

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

workers.org

NOV. 27, 2008

VOL. 50, NO. 47

50¢

## Prop 8 protests sweep the country

By Gerry Scoppettuolo

In just one week a major political struggle has rocked the U.S. from coast to coast and even gone international. From Montreal to Puerto Rico and from California to Maine to Europe, literally hundreds of cities in the U.S. and elsewhere have mounted solidarity rallies and protest marches opposing California's backward Proposition 8, which passed on Nov. 4 and disenfranchised the lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans communities in that state from the recently won right to marry.

In North Carolina alone, seven cities mobilized communities angered by the right-wing attacks: Charlotte, Raleigh, Greensboro, Asheville, Greenville, Wilmington and Boone. This kind of response was repeated all across the South and elsewhere and is unprecedented in U.S. LGBT history.

In Bozeman, Mont., the Queer/Straight Alliance, the Bozeman Peace Seekers and the Gallatin Task Force organized a spirited Prop. 8 protest. The Montana cities of Billings, Helena and Missoula also held protests.

Among the assemblages in big U.S. cities, a number of reports cited the one in San Diego as the largest, with estimates of over 25,000 participants. It was a long march on an especially hot day. At an end-point rally one recently married gay man urged the crowd: "Look around! This is just the start of what the sleeping giant has awoken. We must carry this march on."

In fact, word is spreading of more nationally coordinated actions to come, including a Dec. 10 "Day without a Gay" and a Jan. 10 coast-to-coast protest. And Black lesbian comedian Wanda Sykes, who addressed the Las Vegas protest, told the crowd: "We shouldn't have to settle for less. Instead of having gay marriage in California, no! We're going to have gay marriage across the country." (thetrippedcast)

In New York on Wednesday evening, previous to the national mobilizations on Saturday, Nov. 15, a huge crowd, many with homemade signs, gathered near a Mormon temple at 65th Street and Columbus. Later, as the crowd continued to grow, thousands marched down Broadway. The militantly chanting marchers took up the whole street, curb to curb, for five or six blocks. Then on Saturday more than 10,000 focused on the metropolis's City Hall area, as was the case in most other cities.

The Los Angeles mobilization drew more than 10,000 despite the raging wildfires that are devastating southern California. San Francisco, with no official planning, also drew 10,000 to the City Hall area.

Not since the 1970s and the days when Anita Bryant and the Moral Majority launched their reactionary attacks (see Lavender and Red series at workers.org.) has the LGBT community reacted with such a visceral response, tens of thousands mobilizing seemingly overnight via

*Continued on page 3*



Long Island vigil where Ecuadorian immigrant was murdered.

PHOTO: MARTHA ROJAS

### Lynched by racist vigilantes

## Immigrant mourned by thousands

By Heather Cottin Patchogue, N.Y.

Seven suburban youths from Patchogue-Medford High School on Long Island decided to go out in their SUV on Saturday night, Nov. 8, and "f \_ \_ \_ up a Mexican." When they came across Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero on his way to a friend's house, they jumped him and beat him. Jeffrey Conroy, a local high school athlete, has been charged with first-degree manslaughter in the stabbing death of Lucero.

On a rainy Friday night following the murder, more than 2,000 people gathered at the site of Lucero's killing for a

memorial vigil. Religious and government officials counseled peacefulness and reconciliation, but many people held signs asking for a reckoning.

Lucero was the eldest son of a poor Ecuadorian family. He left his home 16 years ago at the age of 22 to take the long and dangerous trip to the United States to find work. He traveled to Patchogue in Suffolk County, New York, a magnet for Ecuadorian families.

Marcelo Lucero worked for many years in a dry cleaning store, went to church and sent money home to his mother so she could build a house and survive. He was often sad and lonely and called his mother

*Continued on page 3*

### Workers World Party conference: Election, economic crisis create new situation



WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

#### Subscribe to Workers World

Four weeks trial: \$1  One year: \$25

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**WORKERS WORLD**  
55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 212-627-2994 [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)

An overview, interviews with activists 5

Economy, Obama, class struggle, socialism 6-7

Youth and the labor movement 8-9

Interview on Iraqi resistance 4

FREE MUMIA—be in Philly Dec. 6! 3

# A socialist perspective on Obama victory

**PART 2**

*This week ...*



**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. Read the entire talk at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).*

Winning the presidency in 2008 required that a candidate would, at least in form, break with the political thrust of the Bush/Cheney administration of the last eight years. Initially the campaign of Obama emphasized his opposition to the invasion of Iraq. Since the overwhelming majority of people in the U.S. and the world oppose the U.S. occupation of Iraq, such a position would win over a huge section of the electorate to Obama.

Also the economy is in the deepest crisis since the Great Depression of 1929 to 1941. Many people would vote against the McCain-Palin ticket just on the basis of sending a message to the current administration.

Yet it will be a mass movement of working people and the poor that will serve as the engine for real social and economic change in the U.S. The very same elements that came out in the millions to vote for Obama can play an even greater role in building the struggle to take control of the banks, factories and other centers of economic power in this country.

During the campaign, the right wing threw all of its ideological weapons against the Obama campaign. He was called a terrorist sympathizer, a Muslim—as if that is to be disdained—disloyal to the military, and connected to the Weather Underground, Black nationalism and socialism. Interestingly enough, these attacks did not stick.

Most of Obama's supporters and even some Republicans rejected this slander. In fact, more people and youth especially are now trying to find out more about socialism and what it really means for addressing the current crisis. As a result of this renewed interest in socialism, revolutionaries in the U.S. have a role to play in this political development.

## Need for new foreign policy orientation

In the international arena there is an immediate need for major changes in U.S. military, political and economic policy. Obama will be expected to withdraw U.S. troops from Iraq. The Iraqi people—from the nationalists and revolutionaries to many of the U.S.-backed puppet leaders—want the swift evacuation of occupation troops and bases.

The military contractors must leave as well since they constitute a considerable portion of U.S. military expenditures for the occupation.

Obama has advocated the drawing down of troops from Iraq and their redeployment in Afghanistan. This policy would be disastrous for the U.S. Some British military officials are calling for their country's withdrawal

from Afghanistan because the war is unwinnable. The resistance in Afghanistan is escalating against the U.S./NATO occupation.

The struggle in Africa is also heating up against U.S./E.U. intervention in Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe as well as other parts of the continent. Opposition to the Pentagon's Africa Command (AFRICOM) is overwhelming on the continent and throughout the world.

In Latin America the movement is clearly towards the left. There are political parties in power in Venezuela, Cuba, Bolivia, Paraguay, Chile and Ecuador that advocate socialism and anti-imperialism. In other states, there are parties and labor unions that are challenging U.S. hegemony and international finance capital.

In Europe, the working class and the nationally oppressed have engaged in many labor and protest actions over the last several months. The way forward for the working class and nationally oppressed in the U.S. will involve an alliance with all these social forces throughout the world.

## U.S. workers' struggles and the global economic crisis

In Michigan, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions has raised the demand for an immediate freeze on home foreclosure seizures, a popular demand in direct response to the worsening economic crisis in the U.S. and the world. This demand has spread throughout the country and has subsequently drawn the interest of various news agencies from around the U.S. and the world.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition has received journalists from many media outlets based in Korea, France, Latin America, Britain and Canada. The city of Detroit and the state of Michigan represent one of the hardest-hit areas of the country in the crisis of capitalist overproduction and are suffering from the incapacity of the state to respond to the people's needs during the current economic meltdown.

This struggle for a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions must be linked up with the overall plight of the working class and the nationally oppressed in the U.S. It has been working people and people of color who have been disproportionately affected by the housing crisis and its concomitant impact on the financial markets and consequent rise in unemployment, with over 1 million jobs being lost in the U.S. over the last year.

The economic crisis has also had a tremendous impact on the status of women since many of them were subjected to subprime mortgages and the decline in wages so prevalent in the current capitalist labor market. In the Moratorium NOW! Coalition in Michigan, women have played a leading role in the fight against foreclosures and the decline in living standards.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition has also reached out to the immigrant rights struggle. The coalition has strengthened contacts with the Latin@ community since this nationally oppressed group has also been negatively affected by the economic crisis.

