, political and social system that allowed others to be held in a state of destitution without homes, without jobs, without the option of sending their children to college. Meanwhile, a stratum of our society was allowed to receive extended credit, purchase homes, send their children to colleges, save monies in annuity accounts and have pension plans. Now these two worlds are crashing down to the ground together, but they can both raise their hands and pull back the curtain to see who is truly running the show.

"Who has had the unfettered opportunity to make billions of dollars, to trick us into unbearable credit debt and untenable mortgages? Who has kept our children either in enormous debt, due to thousands of dollars in college loans, or sent to war or prison? It is the same folks who decided they could make more money by destroying our entire industrial base and allowing our infrastructures to deteriorate to such dangerous levels that the potential of disasters displacing millions across the country is very real.

"We will not accept a rejection of our demands for single-payer health care; a moratorium on evictions and foreclosures; jobs with a living wage; free education from cradle to grave; an end to all wars and the immediate return of our troops; a national civic works project to rebuild our infrastructures and absolutely no bailout for the rich criminals."

E-mail: [ldowell@workers.org](mailto:ldowell@workers.org)

# Supreme Court denies Mumia right to present new witnesses

By **Betsey Piette**  
Philadelphia

Courts on the local, state and federal levels have time after time reversed their own legal precedents just to rule against political prisoner and journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal. The latest outrageous chapter in this 27-year conspiracy to imprison, silence and kill Abu-Jamal came Oct. 6, when the U.S. Supreme Court rejected his appeal for a new guilt-phase trial.

Abu-Jamal's appeal, based on the Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA), had asked the courts to hear newly discovered testimony from Yvette Williams and Kenneth Pate, two witnesses who came forth after his 1982 trial on charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer.

The appeal was filed with the U.S. Supreme Court in July after being rejected by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in February. Earlier, Philadelphia Judge Pamela Dembe had also denied Abu-Jamal's PCRA petition in 2005 on the basis that it was not "timely."

The Pennsylvania State Supreme Court, led by former Philadelphia District Attorney Ron Castille, who helped fight Abu-Jamal's appeals when he was the district attorney and has yet to recuse himself from decisions involving the case, has never issued a ruling favorable to Abu-Jamal.

Yvette Williams, who was in jail with star prosecution witness Cynthia White in December 1981, testified that White had told her police made her lie against Abu-Jamal. Suspiciously, no official eyewitness had even reported seeing White at the scene.

Williams' account of White being

coerced by police into giving false testimony was strongly supported by the testimony of Veronica Jones at the 1982 trial and the 1996 PCRA appeal and by Pamela Jenkins at the 1997 PCRA appeal.

Hans Bennett of Journalists for Mumia notes that "Amnesty International has documented that White's alleged eyewitness account was altered, as each subsequent account given to police further served to support the prosecution scenario used to convict Abu-Jamal."

Kenneth Pate stated that his stepsister, prosecution witness Priscilla Durham, confided to him that she also lied in court when she testified that she heard Abu-Jamal confess at the hospital where he was being treated for gun wounds. Even before Pate's affidavit, Durham's account was very suspicious.

Hospital security guard Durham waited for more than two months after the Dec. 9, 1981, shooting of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner to allege that Abu-Jamal had made a "hospital confession," allegedly declaring, "I shot the motherf\*\*\*er and I hope the motherf\*\*\*er dies."

After Durham made her claim in February 1982, another hospital guard, James LeGrand, and police officers Gary Bell and Thomas M. Bray suddenly "remembered" they had also heard the alleged "confession." Only two of these witnesses were called by the district attorney—Bell, who was Faulkner's partner and best friend, and Durham.

Pate states Durham told him that "Mumia was all bloody and the police were interfering with his treatment, saying, 'Let him die.' Priscilla said that the police told her that she was part of the 'brotherhood' of police since she was a security guard

and that she had to stick with them and say that she heard Mumia say that he killed the police officer when they brought Mumia in on a stretcher."

At the 1982 trial Durham also claimed for the first time that she had reported the "confession" to her supervisor on Dec. 10 in a hand-written report. Neither the alleged written statement nor her supervisor was ever brought into court.

In his testimony, Gary Bell claimed that his two-month memory lapse resulted from his being so upset over the death of Faulkner that he forgot to report it to police.

Durham and Bell's testimonies were contradicted by police officer Gary Wakshul, who on Dec. 9, 1981, wrote, "The negro male made no comment." However, Wakshul, who rode with Abu-Jamal to the hospital and guarded him until his treatment, was never called as a witness in the 1982 trial.

When Abu-Jamal's court-appointed attorney, Anthony Jackson, discovered Wakshul's statement on the final day of the 1982 trial, he asked to call Wakshul as a witness. The district attorney responded that Wakshul was "on vacation." Judge Albert Sabo, on the grounds that it was "too late in the trial," denied the defense request to locate him.

When an outraged Abu-Jamal protested, Judge Sabo cruelly declared to him, "You and your attorney goofed." The jury never heard from Wakshul or about his contradictory written report.

At the 1995 PCRA hearing, Wakshul testified that he had spent his 1982 vacation at home—in accordance with explicit instructions to stay in town for the trial so that he could testify if called. Just days before his PCRA testimony, Wakshul was

savagely beaten by undercover police officers in front of a judge in the common pleas courtroom, where Wakshul then worked as a court crier.

## Protests on Dec. 6

With the court's PCRA rejection, another appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court—this one of the Third Circuit decision—is now more important than ever, because this is now his last chance for a new guilt-phase trial. The filing of this appeal is due by Oct. 20, unless a 60-day extension is requested. A number of events are planned to raise awareness of the critical juncture facing Abu-Jamal's case.

This coming Dec. 9 will mark the 27th year of Abu-Jamal's frame-up and unjust imprisonment on Pennsylvania's death row. Saturday, Dec. 6, has been designated an International Day of Solidarity by International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the N.Y. Free Mumia Coalition, International Action Center and other Mumia activists.

Pam Africa of International Concerned Family and Friends told Workers World: "This is just one more example that Mumia cannot get a fair trial here. They say Mumia's life is in the hands of the government, but we say his life is in the hands of the people."

"We cannot have another Shaka Sankofa, Zion Israel, Tookie Williams—where the evidence shows innocence yet they are murdered by the state."

A major protest will take place in Philadelphia. Events are also planned for Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Cleveland, Detroit, Charlotte and Raleigh, N.C., San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Houston, as well as cities in other countries.

## 10 years and counting

# Jericho Movement says: 'Free all political prisoners!'

By **Anne Pruden**  
New York

The National Jericho Movement celebrated its 10th anniversary of demanding liberation for all political prisoners in the U.S. and worldwide with a "Weekend of Resistance" that began on Oct. 10 with a noontime picket line and rally at the United Nations in New York City. The marchers proceeded to Madison Square Park for another rally.

On Oct. 11, Jericho sponsored a protest that began with a march of hundreds starting at the Harlem State Office Building and ending with a rally at Morningside Park with many powerful speakers and some music. Jericho spokesperson Paulette D'Auteuil introduced Chief Billy Tayac of the Piscataway Nation who spoke on behalf of Leonard Peltier, who has been falsely imprisoned since 1976 for the deaths of two FBI agents, and other Indigenous political prisoners.

