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Across the country Thousands in streets defend same-sex rights

Right-wing churches bankrolled Prop. 8 in Calif.

By Imani Henry

The election victory of Barack Obama will go down in history as a triumphant step forward in the struggle against racism and national oppression in the U.S. Unfortunately, it was also an election where more than 10 million voters in Florida, Arizona and California supported right-wing ballot initiatives to deny marriage rights to lesbian, gay, bi and trans people.

Thirty states now have constitutional bans on same-sex marriage. A proposal in Arkansas was also passed to stop gay men and lesbians from adopting children.

The struggle around California's Proposition 8, which amends the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry, garnered national attention. Prop. 8 was the highest-funded campaign in any state and exceeded every other electoral campaign in spending except for the presidential race.

Prop. 8 was launched by ProtectMarriage.com to counter the California Supreme Court's May 15 ruling which deemed unconstitutional a 2000 ban on same-sex marriage. "Vote Yes on Prop. 8" forces raised \$35.8 million. The ban won 52 to 48 percent.

The coalition of right-wing organizations that supported Prop. 8 included the Roman Catholic Church, Knights of Columbus, Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, American Family Association, Focus on the Family and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon).

The Utah-centered Mormon Church actively organized support for Prop. 8 and raised significant funds in both that state and California. Every congregation

THE OBAMA VICTORY

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Centerfold

was read a letter in support of the bigoted ballot measure and urged to donate and raise funds. About 45 percent of donations to ProtectMarriage.com from outside California came from Utah, much more than any other state. (Mercury News, Oct. 24)

Prop. 8 marriage ban ignites protests

On Nov. 4 across the country, LGBT people of all nationalities gathered to watch and then celebrate Obama's victory. But on Nov. 5—with the announcement of the passing of Prop. 8—a new firestorm of protest was ignited. LGBT political and legal organizations immediately started an appeal process.

An estimated 10,000 people rallied, marched, sat down in the streets and/or shut down traffic in Los Angeles and San Francisco. On Nov. 6, the protests spread to more cities, including San Diego and Westwood, Calif. More than 3,000 people protested on Nov. 7 in downtown Salt Lake City at the Mormon temple and church headquarters.

Actions took place throughout California on Nov. 8, including a march of 13,000 in Los Angeles and 10,000 in San Diego. On Nov. 9, the California

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WORKERS WORLD PARTY COMMENTARY

Obama— A new political situation

By Larry Holmes

There is a new political situation in the U.S. and in the world. Even though Barack Obama's sweeping electoral victory was not entirely unexpected, now that it has happened—the reality of it—the way in which it demonstrated to the world that something big has changed about the working class in the U.S., is so stunning that many still find it hard to believe.

The long history of racism in the U.S. seemed to preclude for the foreseeable future the election of an African-American president. The meltdown on Wall Street and the gravest capitalist crisis in 75 years beat back the bigotry that could have stopped Obama's victory.

A record-breaking turnout on the part of African-American and Latin@ voters, and a tidal wave of young voters—including tens of millions of white workers from Virginia and North Carolina, Indiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania—cemented the multinational electoral coalition that made history.

Of course, the capitalist ruling class of the U.S. is still firmly in charge. The loyalty of the two ruling class political parties, including the president-elect, to U.S. imperialism is still intact.

True, much of the U.S. ruling class had concluded that Obama might be the radical makeover that their government needed to deal with the crisis ahead. But that fact cannot negate the role or the feelings of the masses in this phenomenon.

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San Diego tells the bigots: 'YES, WE CAN!'

Several thousand opponents of the narrowly passed Proposition 8 rallied in San Diego's Balboa Park on the evening of Nov. 7. The next morning more than 10,000 turned out for a spirited march through the central San Diego neighborhoods of Hillcrest and North Park.

The Nov. 8 march was characterized by militant chanting, raised fists and many signs referencing the slogan made famous by the Obama presidential campaign: 'Yes, We Can!' More protests are planned for the coming days.

—Report and photos by Bob McCubbin

Trampled by riot police at last presidential debate –

Iraq war veterans charged with 'DisCon'

By Dee Knight

Fourteen members of the Iraq Veterans Against the War attempted to present questions to presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain at their final debate in Hempstead, Long Island, N.Y., on Oct. 15. Instead of being ushered into the debate site as they requested, they were assaulted by riot police on horseback.

One veteran, Nick Morgan, was trampled when a cop provoked his horse to spin, knocking Morgan down and trampling his face. Morgan sustained a crushing blow to his head—a cheek bone was broken in three places, and his eye socket was shattered.

Morgan was dumped in a police wagon with the other vets, until they badgered the cops to rush him to a hospital, then sent to jail. They were arraigned for “disorderly conduct” on Nov. 10 at the Nassau County District Court.

In its coverage of the Hempstead events, the New York City Independent Media Center reported on Oct. 16 that “Speakers included a member of the New York Civil Liberties Union, a local civil rights advocate, a Military Families Speak Out activist and a member of the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights. As more activists from the NYC area poured in, the march to the campus of Hofstra started, with defiant chants of ‘Stop the torture, stop the war, this is what we’re fighting for,’ and ‘They’re our brothers, they’re our sisters, we support war resisters!’ filling the streets of Hempstead. With IVAW members at the front, the crowd swelled to around 400 demonstrators. Members of the local Planned Parenthood joined in along the way.”

IVAW members, backed by a crowd of anti-war protesters, were allowed to pass through one line of police before they were met with lines of Nassau County riot police and cops on horses. IVAW members Matthis Chiroux and Kris Goldsmith, who organized the protest, tried to enter the Hofstra University campus and were promptly arrested. At least three other veterans and four civilians followed and were arrested as well.

As the crowd chanted, “Let them in!” the police on



Iraq veteran Sgt. Nick Morgan, trampled by police horse Oct. 15 in Hempstead, N.Y.

horses pushed back against the crowd, which was led by a group of about 15 Iraq veterans in fatigue uniforms. After a tense standoff for several minutes, four people were knocked over by riot police and horses. It was during this fracas that Morgan was injured. After the police assault, a standoff between the cops and demonstrators occurred for more than an hour.

A couple of questions

Chiroux, who last May publicly declared his intent to refuse to deploy to Iraq, had sent a letter to debate moderator Bob Scheiffer demanding that two IVAW members be allowed to ask the candidates one question each.

“My question is, as President of the United States of America, are you prepared to back up your own words [about the illegality of the Iraq War] and the U.S. Constitution by supporting service members refusing to participate in what you describe as an illegal occupation?”

They also wanted to ask McCain a question about his lack of support for veterans. “What promises are you willing to make, as a veteran, as a senator, as a presidential candidate, to the veterans of the United States, to prove that you will ensure the V.A. is fully funded, staffed and capable of preventing troops from suffering as they are now?”

A petition launched the day following the Hempstead incident says in part:

“We, the undersigned, denounce and condemn the violent actions and gross misconduct of the Nassau County Police Department in Hempstead, Long Island. Specifically, we are citing the unprovoked attack unleashed upon a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, who was acting within the First Amendment right to peacefully assemble on the evening of October 15, 2008 at Hofstra University, the site of the last presidential debate. ...

“We urge that all charges against the Iraq veterans and the other people arrested be dropped. ... All charges against [Morgan] must be dropped immediately, and a public apology be given by not only the Nassau County Police Department but the Mayor of Hempstead.”

To sign the petition, go to www.ipetitions.com. At the arraignment, Chiroux said, “We were charged with disorderly conduct, to which we all plead not guilty.” But, he adds, “Here’s the dirty thing. The cops scheduled our court appearances on different days to break us up and make demonstrations that much more complicated.” What the cops did not take into account is that more demonstrations help the movement—not them.

No reports were available regarding possible civil action against the police for damages. □

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Before it's too late, stop the murder of Mumia!

Lynne Abraham, the Philadelphia DA, known as 'the Deadliest DA in the U.S.' is calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to reinstate Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence, despite the mounds of evidence of his innocence. If Abraham's filing is granted that would mean EXECUTION for Mumia without even a new hearing or a new trial.

Join a day of International Solidarity to
FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL



Sat., DEC. 6 12 Noon

District Attorney's Office
 2 So. Penn Sq. (East Side of City Hall)
MARCH to Federal Courts 5th St. & Market

For information about purchasing bus tickets from NYC to Phila. call the **Solidarity Center 212-633-6646**

For info in Phila. call the **Int'l Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal 215-476-8812** and the **Int'l Action Center 215-724-1618**
www.FreeMumia.com www.Millions4Mumia.org

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Inflation? Deflation? Stagflation? Or all three?

By Milt Neidenberg

Is the “r” word, now being bandied about by Wall Street pundits, morphing into the “d” word? Depression raises the specter of the 1929 crash followed by 10 years of hardship, sacrifice and struggle before the capitalist economy recovered—primarily due to the stimulus of World War II. The workers of many countries paid the staggering price for that imperialist war—tens of millions dead and maimed.

Following the 2001 recession, a depression—loss of jobs and income—came early for many workers and oppressed nationalities. But the bankers and bosses, who called it a “jobless recovery,” quickly recovered their profits.

Seven years later, multinational workers face a debacle far worse than 2001. A Nov. 8 New York Times editorial referred to “surging joblessness and shrinking incomes. ... The job numbers for October, released by the government on Friday, leave no doubt that the nation is in a recession that will be deep and painful.”

For 10 months now, there have been mass layoffs and lost wages. Full-time workers couldn't keep up with rising inflation even as the government—the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve—pumped at least a trillion dollars into the financial system to bail out the bankers, attempting to restore liquidity and credit.

Part-time and temporary workers looking for full-time jobs also suffered. Young workers and people of color have been hit the hardest.

Since the beginning of the year more

than 10 million workers have swelled the unemployment lines. One in five, more than 2.3 million, haven't had jobs for six months or more. And those grim statistics are understated and outdated.

Foreclosures and evictions are on the rise. Health care is beyond the reach of 47 million uninsured workers. The scourge of capitalism has swept down on the masses with a vengeance, even though the depression is still in its earliest stage.

Recently the stock market dropped nearly 1,000 points over a two-day period. Never in the recorded history of market highs and lows have the losses come so quickly and sharply. It was literally a crash—one of many in recent months.

Wall Street and the apologists for the capitalist system defined this crash as a “correction,” exacerbated by fear and panic. In recent years the Dow Jones Industrial Average has plummeted from 14,000 to nearly 8,000, wiping out a huge amount of workers' wealth in savings, pensions and other retirement funds invested in the stock market.

In February 1988, less than four months after the October 1987 crash, Sam Marcy, founding chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote the pamphlet “Wall Street Crash—What does it mean?” It dispelled the illusion that the stock market is driven by emotions. He documented with Marxist clarity the relationship of the stock market to the capitalist economy, noting that “It tends to concentrate all industry, agriculture, commerce and the means of production in the hands of stock exchange operators.” (Full text online at workers.org.)

Powerful transnational monopolies like

ExxonMobil and the agribusiness barons are desperately trying to maintain a stable price structure for their products. Companies with less capital are forced to lower their prices as buyers wait for prices to fall. As workers find it more difficult to buy what they need to subsist, markets become glutted, profits shrink and dry up, plants close, unemployment deepens, investment gets too risky and companies and banks go belly up.

The word for this chilling process is deflation. Deflation accompanied the 1930s Great Depression. Economists like Nouriel Roubini of the New York University Stern School of Business, one of the many economic advisers to President-elect Barack Obama, warned months ago of a financial crisis and the threat of deflation. He, like all supporters of capitalism, believes there are reforms that can surmount these crises.

However, these reforms, called “priming the pump,” intensify inflation. The government is already printing dollars in the trillions and accumulating new debt. Exacerbated by the huge sums spent on the military-industrial complex, total government indebtedness has grown to more than \$10 trillion.

Ultimately, debasing the dollar creates havoc in global currency markets and in trade and commodity relations. The panic has quickly spread as dozens of countries, particularly the emerging economies, are sliding into financial and economic crisis. The economy of Iceland, a NATO ally, has collapsed. Hungary and Poland are seeking financial bailouts from the International Monetary Fund.

More than 125 years ago, Frederick Engels, co-thinker and collaborator of Karl Marx, described the course of a capitalist crisis and collapse in his “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific.”

“[S]ince 1825, when the first general crisis broke out, the whole industrial and commercial world, production and exchange ... are thrown out of joint about once every 10 years. 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 of subsistence; bankruptcy follows upon bankruptcy.”