The only real long-term solution to the current crisis in capitalist overproduction, however, is the struggle for socialism. Under a socialist economic system, the production of goods and services will coincide with the needs of the majority of people. There will be employment, health care, education, housing and social services for all. This will represent the new phase of the peoples' efforts to win genuine human rights and social justice for the working class and the oppressed. □

## ★ In the U.S.

Immigrant mourned by thousands . . . . . 1  
 Prop. 8 protests sweep the country . . . . . 1  
 A socialist perspective on Obama victory . . . . . 2  
 On anniversary of Greensboro Massacre . . . . . 4

## ★ Around the world

Interview with Abdul al-Bayaty . . . . . 4  
 Makeba--a voice for freedom . . . . . 4

## ★ WWP conference

Conference focuses on new situation . . . . . 5  
 What activists had to say about conference . . . . . 5  
 Larry Holmes: Pushing class struggle forward . . . . . 6  
 Fred Goldstein: Stimulus fails to reverse contraction . . . . . 6  
 Teresa Gutierrez: The immigrant struggle . . . . . 7  
 Jerry Goldberg: The housing crisis . . . . . 7  
 LeiLani Dowell: Youth are yearning for real change . . . . . 8  
 Larry Hales: Need for a revolutionary organization. . . . . 8  
 Monica Moorehead: Obama, national oppression, class struggle . . . . . 9  
 Martha Grevatt: Prospects for a class-wide movement . . . . . 9  
 Messages to WWP . . . . . 10

## ★ Noticias En Español

Las elecciones del 2008. . . . . 12  
 China y el estímulo . . . . . 12

Workers World  
 55 West 17 Street  
 New York, N.Y. 10011  
 Phone: (212) 627-2994  
 Fax: (212) 675-7869  
 E-mail: [editor@workers.org](mailto:editor@workers.org)  
 Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)

Vol. 50, No. 47 • Nov. 27, 2008  
 Closing date: Nov. 18, 2008

Editor: Deirdre Griswold  
 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk  
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson  
 West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Kris Hamel, David Hoskins, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

Technical Staff: Sue Davis, Shelley Ettinger, Bob McCubbin, Maggie Vascassenno

Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Teresa Gutierrez, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Donna Lazarus, Michael Martínez, Carlos Vargas

Copyright © 2008 Workers World. Verbatim copying and distribution of articles is permitted in any medium without royalty provided this notice is preserved.

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [www.workers.org/email.php](http://www.workers.org/email.php).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

## What YOU should know about the hidden war in CONGO—past & present

By Abayomi Azikiwe Reprinted from Workers World

Summit fails to resolve crisis Nov. 20, 2008

Fighting continues in eastern Congo; imperialist states weigh intervention

Colonialists plot return Nov. 13, 2008

E.U. ministers signal troop deployment to Congo

U.N. poised for broader intervention in Congo Oct. 30, Nov. 6, 2008

Historical background to the current crisis— In 3 parts

U.N. poised for broader intervention in Congo Oct. 23, 2008

Order online at [www.Leftbooks.com](http://www.Leftbooks.com)

## JOIN US.

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

**National Office**  
 55 W. 17 St.,  
 New York, NY 10011  
 212-627-2994;  
 Fax (212) 675-7869  
[wwp@workers.org](http://wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
 P.O. Box 424,  
 Atlanta, GA 30301  
 404-627-0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](http://atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
 c/o Solidarity Center  
 2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.  
 Baltimore, MD 21218  
 443-909-8964  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Boston**  
 284 Amory St.,  
 Boston, MA 02130  
 617-983-3835  
 Fax (617) 983-3836  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
 367 Delaware Ave.  
 Buffalo, NY 14202  
 716-883-2534  
[buf\\_alo@workers.org](mailto:buf_alo@workers.org)

**Chicago**  
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
 Chicago, IL 60606  
 773-381-5839  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
 P.O. Box 5963  
 Cleveland, OH 44101  
 216-531-4004  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
 5920 Second Ave.,  
 Detroit, MI 48202  
 313-831-0750  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Houston**  
 P.O. Box 595  
 Houston,  
 TX 77001-0595  
 713-861-5965  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
 111N. La Brea Ave., #408  
 Inglewood, CA 90301  
 310-677-8647  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)

**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
 P.O. Box 23843,  
 Philadelphia,  
 PA 19143  
 610-931-2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Raleigh, N.C.**  
[raleigh@workers.org](mailto:raleigh@workers.org)

**Richmond, Va.**  
 P.O. Box 14602,  
 Richmond, VA 23221  
[richmond@workers.org](mailto:richmond@workers.org)

**Rochester, N.Y.**  
 585-436-6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**San Diego, Calif.**  
 P.O. Box 33447  
 San Diego, CA 92163  
 619-692-0355

**San Francisco**  
 2940 16th St., #207  
 San Francisco, CA 94103  
 415-738-4739  
[sf@workers.org](mailto:sf@workers.org)

**Washington, D.C.**  
 P.O. Box 57300,  
 Washington, DC 20037,  
[dc@workers.org](mailto:dc@workers.org)

# Prop 8 protests sweep the country

Continued from page 1

Facebook, YouTube, a national Web page and other means.

California's Prop. 8 passed 52 to 48 percent, carried to victory by a multimillion-dollar campaign funded by the Mormon Church, Focus on the Family, the Catholic Church and its affiliated Knights of Columbus, and other racist and backward forces—today's equivalents of the Moral Majority, the Campus Crusade for Christ and the Liberty Lobby of the early 1970s. Falsely casting their attack as a "moral" issue, these racist forces worked hard

to deprive millions of the economic class benefits that derive from civil marriage in the areas of health insurance, partner benefits, tax relief and other spousal benefits and rights.

Critical to the growth of this struggle is the overcoming of racial divisions exploited by the right wing. An attempt by conservative pundits to blame communities of color is being challenged. Rallies featured speakers from oppressed African-American, Latin@ and Palestinian communities, especially in San Francisco and Oakland, and in Raleigh, N.C., where Rev.



Front of New York march, Nov. 13.

WW PHOTO: IMANI HENRY



Boston

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

Carl Kenney, former pastor of Orange Grove Missionary Baptist Church in Durham, spoke words of encouragement to the hundreds gathered there.

R. Dooley, who organized the protest in Montreal, explained this challenge to Workers World this way: "I do think this is part of a broader struggle. I agree very strongly that this isn't our only fight. Marriage rights aren't the only issue that our communities have to address at this time."

Ten thousand rallied at City Hall in Boston, where speakers included African-American state Rep. Byron Rushing; Gary

Daffin, director of the Multicultural AIDS Coalition; and Mark Solmonese, director of Human Rights Campaign.

Twenty-two-year-old Ryan MacNealy, a main organizer of the Boston rally, acknowledged the challenges facing the equal-marriage rights movement in a statement to Workers World: "Our advocacy groups are very exclusive, only focusing on the matter at hand. We need to reach out to other struggles." MacNealy will be leading a relationship-building effort with African-American church leaders in Boston in the coming weeks.

Others, like Curtis Morrison from Louisville, Ky., cited Rosa Parks as having inspired their organizing efforts. Progressive LGBT blog sites like [www.queertoday.com](http://www.queertoday.com) are leading the way at refuting the false racist charges raised by the right wing. One thing is certain: the potential for unity is unlimited and the classwide power that could result for the benefit of all the oppressed everywhere would be a welcome sight.

Reports from Imani Henry, John Lewis, Bob McCubbin and Dante Strobino contributed to this article.

## Lynched by racist vigilantes

# Immigrant mourned by thousands

Continued from page 1

several times a week. (Newsday, Nov. 16)

### Anti-Black and anti-immigrant history

Suffolk County has a long racist history. White colonists stole the land from Indigenous people in the 17th century. The enslavement of Africans was legal there until 1827.

In the 1920s, the Ku Klux Klan held rallies in full white-sheeted regalia in Huntington, originally the Suffolk County seat. The Nazi Party chose to set up "Camp Siegfried" in the Suffolk village of Yaphank in the 1930s. Lucero worked just eight miles from there.