Jericho co-founders Iyalua Ferguson and Herman Ferguson—a former political prisoner—gave moving talks. Jericho Chairpersons Kazi Toure and Ashanti Alston spoke as well. Attorney Lynne Stewart spoke of her ongoing trial and frame-up and the need for all to stay active. Suzanne Ross and Gwen Debrow, co-chairs of the N.Y. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition, spoke. An audio-taped message was played from Mumia paying tribute to former political prisoner, Safiya



Mumia was one of many political prisoners honored at the Jericho Movement march.

Bukhari, a late founder of Jericho.

Other activists spoke on behalf of other political prisoners such as the Puerto Rican Grand Jury defendants, who are being targeted by the U.S. government for their pro-independence activities; the Cuban 5, serving life sentences in the U.S. for exposing terrorist plans to overthrow the Cuban revolution; the Angola 3, former Black Panthers framed for killing a prison guard in Angola, La.; Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin, formerly H. Rap

Brown, who is serving a life sentence for the shooting death of a white deputy in Alabama; and Herman Bell, one of the New York Three.

D'Auteuil concluded the rally with this message: "Our goal continues to build a political prisoners and prisoners of war movement nationally and internationally!"

Go to [www.thejerichomovement.com](http://www.thejerichomovement.com) for more information on these political prisoners and others. □

Mumia speaks on prisons, capitalism, politics, revolution, & solidarity. Also, Monica Moorehead on the oppressed nations, the poor and prisons. Teresa Gutierrez on the death penalty & the Texas killing machine.

Booklet available from WW Publishers  
55 W. 17 St., 5 Fl. NY, NY 10011  
Order books by Mumia Abu-Jamal online at [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)

\$4.50



PHOTO: NATIONAL JERICHO MOVEMENT

## Now he's facing years in jail

# Black alderman fought Depression-level poverty in Milwaukee

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Milwaukee

Former Milwaukee City Alderman Michael McGee Jr. is scheduled to be sentenced on Oct. 24. An all-white jury in August convicted him in federal court of nine corruption charges. McGee, an African American, faces six-and-a-half to 10 years on these federal counts; a state trial begins Dec. 1 on yet more charges.

U.S. District Judge Charles Clevert on Oct. 10 denied McGee's request to delay the sentencing and grant him an additional 20 days to respond to a pre-sentence report.

McGee and his many supporters, almost all from the Black community, who witnessed the federal trial, say that he was entrapped, that prosecution witnesses contradicted themselves during the trial, and that the prosecution was allowed to enter fabricated evidence and attempt to pit Arab witnesses against Black ones.

McGee's supporters have submitted to the sentencing court numerous letters that describe his strong support of poor and working people, particularly of youth, during his terms as Sixth District alderman from April 2004 to 2008. McGee fought police brutality, questioned the rapid gentrification of working-class neighborhoods, wrote a letter to Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez inquiring about heating oil assistance for poor Milwaukeeans, fought to broaden affirmative action in contract bidding and city hiring policies, fought massive tax breaks for corporations in the city, and supported political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, among other progressive activi-

ties. (For background, search for Michael McGee at workers.org.)

Many questions surround this case, but the central one is: Why are the state and federal governments willing to spend hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of dollars railroading McGee and locking him up, possibly for years?

### Why McGee has wide community support

McGee has been moved to various jails since his arrest on May 28, 2007. He has been denied bail, had his jail phones tapped by local police agencies and the FBI, been subject to racist depictions in the corporate media, and worse. Other white politicians facing similar charges over the past few years have been released on bail and served minor jail or prison terms, if any time at all.

McGee's progressive activities have received virtually no coverage in the corporate media, although he has been a community activist for decades. Nor has the media investigated the social conditions in Milwaukee that have led to his widespread support in the Black community. It is impossible to analyze McGee's case without putting it into a social, political and economic context—exactly what is lacking in the racist corporate media.

McGee was one of the very few politicians to actively participate in alleviating the semi-apartheid conditions that exist in Milwaukee, the most segregated city in the United States.

Consider these facts about Milwaukee:

- One in every four residents lives below the poverty level, according to federal statistics. For Black Milwaukee, semi-

apartheid conditions are the norm and have gotten even worse in recent years with the dismantling of Aid for Dependent Children and welfare, as well as the introduction of charter schools.

- Infant mortality for Black babies is 21 per 1,000 live births—more than four times the rate for whites. (Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services and the Black Health Coalition of Milwaukee)
- Although Blacks comprise only 5 percent of Wisconsin's total population of 5 million, they make up more than 50 percent of the prison population. The number of Black and Latina women in prison in the state has skyrocketed since the early 1990s. (The Sentencing Project)
- Unemployment in metro Milwaukee among African-American males ages 16 to 64 increased to 51.1 percent last year from 46.8 percent in 2006. This is probably the highest jobless rate Black men here have ever suffered, according to a just-released report by The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Center for Economic Development. Milwaukee has the biggest gap between Black and white joblessness in the U.S. In the past, many Black Milwaukeeans had union jobs at manufacturing plants in the city. But the majority of living-wage jobs are now in the suburbs and there is inadequate public transportation to get there from the city. Many Black people in Milwaukee are ready and willing to work but don't have vehicles, due to institutionally racist factors such as racial profiling and the court system.

• Police brutality and murder have been an ongoing fact of life for Black and Latin@ people in Milwaukee. City police and other repressive local, state and federal agencies, often with paramilitary units, occupy whole sections of the Black community. Since 1990 at least 50 Black men have been shot dead by Milwaukee city police. Even after the highly publicized Frank Jude Jr. case—a struggle against naked police brutality that McGee spearheaded—the police feel free to act with virtual impunity.

McGee was attempting to combat these conditions, often in alliance with progressive community organizations.

McGee supporters say that if he has given grounds for suspicion, it is grassroots representatives of the Black community in his district who should have the right to pass judgment, not the enemies of the people.

The government is spending huge sums on legally lynching McGee. Why aren't these funds going to alleviate these horrendous social conditions? Aren't the real criminals the bankers and bosses responsible for these conditions, not those like McGee who fight them? Shouldn't the rulers be the ones on trial for all the death, misery, destitution and destruction they cause on a daily basis? Shouldn't they be made to pay reparations?

The government and the ruling class behind it are using McGee's case—and rabid racism—to strengthen the repressive apparatus against all poor and working people. They are trying to deflect anger away from the rapidly disintegrating capitalist system, the real enemy of poor and working people. □

## For protesting police brutality

# Sean Bell arrestees found 'guilty'

By Dolores Cox  
New York

The tragic death of Sean Bell revisited New York City recently. This past Oct. 6, eight of the remaining protesters went to trial in a Manhattan courtroom for their participation in the protest of the New York Police Department's killing of Sean Bell as he was driving a car.

On Nov. 25, 2006, the morning of Bell's impending wedding, NYC police shot 50 bullets into Bell's car. In addition to killing Bell, they also wounded Trent Benefield and Joseph Guzman. None of the three men was armed. New York City has a history of its police targeting Blacks and Latin@s in the form of racial profiling and killings.

People in New York City and nationally were outraged by the April 25 verdict acquitting all the officers of every charge in the shooting. On May 7, in New York City and elsewhere people expressed their extreme anger. Many hundreds took to the streets in a mass traffic action out of deep frustration and desperation, surrounded by thousands of supporters.

The protest action blocked bridges and tunnels at several different locations within New York City. The action, initiated by the National Action Network, was well organized. Approximately 250 participants, including this reporter, were subsequently arrested for civil disobedience.

The bulk of those arrested had their cases adjourned in contemplation of dismissal at a later date. However, the Rev. Al Sharpton; Sara Flounders, International Action Center co-director; and six others were among the activists singled out for trial on Oct. 6th. One of the arrestees had himself been a victim of a brutal police attack.