The obscene bailout, in which the capitalist parties agreed to spend billions to save Wall Street bankers and their army of predators, will awaken the masses of workers and the oppressed nationalities. In the rapidly growing mass movement that brought about the historic Obama victory, can we see a glimmer of the classwide struggle that will be necessary to bring about revolutionary change? Such slogans as “a job is a property right,” which grew out of mid-1930s struggles, will resonate as capitalism unwinds.

Referred to earlier, Marcy's 1988 analysis is a perfect fit for 2008: “The prospects are not just for a rerun of earlier economic collapses, but for one that could be on a profounder and deeper level even than 1929. Regardless of its dimensions, however, it will reopen the struggle of the working class and change the character of the entire international situation.” □

New book examines character of deepening crisis in capitalist globalization

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

This is a must-read book for those seeking answers to the current crisis in world capitalism. With the economic meltdown of 2008, the very future of the system of international finance capital has been thrown into question.

Monumental write-offs of hundreds of billions of dollars by the world's leading banks and investment firms have occurred this year. Names such as Bear Stearns, Goldman Sachs, UBS, HSBC, Wachovia, Citigroup, AIG, Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, etc., have become the focus of attention of not only the bourgeoisie, but of working people who have seen their jobs, homes, pensions and overall living standards plunge.

Official statistics on the U.S. economy indicate that over one million jobs have been lost during 2008. Consumer confidence has declined while signs of social discord have emerged, in part resulting in the willingness of many whites to vote for the country's first African-American president.

What has generated profound anger among working people throughout the U.S. is the response to this crisis by the capitalist class and the bourgeois state, which have given over a trillion dollars in taxpayer money to the very same financial institutions that created the crisis.

This crisis, however, is not confined to the U.S. The subprime mortgage crisis and the “credit crunch,” as it was described during the early months of 2008, are now being labeled—even by the corporate press—as

a major economic dilemma affecting billions of people around the globe.

The U.S. Federal Reserve Bank along with central banks throughout Europe and the world have handed over hundreds of billions of dollars and other units of currency to the bankers in order to stave off a rapid collapse of the system. Despite all of these subsidies to the financiers, many of these firms have not survived. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac have essentially been “nationalized” under capitalist control by the U.S. government in order to soften the fall of the multi-trillion-dollar housing market.

Yet there has been no bailout for the working people of the U.S. and the world. Millions have lost their homes and jobs. Their pensions are rapidly drying up because many of these funds were invested in the gambling houses of Wall Street and its counterparts around the world.

Nonetheless, the resistance and fight-back are developing. Workers in Europe have staged general strikes against rising fuel and food prices. There have been food rebellions in various countries throughout the Caribbean and Africa. In the U.S., a burgeoning movement calling for a moratorium on foreclosures has made a political impact and is influencing the political dialogue taking place inside the country.

The source of the crisis

Goldstein, utilizing Marxist economic analysis, has approached this crisis from the standpoint of those who are most seriously affected: the working class, the nationally oppressed and women. The

Colossus with Feet of Clay: Low-Wage Capitalism

What the new globalized, high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S., by Fred Goldstein,
World View Forum, 2008

author makes the case in very simple and straightforward language that the crisis is one of capitalist overproduction.

According to Goldstein: “This cycle dictates that, during periods of capitalist expansion, the powers of production increase ever more rapidly while the powers of consumption of society expand only gradually. Sooner or later production outstrips consumption. Profit does not arrive in corporate bank accounts until sales take place. If commodities cannot be sold at a profit, inventories pile up, production stops, workers are laid off, and a crisis ensues. That is the crude dynamic of the capitalist crisis of overproduction.” (pp. xi-xii)

The author explains: “The new international division of labor pits workers all around the world against each other in a race to the bottom. It depresses wages of the working class in imperialist countries and expands the sweatshop, superexploitation of the workers in low-wage countries. It makes each capitalist recovery more difficult and undermines the historic advantages accruing to the workers in a capitalist upturn. All this is aggravating the general crisis of capitalism. High technology and low-wage capitalism on a world scale are accelerating the crisis of

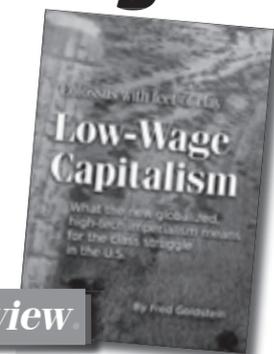
overproduction and laying the basis for a massive counterattack by the working class.” (p. xiii)

Women, race and the capitalist crisis

As it relates to the impact of the crisis on women and the nationally oppressed in the U.S., Goldstein looks at this phenomenon within the context of the historical development of the country. It was the stolen land of the Native Americans and the slave labor of the African people, along with the low-wage exploitation of Chinese workers in building the railways to the West Coast, which made the U.S. the leading capitalist nation in the world.

The author takes note of the changing character of the labor force in the U.S.: “The rise in the number of women compared to men in the workforce over the last three decades is telling. In 1970, 79 percent of all men participated in the labor force as opposed to 43 percent of all women. In 2005, men's participation dropped to 72 percent while women's climbed to 60 percent. Women's participation in the labor force has steadily risen since 1980 and men's participation has steadily declined. By 2005 there were 80

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A Review

500 protest anti-gay broadcaster, Prop. 8 patron James Dobson in Chicago

By Lou Paulsen

Days after the passage of Proposition 8 in California, which eliminates equal marriage rights for lesbians and gays in that state, one of its chief backers was hit by a large and energetic protest when he came to Chicago for an award dinner.

The protest has been building since July, when it was announced that right-wing Christian broadcaster James Dobson had won an online vote to be inducted into the "Radio Hall of Fame" of Chicago's Museum of Broadcast Communications. Having already won wide local and national support, the protest picked up steam after the passage of Prop. 8 touched off a wave of mass activism for LGBT rights.

Over 500 people came out on the evening of Nov. 8, bringing signs, banners and rainbow flags, and establishing a loud and vigorous picket line which covered two sides of the Renaissance Hotel in the heart of downtown Chicago.

James Dobson, whose "Focus on the Family" broadcast is carried by 1,000

radio stations in the U.S., gave \$800,000 to finance propaganda supporting Prop. 8. Dobson has said that equal marriage for lesbians and gays will "destroy the earth." His "Love Won Out" subsidiary attempts to get lesbians and gays to "repent" of their sexual identity. Genuine therapists condemn Dobson's "conversion" attempts as unscientific and dangerous.

A fierce opponent of reproductive choice, Dobson also distributed a pre-election "Letter from the year 2012 in Obama's America," warning that if Barack Obama were elected president, tyranny, ruin and nuclear destruction of U.S. cities would follow.

The leading sponsors of the protest were Truth Wins Out, a New York-based organization that has exposed Dobson's "conversion" quackery; Chicago's Gay Liberation Network; and Equality Illinois. Dozens of other LGBT and progressive groups built for the action and signed full-page newspaper ads to publicize it. (See dumpdobson.com, truthwinsout.org, and gayliberation.net) □



Andy Thayer of the Gay Liberation Network addresses the protest.

WW PHOTO: LOU PAULSEN

Obama—A new political situation

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to Harlem to the still Katrina-devastated New Orleans there is elation over the outcome of this election, even a feeling of liberation from a measure of the racism born out of slavery, then cultivated into an unofficial second-class status, enforced by terror at the hands of the police, prisons or the KKK.

Indeed hundreds of thousands of people everywhere, for the most part spontane-

ously, took to the streets after Obama was declared the winner and the first African-American president of a country built on African slave labor.

And the celebrating was by no means exclusive to the African-American community. Everywhere, both within and beyond the borders of the U.S., people of every race and nationality poured into the streets crying, yelling and embracing strangers as if a long terrible, reactionary, life-stifling occupation, exemplified by the Bush regime, had finally come to an end.

Will this election restore people's faith in the U.S. capitalist system and government at the very time that exposing the system and government is so critical to forging the mass struggle against capitalism? Perhaps for a little while, but it won't last long.

In the coming days and months, the mass suffering brought on by the deepening of the worldwide capitalist economic crises, and the reality of the continuing U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, will betray the truth of what has or has not changed as a result of the presidential elections.

The inevitable revelation of how much change the incoming U.S. government represents, and how the mass of working and oppressed people in the U.S. and everywhere react to that revelation, will to a large degree provide the content of the world struggle against U.S. imperialism over the next period.

In lieu of that revelation, something has already changed. Only time will tell how deep and meaningful that change is. The people by the tens of millions have awakened and they have desperate expectations. The people want the U.S. capitalist government to end its wars abroad, stop layoffs and home foreclosures, provide healthcare and education.

Will the new government end the wars? Or will it withdraw troops from Iraq only to send them to Afghanistan?

Will the new Democratic Party government, with an even larger majority in Congress, bail out the workers who are losing their homes and jobs? Will it take the side of labor against capital?

One of the issues that is likely to come before the new Democratic government is a long-standing, simple, proposed law that would require a majority of workers at a workplace to sign union cards in order to get union recognition. The labor movement has been waiting for this law to pass. Will it be signed?

The people want the government to come to their rescue instead of Wall Street's. It's a dangerous thing to wake people up and arouse their expectations.

Now that the people are awake they may organize and fight for what they want and need. More than anything else, it is this potential that portends a new political situation in the U.S. and the world.

The feeling on the streets of cities large and small across the U.S. on election night was that now, anything is possible, and it is. □

Thousands defend same-sex rights

Continued from page 1

Highway Patrol was forced to close two state highway traffic ramps for 13 hours, as 350 people protested outside the largest Mormon temple in Oakland.

Saturday, Nov. 15, has been called as a national day of action against Prop. 8. In California, protesters are planning massive rallies at city halls all across the state. Legal and economic campaigns have been launched throughout the country to strip the Mormon Church of its tax-exempt status. An economic boycott is being discussed.

According to the Associated Press: "Utah's growing tourism industry and the star-studded Sundance Film Festival are being targeted for a boycott by bloggers, gay rights activists and others seeking to punish the Mormon church for its aggressive promotion of California's ban on gay marriage. It could be a heavy price to pay. Tourism brings in \$6 billion a year to Utah." (Nov. 6)

Don't blame Prop. 8 win on Black community

In a despicable effort—played heavily in the media—to deflect attention from the rich and powerful religious right, California's Black communities have been blamed for Prop. 8's passage. The media falsely concluded that the high voter turnout of Black people resulted in the measure's passage.

The LGBT movement has been erro-

Votes for third-party candidates

According to independent.org (Nov. 7), third-party presidential candidates received the following votes in the 2008 elections:

Ralph Nader (Independent)— 672,000

Bob Barr (Libertarian Party)— 500,000

Chuck Baldwin (Constitution Party)— 180,000

Cynthia McKinney (Green Party)— 145,000

Gloria LaRiva (Party for Socialism & Liberation)— 7,583 (wikipedia)

Roger Calero (Socialist Workers Party)— 7,182

neously depicted as entirely white and middle class, and Black communities as politically conservative, highly religious and heterosexual.

But LGBT communities and movements in the U.S. are overwhelmingly multinational and working class in character, and neither Prop. 8 nor the oppression of LGBT people originates from the African-American community. The millions in donations raised by the anti-LGBT forces did not come from the pockets of Black churchgoers.

A new study released by the University of California, Los Angeles-based Williams Institute indicates that more than 7,400 Black men and women in California are in same-sex relationships. Fifty-five percent of Black women and 11 percent of Black men are raising children within these couples, the study found. It also found economic disparities among Black same-sex couples and their heterosexual counterparts.

Christopher Ramos, the study's co-author, noted: "These analyses break stereotypes about gay, lesbian, and bisexual people, like the idea that they are all wealthy. We find that gay and bisexual [African-American] men in California have household incomes that are 44 percent lower than their heterosexual counterparts." (L.A. Reporter, Oct. 23)

In a statement, Kathryn Kolbert, a reproductive rights attorney and president of the pro-LGBT People for the American Way, countered the divisive news coverage: "[We have looked] at the basic numbers and concluded that it is simply false to suggest that Prop. 8 would have been defeated if African Americans had been more supportive.

"The amendment seems to have passed by more than half a million votes, and the number of black voters, even with turnout boosted by the presidential race, couldn't have made up that difference. ... Republicans and white churchgoers, among many other groups, voted for Prop. 8 at higher rates than African Americans. ... Who's really to blame? The religious right." (www.pfaw.org)

The right-wing campaign of lies and deception during the campaign included "robocalls" directed at Black households that falsely portrayed Obama as a Prop. 8

supporter. In fact, it was Black communities and religious leaders who mobilized to counter much of the right-wing efforts.