Racist realtors have promoted "racial steering" in the growing white suburbs from the 1950s to the present, forcing Black families into designated Black communities with inferior schools and social services. Suffolk County police have been notoriously racist in these communities.

U.S. policies have created a system of forced migration for millions of people. "Free trade" agreements have devastated the national economies of most of the countries of Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Millions have left behind their beloved families to become low-wage laborers in the capitalist world market.

Racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric from media "stars" like Rush Limbaugh, Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity of Fox News has labeled immigrants "illegal aliens."

Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy garnered votes by pandering to reactionary groups in the county and spearheading numerous anti-immigrant bills in the county legislature.

The Mexican Consulate, investigating racist attacks on Mexican immigrants in Farmingville—about 10 miles from where Lucero was killed—compared the region to the Arizona border for the abuse of immigrants. Levy did nothing in the face of fire

bombings of Latin@s' houses, attempted murders of Mexican day laborers, racist beatings, and police harassment of Latin@ residents. (AP, Nov. 16)

Levy's policies mirror federal law, which has produced the terrible Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on workplaces. These raids have intensified in the past year and have resulted in the deportation of 345,000 immigrants so far in 2008, up 16.5 percent from last year. (Boston Globe, Nov. 7)

Political reputations have been made or destroyed by adherence to the anti-immigrant line—from former Gov. Elliot Spitzer in New York, who dared to suggest that undocumented people should be able to get drivers' licenses, to Sheriff Joe Arapaio of Maricopa County, Arizona, who has become the hero of the Aryan Nation, the Klan and the Minutemen as he conducts a campaign of terror and racial profiling in Phoenix and its environs.

George W. Bush's Department of Homeland Security has spent billions of tax dollars to fund the raids and incarceration of hundreds of thousands of immigrants of color.

Anti-immigrant policies benefit corporations profiting from the immigrant-prison-industrial complex. The Border Patrol provides the best-paying jobs available for youth in the Southwestern U.S.

When the press and government conspire to demonize a specific group, that is institutionalized racism. As a result, a 40-percent rise in racist anti-immigrant attacks since 2003 preceded the murder of Marcelo Lucero. (AP, Nov. 16)

On that November night when the teenagers decided to ride around looking for a Mexican to attack, they were motivated by the rhetoric of County Executive Levy. They were inspired by public officials who confer legitimacy on anti-immigrant



PHOTO CARLOS CANALES

May 1 Coalition for Immigrant Rights in Patchogue, N.Y., Nov. 14.

groups in Suffolk and across the U.S.

Foreclosures, low wages and unemployment are hitting hard on Long Island. Bankruptcies are up 77 percent. Anti-immigrant politicians promote racism to obscure the real reasons for the economic decline. They inspired the adolescent killers of Marcelo Lucero.

At the vigil, a young Salvadoran man stood on a roof and held up a sign, "The murder of Marcelo Lucero is the responsibility of Steve Levy."

Carlos Canales of the Workplace Project, an organizer of day laborers in nearby Farmingville, said, "They haven't permitted the people to speak up and to tell our real feelings which show our anger, which

shout our sorrow for the death of Marcelo. They ask us to live in peace, but we can never live in peace because there is no peace if there is no justice."

Canales told Workers World that Steve Levy is "the spiritual leader of the doctrine of racial hatred" who promotes the "legalization and implementation of the most effective local anti-immigrant laws" in Suffolk County, the most segregated county in the U.S. (AP, Nov. 16)

During the vigil, many circulated a petition asking New York State Gov. David Paterson to call for the resignation of Levy. The May 1st Coalition plans a protest at the governor's offices in Manhattan on Nov. 21. □

**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** **Actions will be held in cities across the U.S. & the world**

**12 Noon at District Attorney's Office 2 South Penn Square** (East Side of City Hall)  
**MARCH to Federal Courts**, 5th St. and Market St.

To purchase bus tickets from NYC to Phila. call the **Solidarity Center: 212-633-6646** For information in Phila. call the **International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal: 215-476-8812** and the **International Action Center: 215-724-1618** [Millions4Mumia.org](http://Millions4Mumia.org) [FreeMumia.com](http://FreeMumia.com)



## Interview with Abdul al-Bayaty

# Why Washington's surge in Iraq failed

Following are parts of an interview done last Aug. 27 by Sigyn Meder of Swedish Iraq Solidarity with knowledgeable Iraqi exile Abdul Ilah al-Bayaty at his home in Le Feyt in the Auvergne region of France. Though the interview is over two months old, it still adds insight to more recent events in Iraq exposing the difficulty Washington has imposing a Status of Forces Agreement on the Iraqis. It also debunks the false claims the Bush administration has made that the so-called surge of U.S. forces has stabilized the occupation. Al-Bayaty, a Ba'ath Party organizer in the 1960s, played a leading role in August with a group of anti-war activists who drafted the Le Feyt proposal for a peace agreement that would end the occupation of Iraq. (See [anti-occupation.org](http://anti-occupation.org) for the Le Feyt Declaration.)

**Sigyn Meder:** According to the election propaganda of the Bush administration and in the media, "security is increasing day by day" in Iraq. What is the reality of the situation?

**Abdul Ilah al-Bayaty:** For whom is security increasing? The American troops are changing tactics, avoiding movements on the roads and land, letting Iraqi troops do the ground work—at the same time the U.S. provides air support. Some 1,700 people were killed during the last two months during American-Iraqi offensive operations.

What kind of security exists when thousands of people are arrested in connection with offensives against Mosul, Basra, Baghdad and other cities? What kind of

security exists when American troops can hardly leave the Green Zone?

It is not just a military question—it concerns clean water, food, being able to go to school, meet friends, travel. It is about having a normal life. What kind of security is it to live closed-in behind the high walls that the occupation power builds around neighborhoods in Baghdad and around whole towns in Iraq or when people are exposed to bombings, military offensives and mass arrests? There is no security. There is no normal life.

**Meder:** Would you comment on the Status of Forces Agreement being discussed by the United States and the puppet regime?

**Al-Bayaty:** The people have no legitimate government. This is a security problem. There can be no security with a government that has no legitimacy. And it cannot attain legitimacy. The propaganda talks about security and the mass media ignore the real situation.

The security agreement is a charade between the Bush administration and some local forces that fear that they will lose their privileges if the U.S. withdraws their troops. They want to ensure a continued American presence. At the same time the Bush administration wants to ensure a continuation of its policy regardless of the results in the U.S. election.

These Iraqi forces are completely dependent on foreign troops, militias, criminal gangs and foreign, private-contract employees—in essence, an entire corrupt apparatus whose lifeblood is money. Iraq is one of the most corrupt states in

the world. How can you fight corruption with corruption?

According to the original plan Iraq was supposed to have an army with 40,000 soldiers. Today the "armed forces" include a million members if you include the integrated militia forces. They will never achieve security or obtain legitimacy. If there were real security in Iraq, then the refugees would return.

The people of Iraq and their resistance in all its forms, the parliament and even parts of the government, are opposed to a security agreement that expresses the colonial dependency of Iraq in humiliating forms.

The Bush administration has tried to transform the treaty into an agreement to avoid having the question dealt with by the U.S. Congress or the Iraqi parliament in the face of growing opposition. They know that the people of Iraq will change the constitution and the government if the U.S. troops leave the country.

It is obvious that the agreement will make Iraq a permanent colony. In the same way that Arab regimes have created the concept of "hereditary republics," the United States is trying to create a "sovereign colony."

**Meder:** The United States has not yet succeeded in forcing through the "oil and gas law." [It would leave Iraqi energy resources in the hands of foreign transnational corporations, mostly U.S.—WW.] Would you like to comment on this?

**Al-Bayaty:** The resistance to the oil law is firm. Even in the parliament, despite the enormous pressure from the Bush



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Abdul Ilah al-Bayaty

administration and the oil companies. For example, the Bush administration has in numerous statements demanded that the Iraqi parliament pass the oil law to give a shred of "legitimacy" to the plundering of Iraq's oil—which was nationalized more than 30 years ago.