Judge Larry Stephen, a former district attorney, refused to accept their "Not guilty—Necessity Defense" plea, and they were declared guilty. In essence, the Necessity Defense motion for dismissal argued that the conduct of the protesters was justifiable and not criminal.

The motion also argued that the desirability and urgency of avoiding further police misconduct and violence should outweigh the civil disobedience offense of blocking traffic; that there were no adequate legal means to prevent further police brutality; that there was an immediate need to break the pattern of police killings; and that the arrestees felt they had no other recourse against the precipitating injustices than the action they took.

On Oct. 8, all eight defendants were sentenced to "time already served in jail" and fined \$95 each. Benefield, Guzman and Sean Bell's fiancée, Nicole Bell, were in the courtroom. Despite no one going to jail, it was another example of justice being denied to the people.



WW PHOTO: DOLORES COX

Press conference after eight people were found guilty for having protested the verdicts in the Sean Bell case. From left: Joseph Guzman, Attorney Wylie Stecklow, Rev. Al Sharpton, Sara Flounders, Trent Benefield, Manijeh Saba, Anthony Estes and Donna Gould.

In Flounders' statement to the court she pointed out that "When the protesters' defense of 'justified necessity' has no basis and the police's long record and pattern of attacks is not relevant to the protesters' actions, it only confirms the pervasiveness of police misconduct and that the courts have lost the ability to hear the rising anger.

"The traffic action by the many hun-

dreds of people," she added, "was a polite reminder to the powers in NYC of the people's ability, in response to deep grievances, to bring the city to a halt, even if just for minutes. It also shows the enormous power and potential that people have when they are mobilized. None of us are guilty. The police guilt is what stands. While the police are found 'not guilty' there is no justice." □



Jackson Heights, Queens

WW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN



San Francisco

WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

# Actions across U.S. support immigrant workers

By LeiLani Dowell

Immigrant rights groups throughout the country took the occasion of Indigenous Peoples Day, Oct. 12, to protest the government's severe raids, roundups and detentions of immigrant workers. This repression has increased since the first huge outpourings of immigrants in 2006; however, activists and community members refuse to be silent in the face of these attacks.

The following is just a sampling of the activities that took place:

In rural **Lumpkin, Georgia**, more than 30 people from Alterna, Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights, American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, International Action Center and other groups staged a mass detainee visitation to the Stewart Detention Center. The detention center holds more than 1,700 immigrant workers who have been caught in Immigration and Customs Enforcement raids at workplaces or stopped while driving by local police forces for alleged traffic violations.

Some detainees had not received any visits from family or friends; very few had legal help; none had any knowledge of how much longer they would be there. Very few of the staff and guards are bilin-

gual, and books and other reading materials are not available.

A common issue mentioned by each detainee was the lack of medical care. An untreated eye infection has left one man with only 20-percent vision; an HIV-positive man isn't receiving his complete drug regimen and another is being given only 50 percent of the prescribed dosage.

Messages to family members were gathered and pleas for legal and medical help recorded. The organizations are projecting a broader program of detainee visits to monitor ICE facilities around the state.

In **San Francisco**, more than 150 immigrant rights activists rallied outside a busy Bay Area Rapid Transit station in the Mission district. Speaker after speaker demanded an end to the ICE raids in the Bay Area and around the country.

In September alone, more than 1,100 people in California were arrested for the "crime" of being undocumented, as ICE raids terrorized many immigrant communities.

Rodrigo Ibarra from El Organizador stated, "We pledge today to continue to fight the repression that resulted in over 300,000 of our brothers and sisters being deported over the past year."

Evangelina, a Latina worker who was arrested during ICE raids at El Balazo restaurants, called upon the community to unite to stop all deportations.

Local endorsers included Teatro Jornalero, Movement for Unconditional Amnesty, Manos Unidas Community Center and Workers World Party.

A march and rally was also held in southwest **Detroit**. March organizers noted: "Día de La Raza' is a symbolic date that remind us of the European invasion and colonization of America. Ironically today ... these immigrant workers were forced out of their home countries by the neoliberal economic policies of globalization and free trade agreements ... imposed on Latin America by the U.S. and European governments and multinational corporations."

About 50 people gathered from the May 1 Coalition and other groups in **Queens, N.Y.** Speakers from Guatemala, Mexico, Chile, Ecuador, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic and Texas spoke in English, Spanish and Que'chua.

The immigration rights activists rallied at Wells Fargo bank, which in Phoenix is the headquarters for fascist Sheriff Joe Arapaio. Arapaio maintains Arizona's Maricopa County like a police state against

Latin@s and has deputized Minutemen. Wells Fargo also leads in subprime foreclosures in Baltimore, Cleveland and the entire state of Wisconsin, which have preyed on mainly Black and Latin@ families.

Speakers denounced war, the bank bailouts and the plunder of the Indigenous people that began with Columbus and continues to this day.

In tiny **Sodus, N.Y.**, a multinational crowd of more than 40 people gathered to protest the increasing ICE terror in the area.

On Sept. 28, ICE raided a trailer camp housing workers, deporting many. Yolanda Villa of the Rochester Alliance for Immigrant Rights, organizer of the rally, said, "People can't go to church, can't go shopping, can't go to the laundry, without getting picked up." Signs demanded amnesty, civil rights, and justice for the workers, and said, "Support our neighbors."

Other actions were held around the country, including in Boston; Chicago; Madison, Wisc.; Minneapolis, Minn.; and Rochester, N.Y.

*Heather Cottin, Judy Greenspan, Kris Hamel, Dianne Mathiowetz and Minnie Bruce Pratt contributed to this article.*

*E-mail: ldowell@workers.org*

## Born with a midwife's help?

# Government says, 'Sorry, no passport'

Special to Workers World

The U.S. State Department is supposed to issue passports to people who can provide documents showing they were born in the United States. But it has begun rejecting birth certificates, mostly belonging to Latin@s born in the Southwest, that were signed by midwives—in other words, if the applicants were born at home.

In that area, people cross the border frequently to work, for family and business reasons, and even to obtain health care in Mexico that would be unaffordable in the U.S.

Thousands of people are now frantically seeking other documentation to obtain passports, since they will be required for all travel to and from Mexico and Canada starting in June 2009.

The National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health has condemned this move as "a racist and unfair practice, which ... unfairly targets Latino citizens on the border and those who were born to parteras or midwives in private residences, a common practice among Latinos."

The passport rejection is part of a wave of anti-immigrant policies that include mass round-ups and deportations, the building of a wall along the Mexican border, and calls for laws that would deny citizenship to U.S.-born children of undocumented immigrants.

David Hernandez enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1985, using his birth certificate

as proof of citizenship. But now the State Department will not issue him a passport based on that same birth certificate without further proof, even though he also provided his military discharge papers. (Brownsville Herald, Sept. 14)

In September, nine U.S. citizens, including Hernandez, sued the federal government for refusing to issue them passports because of the midwife issue. They are represented by the American Civil Liberties Union, which alleges that the State Department unfairly targets Mexican Americans, essentially reducing them to "second-class citizenship status."

The government, according to the lawsuit, is systematically asking for an excessive number of documents that most people would not possess, such as school or baptismal records, or documents that never even existed. Then, after the applicants go to great lengths to supply additional proof, "the State Department often doesn't accept it and deems the applications abandoned—'filed without further action,' or essentially closed." (The Oregonian, Oct. 5) According to immigration lawyer and former passport agency employee Brent Renison, the agency has turned customer services over to private contractors.