The California NAACP sent mailers opposing Prop. 8 to 140,000 Black households. In October the campaign in the Black community against Prop. 8 ranged from an evening of preaching against Prop. 8 at a predominantly Black church in San Francisco to a press conference held on the steps of Oakland's city hall by prominent African-American leaders.

While John McCain was a supporter of Prop. 8 and Obama publicly opposed it, both candidates voiced opposition to gay marriage. Obama is only for the right of civil unions for LGBT persons, which do not confer the same rights and benefits as marriage does.

According to the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: "The 1,138 federal benefits and protections of marriage are only available to couples that are allowed to legally marry. These include Social Security survivor and spousal benefits, the ability to file a joint tax return, immigration rights, and coverage under the Family and Medical Leave Act. To date, civil unions are not 'portable,' meaning that when a couple moves to another state, none of the benefits, rights or responsibilities coming from civil unions move with them."

At the heart of the Prop. 8 and marriage equality struggle is the right to health care and employment benefits that all workers of every nationality, gender and sexuality should have. LGBT marriage is essentially about workers' rights. This is why organized labor has fought the bosses to have domestic partner benefits in their contracts. Prop. 8 is a setback to the entire progressive movement for social and economic justice.

It is not surprising during this capitalist economic crisis that the right wing poured millions of dollars into a campaign to deny benefits to LGBT workers. At the heart of their efforts is an attempt by the entire ruling class to pit workers and oppressed communities against each other in the hope we won't unite to fight back against them.

The struggle to overturn Prop. 8 will continue. A multinational, multisexuality movement will be a powerful force to turn back all the economic attacks coming down on the working class in this period. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

UFCW reaches agreement with Smithfield

After more than 15 years of totally vicious, sometimes violent, always racist anti-union activities at its Tar Heel plant in North Carolina, Smithfield Foods agreed that the roughly 4,600 employees at the world's largest slaughterhouse could vote this December for union representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers. Smithfield also dropped its federal racketeering lawsuit against the union. As part of the settlement, the UFCW agreed to drop its public campaign against Smithfield. (New York Times, Oct. 28)

In a related development, the 1,400 workers in UFCW Local 440 who work at Farmland's pork processing plant in Denison, Iowa, approved a four-year contract in late September. Farmland, which is a subsidiary of Smithfield, agreed to wage increases that keep Denison workers among the highest paid in the industry, innovative health and safety standards, and quality, affordable health care coverage. (UFCW press release, Sept. 28) Tar Heel workers deserve as much!

Immokalee workers target Subway and Chipotle

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers has extended its fight for economic justice for workers in Florida's tomato fields by picking two new targets: Subway and Chipotle chains. That's why Southern Illinois University students demonstrated on Halloween in front of a Subway in Carbondale, Ill. CIW's Fair Food campaign, which was initiated in 1993, has successfully negotiated agreements with Taco Bell in March 2005, McDonald's in April 2007 and Burger King in May 2008. To request postcards to mail to the CEOs of Subway and Chipotle, send an e-mail to workers@ciw-online.org.

SAG/AFTRA meet to discuss commercials contracts

Joint Screen Actors Guild/American Federation of Television and Radio Artists Wages & Working Conditions meetings are being held in Los Angeles and New York to prepare for negotiations of commercials contracts that were extended from Oct. 31, 2008, to March 31, 2009. SAG has not yet signed a new contract for TV and film work, and a strike vote is still under consideration. Stay tuned.

Employee Free Choice Act Now!

Now that the U.S. labor movement successfully organized from coast to coast to get out the vote to elect Sen. Barack Obama president, one of its first priorities is passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. Known as the "card-check bill," it gives workers the right to join a union as soon as a majority of employees sign cards saying they want one.

After passage of the bill, the 16-million-member union movement estimates that its ranks will swell by at least 5 million workers in a couple of years. Long opposed by the corporations and the Bush administration, the bill has been called "Armageddon" by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. (New York Times, Nov. 9) Even the Times characterized corporate opposition a declaration of war against the bill. To add your name to the American Rights at Work petition supporting the EFCA, go to www.freechoiceact.org.

Other demands of the labor movement include universal health care coverage and a huge stimulus package to create jobs and help workers get through the deepening recession. It's important to remember that the struggle for jobs needs to be spearheaded by the demand that jobs are the property right of all workers. □

GM-Chrysler merger off, but more layoffs on the way

By Martha Grevatt

Between Chrysler and General Motors, it's hard to say where the collective sigh of relief was the loudest. On Nov. 7 GM announced that talks on a possible merger of the two automakers—which would have wiped out thousands of jobs at both companies—was off. At the same time, the headlines announced yet more layoffs at the Big Three and their supplier plants.

In the past week the following cuts have been announced: 2,000 salaried and 3,600 hourly workers at GM;

2,000 salaried workers at Ford; 500 at Chrysler's advertising agency, BBDO North America; and among parts makers, 200 at Meridian Automotive Systems, 2,000 at Dana, 1,250 at ArvinMeritor and 800 at Visteon.

These are on top of all the previously reported cuts, some of which have already gone into effect. Workers at Chrysler's St. Louis minivan assembly plant will receive their final paycheck this month.

By the time this paper goes to press there will probably be more layoff announcements. The industry analysts

are busy speculating about a possible bankruptcy of one or more of the Big Three if they don't get federal aid fast. Any funds that become available for "retooling" will be used to modernize the operations so as to eliminate, not protect, existing jobs.

The laid-off and soon-to-be laid-off workers were no doubt a factor in Barack Obama's sweep of the Great Lakes industrial states. Now the task is to take that incredible anti-racist sentiment and unite the workers around a program of jobs before profits and money for worker-community control of the plants. □

58-day strike

Machinists go to the mat with Boeing for jobs

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Twenty-seven thousand members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District 751, ended their two-month strike against Boeing on Nov. 2. The week before, members ratified a new contract which beat back many of Boeing's concessions. Many were upset with the new contract; among the 74 percent who voted to ratify were many who were against the contract, but were running out of money.

But the strike cost Boeing plenty too: \$100 million a day, according to industry analysts.

The strike was a terrific effort by the workers to save their jobs from Boeing's outsourcing. The strikers stayed out extra weeks to save between 2,000 and 3,000 parts delivery jobs from being outsourced.

The Machinists fought for and won a 15-percent pay increase over four years.

They won an increase in the basic minimum, from \$12.76 per hour to \$15.00. They also got an extra \$1 per hour increase, after the general wage increase. Their medical plan will have no increased payments and they stopped a threat to cut the retirees' medical plan. They gained a pension increase from \$70 to \$83 per year of service. And 2,000 facilities maintenance workers are protected from being laid off during this contract.

However, the new contract doesn't give the firm guarantees that the workers were looking for, since an outside parts delivery contractor will be allowed inside the plant gates. Boeing also got a long four-year contract with the Machinists, who have always had three-year contracts. They have struck four times in two decades.

The union and company went to the mat on the issue of outsourcing of union jobs. The Machinists have seen their jobs outsourced, especially since 1999, with tens of thousands of jobs lost. Jobs have

been outsourced to lower-wage companies around the world and to outfits right down the street from Boeing plants. The Machinists have pointed out that outsourcing caused a 15-month delay in production of the new 787 plane, and Boeing even agreed.

Now New Breed Logistics, a nonunion company, will be able to bring parts inside the plants, giving Boeing a loophole which may endanger Machinists' jobs.

This heroic strike raised the issue of jobs high on the banner for labor. Tens of millions of jobs in aircraft and auto and other industries have been lost in recent decades. Wall Street financiers who dictated these layoffs have now created a global economic crisis. Workers' organizations have been demanding that "a job is a right" and calling for a moratorium on plant closings and layoffs.

This 58-day Machinists' strike, despite some compromises, advanced the cause of the workers' right to a job to protect their livelihoods. □

Calif. immigrant youths defend their families

By Judy Greenspan
San Francisco

Hundreds of progressive youth, predominantly Latin@, converged on the local offices of Immigration and Customs Enforcement to demand an end to the raids on the homes and workplaces of undocumented workers in this city. Young people from the East Bay risked arrest by jumping BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) turnstiles to attend the Oct. 31 protest.

The organizers of this protest chose Halloween to launch a broad and united youth-led campaign against the ICE raids and deportations. Demonstrators were urged to wear black and skull face paint or masks. The all-day event gathered at 10 a.m. at Ferry Park, marched to the ICE office at 11:30 and maintained a militant, energetic rally and protest until after 5 p.m.

At the ICE headquarters, young people blocked both entrances of the building and refused to let any ICE vehicles leave the area for several hours.

Young protesters from the East Bay who wanted to attend the rally jumped the turnstiles at several East Bay BART stations. The BART responded by closing several stations. However, the young people, who kept in contact with each other by cell phone and Internet, successfully held up the East Bay BART trains, demanding that the stations be reopened. There were several arrests of young people at the downtown Richmond BART stop.

"We want to make sure our families are safe and that our lives are not being threatened. It's really unfair, trying to scare high school students. We want to make sure sanctuary cities are respecting immigrants," said Aurora Castellanos, a first-year student at the University of California at Berkeley. Castellanos was one of the organizers of the rally.

ICE raids at schools and workplaces have increased dramatically over the past year. Several coalitions, including this newest one, have come together to demand amnesty for all undocumented workers and an end to the ICE raids.

Many cities in the Bay Area are "sanctuary cities" for undocumented workers. However the sanctuary status has not deterred ICE from its terrifying raids.

"We are humans, not illegals! Stop the raids!" the protesters chanted as they marched through this city's business district. Hundreds of people came out of stores and offices to watch the march go by.

Many of the students who came out to stop "the violence done to immigrants and families from Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, Asia and the Pacific Islands and the Middle East, had first hand experience with the ICE raids. One woman, Beatriz Dominguez, spoke about waking up one morning to find her father gone. 'They took my dad away,' she said. 'That's why I am here today—to make my voice heard and to speak out for my family and for all the students who couldn't be here because they were afraid of ICE,' Dominguez explained."

All quotes from the Berkeley Daily Planet, Nov. 6.

Worldwide response positive to Bush era's demise

By John Catalinotto

Twenty months ago, Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez joked about U.S. President George W. Bush's popularity in the U.S. dropping below 30 percent. "Outside the United States," Chávez added, "Bush's popularity rating is probably negative." (workers.org, March 13, 2007)

Now the mostly positive reaction of people all over the Earth to the news that Barack Hussein Obama was elected president of the United States has proved Chávez's comment was more than a joke. Most people in the world identified the African-American Obama as the negation of Bush and made him their favorite.

An unscientific but still interesting straw poll run by the conservative British magazine *The Economist* counted 85 percent of about 50,000 people polled worldwide as choosing Obama over John McCain.

Not surprisingly, a center of worldwide enthusiasm was in Kenya, where Obama's father was born. There from Nov. 4 to Nov. 8, "43 children born at the Nyanza

Provincial Hospital in Kisumu were named after the Obamas, with 23 boys given the first and middle name Barack Obama and 20 girls named Michelle Obama." (New York Times, Nov. 9)

The worldwide media—including the corporate media—greeted Obama's election with big photos of the president-elect and generally favorable coverage. One of the websites that follow Obama's life published photos of these front pages from Indonesia to Pakistan to Palestine to South Africa and Brazil. They celebrated not only the end of the Bush era, but the historic election of someone of African origin, with a Muslim middle name, to what is considered the most powerful elected position in the world.

Governments of countries that have been a target of U.S. economic and political subversion and war threats reacted to the change by requesting new diplomatic moves.

From Venezuela, Chávez congratulated Obama on his "historic" win and called for new relations between the coun-

tries, according to a Venezuelan Foreign Ministry statement.

"The historic election of an Afro-descendent to the head of the most powerful nation in the world is the symptom that the epochal change that South America has initiated could be knocking on the door of the United States," the statement read.

From Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad congratulated Obama on his election victory and said, "It is expected that fundamental and clear changes will be made in Washington's foreign and domestic policies, as demanded by all nations and the American people." (Tehran Times, Nov. 6)

The Political Council of the Iraqi Resistance, which is associated with the Islamic Army, one of a few major Iraqi armed resistance groups, wrote an open letter to Obama. It credited the strong anti-Bush feelings in the U.S. population for Obama's election and offered to negotiate an orderly withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq so long as the U.S. doesn't attempt to

keep the puppet politicians in a liberated Iraq and includes reparations for all the damage the U.S. invasion and occupation have done to the Iraqi people.