The Iraqi Constitution has been changed during the occupation in violation of existing conventions in order to facilitate the activities of foreign interests. Agreements made during voting on the constitution made new changes in that same constitution. Therefore an important question is—which constitution is valid?

**Meder:** The U.S. is making great efforts to get its puppet regime in the Green Zone legalized. What are your comments?

**Al-Bayaty:** There is a diplomatic surge taking place. Jordan and some Arab regimes are considering recognizing the Al-Malaki regime. The pressure by the U.S. to have an illegitimate regime accepted by the international community is part of a diplomatic offensive to assist the U.S. in Iraq and to "legalize" the continued occupation and plundering of Iraq. □

## On anniversary of Greensboro Massacre

# Youth march calls for community justice

By Dante Strobino  
Greensboro, N.C.

Still pumped with energy from the election of the first Black president, several hundred oppressed youth marched through the streets here on Saturday, Nov. 8, in memory of the 1979 cold-blooded murder of five activists by the Ku Klux Klan and to carry on the struggle for change that Barack Obama's election campaign has sparked.

The march was organized by the Beloved Community Center to fight around four main issues: stop the violence, education, an end to police brutality and community justice.

"We are calling upon our spiritual communities to go beyond their walls and address the root issues that cause violence, self-hate, injustice and oppression," stated event organizer Wesley Morris at an opening rally.

After gathering at the St. Phillips AME Zion Church on the south side of town, the youth marched through the Black community, down Elm Street in downtown, and then rallied at the courthouse.

The Greensboro Massacre took place 29 years ago, after activists had organized a series of marches and rallies against racist provocations and attacks.

On the morning of Nov. 3, 1979, in collusion with the Greensboro Police

Department and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the Ku Klux Klan publicly massacred five communist activists and wounded many other anti-racists. Even though all the shootings were captured on video camera and were clearly visible on a video segment, no one was ever found guilty for the murders.

Survivor Nelson Johnson, along with others, formed the Beloved Community Center as a way for the community to heal and find truth and reconciliation. This year's march was part of that legacy.

The march brought together students from A&T College, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Guilford College and many young workers under

the slogan, "Peace, unity and justice."

Many spoke about the need for better tutoring services for students in schools at all levels of education. Others spoke about work they are doing to empower parents and communities to improve the overall education process.

Among the marchers were members of the Latin Kings, who recently called for all gangs to stop fighting each other and realize who the real enemy is—the police and the state.

"When we stepped forward to call for peace, we knew it was the government that was keeping [the gangs] divided, especially police departments like the Greensboro Police Department. It is time for us all to stand together. Black and Brown unite!" stated King J, leader of the Latin Kings from Garner, N.C.

On stage with the Latin Kings were dozens of family members of African-American youth who have been killed by Greensboro police.

"We demand the dismantling of the gang squad. We don't need these police attacking people, throwing people out of work, creating false charges. ... It needs to be eliminated," stated Johnson to the crowd gathered at the courthouse. He continued: "Together we can make Greensboro a beautiful, peaceful and nice city. However, we cannot move forward until justice comes."

Marchers were also demanding adequate housing, living-wage jobs, accessible health care benefits, and quality recreation for all members of the community. They stressed the need for community facilities, especially recreation centers, to be open and accessible to the youth from all communities. □



## MAKEBA — a voice for freedom

On Nov. 10, the world-renowned singer Miriam Makeba, also affectionately known as Mama Africa, passed away. Makeba's talent, her powerful voice and her steadfast conviction as an outspoken critic of racist apartheid in her homeland of South Africa earned her great respect and admiration around the world.

Eventually the racist government in South Africa banned her from returning home for 30 years. It was not until the victory that she was able to go back home. A full appreciation of her life and music will appear in the next issue of Workers World.

—Larry Hales

## Obama, capitalist economic crisis

# Workers World Party conference focuses on new situation

By Monica Moorehead  
New York

The historic election of the first Black U.S. president, Barack Obama, and the deepening capitalist economic crisis have become the center of worldwide dialog and debate in the broad, progressive movement. Many are asking if these two unprecedented developments will lead to a revival of the class struggle inside the U.S., ultimately resulting in a socialist future.

These important questions and more were raised at a timely conference entitled "The New Situation in the U.S. and the World" held in New York on the weekend of Nov. 15-16, sponsored by Workers World Party. WWP members from around the country attended, along with key activists and allies as well as the youth and student organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST).

The conference included plenary sessions where WWP speakers gave a Marxist, working-class analysis on the multifaceted political and economic crisis that permeates every sector of society. They projected genuine optimism regarding the openness by the masses to an anti-capitalist, pro-socialist orientation. There were discussion groups including a question and answer period and also a dialog on strategies and tactics for local and national organizing.

FIST held a workshop on Saturday that attracted activists from around the country to discuss a fightback program for young people. The FIST panel included Caleb Maupin, Namibia Donadio, Karina

Schechter, Jaimeson Champion and Larry Hales.

At several points during the conference, summaries of 25 international messages of solidarity to the conference were read.

### What's behind the new situation?

The Saturday morning plenary session was chaired by Miya Campbell, a FIST organizer and spoken-word artist from Boston, who moved the conference with a highly creative and political spoken-word presentation based upon a poem by Langston Hughes. Then Judy Greenspan from San Francisco, a long-time fighter for prisoners' rights and an LGBT activist, formally gave a welcoming talk. Following her welcome three talks were given by WWP Secretariat members Larry Holmes, Teresa Gutierrez and Fred Goldstein.

Holmes focused a great deal of his talk on a 1950 thesis written by the late WWP chairperson, Sam Marcy, that explained how imperialist economic development would eventually change the social and political character of the working class here and worldwide, making it more multinational. This phenomenon was essential in Obama winning the presidency. Holmes also motivated the need to hold actions on the 80th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday the third week in January to demand political and economic equality.

Gutierrez, a leader in the May 1st Coalition for Immigrant and Worker Rights in New York, spoke on the capitalist crisis, the immigrant rights struggle and the potential for building classwide unity among all workers—with a special empha-

sis on May Day 2009.

Goldstein, the author of the newly released book, "Low-Wage Capitalism," explained why socialism is the only solution to both the current phase of the economic crisis and the general crisis of capitalist exploitation and overproduction that sacrifices human needs for profits.

Jerry Goldberg, a retired Detroit auto worker and a leader of the Moratorium Now! Coalition Against Foreclosures and Evictions in Michigan, compared the current crisis to the 1930s Great Depression and the need to go directly to the workers and oppressed with an independent, fight back program in their interests.

### The struggle at home

Bev Heistand, a retired nurse and co-chair of the second plenary session, which focused on the struggle at home, shared with the audience a description of the declining living standards where she lives, in Buffalo, N.Y., especially in the area of health care. The other co-chair, LeiLani Dowell, a FIST organizer and Workers World managing editor in New York, spoke on the political and economic crisis facing young people.

Monica Moorehead, a WWP Secretariat member and Workers World managing editor, addressed the contradictions of the Obama victory in relationship to the struggle against racism and national oppression.

Dante Strobino, a Raleigh FIST member and UE union organizer, and Martha Grevatt, a longtime auto worker from Cleveland, reviewed the changing character of the working class in North Carolina

and Ohio that led to Obama winning those states on Nov. 4.

Kris Hamel, a co-founder of the Detroit Action Network for Reproductive Rights, and Phebe Eckfeldt, a leader of the Women's Fightback Network in Boston, spelled out the political and economic challenges facing working-class and oppressed women of all ages.

Imani Henry, a trans activist and co-founder of Rainbow Flags for Mumia, described the organized mass anger in the streets resulting from the passage of the bigoted Proposition 8 that overturned same-sex marriage in California on Nov. 4.

John Parker, a Los Angeles International Action Center organizer, analyzed the significance of the general crisis in California that led to the formation of the Labor-Community Coalition.

Sharon Black, a founder of the Baltimore All Peoples Congress and a health care worker in New York, explained why it is important to reach out to workers and oppressed peoples with popular propaganda.