Midwives, or parteras in Spanish, have been delivering babies in the Southwest since before hospital births became the norm. Births with parteras continue in that area today as a traditional practice, although the current problem with obtain-

ing passports is scaring many women away from this safe alternative to medicalized hospital births.

In the South, midwives served Black communities with skill and dedication until the mid-1960s, when Medicaid and the end of legally segregated facilities made hospital births available to African-American and poor white women. Denying the validity of midwife-signed birth certificates could be used to disenfranchise hundreds of thousands of Black people in the South if voter ID laws are enacted.

### Resurrecting 'segregation-era injustice'

Ellen Catalinotto, a New York-certified nurse midwife, sent the following letter to the State Department:

"As a midwife, I am appalled to learn that the State Department now refuses to accept the validity of birth certificates signed by midwives who attended women at home births as legal documents for obtaining a U.S. passport.

"This unfair and racist practice targets Latinos and African Americans, who have had a long tradition of midwife-attended births. It is creating havoc, especially in Texas and the Southwest, where many people frequently travel to Mexico and now find that they cannot obtain the passports that will soon be required to cross that border.

"Just 45 years ago there was no Medicaid or Medicare to pay for health

care for poor or disabled pregnant women. Segregation was the law of the land in southern states—where only whites could be admitted to most hospitals. Rural areas had few good roads to transport women in labor. Many African-American and Latina women could not afford to deliver in hospitals, could not get transport to the hospital in labor, and could be denied admission to the hospital even if they overcame the hurdles of cost and travel. Midwife births at home were the only option for women in these circumstances.

"To deny the validity of midwife-signed birth certificates is to resurrect and continue these injustices and human rights violations of the not-so-distant past.

"Furthermore, refusing to accept midwife-signed birth certificates puts the State Department in the de facto position of regulating our profession by delegitimizing the documents we are legally authorized to sign. The State Department clearly has no right or authority to regulate midwifery practice.

"The excuse given for not recognizing these birth certificates is that some midwives were convicted of falsely providing them to babies born in Mexico. Some of these cases occurred as long ago as almost 50 years. Such instances should be handled by local jurisdictions on a case-by-case basis, with a presumption of innocence. Instead, the State Department is imposing collective punishment on every midwife and every baby she has delivered." □

# U.N. poised for broader intervention in Congo

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

In a recent statement from the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC), the possibility was raised of a greater military presence there under U.N. auspices. This announcement comes at a time when there has been an escalation of fighting between rebel groups and the Congolese National Army in North and South Kivu provinces, located in mineral-rich eastern Congo.

U.N. special envoy Alan Doss reported to journalists on Oct. 3 that the request for a greater military presence was made during a closed session of the Security Council. Doss did not say how many additional troops were requested. There are currently 17,000 U.N. soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the largest so-called peacekeeping force in the world.

Despite a peace agreement signed in 2003 ending a five-year war among regional rebel groups backed by the neighboring U.S.-allied countries of Uganda and Rwanda, and despite a 2006 election won by President Joseph Kabila, two other political and military factions remained alienated from the central government.

Soon thereafter serious conflict erupted, and has grown over the last two years. A former colony of Belgium, which extracted immense wealth from this African country, Congo gained its independence in 1960 but has been beset by the intervention of outside imperialist forces and their surrogates ever since.

In early October the Kabila government reported to the Security Council that the administration had obtained photographs of Rwandan military forces inside DRC territory. Although the Rwandan government denied the allegation that its forces crossed the border into North Kivu, 34 photographs turned over to Reuters press agency purportedly show weapons, Rwandan currency, a medical insurance card and a military satchel that bore the inscription "Rwanda Defense Force." (Reuters, Oct. 11)

In response to the photographs, Congolese Ambassador to the United Nations Atoki Iлека forwarded a letter to Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yesui, the current president of the Security Council, confirming the Kabila government's concern that neighboring Rwanda was preparing for a major incursion into Congolese territory.

It has been reported that the rebel leader, Gen. Laurent Nkunda, a renegade Congolese military officer, has received material assistance from the Rwandan government. Nkunda, who is of Tutsi ethnic origins and operates in eastern DRC, has accused the Congolese government of being allied with members of the Hutu ethnic group who were involved in the mass killings in Rwanda during 1994.

Nkunda's rebels, who call themselves the National Congress for the Defense of the People, are very active in eastern DRC. It is alleged that they wear Rwandan military uniforms and speak Kinyarwanda, a language used on both sides of the Congolese and Rwandan borders.

As a result of fighting, since Aug. 28 dozens of civilians have been reported killed and injured and some 10,000 have been internally displaced. In a recent statement, Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières—MSF) said that the humanitarian situation in North Kivu was rapidly deteriorating.

Underlying the continuing conflict in the DRC are the vast, highly concentrated mineral resources in the eastern regions. The southeast and eastern areas as a whole contain ore of every mineral listed in the periodic resource tables.

The Inter-Regional Information Network, a U.N. affiliate, reported that "The head of MSF in Goma, Axelle Delamotte Saint Pierre, said villagers in Rumangabo, Rubare and Rutshuru areas had been displaced and were now living with other families or in precarious conditions."

The IRIN report went on to state that "Delamotte Saint Pierre said MSF had attended to some 90 injured people at the general hospital in Rutshuru. A local [nongovernmental organization] official, Jerome Tanzi, said the villages of Katala, Bushenge, Kabaya, Nkokwe, Ntamugenga, Kazuba and Biruma had been emptied after the residents fled fighting between the army and the rebel group CNDP," headed by Laurent Nkunda.

On Oct. 9 the rebel group issued a statement claiming it had captured a government military base at Rumangabo, 25 miles north of the city of Goma. MONUC reported that dozens of Congolese soldiers were killed in the attack.

## Kabila calls for national mobilization against rebels

On Oct. 11 President Kabila went on Congolese television and appealed to the people of eastern DRC to take up arms and defeat the rebels under the control of Laurent Nkunda. Kabila—who took power after the assassination of his father, Laurent Kabila, in 2003—was elected as president in a national poll held in 2006.

Two days earlier, Kabila had told the people: "Over and above any political divide, we must mobilize as one behind our armed forces and our elected representatives to preserve peace and the unity and territorial integrity of the country." He commended the efforts of the Congolese National Army, saying that "despite their youth and the imponderables of an unconventional war, [they] have consistently resisted the enemy attacks with courage."

Kabila went on to say that while "we thought a page had turned on this country's tumultuous history with the establishing of new institutions, the sound of boots is once again being heard in the east, with echoes in Ituri [a northern province], where brothers' blood is again being spilled."

The president continued by pointing out that Nkunda's aim was "not to protect his ethnic community as he has always claimed, but to divide the country to bring about the expansionism of a neighboring territory," referring to Rwanda.

In addition to Kabila's statement on national television, the country's new prime minister, Adolphe Muzito, stated in an interview on Oct. 11 with Radio France International that he would soon visit the eastern regions to work toward bringing peace to the area.

Prime Minister Muzito said that the purpose of the visit was to "reinforce discipline and give the resources and control over them so that they are not used to attack anyone but to defend the country."

Conversely, rebel leader Nkunda said in a British Broadcasting Corp. interview on Oct. 8 that his forces would continue fighting against the central government based in the capital of Kinshasha. According to the BBC, Nkunda "called on all Congolese

people to 'stand up' to the national government and said his rebel group would 'fight until the people are liberated.'"