From statements from political groups and from the street—the latter reported in the corporate media—it appears that people in the Middle East are most skeptical that the change in the U.S. presidency represents a real change in direction in U.S. policies. This was especially true in reports from Iraq and Palestine.

Popular support in Europe

This past summer, the rally in Berlin where 200,000 listened to Obama speak in the German capital made it clear there was broad popular support for him in Europe. In addition, most of the corporate media were positive to enthusiastic about Obama throughout the campaign. They pointed to a possible Obama victory as a sign that the United States could change its ways after eight years of Bush's arrogant aggressive policies.

Only the most rightist European parties, especially the far right in Eastern Europe, openly supported McCain. Centrist and social democratic parties backed Obama, increasing their support as he gained in the polls. Even the conservative *Economist* magazine, which backed Bush in 2000, this time threw its full editorial support behind Obama.

The European "Center-Left"—which is now close to the U.S. Democratic Party in its overall policies and has opposed Bush since his administration—made it clear with the 2003 U.S.-British invasion of Iraq that it would order U.S. unilateral military moves without heeding advice from the European leaders. Then the German, French and other Western European governments backed away from the invasion.

In contrast, under Democratic President Bill Clinton, the NATO powers acting together waged an aggressive war under U.S. leadership against Yugoslavia in 1999.

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The 2008 elections and the prospects for struggle

Following is a statement released by the youth group *Fight Imperialism, Stand Together*. Visit fistyouth.org.

Nov. 4

The election of Sen. Barack Obama as the first Black U.S. president is historic. No amount of cynicism can erase that fact.

Even more historic were the great throngs of people who stood outside in large crowds and in packed arenas, churches, bars, community centers, union halls and homes. In Chicago, hundreds of thousands flooded Grant Park. In Harlem, N.Y., thousands cheered as they watched the election results on a massive screen. After the victory was announced the crowd erupted in applause and cheers. Cars honked, children ran and yelled, "We have a Black president! We deserve this! We deserve this!"

And, indeed, after hundreds of years of oppression—from when the first slaves were brought to the shores of North America, shackled in chains, after having survived for what must have seemed an inexorable amount of time cramped together as cargo in the holds of a ship, having witnessed other Africans tossed overboard, whose remains still litter the Atlantic Ocean—the oppressed Black masses deserve a Black president.

After years of oppression and repression—de facto slavery, U.S. apartheid, lynching, the assassination of leaders, poverty and disenfranchisement, up to the current state of racism and repression—and only three years removed from Hurricane Katrina, this symbolic victory and the tears of joy and relief, the smiles and exclamations of Black people young and old, cannot be denied or simply dismissed.

How must anti-imperialists and revolutionaries interpret the Obama phenomenon and the congressional gains of the Democratic Party?

It is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to analyze any rising of the oppressed and workers. It is Frederick Engels, a companion of Karl Marx and co-writer of "The Communist Manifesto," who wrote that universal suffrage is "the gauge of the maturity of the working class. It cannot

and never will be anything more in the present-day state."

The reality is that the Obama phenomenon and the Democratic Party gains are buttressed by two contradictory sets of expectations—those of the imperialistic, capitalist ruling class, and those of the oppressed Black masses, other oppressed nations and the working class as a whole.

The oppressed and working masses want an end to the Iraq war; jobs with a living wage; health care; housing, including a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions; access to education; an end to raids and deportations; and an end to police brutality, police occupation of oppressed communities and the railroad-ing of oppressed youth into the prison industrial complex.

The U.S. ruling class needs a smoother image around the world after eight years of ineloquence and right-wing reaction. Their expectation is for more corporate welfare, cheaper access to resources and more markets.

U.S. imperialism is unchanging. What does it matter if a hearty handshake and smile precede a knife in the back? This is what the Democrats offer.

History, however, belongs to the masses and it is the masses whose demands will prove to be the strongest. Though some in the Democratic Party may have intended the words "hope" and "change" to be slogans void of content, the expectations of the masses are that these words bear substance.

The economic crises will deepen. The housing market is glutted, the automobile market too, and there has already been a slowdown in construction, which has led to huge layoffs. The credit crisis and decreased consumer spending have led to more layoffs. Every sector is being hit around the world and the stock markets continue to vacillate. It can only be expected to get worse. The capitalist crisis may eventually eclipse the Great Depression and lead to a general crisis of overproduction.

For workers and the oppressed, this spells more misery. For anti-imperialists and revolutionaries, this presents great opportunities to exert broader influence

and raise the bar of struggle. We can bring up what imperialism is and show solidarity to our worldwide class—from Harlem to Iraq, from Palestine and Afghanistan to Africa, Latin America and Asia; to show workers and the oppressed in the U.S. their commonness with workers and the oppressed around the world and to raise workers' demands.

Struggle will come and the millions who took to the streets in celebration of an historic event, and the millions more who watched with gleams in their eyes, will not disappear, but will take to the streets as conditions intensify.

As the capitalist crisis plunges deeper, the prospects for struggle and for socialism are looking up. □



Right wing writhes in anger at Obama's victory

By Caleb T. Maupin

The right wing of the U.S. establishment looks at the election of Barack Obama in horror. In Barack Obama, they see a non-white man with a non-European name, who has spoken of "spreading the wealth around." Not only is this man a popular national figure, but he has been elected president of the United States by an overwhelming majority.

Much of the bigotry, hatred, demagoguery and outright fascistic violence associated with the right wing have arisen in response to Obama's election.

In the media, pundits from CNN to FOX have attempted to claim that despite the election results, this is still a "center-right" country. Greg Gutfeld of FOX news ruthlessly mocked a Black reporter who was moved to tears by Obama's election, publicly displaying his lack of empathy for what Obama's victory means to oppressed people. Glenn Beck screamed that he "feared for the republic."

Right-wing commentators have not let up their charge that Obama is a "socialist," which they mean as a heavy insult.

Two assassination plots against Obama have thus far been uncovered and made public. Both of them came from white males associated with the neo-Nazi movement. (All Headline News, Nov. 7) These fascists saw the hints of progress in Obama's election, with much white support, and were disgusted with rage.

Ali Kamara, a young Black Muslim teen, was violently beaten on election night by a crowd of white men with baseball bats on Staten Island, N.Y. This murderous mob chanted "Obama" as they ruthlessly assaulted this Black youth for no other reason than that he was the same race as the candidate these racist bigots disliked. (nbcnewyork.com, Nov. 6)

The right wing pulled out all of the stops in the last few days before the election, attempting to bait Obama as a friend of terrorists and closet socialist. The battle between the movements for change and social justice, and the right-wingers who cling to the evil establishments of the present and past, is sure to heighten. Let us long for the day that the bigots who respond to a Black man's election as president with violence are themselves thoroughly smashed. □

Latin@ voters help make history

By Teresa Gutierrez

There are many beautiful examples of the rich history of solidarity that exists between the Latin@ and Black communities in this country.

The indissoluble ties between national-liberation organizations, like those between the Black Panther Party and the Young Lords and the Brown Berets from the Southwest, are such examples. Cooperation between civil-rights leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Cesar Chavez are also great examples.

But the capitalist ruling class of this country uses not only racism as a tool to drive a wedge among the working class, but the age-old "divide and conquer" tactic as well. As a result, tensions between the Black and Latin@ community often erupt as part of the strategy emanating from the ruling class to have the most oppressed fighting among themselves for a bit of crumbs.

You need only witness how pundits and reporters play up divisions, real or imagined, between African Americans and Latin@ immigrants today.

Early on during the recent presidential primary season, the Clinton wing of the Democratic Party, whether overtly or covertly, often fostered these divisions. Tragic stories of fights between Latin@s and Blacks in Nevada before the primary, for example, were the result of these forces having fostered those tensions.

Many in the political leadership had wanted the vote from the Hillary Clinton base to go to McCain. Fortunately, this view, which would have been a gain for reaction, was smashed.

So Latin@s voting for Sen. Barack Obama for president in overwhelming numbers is a tremendous step forward for Black and brown unity.

Just as white workers pushed aside their prejudices and racism and instead let their economic interests drive their decision, these developments lay the basis for class unity.

Texas: barometer of change

Texas is a state as backward and reactionary as you can get in the United States. More people are executed in Texas than in any other state in the country.

President-elect Obama did not do much campaigning there after the primaries.

But a close look at the vote in Texas shows a sea change among the population that demonstrates a progressive turn among the electorate of this country.

Every major city in Texas—Houston, Dallas, Austin and San Antonio—voted for Obama.

South Texas, which is called El Valle (the Valley) and borders Mexico, went overwhelmingly for Obama as well.

The Latin@ vote also helped turn Colorado, Nevada and New Mexico into "blue states" from "red" ones.

Lorenzo Cano, a long-time Chicano activist who teaches Chicano Studies at the University of Houston, said this about the elections: "The overwhelming support by

Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Latinos in general is due to the 'hope' that Barack Obama symbolizes and has conveyed in his campaign. It is also due to the negative reaction and bad administration of George W. Bush and the Republican Party. The anti-immigrant bashing by Republicans during the Bush administration was a factor in the Democratic candidate getting so much support as well. ...

"The Obama administration will have to be lobbied and pressured into doing the right thing in the area of immigration reform since this may not be one of his priorities in the first year of his presidency. The first thing he must do is to call

Continued on page 9

A socialist perspective on Obama presidential victory

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The following is based on a talk by Abayomi Azikiwe at a Workers World Party public meeting in Detroit on Nov. 8. Part 2 of this talk will appear in the next printed WW issue. Read the entire talk at www.workers.org.

An alliance of African Americans, Latin@s, large sections of the working class, youth and women of all nationalities led to the victory of Sen. Barack Obama on Nov. 4. In electoral votes earned, which actually determines the presidential winner, Obama defeated Sen. John McCain by a margin greater than two-to-one. Obama

won over 52 percent of the popular vote.

In addition to Obama's victory in the presidential race, the Republican Party lost more seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The turnout of voters in this election surpassed the percentage of participation of many decades before. People stood in line at polling places throughout the country even days prior to Nov. 4.

The most burning issues identified in the corporate media through exit polls and other data collected leading up to the elections, indicated that people were most concerned about the economic crisis, the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the lack of quality health care or any medical coverage at all.

It is very clear that the Democratic Party, which has a different social base than the Republicans, is still a political organization of the ruling class. The Democratic Party leadership is beholden to the international finance capitalists, the industrialists and landowners, who also control the Republican Party.

Consequently, our focus is to shed some light on the real significance of the Nov. 4 election and the future prospects for fundamental transformation in the U.S. and the world.

The Obama victory and the national question in the U.S.

With the election of Sen. Obama, many people have concluded that this political development represents a whole new phase in race relations in the United States. Even before the elections it was quite obvious that Obama had sparked the interests of not only African Americans, but many whites, particularly the youth, women, Latin@s, Asian Americans, Arab Americans, Native people and other oppressed groups.

In the Obama campaign, African Americans saw the potential for exercising their right to self-expression and self-determination. The potential of having an African American as the Democratic presidential nominee and eventual president fired the imagination and national pride of all classes within the community.

This sense of national pride has been reflected in the plethora of T-shirts, posters, artwork, music, poetry and other forms of cultural expression that flourished during the spring and summer of 2008. Many of the works of art displayed on the T-shirts, garments and posters placed Obama within the historical context of other notable African-American and African leaders, such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela.

Expectations grew considerably after Obama's victory in the Iowa caucuses. When he later won a series of state primaries and caucuses in various parts of the U.S., the Illinois senator's stature within the African-American community reached iconic levels. In response to Obama's victories during the primaries, the Hillary Clinton campaign reverted to some of the most virulent racism exemplified in modern U.S. electoral politics.

Notions of "who is qualified" to lead the U.S. political system and whether Obama was really loyal to the ruling class and its bourgeois state began to surface. Rev. Jeremiah Wright of Chicago, who had brought Obama into the African-Christian church, became a scapegoat for the racist corporate media, the Clinton campaign and the Republican candidates as well.

Rev. Wright, who is well known and respected in the Black church throughout the U.S., reflects the theological approach of a section of the progressive religious community. In the aftermath of the hijackings of Sept. 11, 2001, he sought to answer the questions that arose among broad sections of the people as to why these attacks occurred.