### The struggle abroad

Tyneisha Bowens, a FIST organizer from Philadelphia, chaired the third plenary session on the struggle abroad and gave opening remarks on her experiences in socialist Cuba in 2007.

Sara Flounders, a WWP Secretariat member and an IAC co-director, presented an overview of the global crisis of imperialism and a call for revolutionary defeatism as a form of supporting the right to self-determination.

*Continued on page 10*

## What activists had to say about WWP conference

By Betsey Piette

With a deepening global economic crisis and the election of the first African-American president of the U.S. creating a new political situation, the Workers World Party conference on socialism was a magnet for activists who sensed a sea change in the working-class struggle.

Community, union and youth activists came from across the country to discuss the impact of the election and the mounting struggles against the economic onslaught against workers and oppressed, and to make plans for future struggles.

Some were longtime supporters and allies of Workers World Party. For others, it was their first time at a national gathering of the party.

Sandra Hines from Detroit, Mich., was attending a WWP conference for the second time and liked what she saw. Hines, a leader with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, lost her family home of 38 years to foreclosure. She knows well the pain of people fighting against the greed of the banks and has become an outspoken advocate in the struggle to win a moratorium against foreclosures.

She didn't attempt to contain her enthusiasm, frequently shouting out encouragement to speakers. "The excitement and energy people have here is refreshing," Hines noted. "It's predicated in the fact

that the complete financial collapse has awakened us all. The collapse is a reality for people all over the world. We can't leave it to big government politicians for our salvation. They have no interest in the working class.

"I hope people will take from the conference the courage and commitment to fight back. We need to lay out our program for where the bailout money should go. The money going to the banks is our money. It came from our blood, sweat and tears, and we have the right to demand our fair share. People have to fight back. This is no time to be afraid," she concluded.

Deborah Wray, a public housing activist from Providence, R.I., spoke to the historic significance of the Obama election in the fight against racism. Wray is active with the People's Assembly/Direct Action for Rights and Equality (DARE) and helped organize events commemorating Rosa Parks' courageous defiance of racial segregation that led to the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

"We exercised our freedom to get out and vote, and now we have to take on all the other issues that confront us—housing, prisons, education, unemployment and more. This is what people in my proj-



Martha Rojas

ect are talking about. The Obama election was an important victory, but racism was not swept under the rug."

This was also the first WWP conference for Martha Rojas, a Colombian activist and union organizer for home health care workers in Los Angeles. Rojas first met WWP during the 2006 massive struggles around immigrant rights.

"It's great to see African Americans, Anglos and Latin@s involved together in the struggle," Rojas stated. "This is my place. The speakers here are not just saying there should be unity, but they are doing things to bring it about."

Rojas described the impact of the global economic crisis on her family in Colombia. "There is a saying that when the U.S. gets a cold, Colombia gets pneumonia. My family were never doing that well, but now they are really suffering.

"Because Barack Obama came out against Plan Colombia, the Afro-Colombian community came out in the thousands when he won," Rojas said. "Colombia has the second-largest African community in Latin America after Brazil. The vote against racism for Obama is affecting them. If the U.S. can change, we can make a difference in Colombia against Uribe."

Pam Africa from International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal welcomed the insight the conference offered on the Obama election. "The conference was great," Africa reported,

"and very educational on where we need to go from here after the elections.

"I have never felt anything but solidarity from Workers World around the struggle to free Mumia. With all the other commitments the party has, you have never set aside your support for political prisoners, whether it's Mumia or the Cuban Five. Workers World is not just there in a conference like this, but in the street and on the front line. Not behind me, but beside me. I'll be at the next conference, too!" Africa concluded.

"I'm very impressed with the commitment of the people who came to this meeting from all over the country," noted Dave Welch, a leader of the National Association of Letter Carriers Local 214 and delegate to the San Francisco Labor Council. "They are already deeply involved with the fight against foreclosures to put people back in their homes. They come from the rising movement of workers and poor who are dealing with the economic crisis that is devastating people's lives."

"I'm encouraged by the labor struggles I've heard reported here like the victory of the Boston school bus drivers. People are also taking actions to fight racism where it happens, like the lynching of Ecuadorian immigrant Marcelo Lucero by a mob on Long Island. Many are fighting the epidemic of police brutality and the attacks on immigrant rights. It's happening all over the country." □



Sandra Hines



Pam Africa

WW PHOTOS

## In the midst of biggest crisis

# Pushing the class struggle forward

By Larry Holmes

This capitalist crisis is also a crisis for the working-class movement, for progressives, for the trade union movement, for immigrant workers, for entities trying, with all the weak circumstances, to help the working class and the oppressed rise to the occasion and use this crisis in order to step into class consciousness, class struggle and even revolutionary consciousness.

Usually the stakes in a crisis are as big as the crisis. This is the biggest that has been coming for at least 35 or 40 years. It's been coming ever since the end of the second imperialist war. The reason behind the crisis is a megamonster, worldwide crisis of capitalist overproduction.

Technology, the way the bosses have been able to enhance productivity, redivide labor all over the world, globalize and centralize labor in order to drive wages down, has backfired. It's only made the crisis of overproduction that much more severe and merciless. We now have an African-American president. We should say that it's a victory not only for the African-American masses but everyone in the world who is struggling against racism, for oppressed all around the world.

I want to touch on some positive, hopeful significance behind this development. Comrade Sam Marcy, the founder and chairperson for many, many decades of Workers World Party, died 10 years ago.

In 1950 Sam wrote a document called "Memorandum on the war and the tasks of the proletariat in this phase of the revolutionary struggle." This memorandum had 25 points.

The first 12 points are orienting the movement to support the uprising of the Korean people and chastising those

who were reluctant to do that. He also explained both the gains that the worldwide working class movement had made at the end of the second imperialist war—the strengthening of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, the Chinese Revolution—but also the problems, and principally the leadership in the Soviet Union.

In the other 13 points Sam explained that before the Russian Revolution it was axiomatic for Marxists to consider that the revolutionary center of struggle—where the workers were rising up, where they were the most politicized and class conscious and perhaps even ready to enter into a struggle for power—was where imperialism and capitalism were the strongest. But after the first few years of the Russian Revolution, it was a very difficult period. It seemed clear that the centers where imperialism and capitalism were strong were in the West, while the revolutionary center where the masses were rising up and engaging in revolutionary struggle, overthrowing governments and building liberation movements, was shifting to the East. And the center of imperialism was shifting away from Europe to the United States.

He made a prognosis: that in the natural course of imperialist development—the redivision of labor, the introduction of technology, attacks on the working class, the unfolding "globalization"—the center of imperialism and capitalism would reunite with the center of revolutionary struggle.

### Which way forward?

Many people voted for Obama out of justifiable righteous hatred of the war and Bush. And we know why African Americans rose up and voted for him. The world is happy. But there's something deeper. Look at the character of the work-

ing class and how it has changed, how it's more multinational, more Black and Latin@, with a larger and larger proportion of women and immigrants. Not just in the East or in the West, but also in the U.S. South, in places like Virginia and North Carolina, and also with support from white workers, Obama was able to win.

The fact that a Black politician by the name of Barack Hussein Obama was able to win an election in the most racist reactionary country in the world—at least that's the way it started by comparison to Europe—is because there is something going on underneath. And it's asserting itself.

The first big sign of this was the immigrant workers' uprising in 2006. And if you understand that, you'll understand why the government has mercilessly gone after immigrant workers to beat them down, break their movement and leave them vulnerable—like the lynching of Marcelo Lucero in Long Island—to make sure their movement doesn't grow strong and most importantly make sure that other detachments of the working class don't unite with them. They're afraid because this is the future.

In this demographic development that is changing the composition of the population and the working class, there is also a class struggle going on. And our class is not ready to assert itself yet. So when you have an Obama phenomenon, it is the ruling class—especially those who are wiser—who co-opt Obama and use this development in their class interest. He is wonder-



WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

Larry Holmes

The articles in this section are based on speeches given to the 2008 Workers World Party National Conference by party leaders. Four of those published this week were by WWP Secretariat members: Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Holmes and Monica Moorehead. More edited talks will be published in future issues. The complete talks and podcasts are online at workers.org. ■

ing, along with all his advisers and the rest of the ruling class, how in hell they are going to deal with this crisis. They cannot end it no matter how much money they throw at it.