On Oct. 10 the African Union Commissioner Jean Ping traveled to the DRC and met with leading Congolese governmental officials, including President Kabila and members of parliament. He also held discussions with MONUC special envoy Alan Doss.

Ping said, "I have come to meet with Congolese authorities to understand the situation on the ground before putting forward solutions."

## What's at stake in eastern DRC

Underlying the continuing conflict in the DRC are the vast, highly concentrated mineral resources in the eastern regions. The southeast and eastern areas as a whole contain ore of every mineral listed in the periodic resource tables.

A report issued by the Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons in 2001 stated that as a result of rebel activity, almost 40 percent of the Congo's wealth from natural resources was outside the control of the national government.

One source of mineral wealth is the large deposit of copper found in an area 140-by-30 miles extending from the Katanga region into neighboring Zambia. This area is known as the copper belt. During the period of the former U.S.-backed leader, Mobutu Sese Seko, the DRC was the fifth-largest producer of copper in the world. In addition, it was considered the leading producer of cobalt and the second-largest producer of industrial diamonds.

The mining of copper and cobalt was under the control of a government firm, Gecamines, which allowed Western transnationals to extract the minerals in return for royalties. These imperialist corporations were always pressuring the government to let them keep an even larger share of the wealth. In recent years, partnerships between the DRC government and transnational firms have proven to be problematic due to the ongoing rebel activity in the mineral-producing areas.

For example, a Washington Post fact sheet reported on Nov. 28, 2001, that "The Société du Terril de Lubumbashi (STL), a

consortium consisting of 7s, a Belgian and a U.S. company have invested \$120 million in a project aimed at extracting cobalt, copper and zinc oxide from the slag heap in Lubumbashi using the world's second-largest electric oven. The new facility is expected to produce an alloy with cobalt content of between 15-22 percent.

"In addition, the exploitation of the Kolwezi slag heap by Congo Mineral Developments (CMD), a 50/50 joint venture between American Mineral Fields (AMZ) and AngloGold, has also recently been extended for another year. And in April [2001], the government approved the new terms of the copper-cobalt tailings in a \$350-million deal with AMZ."

However, rebel activity in these regions has led to the massive theft of the natural resources of the DRC. For example, while the country is the largest producer of industrial diamonds, an illegal trade outside government control generates anywhere between \$300 million and \$500 million per year.

Another important mineral found in abundance in this region is coltan, which is used in cell phones. According to the Washington Post, another problem for the national government is "the theft of coltan, the new wonder mineral of which large deposits have been recently discovered and exploited in rebel-held areas of North Kivu. Technological advances and increased global consumption, especially of high-tech manufactured goods, has turned coltan into one of the most sought after raw materials.

"Its uses vary from making tantalum capacitors in cell phones, computers, game consoles and camcorders to pharmaceuticals, chemicals and automotive industries. In a recently published U.N.-sponsored report on the illegal exploitation of the DRC's natural resources and other forms of wealth, it was estimated that up to 100 tons a month of tantalum was exported by the Rwandan army. Likewise, Ugandan exports of the mineral rose from 2.5 tons in 1997 just before the war, to nearly 70 tons in 1999."

*Next: The role of Belgian colonialism and U.S. imperialism in destabilizing the independence of Congo.*

## Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle

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

**Racism, national oppression and self-determination** by Larry Holmes

**Black labor from chattel slavery to wage slavery** by Sam Marcy

**The struggle for Socialism is key** by Monica Moorehead

**Harriet Tubman: woman warrior** by Mumia Abu-Jamal

**Causes of turmoil in Jamaica** by Pat Chin

**Black youth: repression & resistance** by LeiLani Dowell

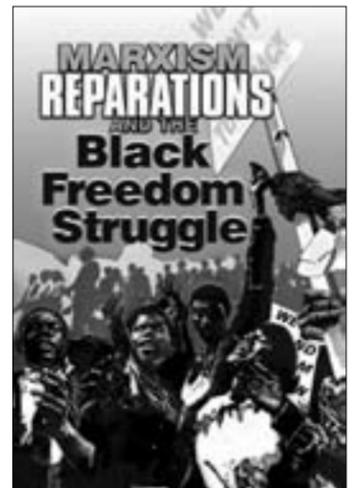
**Black and Brown unity: A pillar of struggle for human rights & global justice!** by Saladin Muhammad

**Are conditions ripe again today? 40th anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion** by John Parker

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## Hands off Pakistan, Afghanistan & Iraq!

The Bush/Pentagon war regime is escalating its brutal occupation of Afghanistan and expanding the conflict to Pakistan—and both the Republican and Democratic parties are giving their backing to this new phase of U.S. aggression.

Bush announced in September that he was deploying an additional 4,500 troops to Afghanistan. The news from that country is that the resistance to the occupation forces already there has been growing; the population has turned strongly against them and against the “government” of Hamid Karzai, who is scornfully referred to not as president of the country but as mayor of the city of Kabul.

The Karzai regime was imposed on Afghanistan by the foreign imperialist invaders, who have tried unsuccessfully to clothe it in the figleaf of “democracy.” Karzai was chosen by the U.S. because he used to be a consultant for Unocal, an energy company with interests in the oil and gas of the region.

In northwest Pakistan, which borders Afghanistan, nearly 190,000 people have fled the area since government forces launched an offensive against “militants.” (United Nations report, Oct. 14)

This Pakistani offensive comes after repeated demands from Washington that Islamabad “crack down on insurgents.” When the Pakistani government, feeling enormous resistance from its own population, didn’t jump far enough and fast enough for the U.S., the Pentagon forced the issue by invading Pakistan’s territory, both from the air and on the ground. U.S. planes have bombed villages in Pakistan; pilotless drones have delivered deadly bombs and provided reconnaissance for attacking ground and air forces.

The current Pakistani offensive, which is having such a terrible effect on the people of the area, forcing them from their homes just before winter sets in, is the direct result of this U.S. pressure.

Pakistan has a long, tortured history with regard to U.S. imperialism. For decades during the Cold War, the U.S. sponsored and armed military dictators there who could be counted on as allies in the struggle against the Soviet Union.

In recent years, however, as Washington’s war in Iraq created anguish and hostility throughout the Muslim world, public opinion in Pakistan turned decisively against Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the latest in the long line of military men who came to power through coups.

Musharraf had Washington’s support

during most of his reign, but even he would not unleash his military against the rebellious people of the northwest regions to the extent the U.S. wanted. He feared the popular reaction that would provoke.

As the movement for democracy grew in Pakistan with thousands of protests, strikes and the defection of most of the country’s judges and lawyers, Musharraf cracked down with mass arrests and disappearances. But he was forced out in the last election.

The civilian government now in power is weak in relation to the U.S. In ordering the northwest offensive, it is trying to placate Washington. At the same time, Pakistani military officials and the new president have denounced the incursions by U.S. forces into Pakistan and are vowing to defend their country’s sovereignty.

They have to say it. The Pakistani people are furious at being dragged into Washington’s war against the Afghan resistance. There was a huge outcry when, in early September, a U.S. helicopter attack on a Pakistani village bordering Afghanistan resulted in the deaths of 20 civilians, including children, women and men. That was followed by missile attacks and a ground assault by U.S. forces invading Pakistan from their bases in Afghanistan.