Wright looked to the historical legacy of settler-colonialism, slavery, Jim Crow and modern-day imperialism. He was shown out of context on national television through news reports and Republican campaign ads saying "Not god bless America, but goddamn America."

Consequently, Obama was compelled to distance himself from Rev. Wright. In fact, a number of people criticized the Obama campaign for not raising questions of national oppression and racism. Obama ran a campaign that de-emphasized racial and class oppression. Yet his speaking style and content reflected some aspects of the legacies of Frederick Douglass, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela and Rev. Jeremiah Wright.

To any seasoned observer of U.S. society and history, the election of an African American to the presidency is a monumental accomplishment not to be minimized. Nonetheless, until the last vestiges of capitalism are eliminated, U.S. society will not be able to overcome its racism and consequently the national oppression of the African-American people.

The racist power structure is not willing to make amends for the crimes committed against Africans, Native peoples, Asians and Latin@s during the course of the last 400 years. This elimination of racism and national oppression requires a revolutionary movement led by the working class and the nationally oppressed. □

Harlem's joy over President-elect Obama

By Dolores Cox
Harlem, N.Y.

Word on the street on election night was "Yes, we can!" and "Yes, we did!" These and other chants were echoed at various venues throughout the village of Harlem, New York City.

Word of the Obama victory was accompanied by noisemakers, cheering, hand-clapping, honking horns, singing, soul food and the electric slide. In front of the famous Sylvia's soul food restaurant near 125th St., a tall ice sculpture spelled out Obama's name.

There were also tears, tears of joy following the election of the first Black U.S. president—a day which most said they thought they'd never see. There were also tears of sadness for those who didn't live to see this day, including those who endured hardship, violence and even death in attempting to win and exercise their right to vote. And there were prayers of giving thanks.

Conversations varied. There were concerns expressed regarding the significance and meaning of Barack Obama's election, and a varying consensus of opinions. There were expressions of shock and disbelief, as well as statements of "See, I told you so." People expressed hope for the prospects of a change in race relations and a better future.

Watching the election results on TV or on large outdoor screens, as one-by-one the voting polls closed and states reported their numbers, was reminiscent of the original Watch Night, New Year's Eve, in 1863. That was the occasion when enslaved Africans gathered and began

their watch at 11 p.m. awaiting the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation by President Abraham Lincoln, which occurred on Jan. 1.

One could see anxiety, fear and shared doubt on the faces in Harlem, intermingled with the audacity to hope. And at 11 p.m. here in New York on Nov. 4, 2008, millions of African Americans and others throughout the African Diaspora finally exhaled when Obama was declared the winner. The dream of a future existence without the stranglehold of racism seemed closer to becoming reality. There's need to ensure that those hopes not be dashed.

The souls and spirits of W.E.B. Du Bois' Black folks soared that night. "The problem of the 20th century," stated Du Bois, "is the problem of the color line." He spoke of how long overdue the achievements of the Civil Rights Movement were, and how difficult the struggle for civil and human rights had been and would continue to be politically and economically.

In the 21st century, a world without a color line, unfortunately, has yet to be achieved. And so, the watch and vigilance must be eternal. Obama is being described as a redemptive figure. It is also being said that his election constituted a nonviolent grassroots revolution. If so, further life will have to be breathed into the revolution to sustain it.

In the sobering days following Obama's Jan. 20, 2009, inauguration, people worldwide will be watching. Expectations will be high, maybe too high. There will also be skepticism related to uncharted waters. To be sure, U.S. domestic and foreign policy will certainly be closely scrutinized. □

COMMENTARY

Economy devastated but no lives lost

Cubans live through yet another hurricane

By Deirdre Griswold

For the third time in less than 10 weeks, Cuba has demonstrated its ability to save lives during a powerful tropical storm.

Hurricane Paloma, a Category 4 storm generating 145-mph winds and heavy rain, ripped into the island from the south on Nov. 8. The coastal city directly in its path, Santa Cruz del Sur, had lost 3,000 people in a similar hurricane in 1932, most of them drowned in a sea surge. This time, even though crashing surf and a powerful surge sent waves almost a mile inland, no storm-related deaths were reported anywhere in Cuba. (Associated Press, Nov. 10) After a day of drenching rains over land already saturated with water, Hurricane Paloma diminished to a tropical depression.

The reason no one died is that the Cuban government evacuated 1.2 million people away from the coast and other vulnerable areas. Cuba has a well-developed plan for temporarily moving storm evacuees to homes of friends and relatives, as well as to public shelters. When disaster strikes, the whole population is mobilized through the mass organizations that are an essential element in Cuba's socialist democracy.

In August and again in September, two earlier storms, Hurricanes Gustav and Ike, had roared through the Caribbean before moving north. Hundreds died in several Caribbean countries from these monster storms. Ike caused at least 51 deaths in the United States. (AP, Sept. 17) In addition, the Laura Recovery Center still lists 59 people missing along the Gulf coast of Texas.

In Cuba, only four people died because of Hurricane Ike; everyone was accounted for. However, the damage to the economy from these two storms was terrible.

One-third of Cuba's crops were destroyed. This and the widespread damage to the infrastructure and housing were estimated to cost the country \$9.4 billion.

And now comes Paloma.

Many Cubans who had been rebuilding their homes after the first two storms have now seen them totally swept away or irreparably damaged. Electric and phone lines that had just been repaired are down again.

As Paloma was bearing down on Cuba, Fidel Castro wrote an essay about the danger to the food supply. He predicted "many crops that were expected soon, countless

hours of human sacrifice, gasoline, seeds, fertilizer, herbicides and the work of labor teams to produce food urgently, will be lost anew."

Repeated natural disasters like this pose great difficulties for any country. But revolutionary Cuba has a special problem: the U.S. economic blockade. For 46 years Washington, furious at losing a rich source of profits for U.S. corporations, has tried to strangle socialist Cuba by cutting off its access to trade with the world.

For the last 17 years, however, the nations of the world have voted overwhelmingly in the U.N. General Assembly to lift the trade embargo. This year the vote against the blockade was the biggest ever: 185 countries. Washington could get only Israel and the tiny Pacific island of Palau to vote with it. Micronesia and the Marshall Islands abstained. The United States seized all three of these small Pacific states during World War II and held them for four decades as part of its "Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands." Obviously, Washington still keeps them in an iron grip.

The blockade prevents Cuba from being able to get the normal credit arrangements

that facilitate trade all over the world. It prevents ships from docking in Cuba. It prevents U.S. companies and their affiliates in other countries from selling to or buying from Cuba. It penalizes companies in other countries that do business with Cuba.

It prevents U.S. citizens from traveling and spending money there, and limits remittances from Cuban Americans to their families back home.

After Hurricane Ike, the Bush administration offered a paltry \$5 million in aid to Cuba—with the stipulation that a team from USAID, which is well known to have long fronted for CIA operations, be allowed to come and "assess" Cuba's needs.

Havana rejected this obvious ploy, saying that instead of offering "gifts" with strings attached, Washington should just drop the blockade and let Cuba buy what it needs from the United States.

The worldwide struggle against the long and cruel blockade is growing. The U.S. is totally isolated on this issue—another foreign policy disaster the new administration in Washington will have to cope with.

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Famine in Haiti made in the U.S.

By G. Dunkel

The four hurricanes that hit Haiti in August and September directly caused 800 deaths and massive destruction of its roads and bridges, along with the crops and cropland that feed its people.

Haiti is so poor that it couldn't recover from this devastation. At the end of October, people in isolated communities started dying from hunger.

In Baie d'Orange, a community of 20,000 associated with the municipality of Belle-Anse in southeast Haiti, 16 children and two adults died from hunger in the last week of October. Pierre Antoine Diléné, a doctor working in Belle-Anse, confirmed the deaths and emphasized that many were also suffering from dysentery, fevers and skin diseases. (AlterPress, Oct. 30)

Le Nouvelliste reports that the road to Belle-Anse, cut by the effects of the hurricanes, was only opened at the end of October. (Nov. 7)

Kim Ives, a Brooklyn-based journalist with the Haitian newspaper *Haïti-Liberté*, returned from Haiti Nov. 6 and reports that the radio stations, the main source of news for most Haitians, are reporting deaths due to acute malnutrition in southwestern Haiti and in the north around Cap-Haitien.

While the southeast, southwest and north of Haiti contain some of the poor-

est areas of the country, hunger is generalized. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, the average intake in Haiti is 1750 calories a day, about 75 percent of what an adult needs. Note that this figure is an average, which means there are many people getting less. (*Haïti-Liberté*, Nov. 5)

While the Haitian press, some French television channels and French-language Swiss television channels have covered hunger in Haiti, the English-language press has concentrated on the collapse of the La Promesse school in Petionville, a wealthy suburb of Port-au-Prince. The deaths of 88 children and teachers (as of Nov. 9) in a building collapse provoked by the acts of the school owner are indeed a tragedy. The rapid response of U.S. rescue teams and French teams from Martinique showed these countries can act quickly.

But Robert Zoellick, the president of the World Bank who visited Haiti at the end of October, feels that forgiveness of Haiti's debt needs to be reviewed. The

earliest this process will be completed is the middle of 2009.

Until this happens, Haiti will have to pay a bit more than \$1 million a week—enough to guarantee that no Haitian would starve to death—to prove it is fit for "help" from the Multilateral Financial Institutions. Obtained by the Duvaliers and the military juntas that succeeded them, these loans now being repaid were used for their luxurious living and to swell their Swiss bank accounts. (*haitiaction.net*, "Haiti: Racism and Poverty" Oct. 26)

Zoellick was the deputy U.S. secretary of state who helped negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement and then left the position for Goldman Sachs. He was at Goldman Sachs in 2007 when it paid out more than \$18 billion in bonuses to its 22,000 traders—more than 50 percent of Haiti's gross domestic product.

Part of the weakness of the Haitian state is the insistence of the international donor community that all their "aid" flow through nongovernmental organizations

(NGOs), which means a sizable slice goes to overhead—like salaries paid at rates far higher than those prevailing for Haitians. Another sizable slice is directed to companies in the "donor" countries and their profits. Of course, a significant amount of the promised aid never shows up, and the NGOs don't dare complain.

The reason Haiti is currently starving is simple. Canada, the U.S. and France—the three imperialist powers most involved in exploiting Haiti—colluded in the overthrow of the democratic government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide four years ago. They couldn't let a poor, small country defy their wishes and elect a president that the people wanted.

For the past 200 years, ever since the enslaved people of Haiti won their freedom and independence by defeating France, England and Spain, the developed nations of North America and Europe have tried to reverse this defeat.

Haiti has resisted and survived, as best it can. Long live Haiti! □

Brigadistas support Cuba

The Interreligious Foundation for Community Organizing sent an Emergency Hurricane Relief Brigade to Cuba on Oct. 20. The team of 20 construction workers, including masons, electricians and plumbers, are in Puerto Esperanza helping to repair a school for special needs children that was all but destroyed by Hurricane Ike. Upon its arrival, the brigade was welcomed by ICAP, the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the People. It will remain in Cuba until Nov. 17.

—Johnnie Stevens



PHOTO: ALEXY JAVIER LANZA CASTILLO

Israel invades Gaza again; Palestinian resistance continues

By Sara Flounders

The Israeli Army invaded the Gaza Strip on Nov. 4 with tanks, helicopters and jet aircraft. The attack was an explicit violation of a five-month Egyptian-mediated truce between Israel and the Palestinian resistance groupings in Gaza. The elected Hamas government there had agreed to the cease-fire.

Nov. 4 was Election Day in the United States. Global attention was riveted on the deep enthusiasm here for the first African-American president and how the vote reflected a break with the reactionary policies of the Bush administration. The surprise Israeli attack went almost unnoted in the corporate media.

According to reports in the Palestinian media, Israeli soldiers and tanks accompanied by military helicopters firing flares and missiles invaded an area east of Deir al-Balah, in the central Gaza Strip, while Israeli jets shelled an area east of Kahn Younis in the southern part of Gaza. The next day Israeli tanks moved into Beit Hanoun in the northern part of Gaza.

Latin@ voters

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for a moratorium on the raids inside of the country and then proceed to call for a new amnesty program.”

It is not a revolutionary act for so many Latin@s to have voted for Obama. Class relations of oppression and exploitation have not been overturned. Nor is it a revolutionary act if Texas in the future goes from a red Republican state to a blue Democratic state.