It is why Obama is now desperately trying to make a coalition government with all the factions of the ruling class both in and outside the Democratic Party; why Hillary Rodham Clinton might be the secretary of state and Gates might continue as secretary of war and others from other factions also might continue.

He needs them and they need him. How will we fight the new government with its new face? How much of a problem will it be? Will it confuse workers? Will it confuse the Black masses? Will they say, "Don't criticize Barack Obama, he's on our side"?

I don't expect that period to last very long at all.

I have been so strong about doing something on the 80th anniversary of Martin Luther King's birthday because it is a way of beginning the class struggle against the class character of the United States government, no matter who is president.

Our party always knew that in this country and in this world you have to have a close strategic relationship with the Black working class, and it has to be based on longstanding experience, trust and ironclad solidarity. These are things

*Continued on page 11*

## Artificial stimulus fails to reverse global contraction

By Fred Goldstein

When Barack Obama first began his campaign back in 2006, he and his advisers and backers in the establishment had as a priority trying to deal with long-neglected aspects of U.S. capitalist society that were in decay and were endangering the world position of U.S. imperialism.

The festering issues of health care, global warming and energy, declining education, antiquated infrastructure, the global isolation of U.S. imperialism and many others were on the agenda for a future Obama administration, which was supposed to "reach across the aisle" and work out bipartisan solutions. But these were all policy issues, issues of capitalist decay arising during a period when bourgeois politics has been in a factional logjam, unable to resolve anything other than to hand the corporations whatever they asked for and attack the workers and the oppressed—during the Clinton as well as the Bush administrations.

Now, as Obama gets ready to take office, the policy issues he wanted to address all have to be subordinated to an acute systemic crisis that is global in scope and historical in proportion.

Some 1.2 million workers have lost their jobs so far this year. Unemployment has jumped from 6.1 percent to 6.5 percent and is projected to soon rise to over 7 percent. Consumer spending dropped a

record 3 percent in October. Retailers are girding for the worst shopping season on record.

Citibank has just announced 10,000 new layoffs [two days after this speech, the number rose to 53,000—ed.]; Sun Microsystems has announced 6,000 new layoffs; Circuit City, the second-largest electronics retailer in the country, closed down 155 stores and is filing for bankruptcy; and the second-largest mall operator in the country, General Growth Properties, which operates 200 malls in 44 states, is on the verge of bankruptcy.

Intel, the largest microchip maker in the world, has suffered a major decline in revenue. Caterpillar, the largest construction equipment maker in the capitalist world, is planning for a downturn. GE, a giant multinational conglomerate, is planning to cut back investment and workers.

The auto industry is in crisis, with sales dropping and losses and layoffs rising. General Motors is hinting at bankruptcy in a public relations campaign to get a bailout from the Treasury—also a dangerous game of psychological warfare against the United Auto Workers, as the company is trying to set the stage to reopen contracts and get major concessions. GM recently announced it will end health care coverage for 100,000 white-collar retirees by the end of the year.

As the G-20 meet in Washington, the capitalist economies of Europe and Japan

are in recession. This is the first time since World War II that the three major centers of imperialism—the U.S., Europe and Japan—have gone into recession within the same year.

Japan, with the second-largest economy in the capitalist world, has had six consecutive months of contraction; Germany, the fourth-largest economy, has had six.

China, Brazil, Russia and India, the world's most populous countries, have also had major declines in growth in the last quarter.

It is evident that there is a crisis of production and employment in the entire economic system.

The cause of the crisis can be reduced to two words: capitalist exploitation.

Why are all the toxic mortgages and other debt-backed securities going bad? Because they were based on collecting the future wages of the workers. Mortgage debt, credit card debt, school loan debt, auto loan debt, debt to pay medical bills, and all the other debts were bundled up and sold around the world. After 30 years of falling wages and a growing consumer credit system, the working class has become deeply indebted. African-American, Latin@, Asian and Native workers have suffered the most, especially single women.

Interest and fees on working-class debt



WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

Fred Goldstein

have become a major source of profit for finance capital. The capitalist class, in its various forms as lenders, mortgage brokers, credit card companies, banks, auto finance companies and so on were taking advantage

of the dire needs of workers in order to promote credit. These money grubbers turned around and resold the workers' IOUs in bundles to make a quick profit.

Meanwhile, other sections of the capitalist class were intensifying the exploitation of workers on the job by busting unions, cutting wages and benefits, shortening hours, laying off and outsourcing to contract labor. The medical insurance industry, pharmaceuticals, hospitals, all raised costs to boost profits. Agribusiness and the oil barons raised the price of food and fuels, fueling inflation in the things workers need to live.

Sooner or later the whole debt structure had to collapse—and the cause was capitalist exploitation, i.e., the profit system.

The capitalist class has become more and more reliant upon debt as an artificial means of counteracting the growing problem of capitalist overproduction. As technology improves, the increased rate of exploitation and the worldwide wage competition drive wages down everywhere, making it harder for the capitalist system to generate a strong boom that can

*Continued on page 11*

# The immigrant struggle, the economy and May Day 2009

By Teresa Gutierrez

Wouldn't it be great if we were able, along with our allies in the movement, to take May Day even further next year? Is not the potential there for building a huge May Day, broader, more class conscious and more multinational than ever before?

Is not the deepening economic crisis laying the basis for a May Day rich with the struggle of all workers, not just immigrants?

We believe so.

The lessons of recent May Days are important for our party and are something we must examine.

We are right now entering a very interesting period. The election of the first African-American president was historic and is a triumph for the Black masses and all the oppressed.

It is a triumph fraught with contradictions. We have no illusions that the capitalist system has changed with this election or that class relations of exploitation and oppression have been done away with.

Oppressed people are walking now just a little bit taller, but they are still walking unjustly into jails. They are still walking into schools that are not much better than jails.

Nonetheless, as communists and revolutionaries we take joy with the oppressed and other progressives as they gather in jubilation from Harlem to Colombia to Japan to Kenya with the election of Obama.

As Che said, a true revolutionary is guided by genuine feelings of love. And our love of the oppressed masses—like our solidarity with the working class—extends even when it involves the presidency of the strongest imperialist country ever.

Racism is that profound, victories are

that few, that this extreme contradiction does not stop us from celebrating with the masses.

The forces of reaction have been pushed back, even if for just a moment. And the election of Obama is a slap in the face of Lou Dobbs, even if only momentarily. For that I am very happy.

A few months ago, it was not known which way the Latin@ masses would go. Would Latin@s fall prey to the divide-and-conquer tactic and be so disappointed with the defeat of Hillary Clinton, who many had supported, that they'd turn to McCain in disgust? Or would they become apathetic and not turn out in great numbers at all?

Fortunately, Latin@s, driven by economic and immigration concerns, were not immune to the excitement that the Obama movement had inspired, voted in huge numbers for Obama, and were even decisive in his victory.

However, whatever euphoria may have come out of the election of the first Black president was clouded last week as we learned of yet another savage murder of a Latino immigrant, this time in Suffolk County, Long Island.

Marcelo Lucero, an Ecuadorian, was stabbed to death by a racist vigilante mob. These thugs said they purposely and callously went out to hunt a Mexican. They are as ignorant as Sarah Palin; to them everybody south of the U.S. border is Mexican.

I am proud to say that our party, despite all the organizing efforts for this conference, went out to Long Island last night to join the community to condemn this killing. It was a great way to open this conference: in the struggle and in the streets.

Conditions for migrants today, here and around the world, are exactly as Lenin



Teresa Gutierrez

predicted in the early 1900s. He wrote how a special feature of imperialism was the decline of emigration from the imperialist countries while migration increased from oppressed nations to the richer nations.

Indeed, around the globe, workers in record numbers are forced out of their homelands to seek work as a result of capitalist economic policies. A witch hunt of racism, brutality, demagoguery and terrorism is waged in an attempt to drive immigrants further and further underground.