At the same time, bombs have been set off in several Pakistani cities, and the U.S. is using that as justification for its campaign against “terrorists.” But the people don’t see it that way. Even the Associated Press admitted that “Many Pakistanis blame the violence on their country’s support for U.S. policy in its pursuit of al-Qaida and the Taliban.” (Oct. 14).

No amount of soldiers or firepower will make the imperialists “win” in Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan. These are imperialist wars against oppressed nations where the resistance by the people to being taken over by the “West” is growing daily.

As the capitalist economic crisis grows more severe, and everything but the military budget is slashed in order to bail out the profiteering bankers, these wars will be resisted even more by the people in the U.S. It’s important for the antiwar movement to demand that U.S. troops be withdrawn from all these countries, that the machinery for aggression be dismantled, and that the Pentagon budget be converted into social funds to meet the needs of the people for jobs, housing, education and health care. □

## S. Asian community marches against war

By N.S. Singh  
Chicago

Approximately 400 people on Oct. 11 attended a three-hour, peaceful, anti-war rally and march through West Rogers Park, a diverse, largely immigrant-based and working-class neighborhood in Chicago.

Attendees and marchers were greeted with the propulsive musical strains of South Asian folk and dance music. While the march and rally were explicitly sponsored by an ad-hoc committee of various socialist, progressive and anti-imperialist organizations, local Pakistanis assisted in the procurement of a neighborhood rally permit.

During the rally, multiple speakers called for an end to U.S. occupation and involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan; additionally, they warned of possible U.S. military intervention in Iran and Pakistan. Speaker after speaker was clear that ALL the troops needed to come home immediately and also addressed other important related political issues, including expressing support and solidarity with Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Following the speeches, the crowd marched six blocks down Devon Avenue, through the heart and central focal point of the Indian and Pakistani communities in Chicago, and was greeted positively by onlookers and neighborhood residents. □

## Message to our readers

# Who in the world is reading Workers World?

From the editors:

As the Workers World Party National Conference approaches, we continue our series of reports on how Workers World articles are being disseminated internationally. Now that the financial meltdown has struck with such force in the heartland of world imperialism, there is even a greater desire for progressive news and analysis from this country. And it is just these topics that the conference will discuss and expand upon.

In our last report we wrote, “We know ours is a minority opinion within the United States. Now. We are equally sure we speak to the needs and interests of the vast majority of workers and oppressed people.” Now, just three months later, we may still be a minority opinion, but people no longer ignore us when we say, “Karl Marx was correct.” And no one laughs.

In Britain—where it’s possible to use the articles without translating—the New Worker has continued to feature our coverage. In four issues as summer was ending, this newspaper of the New Communist Party published six WW articles. Two were on the class struggle here: Betsey Piette’s on job losses in the U.S. and Jim McMahan’s on the strike at Boeing.

The New Worker also published Abayomi Azikiwe’s articles on Mauritania and on Zimbabwe, David Hoskins’ on the election of the Communist prime minister of Nepal and Hillel Cohen’s on anthrax.

Though Larry Holmes wrote his analysis of the Barack Obama candidacy last May, it still carries weight for foreign leftist political activists who are trying to look at both sides of the contradictory Obama phenomenon. Having been translated into Portuguese, Holmes’ article has been picked up on Portuguese language Web sites, among them Mudar de Vida, which also translated a WW editorial about the Iraqi resistance. (jornalmudardevida.net)

Fred Goldstein’s article “Capitalist meltdown” was also translated into Portuguese and published on the resistir.info site, from which odiario.info—also based in Portugal—picked it up, as did the Brazilian

sites vermelho.org.br and brasil.indymedia.org, and two trade union center sites, portalctb.org.br for the CTB and galizacig.com in Galicia, among two dozen sites. The same article was also translated into French and published in Michel Collon’s site michelcollon.info.

The resistir.info site just translated Jaimeson Champion’s front-page article on the financial crisis from the Oct. 16 issue of WW into French.

In July and then starting in October (September is their vacation month), the Workers Action newspaper in the Ukraine translated another five WW articles into Russian. This included an editorial on imperialism and Caspian Sea oil, Caleb Maupin on Exxon’s environmental destruction, David Hoskins on India’s forming an anti-partisan force, Jaimeson Champion on youth unemployment in the U.S., and an editorial on the financial crisis and the Pentagon.

International solidarity with the comrades in Ukraine will be more important as the U.S. continues to try to expand NATO eastward.

Sara Flounders’ article on NATO expansion was published in Global Research magazine (globalresearch.ca) and one of Flounders’ on Georgia’s attack on South Ossetia is on Michel Collon’s Web site in French.

Michel Mounayer in Damascus has continued to translate selected WW articles for the Syrian newspapers al-Ba’ath and Tishreen, mostly pieces about the Middle East and the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. Avante, the newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party, published articles by Gloria Rubac on the situation in Houston and Galveston in the aftermath of Hurricane Ike and an appreciation by Larry Holmes of the candidacy of Cynthia McKinney and Rosa Clemente.

The axisoflogic.com site and the Pan African News Wire have continued to regularly republish WW articles.

If you can report on other sites that use WW articles or have ideas on how to reach out, write to jcat@workers.org. □

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## Millions of workers affected

# Foreign businesses in China forced to unionize

By Sara Flounders

China is forcing some of the biggest corporations in the world to immediately allow workers in their giant plants, offices and shops to unionize. In a widely publicized 100-day campaign, the Chinese government set a deadline of Sept. 30 for corporations doing business there to recognize unions.

The ruling benefits millions of Chinese workers, who will now have a say not only in their wages but in working conditions and health and safety issues.

This sweeping change impacts almost all the U.S. Fortune 500 companies doing business in China. Wang Ying, a senior official with the state-backed All-China Federation of Trade Unions, explained that there are holdouts, such as Microsoft and pharmaceutical giant Wyeth. But even they “don’t dare say they will not set up unions. They are finding all kinds of excuses to put it off.” (Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 29)

The ACFTU is under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. Two years ago it represented 170 million workers. Its goal by the end of the 100-day campaign was to increase its membership to 200 million—more than 12 times the number of unionized workers in the United States.

Will these unions be just paper organizations? The giant transnational corporations don’t think so, judging by their hostility.

Jim Leininger, the Beijing head of the U.S. management consulting firm Watson Wyatt, explained that “Many foreign firms see unions as an unnecessary hindrance.” But they have acceded to the unions, he said, because “they don’t really have a choice.” (CSM, Sept. 29)

These are companies that moved to China to lower manufacturing costs and avoid unions in their home countries. Now they “fear admitting the unions will give their Chinese employees the power to slow or disrupt their operations and will significantly increase the cost of doing business here.” (New York Times, Sept. 12) In other words, they will have to pay more in wages and benefits. The new laws will also make it more difficult to fire workers.

### Wal-Mart, McDonalds, Disney

Wal-Mart, McDonalds and Yum Brands—which operates KFC and Pizza Hut—have all been forced to agree to unions. Yum Brands has 160,000 workers in China. Wal-Mart has 83,000 workers at its 108 Chinese stores in 55 cities. Wal-Mart, Disney and Adidas have been singled out for using contractors that violate Chinese labor law.

A contract with Wal-Mart signed in late July brought an immediate 8 percent pay increase, along with job protection

and legal support in addressing workers’ grievances over intimidation, forced overtime, fraudulent pay stubs and dangerous work conditions. Workers at Wal-Mart stores in the U.S. and other countries where unions have been kept out face similar conditions.