But what is important and gives revolutionaries a basis for optimism is the changing character of the working class that lays the basis for radical and even revolutionary struggles in the coming period. If Texas turns blue it is a progressive turn for an area where the white ruling class promotes racism and reaction in their ugliest forms.

A blue turn would mean a population that is becoming more Third World is in turn becoming more progressive—and that is a welcome development, especially for Texas.

The economic crisis, coupled with the historic election of the first African-American president, has opened a door. Latin@s flexed their muscles. Although they were flexed in a ballot box and not in the streets or through revolutionary acts of struggle, they were flexed nonetheless.

During the last 30 years the working class, including Latin@s, has not flexed its muscles very much, with one huge exception: the spring upheavals of 2006 among the immigrant sector of our class.

President-elect Obama has recently made statements against the vicious, cruel and racist raids that Immigration and Customs Enforcement—ICE—has been carrying out in the immigrant community. His statements against the raids are a progressive gesture toward the Latin@ community, whose top concerns in the election were the economy and immigration.

The door has been opened and the tide of reaction has lifted slightly. It is a perfect opportunity for communists and revolutionaries to step up and open that door even wider and lift the tide of reaction once and for all. Now more than ever, the working class and the oppressed need a class perspective and revolutionary analysis for the period to come. □

Seven Palestinian fighters from the Al Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Hamas, were killed attempting to repel the incursion. There were many injuries. At Deir al-Balah four Palestinian women were abducted, including one who was wounded.

Every piece of Israeli military equipment used in the attack was made possible by the billions of dollars in aid provided to the Zionist regime by Washington over the last 60 years.

When Palestinian forces defended themselves against the three-pronged Israeli invasion, Israel claimed it was the Palestinians who violated the cease-fire. It cut off fuel shipments to the Gaza City power plant.

Gaza residents are now experiencing sporadic blackouts. Cutting fuel affects not only electricity for lights and refrigeration of food and medicines but also, most seriously, it curtails pumping of water for drinking and sanitation.

Abu Obaida, a spokesperson for the Al Qassam Brigades of Hamas, speculated that the Israeli invasion might be part of a plan to foil the internal Palestinian dialogue scheduled for Cairo, Egypt, on Nov. 9. The meeting for an opening dialogue on reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas forces did not take place.

Israel's use of collective punishment

Three years ago, determined Palestinian resistance forced Israeli forces to withdraw from the densely populated and impoverished Gaza Strip. However, Israel continues to control all access by land, sea and air.

Farm produce and even essential medicines, electronic parts, repairs for sanitation and sewage are all blocked. With all access to and from Gaza closed, Palestinian workers cannot travel to find work.

The result is huge increases in unemployment, poverty and malnutrition. Commerce is shut down.

Israeli gunboats routinely attack small Palestinian fishing boats with water cannon and machine-gun fire.

Two years ago the Palestinians overwhelmingly elected a government with a majority from Hamas—a Muslim force

seen as more intransigent toward Israeli occupation. Both the United States and the European Union then imposed sanctions and withdrew aid.

In a further effort to break the resistance, Israel has confiscated hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes from Palestinians that, according to previous agreements, it is obliged to pass on.

The 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza now live in a blockaded and surrounded ghetto. But the determined population has shown incredibly creative and heroic resilience.

Tunnels have been dug from southern Gaza into Egypt to smuggle in the most essential supplies. Israel claimed that the purpose of its recent brutal offensive was to destroy the Palestinian tunnels. The tunnels can vary in length from 100 yards to half a mile. In the past three years hundreds of tunnels have been destroyed.

After each Israeli attack, the work begins again.

Breaking the siege of Gaza

Concerned about the dire conditions in Gaza and inspired by the heroic mass resistance, solidarity activists internationally have developed more serious challenges to the siege.

The SS Dignity arrived in Gaza harbor four days after the latest Israeli attack. The small ship, organized by the Free Gaza movement, brought parliamentarians from Britain, Italy and Switzerland, Arab leaders, human-rights activists and journalists. It was the fourth ship to get through in the last three months.

The solidarity delegation will visit some of the hardest-hit areas in the Gaza Strip, particularly the camps and hospitals. The ship also brought 1 metric ton of medicines, mostly pain killers and aspirin. These basic, inexpensive medicines are in desperately short supply and unavailable in local pharmacies.

Solidarity demonstrations around the world, including one organized by the Al-Awda Palestine Right to Return Coalition in New York on Nov. 7, have demanded that Israel lift the siege of Gaza. Demands have also been raised against the complicity of the Egyptian government, which has bowed to U.S. and Israeli

pressure and helps to enforce the blockade at the Rafah crossing.

Israel attacks in the West Bank

In the same week, Israeli attacks escalated throughout the West Bank.

Israeli forces carried out 33 military incursions into Palestinian towns and villages and kidnapped 21 civilians, including two children.

In just the past year, Israel has abducted 2,111 Palestinian civilians.

Six Palestinians, including two children, were wounded by Israeli gunfire in al-Far'a refugee camp, south of Tubas. Three were wounded in the village of Dura, southwest of Hebron.

Another four Palestinians, including a child, and an international human-rights defender were wounded when Israeli troops attacked a peaceful, unarmed demonstration protesting the construction of the apartheid wall west of Ramallah.

Some 217 miles of the 450-mile wall have been completed, further isolating the Palestinian population into small ghettos. To build the wall and a network of walled Jewish-only roads, along with more than 630 roadblocks and checkpoints, Israel has dispossessed small farmers, plowing under and destroying thousands of acres of cropland.

Farmers can't get to their land, children can't get to school and workers can't leave their surrounded enclaves. Sick children, pregnant women and seniors have died at checkpoints after being blocked from reaching hospitals, even in emergencies. Free movement and all normal economic activity are impossible.

Increasingly, international and Israeli human-rights defenders are joining Palestinian demonstrations challenging this criminal policy.

In occupied East Jerusalem, Israel continues to expropriate and drive out the Palestinian residents. In the first week of November, the Israeli army bulldozed two homes and a wedding hall in Jerusalem. As Palestinians and supporters defied the bulldozers, 21 residents were wounded and many more were arrested.

Today massive Jewish-only settlements bisect the West Bank. Israeli demolitions,

Continued on page 10

Air offensive in Afghanistan means U.S. is losing

By G. Dunkel

Air missions in Afghanistan are up 31 percent in 2008, meaning that opposition to the colonial occupation of Afghanistan is growing more intense and spreading.

USA Today points out that “The growing reliance on air power raises the risk of injuring civilians and their property and reflects a shortage of ground forces needed to protect civilians and root out insurgents, ground commanders and military experts say.” (Nov. 5) U.S. and NATO troop strength has not increased significantly.

The political impact of these civilian casualties has been devastating. The more civilians that die, the more the resistance grows.

A good example of this effect is an early November air strike on a wedding party near Kandahar, in southern Afghanistan. The first report from the Pentagon put the number of casualties at 20, with 26 wounded, and claimed that the Taliban

was using civilians as human shields. (Globe & Mail, Nov. 5) But the Karzai client government claimed that there were 37 civilian casualties, and further reports from the Thai Press Agency put the number of deaths at 40. The Canadian Press (Nov. 5) quoted the governor of Kandahar Province as reporting 90 deaths and 30 injuries. Pashto-speaking Afghans living in New York say that news reports from home claim 300 people died.

What is more significant is the political defeat of U.S. forces. The people of this district, and indeed of the whole province of Kandahar, are enraged by this attack and the similar ones that preceded it. This rage is moving them to support the armed opposition to the colonial occupation of their country.

Political defeats in Afghanistan, along with military casualties, are going to make it harder for the NATO allies of the U.S. to sustain their commitment, especially in a period of financial crisis. An Oxfam International report (March

2008) notes that “The U.S. military is currently spending nearly \$100 million a day” in Afghanistan.

While Britain, France, Holland, Canada and Germany have much smaller troop contingents in Afghanistan, these countries have smaller economies and their costs are significant. For example, Canada has already spent between \$7.7 and \$10.5 billion (\$ Can.) on its commitment.

The NATO allies are also facing growing domestic opposition. In September, the left in the French parliament—mainly the Socialist and Communist parties—voted against supporting French troops in Afghanistan (France24.com). In addition, there was a nationwide demonstration against Canada's presence on Oct. 18. The Dutch have announced their withdrawal in July of 2010, but it could be sooner.

The U.S. has not been able to build a coalition in Iraq and if the one it has built in Afghanistan falls apart, its position in the region will become more isolated and precarious. □



China & stimulus

China has become vulnerable to trends in the worldwide capitalist system since it allowed market mechanisms to coexist alongside state-owned industries. That seemed highly desirable when the world capitalist economies were ballooning up. China sustained double-digit growth year after year. Allowing investment in companies that exported everything from household items to clothing, it became the world's fourth-largest economy. It also sustained such a favorable balance of trade with the United States that today China has \$1.2 trillion in its currency reserves.

Now that the market for China's exported products is drying up, however, it is experiencing bankruptcies and a big loss of jobs—just like the capitalist countries. China's economic growth has slowed sharply, dropping from 12.6 percent in the second quarter of 2007 to about 9 percent in the third quarter of this year.

However, China is different, because it went through a great revolution against landlord oppression and imperialist domination that led to mass efforts to build socialism. Even though the retreat toward the market began 30 years ago, the role of the state in the economy is still a major force. And that state, unlike in so much of the world today, has its hands on a lot of cash.

So it's not surprising that China has come up with a stimulus plan for its economy that is very, very different from those in the United States and Europe. It is not handing over billions to bail out banks and insurance companies.

Instead, under the plan, China will spend \$586 billion over the next two years "to finance programs in 10 major areas, such as low-income housing, rural infrastructure, water, electricity, transportation, the environment, technological innovation and rebuilding from several disasters, most notably the May 12 earthquake." (Xinhua, Nov. 10)

Environmentalists in China see these times as ideal to increase efforts at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Some of the billions will go to develop mass transportation—especially trains and subways.

The American Society of Civil Engineers estimated in March that the U.S. needs to spend \$1.6 trillion over the next five years to shore up this country's crumbling infrastructure, including roadways, bridges, drinking water systems, public parks, railroads and the power grid. The budget debated by Congress this year would cover less than a fifth of that.

If China can build public housing and subways and update its electric grid, why can't the U.S.? Millions of jobs could be created to partially offset the looming crisis of unemployment. But it will take a militant mass movement to force this banker-ridden political system to change its priorities by even a penny. □

Palestinian resistance

Continued from page 9

land seizures, settlement expansion, assassinations, armed incursions, segregated road-building and continued construction of the separation wall are all continuing.

Despite more than 15 years of talks and negotiations sponsored and supported by U.S. administrations, both Republican and Democratic, none of the issues of occupation have been addressed.

Ever since the 1993 Oslo Accords, despite every Israeli promise to recognize a Palestinian state and every agreement to cease new settlements, construction has continued. It is the endless and guaranteed stream of U.S. funding that enables the Israeli government to continue and expand its occupation of Palestinian lands.

Rahm Emanuel, a virulent Zionist, has just been appointed White House chief of staff in the upcoming U.S. administration. This is just another reason why international support and solidarity for Palestinian demands, including the right of all Palestinians to return to their expropriated homes, is more important than ever. □

Workers World in 1983

The right of self-determination and the class struggle

This archival article, written by Sam Marcy, the chairperson of Workers World Party during the first Jesse Jackson presidential campaign, appeared in the Dec. 8, 1983, issue. Twenty-five years later, with the historic election of Barack Obama as the first Black U.S. president, this article still holds significant lessons for progressives, revolutionaries and socialists in the U.S. and worldwide in building class unity and solidarity in the struggle to eradicate capitalism.

Nov. 25—Of all the great domestic political problems facing the working class and the oppressed people, none surpasses in importance the relationship of national oppression to the class struggle.

Indeed, one may say that it is at the heart of the basic social problem in the United States. It touches every form of social existence, and no sector of society is free from it.

For Marxists in particular it is the acid test of the correctness of their general political program. It is also a test of the revolutionary integrity of the party, in particular as this is manifested in day to day practical application. Probably nowhere else is theory so severely tested by practice as in the field of the national question.

Upon the solution of the national question may very well depend the destiny of the working class in the struggle against capitalism as well as the future of socialism.