That is why it was so exciting in 2006 when immigrants in record numbers took to the streets to say: Here we are and here we will stay! We demand legalization!

But now that Obama has been elected, how will the situation for immigrants play out?

There is much we do not know as we enter this period.

How long will the honeymoon with President Obama last? Could the struggles against Prop. 8 be a sign of things to come? Or will social democracy and the Democratic Party be strengthened, sucking all the progressive energy into their ranks? Will the Obama administration wage more war in Afghanistan or Pakistan?

Will it meet with President Hugo Chávez or President Raul Castro? Or will it tighten the blockade? We know the Cubans are ready, come what may. And we must be too.

We may not have all the answers now, but some things we do know.

Thursday in my doctor's office, a young Black worker told me his sister had won a raffle to attend the inauguration of Obama. Her school and community were raising the money for her ticket. His sister lives in Barbados.

If in Barbados they are raising money to send people to the inauguration, you know it's going to be huge.

How we should relate to this inaugural is one of the questions put before this conference this weekend.

We also know this: May 1 marks the first 100 days of President Obama's administration. Some of the well-meaning, well-intentioned immigrant rights groups are talking about a pro-immigrant event on May 1. This is good.

But many of them are the ones who tried to block May Day 2006. The workers did not allow them to do that.

These forces may want to take the teeth out of May Day 2009. We cannot allow that. We want to work with everyone who supports immigrant rights. But it will do no service to immigrants if the politics are watered down.

Immigrants need a class-conscious May Day. They need U.S. workers to come out on May Day, workers who are losing their homes, white and Black and Asian workers who are losing their jobs. They need the LGBT, the anti-war and the women's movements to come out on May Day. They need the youth who have been recently energized.

*Continued on page 11*

# The housing crisis and a fight-back program

By Jerry Goldberg

The current economic crisis has been building for years. At its root is the massive elimination of decent-paying jobs and lowering of wages in the U.S. and worldwide, a phenomenon explained and analyzed so well in the party's newest book, "Low-Wage Capitalism."

The capitalist class was able to delay the inevitable economic collapse in significant part through the creation of the housing and home refinancing boom and its offshoots, racist subprime predatory lending and exotic adjustable-rate, pay-option, interest-only and negative amortization mortgages. People were sucked into putting their homes up as collateral for loans based on artificial appraisals that vastly overstated their value.

The financial interests made huge profits off these loans with their high interest rates and exorbitant fees. However, the lure of quick profits overcame any rational analysis of what was going on, so every single financial institution became involved in the mortgage boom, buying trillions of dollars of mortgage securities with no regard to the long-term prospects. It was classic overproduction as described by Marx, but within the financial sector.

In the years 2004-2006, U.S. homeowners pulled about \$840 billion each year out of residential real estate, home equity lines of credit and refinanced mortgages. These so-called home equity withdraw-

als financed hundreds of billions a year in personal consumption from 2004-2006.

Today the whole deck of cards has collapsed. The mortgage refinancing boom turned into its opposite. Each company now faces billions of dollars in losses and the government is scrambling to bail them out with its trillion-dollar giveaway financed by the taxpayers. Even if the capitalists stabilize the financial markets on some level, and this is highly doubtful, how are they going to replace the hundreds of billions of dollars a year that were funneled into the capitalist economy through home refinancing?

Home equity loans are a thing of the past, as housing values have declined rapidly across the U.S. In fact, families are forced to divert more and more of their incomes to mortgage payments that have doubled and tripled as they reset upward at the same time that home values are in serious decline.

With foreclosures now affecting about one in nine households, there is no sign of a rebound. The home refinancing lever the capitalists used to stave off an economic downturn has now turned into its opposite, from the last stimulus into a serious depressant. It seems clear that the prospect for the coming period is a profound and long-lasting economic downturn.

Will the government be able to stave off or at least significantly ameliorate the effects of this collapse? It is interesting to note that even in the depression of

the 1930s, the New Deal only modestly eased the vast unemployment and suffering of the masses. It was really the spending for World War II that brought the capitalist economy back. For example, the author of "Labor's Giant Step" points out that during the New Deal, spending for the unemployed ran only about \$1 to \$1.5 billion a year, while the total yearly cost of government was a little more than \$7 billion. In contrast, during the war the Roosevelt administration spent \$79 billion in 1943, \$95 billion in 1944 and more than \$100 billion in 1945. That is not to say that significant reforms were not won, including Social Security and unemployment insurance, but it was the war, not the New Deal, that revived the capitalist economy.

Even the liberal bourgeois economist Paul Krugman of the New York Times has criticized the New Deal for being too conservative, and has called for public spending in the neighborhood of \$600 billion on jobs and services to avert a severe downturn in the economy.

In contrast, the Democrats seem to be proposing a \$150-billion stimulus plan. We already have a bloated war budget that has become a permanent feature of impe-



Jerry Goldberg

rialism and long ago became a depressant on the economy. With the Democrats' continued support for the \$700-billion Pentagon budget and the trillion-dollar bailout to the banks, it's hard to picture where more funds to meet people's needs will be coming from.

Comrades, what is the role of a revolutionary party like ours as we enter a period characterized by a profound economic downturn that has all the indications of being severe and long-lasting? It is to marshal every one of our resources, and especially our revolutionary perspective and experience, to mobilize the workers and oppressed to fight back.

Our ideological view, to overthrow capitalism and replace it with a socialist system, puts us in a unique position to intervene in the period to come. We are not about saving capitalism, like the Democratic Party, which mouths support for the workers and then gives \$700 billion to bail out the banks in a bill that did not have one item in it to stop foreclosures or protect working people in any way.

We reject the view of the UAW leadership who, after agreeing to the last contract, have been silent in the face of layoffs and plant closings that violate that contract

*Continued on page 11*

# Youth are yearning for real change

By LeiLani Dowell

A statement by FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—on the elections concluded: “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.”

We in FIST believe those wonderful, optimistic words wholeheartedly. But as youth, it gives us a certain responsibility because so many of those who not only celebrated, but actively mobilized and organized for an Obama victory, were youth themselves.

CBS News reports that two-thirds of voters younger than 30 supported Obama, and that while “support was especially strong among Black and Latino young people ... more than half of young white voters supported Obama as well.” Surges in voter registration among youth contributed to Obama’s win in some of the swing states.

But young people weren’t just voting this time around—they were Facebooking people about the campaign, going door-to-door, blogging, e-mailing and texting each other about the campaign. Some of them weren’t even old enough to vote themselves.

Lots of analysis can be found in the news about this. Some are saying that Obama was simply the “cool” candidate—dismissing the idea that young people have minds or ideas about politics. CBS News says that “in the new multiracial, multilingual and multicultural America, he was more like them.” Well, okay, maybe they’re onto something with the changing character of the working class, but I doubt that’s where they were going.

I happen to have a little more faith in the minds of youth. This was an opening for many, many youth who have never been political before in their lives, but are yearning for real change. They’re facing an uphill struggle in this capitalist society. Their schools are underfunded; their tuitions are rising. They and their friends get harassed and beat up by the police and thrown in jail for trying to survive—especially if they’re youth of color, immigrant youth, or lesbian, gay, bi or trans youth. The ones who make it to college see few job prospects when they get out and a mountain of debt (almost everyone in FIST can tell you personally about that). Those who don’t make it to college can’t even get jobs at McDonalds, because job losses across the board mean older workers are taking jobs usually held by youth. They see this continuing war in Iraq and the threat of more wars to come and fear they’ll be drafted into the military, perhaps simply because it’s the only option available to them.

And here’s the thing—with all the contradictions of bourgeois elections, the high turnout of youth for the Obama campaign means they are trying to do something about this situation. They are not, as we are always told, apathetic. And, though we are often told so, they are not backwards, lacking in moral fiber, etc.

Of course, this is where we come in. Because not only are youth attempting to do something, but they’re looking for answers as well, particularly in the face of this tumultuous economic crisis that is hitting all of us in one way or another. The word “socialism” has been revitalized in the media, and youth are asking what it



LeiLani Dowell

WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

means. Of course, we have to do a lot of correcting all the crap that they’re saying about it in the media. Comrades in New York have commented on how they’ve seen more young people reading Marx on the trains, and it’s never been easier to hand out copies of our revolutionary paper.