ACFTU representative Wang Ying says more than 4,100 major foreign companies run by the Fortune 500 are doing business in China. She says that despite “tremendous resistance,” especially from U.S. companies, 82 percent of the companies have formed trade unions to date, and the figure would reach 90 percent by the end of this year. As of July before the campaign was started, workers had been able to form unions in less than 50 percent of the Fortune 500 firms. (China Daily, Oct. 7)

While global companies were the target of the 100-day campaign, Chinese companies and contractors make up the bulk of manufacturing work, and those not already unionized are facing pressure to do so.

The 100-day union drive follows strong legislation on labor contracts and arbitration passed by China’s parliament, the National People’s Congress, to strengthen employee rights “after decades of laissez faire investor-friendly policies.” Chinese labor laws now guarantee the right to strike and the right to sue the employer directly. Chinese workers are increasingly turning to courts to enforce their rights to organize. (China Law Blog, Sept. 15)

### Wildcat strikes led the way

The wave of unionization follows several years of growing wildcat strikes, tens of thousands of job actions, and efforts of Chinese workers to organize to defend their rights against super-exploitive conditions in foreign-owned plants. From 1995 to 2006 labor disputes increased 13-fold, according to China Law Blog. Many disputes erupted into mass demonstrations.

The role of unions is also changing. In Guangdong Province in the south, long the center of the largest number of foreign-owned plants, unions are becoming more aggressive in their demands. New labor laws and stricter labor law enforcement means that corporations can no longer avoid paying overtime.

ACFTU also has an active campaign to reach out to millions of new migrant workers who continue to flood in from the countryside. These are the workers with the lowest skills who hold the most oppressive jobs.

These campaigns are not socialist measures. Rather they are defensive efforts, spurred by mass struggle, to protect the workers from the worst effects of capitalist ownership, which has grown in China ever since the adoption of “market socialism” in the late 1970s.

### ‘Market socialism’—a concession

The Chinese Communist Party in the early years of the socialist revolution led heroic efforts to conquer extreme underdevelopment through such campaigns as the Great Leap Forward and the effort to move from collective farms to communes and rural industries.

These heroic efforts enabled the Chinese Revolution to mobilize a largely peasant population to lay the groundwork for a more modern society. Giant strides were made in literacy for the whole population. Mass immunization campaigns and basic health brigades brought epidemics and plagues under control. Infant mortality and life expectancy improved dramati-

cally. Major construction projects undertaken by millions of volunteers brought irrigation, dams and modern roads to the countryside for the first time.

Meanwhile, the developed imperialist world kept China blockaded, sanctioned and isolated from the modern technologies that were changing the West.

In the late 1970s the grouping in the Chinese leadership often called “capitalist roaders” made dangerous concessions in an effort to overcome underdevelopment and attract modern technology and investment capital. China opened its doors to imperialist corporations. The communes were broken up and land use was virtually privatized.

Initially, special capitalist enterprise zones were established. Thousands of Western corporations flocked to take advantage of the low wages that millions of peasants arriving from rural areas were willing to accept.

From the 1990s on, the socialist economy made further concessions. Today more than 150,000 foreign-owned enterprises operate in China. They parcel work among hundreds of thousands of subcontractors.

The All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce reported last February that nearly 200 million Chinese, out of a 1.3 billion total population, worked in private enterprises. However, these enterprises produced 60 percent of the country’s gross domestic product.

The government’s policy also encouraged the growth of a capitalist class within China. In perhaps the most dangerous concession, the Chinese Communist Party has agreed to allow members of that class into the workers’ own party.

### Imperialism remains hostile

U.S. imperialism for decades has aimed to penetrate China’s economy and politi-

cal structure enough to carry out a complete capitalist counter-revolution.

Even while U.S. corporations flooded into China, the Pentagon continued its plans to surround China with bases. It arms and continues to support a separate, hostile government in Taiwan, an island that is internationally recognized as part of China.

The U.S. also supports and gives endless publicity to the Tibetan separatist movement and finances the phony government-in-exile headed by the Dalai Lama.

China’s economy has continued to grow. It now holds a huge trade surplus with the U.S. But the money that China holds means that a significant part of the economy is hostage to the constantly devaluing U.S. dollar. Nevertheless, China has been able to invest billions in infrastructure projects and finance its development.

The capitalist market has made serious inroads in production, distribution and finance. International banks were just recently granted the legal right to buy major stakes in Chinese banks. A great deal of China’s growth is linked to export-oriented manufacturing industries.

The impact of the worldwide capitalist crisis on foreign corporations doing business in China is not yet known. The interests of several million small entrepreneurs, merchants and traders, along with a growing number of big Chinese capitalists, are bound up with imperialism.

But China’s revolutionary break with imperialism in 1949 still remains a mighty social force. It inspires millions of Chinese workers to this day. The recent laws and organizing campaigns are giving the workers new strength when and where they most need it. By all accounts, in both the Chinese media and the Western corporate media, they are taking advantage of the moment. □

## VANCOUVER

# ‘Free the Cuban 5!’



The U.S. Consulate in Vancouver, Canada, was the site of a lively picket line on Oct. 6 as dozens of people demanded freedom for the Cuban 5. Their signs and chants emphasized that the five Cubans jailed in the United States are heroes, not criminals, whose job was to keep their country informed of anti-Cuban terrorist activity. The date marked the anniversary of the bombing of Cubana flight 455, which killed 73 people in 1976. This deadly act was reportedly masterminded by the admitted terrorist and former CIA agent Luis Posada Carriles, who just this May was feted at a gala dinner by right-wingers in Miami—the same city where the five Cuban heroes were denied a fair trial.

—Photo and information from the Free the Cuban 5 Committee/Vancouver

## DAY of MOURNING

### NOV. 27

The 39th Annual Day of Mourning will be held on “Thanksgiving” Thursday, Nov. 27 at 12 noon on Cole’s Hill in Plymouth, Mass. A dinner/social will follow a march and rally. The event is being sponsored by United American Indians of New England. For more updates, go to [www.uaine.org](http://www.uaine.org). For New York transportation, call the International Action Center at 212-633-6646

## El capitalismo crea guerra y depresión

El siguiente es un extracto de la introducción al libro "Low-Wage Capitalism" (Capitalismo de bajos salarios) escrito por Fred Goldstein a ser publicado por World View Forum.

### La crisis dentro de la crisis

Conforme la crisis económica asciende se verá cómo muchos políticos y expertos en la materia se acusan unos a los otros con la intención de suavizar la ira de las masas. La opinión oficial le echa la culpa de la situación a la avaricia y al fracaso de las regulaciones. Es seguro que los banqueros en Wall Street son voraces y avaros. Y es obvio que la destrucción de los límites regulatorios sobre el capital financiero abrió las puertas a la escalada de juegos riesgosos y especulación—a la economía de "casino".

Esta desregulación comenzó con la administración Reagan, aumentó durante la administración Clinton con el abandono del Acta Glass-Steagall de la Era de la Depresión y continuó durante la actual administración Bush. Alan Greenspan, ex presidente del Sistema de Reserva Federal, presidió muchas de estas desregulaciones durante su turno de 19 años desde 1987 al 2006.

Pero decir que la desregulación es la causa del exceso capitalista es poner las cosas al revés. Es la incontenible sed de ganancias lo que verdaderamente conduce a estos excesos. Estos excesos, tales como la salvaje especulación en los negocios de acciones y tierras que llevaron a la depresión de 1929, condujeron a las regulaciones de la época del "New Deal" restringiendo a los financieros—pero solo después de que fuera muy tarde y millones fueran arruinados.