The national question, or as it is sometimes called the race question, has for centuries been covered up by a plethora of lies and deceit. The intent is to convey the impression that it does not exist, or if it does exist it is being solved, or at least its significance is diminishing due to the glory and virtues of the democratic processes of monopoly capitalism.

The deepening of the capitalist crisis, notwithstanding the current ephemeral recovery, is bound to intensify national oppression in the U.S. This will be so not only because of the growing unemployment, of which the oppressed people bear the brunt, but also and perhaps of equal importance because of the direction of U.S. foreign policy toward military adventurism on a global scale unprecedented in history.

The burden of all this is bound to become more and more intolerable for the working class and the oppressed peoples.

The ruling class can be relied upon to desperately attempt to divert the course of the struggle of the workers and the oppressed into divisive and frustrating channels, while reaping a huge harvest in the form of super-profits for itself.

The many millions of the oppressed and exploited masses meanwhile find it more difficult to gather their huge and invincible forces into a united front against the ruling class—the most monstrous and dangerous ever to inhabit this planet, who keep it in constant peril of utter destruction.

'National vs. class struggle'

To many in the progressive and working class movement the relationship between national oppression and class conflict appears as a choice

between two supposedly contradictory phenomena.

To socialists of the pre-World-War-I generation and to many avowed Marxists of that period (and even of decades later), choosing or giving priority to the national question, or as some put it, "giving priority to the struggle against racism," meant the abandonment of the class struggle and a surrender to bourgeois nationalism.

Needless to say such a view of Marxism, in addition to being an error in principle and a violation of basic Marxist theory on the national question, was mostly propounded by whites, even those who saw themselves as adherents of socialism and even of Marxism.

Early socialist movement

Notwithstanding the avowed anti-capitalist struggle of the socialists of that period, their propaganda for socialism, their espousal of the class struggle, and even the militant class battles between the working class and the capitalist class that they led, this type of pursuit of the class struggle tended to completely ignore the very existence of the semi-slavery, oppression, persecution, and disenfranchisement of the Black people.

It goes without saying that the struggle of the Native people was completely disregarded by them, to the point where it seldom if ever occupied any part in the struggle of the socialists of the time or in their political polemics or discussions.

In Marx's time the struggle against capitalism was seen primarily as one in which the working class as a whole was conducting the socialist class struggle against the bourgeoisie and winning democratic demands not only for itself but for all others deprived of democratic rights.

However, it was understood at that time that as long as capitalism existed, only minor reforms could be won, not only for the workers as a whole but for those who were disenfranchised and denied democratic rights. Socialist propaganda emphasized the overall objective of the abolition of the capitalist system. It pointed out the acute and insoluble contradictions under capitalism, the slavery of the wage system, the impoverishment of the farmers, the disappearance of small industry in favor of monopoly.

Just as the socialist struggle could not really bring lasting and basic reforms of capitalism, so it could not solve the racial, that is the national question, under capitalism. The latter would have to wait until the victory of the socialist revolution.

It was then thought that fighting for the enfranchisement of the oppressed nationalities—Black, Latin@, Asian, and Native—was important, as was women's suffrage. But only successive electoral victories culminating in the ultimate overthrow of the capitalist system would attain social and political equality.

It is not to be wondered at, then, that on the eve of 1916 when there were already dozens of socialist mayors throughout the country, there was scarcely even one Black representative nominated for the hundreds of city, county, and state offices to which socialists were elected.

Clearly such Marxism could not have much appeal to Black and other oppressed nationalities. It was also inevitable that a large section of the right wing of the Socialist Party, led by Victor Berger of Milwaukee and Morris Hillquit of New York, would be invested with what would today be regarded as outright racism.

The left wing, headed by Eugene Debs and Big Bill Haywood, was eloquent in its defense of Black people. But it was utterly incapable of influencing the course of the Party's struggle at the time in a progressive direction on the national question, as well as on other political problems.

Impact of Russian Revolution

It was not until the arrival of the October Revolution in Russia and the ensuing years of revolutionary struggle on a world scale that a theoretically correct appreciation of the national question in relation to the class struggle found its way to the U.S.

Lenin's long years of struggle on the question of the right of nations to self-determination and his relentless exposure of chauvinism as arising from the failure to correctly apply this right constituted a virtual treasury of new thinking that was soon introduced here and in other metropolitan imperialist countries.

In addition to writing voluminously on the right of nations to self-determination, Lenin reformulated Marx's world-famous slogan about uniting the working class of the world.

In Marx's time the slogan, as stated in the Communist Manifesto, was: "Workers of the world unite."

Lenin updated this to reflect the changed character of capitalism. So-called progressive, peaceful, competitive capitalism had evolved into monopoly, which not only required vast expansion at the expense of oppressed peoples around the world but also exacerbated and intensified every type of national oppression at home.

To the slogan "Workers of the world unite!" Lenin added the oppressed peoples. So now it reads: "Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!"

It introduced a substantial difference in the approach to the oppressed peoples abroad and, no less important, the super-exploited and oppressed people at home in the internal colonies.

While many decades have passed since Lenin's formulation of the question, it now more than ever needs a proper application since the assault of monopoly capitalism becomes ever more onerous and threatening day by day.

No political equality

What was not understood by the early socialists, and remains a mystery to this day to many who proclaim themselves Marxists, is that the bourgeois revolution so far as it pertained to Black people everywhere in this country was never completed politically or even juridically. There is still no real political equality between Black and white in this country.

This is not only attested to by the wide differential between Black and white in income and social status generally, but is especially evident on the parliamentary front and is made very obvious during electoral campaigns.

Summit fails to resolve crisis

Fighting continues in eastern Congo; imperialist states weigh intervention

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A regional summit on the raging conflict in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo was held Nov. 7 in the Kenyan capital of Nairobi. Seven African states sent representatives to the meeting, which was designed to develop a plan to bring peace and stability to the North Kivu area. Fierce clashes there between the Congolese military (FARDC) and the rebel National Congress for the Defense of the People have resulted in the displacement of thousands of people.

Among the leading political personalities attending the Nairobi summit were President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania, the current chair of the African Union; President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda; Kenyan Foreign Minister Moses Wetang'ula; President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi; President Paul Kagame of Rwanda; President Joseph Kabila of the DRC; and former President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who has been appointed United Nations Special Envoy to the DRC.

The leader of the rebel CNDP, former general Laurent Nkunda, was not invited to the meeting. He later issued a statement condemning the talks as irrelevant since they excluded his organization, which has attacked numerous cities in the North Kivu region.

Renegade Gen. Nkunda claims he is defending the Tutsi people in the eastern DRC from attacks leveled against them by former Hutu militias who carried out the

genocidal attacks in Rwanda during 1994. Many of these militia members fled to the DRC after the seizure of power by the Rwandan Patriotic Front in August 1994.

In addition to the African leaders, the United Nations was represented by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon. Envoys from the European Union and U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer were also present.

During the course of the summit, African leaders criticized the UN peacekeeping forces inside the DRC for their failure to secure the safety of the civilian population in the eastern region. Even Ban Ki-Moon admitted that the 17,000-member force known as MONUC were "stretched to the limit."

At the conclusion of the summit in Nairobi, a communique was issued stating that regional states should send military forces if necessary and "not stand by to witness incessant and destructive acts of violence by armed groups against innocent people."

The 14-state Southern African Development Community, which includes the DRC, pledged troops to help stabilize the situation in the eastern region of the country. Tomaz Salamao, executive secretary of the SADC, "said in a statement the group would also send military advisers to the Democratic Republic of Congo and would not stand by and watch the situation deteriorate." (Reuters, Nov. 9)

Rebel attacks create humanitarian crisis

Since the resumption of fighting in the eastern DRC in August, approximately 250,000 people have been forced to leave their homes, according to humanitarian groups. The France-based group Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders) has warned of the potential for a cholera epidemic resulting from condi-

tions in makeshift camps for internally displaced persons.

"There are many displaced people in the zone who live under very bad sanitary conditions. All the risk factors are there for an explosion of a major epidemic," said MSF's local emergency program coordinator, Megan Hunter. (AFP, Nov. 9)

New front opened amid reports of Angolan troop movements

New fighting between the Congolese army and rebel CNDP forces on the border between North Kivu and South Kivu provinces at Ngungu was reported Nov. 9. The pro-government Mai Mai militias also joined in fighting the rebels.

The UN said that the clashes started before dawn and prompted the flight of thousands of people.

At the same time there are increasing reports that neighboring Angola has sent troops into the DRC to defend the government of President Joseph Kabila. Alexis Thambwe Mwamba, the DRC's minister of planning, said that, while no Angolan troops were in the DRC at the moment, "the Angolan position without any doubt is to support Congo." (AFP, Nov. 9)

In response to these reports of Angolan military involvement in support of the Kabila government, the rebel CNDP, which is supported by neighboring Rwanda, said that "Angolan troops in eastern DR Congo could spread violence throughout the region."

"It would risk setting the Great Lakes region on fire," said Bertrand Bisimwa, a CNDP spokesperson. "It demonstrates the government's willingness to involve former international warmongers in the current crisis."

Angola was one of the countries, along with Zimbabwe and Namibia, that deployed troops between 1998 and 2003 to repel a U.S.-backed invasion by Rwanda

and Uganda aimed at toppling the Congo central government in Kinshasa.

Will U.S. elections change policy towards Africa?

The election of Sen. Barack Obama as president of the United States has been met with great jubilation on the African continent. Obama, whose father was born in Kenya, enjoys widespread support throughout the region. In Kenya, the government declared Nov. 6 a national holiday to celebrate Obama's overwhelming victory.

Nonetheless, over the last century or more, the driving force of U.S. foreign policy in Africa has been the quest for strategic mineral resources and oil. The United States played an important role in the economic underdevelopment of Congo during the period of colonialism.

When the former Belgian Congo became independent in 1960, the Eisenhower administration set out to assassinate the Congo's first prime minister, Patrice Lumumba, a revolutionary leader who enjoyed massive support throughout the country. After Lumumba's overthrow and murder in January 1961, the U.S. played an integral role in preventing the progressive and revolutionary forces in the country from retaking power.

Today, there has been no indication of a fundamental change in U.S. imperialist foreign policy imperatives towards Africa. Even under an Obama administration, if the U.S. government attempts to deepen its direct military intervention in the DRC or other countries in Africa, it will meet with fierce resistance from the masses of people.

Abayomi Azikiwe has written extensively on the current situation inside the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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It may be formally true that Black people generally have the same right to vote as whites do. There are any number of elected Black officials in various cities, counties, and state subdivisions. But by and large there is a glaringly wide discrepancy between the political effectiveness of whites during national elections and that of Black people.

One merely has to take a look at the U.S. Senate. It has 100 Senators, but not one is Black.

And out of 435 Representatives in the House, there are scarcely 30 Black and Latin@ put together.

This glaring inequality as expressed in the bourgeois parliamentary system attests to the fact that the bourgeois democratic revolution begun in the 60s of the last century has not yet been completed. The same bourgeois democratic rights which white workers have been entitled to for two centuries are still not available to Black workers and Black people generally.

Marxists can ignore this only at the risk of losing their historic revolutionary mission in capitalist society. One cannot reduce the question to one of mere racial discrimination which, as the saying goes, is diminishing with the passage of time.

On the contrary, the mere passage of time does not guarantee a gradual evolution to full political rights, that is, to the democratic rights won by white workers and white people generally.

The centuries-old prevalence of social and political inequality attests to the fact that Black people in the U.S., like Native people, constitute a nation. The struggle against inequality thus has to be viewed politically in the context not merely of waging a fight against racial discrimination but of the right to self-determination.

□

New book examines character of deepening crisis

Continued from page 3

million men and 70 million women in the workforce."

Goldstein emphasizes that women are more likely to receive lower wages than men. He also points to the class nature of the Clinton-era "welfare reform" policy that advanced "the politically reactionary campaign to spread the idea that those on welfare were lazy people who just wanted to 'live off the dole.' It was racist in character because the racist regime of U.S. capitalism has left so many Black single parents in poverty and almost all references to the poor focus in on African Americans (even though the majority of the poor in the U.S. are white)." (p. 134)

The author illustrates how the restructuring of capitalism has devastated large sections of the Black working class: "The restructuring by the bosses devastated Black workers, partly as a result of a deliberate effort starting in the 1960s and 1970s to relocate plants away from the industrial central cities, where there were great concentrations of the African-American proletariat. But this devastation was also the result of a general decline in manufacturing and particularly of the general attack on the union movement." (p. 137)

The coming fightback

Goldstein not only analyzes the charac-

ter of the modern-day capitalist crisis, but he boldly puts forward a set of possible demands that can serve as a rallying point for a national and international fightback movement. Looking at the recent struggles that have taken place over the last three decades during the overall capitalist decline, he firmly believes that the present crisis can be reversed through a proactive approach by the working class and the oppressed.