La necesidad gradual del capital para embarcarse en especulaciones inevitablemente resulta en la destrucción de los límites regulatorios. El sistema en sí crea un exceso de dinero capital y lo empuja más y más hacia la especulación financiera e inversiones en riquezas en papel que no tienen ninguna relación con el valor real subyacente.

La realidad es que los banqueros y los ricos en general han aumentado inmensamente sus fortunas en las últimas tres décadas. La desigualdad de los ingresos en los Estados Unidos es ampliamente conocida en todo el mundo. Por ejemplo, en el 1976 el 1% más alto de los hogares recibió un 8.9% de la totalidad de los ingresos. En el año 2005 ese 1% recibió

el 21.8%—el porcentaje más alto del total de ingresos monetarios desde 1928, el año antes de que la Bolsa de Valores se desplomara. (Inequality.org)

Desde el año 2000 al año 2007 los 400 individuos más ricos en Estados Unidos recibieron un aumento de \$670 mil millones en sus riquezas y eran dueños de \$1.5 billones. Mientras que el 1% más alto de los hogares gana más que el 50% de los de abajo, son dueños de más del 90% de las riquezas. (Estas cifras fueron tomadas del discurso en contra del rescate financiero pronunciado por el Senador Bernie Sander.) Estas son cifras realmente chocantes y tienen implicaciones profundas para el sistema capitalista de ganancias.

La clase trabajadora produce todas las riquezas y todo valor en la sociedad. La lucha de clases es realmente una lucha sobre cuál clase social recibirá una porción más grande o más pequeña de las ganancias sociales creadas por el trabajo. Si los patronos reciben más, los trabajadores reciben menos, y viceversa. Esto es lo que hace irreconciliable los antagonismos entre las clases sociales.

Decir que hay una desigualdad creciente de los ingresos en los EEUU es verdaderamente una forma disfrazada de decir que ha habido una amplia re división de las ganancias sociales a favor de la clase capitalista y a perjuicio de la clase trabajadora. Los patronos y los banqueros han tomado una porción más y más grande y la clase trabajadora ha recibido una porción correspondientemente más pequeña.

Sin embargo, el ritmo con que los dueños del capital han acumulado estas riquezas excede la velocidad con que las ganancias se pueden reinvertir en capital productivo. La revolución científica-tecnológica ha hecho más productivo a los negocios. Los trabajadores producen más y hacen más servicios en menos tiempo con cada nuevo avance tecnológico.

Además, la anarquía en la producción—es decir, la naturaleza no planificada y competitiva de la producción capitalista—hace que cada grupo de capitalistas salga en búsqueda de una proporción creciente del mercado para obtener más ganancias, hasta el punto en que colectivamente producen tal exceso de productos en el mercado que entonces no pueden venderlos obteniendo ganancias. Esta es una característica fundamental del capitalismo y no se puede eliminar.

Y después de que los ricos gastan miles

de millones en yates, aviones, mansiones, sirvientes y toda forma de lujos obscenos, todavía les queda cientos de miles de millones en capital. Y, como demostró Carlos Marx, el capital no puede descansar, no puede quedarse ocioso. Busca ganancias, y busca maximizar las ganancias.

Por ejemplo, las dos corporaciones industriales más grandes en los EEUU—General Electric y General Motors—tienen ambas enormes subdivisiones financieras. GE pone miles de millones en ganancias en GE Capital, la cual invierte decenas de miles de millones en préstamos alrededor del mundo. El brazo financiero de la GM es GMAC. (En 2008, para aumentar el capital, vendió un 51 por ciento de GMAC a Cerberus, una empresa privada de finanzas.) Mientras que GM redujo su producción y forzó a una gran parte de su fuerza laboral a retirarse, la compañía ha expandido su actividad prestamista. Igual sucede con la Ford, la Chrysler y otros gigantes industriales. En vez de invertir el exceso de capital en sus propias compañías, lo usan para hacer préstamos.

El colapso del mercado de viviendas en agosto de 2007, seguido por el tumulto en los mercados de capital, fue solo la más reciente en una serie de crisis capitalistas.

Durante la administración Reagan, una grave recesión en 1982 y 1983 hizo subir el desempleo a más del 11 por ciento. La clase capitalista usó esa oportunidad para empezar la reestructura tecnológica en la industria, lo cual resultó en que millones de trabajadores perdieran sus empleos de altos salarios. Entonces Reagan estimuló la economía dándole \$2 billones al aparato militar, utilizando propaganda de la Guerra Fría (anti-Soviética) para justificar este enorme regalo al complejo militar-industrial.

Se expandió la economía y la bolsa de valores floreció de nuevo—hasta que se colapsara en octubre 1987 con pérdidas récord. Billones de dólares de riquezas en papel fueron borrados. Un colapso económico fue evitado sólo cuando Alan Greenspan, que fue nombrado director de la Reserva Federal en agosto 1987, dio decenas de miles de millones de dólares al sistema financiero para apoyar los bancos y la Bolsa de Valores en una acción de urgencia. Este rescate urgente de la economía duró solo hasta 1991 cuando hubo otra recesión.

Sin embargo, el colapso de la Unión Soviética, también en 1991, inició una

década de expansión capitalista. El capital inundó la ex Unión Soviética, Europa del Este, India y otros países. El alza en la producción económica se aceleró en los años a mediados de los 90 con el desarrollo de la Internet y las tecnologías relacionadas. Desde 1995 a 2000, capitalistas aventureros, que en realidad sirven como frentes para los grandes bancos, vertieron miles de millones de dólares en capital especulativo en compañías de tecnología. Nuevas compañías se creaban diariamente. La Bolsa de Valores tuvo un boom creando la llamada burbuja de "dot.com" (punto.com)—hasta que la sobreproducción de tecnología resultó en otro colapso, empezando en marzo del 2000. Desde esa época hasta octubre 2002, \$5 billones de riquezas en papel fueron borrados y un bajón de la economía ocurrió simultáneamente.

En los 110 años que han pasado desde la guerra hispanoamericana de conquista, el capitalismo ha traído un ciclo infinito de guerras, recesiones, depresiones, y más guerras. Después de cada depresión económica el sistema ha tenido que recurrir a la expansión militar y a la manipulación financiera para resuscitarse.

Durante la depresión de los años 30, Franklin D. Roosevelt trató de acelerar la economía con la Administración de Proyectos de Trabajo (WPA por sus siglas en inglés) y permitiendo que subieran los sueldos de los trabajadores. Pero para los años 1937-1938, después de una breve subida, hubo una segunda depresión. Sólo los preparativos para la Segunda Guerra Mundial y las conquistas en el Pacífico y en Europa resucitaron la economía estadounidense.

Durante todo el período de la Guerra Fría, el capitalismo estadounidense dependió del gasto militar para sostener su economía. El crecimiento del complejo militar-industrial, con su red de contratistas primarios y miles de subcontratistas aprovechándose de las apropiaciones del Pentágono para la guerra y exportaciones de armas, fue la medida principal de mantener la economía capitalista y evitar que se hundiera en el estancamiento y la depresión.

Esta historia ilustra que desde el principio del siglo XX, el capitalismo para sostenerse, ha tenido que recurrir a medidas artificiales que a su paso resultan en desastres de guerra, de depresión, o de ambas.

3 de octubre, 2008

CARLOS MARX ESTABA TENIENDO RAZÓN

PARTIDO WORKERS WORLD/MUNDO OBRERO

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