This struggle will not just encompass the workers of the industrialized capitalist states. The proletariat in the U.S. and Western Europe must understand the necessity of forming alliances with working people in the former colonial and neocolonial countries. The globalization of capitalist production has created the conditions for such an alliance, one that can transform the course of history.

Goldstein's work not only makes a significant contribution to the resurgence in literature on Marxist political economy, but more importantly, it serves as a guide for building broader and more militant social movements that directly address the need to transform capitalist societies in order to ensure a socialist future for humanity.

"Low Wage Capitalism" can be ordered online at www.Leftbooks.com.

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.

For New York transportation, call the International Action Center at 212-633-6646

Mundo Obrero

Detrás del ataque de los EEUU contra Siria

Continua de pagina 12

Sean cuales fueran los motivos del ataque estadounidense, no pueden cambiar el destino de los Estados Unidos en la región. Es obvio para tod@s el deterioro de la posición militar estadounidense tanto en Irak como en Afganistán.

Es esencial que l@s opositor@s internacionales de las guerras estadounidenses en Iraq y Afganistán levanten sus voces contra los esfuerzos imperialistas de ampliar la guerra.

Flounders es co-directora del Centro de Acción Internacional, el cual está circulando una petición que protesta el ataque estadounidense contra Siria (iacenter.org).

Las elecciones presidenciales de EEUU— Una nueva situación política Colmada de gran potencial para la solidaridad clasista y la lucha obrera

Por Larry Holmes

Existe hoy una nueva situación política en Estados Unidos y en el mundo. Aunque la abrumadora victoria presidencial de Barack Obama no era inesperada, ahora que ya ha ocurrido, la forma en que demostró al mundo que algo grande ha cambiado en la clase obrera de los Estados Unidos, es tan sorprendente que muchas personas aún lo encuentran difícil de creer.

La larga historia de racismo en Estados Unidos parecía imposibilitar en un futuro cercano la elección de un presidente africano-americano. El desplome de Wall Street y la crisis capitalista más grave en 75 años detuvieron la intolerancia que pudo haber impedido la victoria de Obama.

Un número récord de votantes african@-american@s, latin@s y una ola de votantes jóvenes—incluyendo a decenas de millones de trabajador@s blanc@s de Virginia y Carolina del Norte, Indiana, Ohio y Pennsylvania—solidificaron la coalición multinacional electoral que hizo historia.

Por supuesto, la clase dominante de Estados Unidos está todavía firmemente al mando. La lealtad al imperialismo estadounidense de los dos partidos políticos gobernantes, incluyendo al presidente electo, todavía está intacta.

Es cierto que much@s en la clase domi-

nante de Estados Unidos concluyeron que Obama podría ser el cambio radical que su gobierno necesitaba para bregar con la crisis que se avecina. Pero este hecho no puede negar el papel de las masas en este fenómeno ni sus sentimientos.

En las comunidades africana-americanas desde Chicago hasta Harlem incluyendo la zona devastada por Katrina en Nueva Orleans, hay júbilo por el resultado de estas elecciones, y aún mayor, un sentimiento de liberación del racismo nacido de la esclavitud y después convertido en estatus no oficial de segunda clase, forzado por el terror a manos de la policía, las prisiones y del KKK.

De hecho, cientos de miles de personas por todas partes, espontáneamente en su mayoría, se lanzaron a las calles después de que Obama fuera declarado ganador y el primer presidente africano-americano de un país construido por el trabajo de esclav@s african@s.

Y la celebración no fue exclusivamente de la comunidad africana-americana. Por todas partes, tanto dentro como por fuera de las fronteras de los Estados Unidos, la gente de todas las razas y nacionalidades llenaron las calles llorando, gritando y abrazando a extraños como si una ocupación larga, terrible, reaccionaria y sofocante, representada por el régimen de Bush, finalmente había terminado.

¿Restaurarán estas elecciones la fe del pueblo en el sistema capitalista y el gobierno en el momento en que la exposición del sistema y del gobierno es tan crítica para forjar la lucha masiva en contra del capitalismo? Quizás por un tiempo, pero no durará mucho.

En los próximos días y meses, el sufrimiento masivo impuesto por la profundización de la crisis económica capitalista mundial y la realidad de la continuación de las guerras de Estados Unidos en Irak, Afganistán y en otras partes, dejará ver la verdad de lo que ha cambiado o no como resultado de las elecciones presidenciales.

El inevitable descubrimiento de qué cambio el gobierno entrante representa, y cómo las masas de obrer@s y oprimid@s en Estados Unidos y en todas partes del mundo reaccionen a esta revelación, proveerá en gran parte el contenido de la lucha mundial en contra del imperialismo estadounidense en el próximo período.

En lugar de esa revelación, podemos decir que algo ya ha cambiado. Sólo el tiempo nos dirá cuán profundo y significativo es ese cambio. El pueblo, en decenas de millones, ha despertado y tiene expectativas desesperadas. El pueblo quiere que el gobierno capitalista de los EEUU acabe con las guerras en el exterior, que ponga un alto a los despidos y las ejecuciones

hipotecarias de viviendas, que proporcione cuidado de salud y educación.

¿Terminará las guerras el nuevo gobierno? O ¿sacará las tropas de Irak sólo para desplegarlas hacia Afganistán?

¿Va el nuevo gobierno, con una amplia mayoría en el Congreso, a rescatar a l@s trabajador@s que están perdiendo sus empleos y sus casas? ¿Se pondrá del lado de l@s trabajador@s y en contra del capital?

Una de las cuestiones que probablemente surgirá ante el nuevo gobierno del Partido Demócrata es una simple propuesta de ley que hace tiempo está pendiente requiriendo que una mayoría de l@s trabajador@s en un lugar de trabajo firme tarjetas de afiliación a un sindicato para ser reconocid@s como pertenecientes a un sindicato. El movimiento sindical ha estado esperando a que pase esa ley. ¿Pasará y se firmará esa propuesta de ley?

El pueblo quiere que el gobierno le rescate y no a Wall Street. Es peligroso despertar al pueblo y despertar esperanzas.

Ahora que el pueblo ha despertado podría organizarse y luchar para ganar lo que quiere y lo que necesita. Más que nada, es este potencial lo que indica una nueva situación política en los EEUU y en el mundo.

El sentimiento en las calles de ciudades grandes y pequeñas a través de los EEUU en la noche de la votación era que ahora todo es posible, y esto es cierto. □

Comentario de WW/MO

La amenaza detrás del ataque de los EEUU contra Siria

Por Sara Flounders

Cuatro helicópteros Black Hawk estadounidenses recorrieron la frontera entre Irak y Siria el 26 de octubre hacia la finca de la familia al-Sukkariah en el pueblo de Abu Kama. Fuerzas Especiales de los EEUU aterrizaron y mataron a ocho civiles, incluso a tres niños, según el gobierno de Siria. Fue el primer ataque de este tamaño por fuerzas militares de los EEUU contra Siria.

Al principio, Washington rehusó reconocer su papel en el ataque, pero luego oficiales de los EEUU defendieron el “derecho” de Washington a violar la soberanía de Siria como parte de una provocadora estrategia de cruzar la frontera de cualquier país para atacar “terroristas”. (Periódicos McClatchy, 27 de octubre)

A pesar de cualquier justificación del Pentágono, tal ataque es considerado como un “acto de guerra”.

Es una violación del derecho internacional, de los Estatutos de la ONU y de las leyes de los EEUU, específicamente de la Ley de los Poderes de Guerra.

Decenas de miles de siri@s respondieron el 30 de octubre con una manifestación masiva frente a la embajada de los EEUU en Damasco condenando el ataque como un acto de agresión, una violación flagrante del derecho internacional y una forma de terrorismo sistemático ejercido por la administración de Bush en la región árabe. Una consigna preferida fue: “No al terrorismo americano”. (Agence France-Presse, 30 de octubre) La Organización

de Jóvenes Árabes en la 5ta Conferencia General de la Unión de Jóvenes Árabes que se celebraba en Damasco, condenó el ataque. Siria demandó una disculpa formal en la ONU, cortó relaciones diplomáticas con Irak y suspendió el trabajo del comité conjunto de seguridad para disminuir la cantidad de tropas sirias desplegadas en ambos lados de la frontera común.

A través del mundo, pueblos y gobiernos han reaccionado a la doctrina de guerra de los EEUU con la hostilidad que se merece. Rusia, China e Irán condenaron el ataque por violar la soberanía de Siria. Hasta los estados sumisos a los EEUU y sus aliados, tuvieron que disociarse del ataque. Esto incluía a Fouad Siniora, Primer Ministro pro-estadounidense del Líbano, los regímenes sumisos los EEUU de Egipto, la Liga Árabe y el gobierno derechista de Sarkozy de Francia. Hasta el régimen títere de Irak criticó el ataque.

Según Washington, Siria “no está haciendo lo suficiente” para asegurar su frontera porosa de 300 millas con Irak. Washington dice que Siria ha permitido a “fuerzas extranjeras” entrar clandestinamente en Irak. (Guardian, 30 de octubre)

Pero Estados Unidos no tiene el derecho de estar ni en un lado de la frontera ni en el otro, ya sea en Irak o en Siria.

La invasión y la ocupación estadounidense de Irak por cinco años son ilegales y criminales. Los verdaderos terroristas extranjeros en la región son las 160,000 tropas estadounidenses y los más de 100,000 mercenarios pagados por los Estados Unidos.

Siria—blanco de los Estados Unidos por mucho tiempo

Al ser un estado árabe que está tratando de mantenerse libre de la dominación imperialista, por décadas Siria ha sido blanco tanto de Israel como de los Estados Unidos. Washington ha pasado años requiriendo un “cambio de régimen” en Damasco.

La administración de Bush ha tildado a Siria de estado “terrorista” por su histórico apoyo a la lucha palestina, por su temprana oposición a la invasión de Irak y por su rol en el Líbano al oponerse a la ocupación, invasión, y continuas amenazas de Israel.

Israel todavía ocupa una parte significativa de Siria — el Golán. El año pasado Israel bombardeó un sitio que Israel y los Estados Unidos decían que era una facilidad nuclear potencial, aunque Siria debe tener el mismo derecho que tienen otros países a desarrollar energía nuclear. En el 2004 Bush impuso severas sanciones económicas sobre Siria, sosteniendo que Siria estaba “desestabilizando” los esfuerzos de los Estados Unidos de “estabilizar” a Irak.

Siria ha absorbido más de 1,5 millones de refugiad@s iraquíes desde el 2003, más que ningún otro país vecino de Irak. El proveer vivienda, alimentos, educación y otros servicios esenciales a esta enorme población de refugiados indigentes, es un gasto enorme para un país en desarrollo. La invasión estadounidense de Irak ha desarraigado casi una quinta parte de la población de 28 millones de Irak, incluy-

endo 2,4 millones que pidieron refugio en los países alrededor de Irak.

Los títeres de los Estados Unidos tienen miedo

El ataque complicó las negociaciones sobre el Acuerdo Sobre el Estatus de Fuerzas (SOFA por sus siglas en inglés) con las autoridades títeres iraquíes, las cuales Washington protege en la Zona Verde. Pero aún este régimen teme firmar un acuerdo SOFA que permite a las fuerzas estadounidenses seguir funcionando en Irak después de que expire el mandato de la ONU a finales del 2008.

Las negociaciones sobre SOFA se han estancado, y una demanda persistente iraquí ha sido que el territorio iraquí no sea usado para lanzar ataques contra otros países.

El gobierno liderado por el Primer Ministro Nuri al-Maliki trató de distanciarse del ataque al decir que se abra una investigación sobre el incidente. Un portavoz del gobierno, Ali al-Dabbagh, dijo el 28 de octubre que “La constitución de Irak no permite que su territorio sea usado como una base para lanzar ataques contra países vecinos”. (Los Angeles Times, 29 de octubre)

Algun@s comentaristas han preguntado si el ataque estadounidense en un pueblo sirio tiene como objetivo establecer un precedente muy peligroso para todo el Oriente Medio que pudiera ser seguido de un ataque que frecuentemente se ha pronosticado contra Irán.

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