We know that Obama’s victory was a limited one. A historic, monumental victory, but one that will not bring about the change so desperately needed throughout the world. That change will only come about with the overthrow of capitalism.

But a lot of youth, by no fault of their own, don’t know that. And so it’s up to us to let them know. And this coming period will be rife with opportunity to do so. When Obama’s policies don’t turn out to be pro-worker, we can show how bourgeois elections work and how they provide only the illusion of democracy. When he can’t solve the economic crisis—and some of us still think that he’s been set up to fail on this anyway—we can explain the cycles of capitalism, how this period was inevitable and how if we don’t destroy the system itself, these cycles will continue wreaking havoc on the lives of working people. When imperialist intervention continues, we can explain the need for the imperialist powers to constantly expand throughout the globe, how war is an inherent tenet of capitalism. Likewise, when racism isn’t even slowed by Obama’s victory, and in recent cases intensified, we can explain how racism and bigotry are used under capitalism to divide Black from white, straight from gay, etc.

I keep using the word “can.” That’s wrong. We MUST do these things.

At the beginning of the economic crisis, the national leadership of FIST discussed what we should do about it, what kind of campaign we should undertake. One result of that is an 11-point program of demands that we have come up with to reach out to youth.

Briefly, here are the main points: 1) The right to free public education and job training. 2) The demilitarization of our schools. 3) The right to healthcare. 4) The right to housing. 5) Stop the raids and deportations. 6) The right to a job. 7) Shut down the prison-industrial complex. 8) Self-determination is a right. 9) Defeat U.S. imperialism. 10) Justice and equality for all women. 11) Safety and equality for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer youth.

The program closes with a note on the necessity of the fight for a socialist future: “FIST is a youth group that ultimately believes that all forms of oppression and repression of the masses will disappear with a revolutionary change in the social relations. While it is important to fight for gains and make material demands on the

*Continued on page 11*

# Need for a revolutionary organization

By Larry Hales

I want to talk not just about the importance of a party of professional revolutionaries, but also about the challenge of recruiting youth.

A 15-year-old has had different historical experiences than someone who is 35. It is important to understand what we who were born under the Carter administration, who were born after the great social movements, have come up in—the reaction we grew up in.

We were babies of the Reagan era. We grew up in a period during deindustrialization, when the prison-industrial complex was booming, when the death penalty was reinstated. We grew up during the war on drugs. We grew up during the crack epidemic. We also grew up during the rise of hip-hop culture.

There are a lot of things that have contributed to the difficulty of recruiting youth. The collapse of the Soviet Union didn’t necessarily have that much of an effect on us, certainly not as much as the great Los Angeles Rebellion. That’s what we remember. That was a great defining moment.

This is the period we lived in. There weren’t the great social movements, the struggles for socialism. There was the victory of the Sandinistas, but what we remember of that is the Iran-Contra hearings.

We had to suffer through seeing our parents or our friends’ parents losing their jobs or experiencing the fear of losing jobs. I grew up in the Rust Belt, and the wave of closures, plant closures and layoffs, felt like a cloud of doom as it destroyed communities, especially the oppressed communities.

There is a crisis of youth. It’s because of the period of reaction we grew up in. It’s also a crisis of ideology and of bourgeois society.

Someone was talking about consumerism. We don’t want to make the workers the enemy because they buy stuff. People have a right to stuff, but have a difficult time buying. Capitalism staved off a crisis with credit buying. People couldn’t afford things so they got them on credit. They got groceries on credit. You bought a house or a car on credit.

When you turn on the television, walk outside your door, turn on the radio, go on the Internet, everywhere: buy, buy, buy. If you buy a television and it breaks down, you’ve got to buy a new one because there is nobody to repair it.

The government controls the education system. Not only do we have to contend with the period we grew up in, but also with the decadence of bourgeois society and the fact that the schools aren’t teaching history.

Something very simple that we can explain is the dialectical nature of struggle—how two things butting against one another can create a thing of quality, that struggle is going to produce a better society, that we did not always live under this system in the past and will not always live under it in the future.

We have to talk about the ideas of Marx. Not only do we have to teach the dialectics of struggle and history, but also you have to tell people what is possible for society in simple words. Malcolm X used to say, “Make it plain,” when a per-



Larry Hales

WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

son talked too long. We have to make it plain what socialism actually is.

They are talking about socialism like it’s this monster rearing its head. It’s never gone away. People are beginning to say, “Wait a minute, something’s wrong with this.” But, in order to actually get to that next step you need an organization.

Some youth don’t see the importance of centralization and organization because they are taught that power corrupts and organizations become corrupt. “Look at the Soviet Union. They were corrupt.” It’s like trying to convince people that there is no corruption in the capitalist government. What about Nixon? What about eight years of Bush, of Clinton?

We need a revolutionary organization. The thing about the L.A. rebellion was that it lacked organization. It was great, but it was smashed into the ground. If there had been a revolutionary organization on the ground, it could have propelled it much further.

The idea is the importance of a revolutionary organization to make demands upon the system. As the workers start to move, we actually push it further. As the capitalists try to smash the rising of workers and workers begin to see the system baring its teeth, we need an organization that says, “We need to go further. Keep going, keep struggling because this is what we have to do to win a new society and that new society is socialism.”

As an individual activist I started to get demoralized. You get tired and worn out, but not if you are grounded in a revolutionary understanding of history and of the ability of the masses to rise up and build a better world for themselves. Not if you are grounded in Marxism and you are part of a revolutionary organization.

I believe that one of the shining moments, at least from my perspective, of the party is what we did with the Barack Obama phenomenon. I’ve only been in the party four years, but it has to be one of the shining moments of this organization, because we did the right thing and we will see how that will play out. All those organizations that said, “It’s nothing. It’s nothing.” How are they going to be able to lead the masses in struggle to build a better world if they couldn’t see the very basic question of supporting self-determination and the national question? How will they be able to lead?

I think there are great things in the future. This is a period of struggle, and this is the right organization to help push the struggles forward. We have the right people, the right relations.

This party has given me a great deal of confidence. I’m so glad to be a member of Workers World Party and of the revolutionary youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together, and I look forward to working with you all in the future. □

# Prospects for a class-wide movement

By Martha Grevatt

This year is the tenth anniversary of the death of our founder and chairperson, Sam Marcy. You're hearing references to his many writings, including his seminal work, "High Tech, Low Pay." Now, over 20 years since its publication, it's fair to make an objective assessment of Comrade Sam's projections. Have the class contradictions in the world developed in accordance with his outline at that time? Is class consciousness advancing as he predicted? Or did he miss the mark? He wrote about the shift in the U.S. to a low-wage service economy, with many more workers of color, women and immigrants, adding that "The change of consciousness which has so long been delayed ... is bound to come as the result of deep-seated, profound changes in the social composition of the working class."

Sam's vision was that, over time, there would be a breaking down of those terrible backward hatreds, of the awful racism that too long has kept our class divided and powerless.

Was Sam just another dreamy utopian out of touch with reality? I remember quite well a dialogue that took place, right after the book was published, at a Workers World conference deliberating these very pertinent questions. A member of another political organization was arguing the opposite, that the increased numbers of Black, Latin@, Asian, Native, and Arab workers would only provoke a racist backlash from white workers.

Did this "revolutionary" pessimist have his finger on the pulse of the masses? In a constantly changing world—and Marxism is the science of change—it's hard to make definitive conclusions, but the Obama victory can sure give us some insight. After all, this first African-American U.S. president didn't just sweep the east and west coasts. He completely swept the entire Great Lakes industrial region, once called the Steel Belt, now known as the Rust Belt.

Even more remarkably, the Obama campaign bit off a piece of the Confederacy, along with part of the old West. I'm an autoworker from Ohio, home of Joe the Plumber. (If you're old enough to remember Watergate, you'll notice the Republicans have a thing for plumbers.) So I'd like to focus on that stunning victory in those Rust Belt states, where the Black population ranges from 15 percent in Illinois to 11 percent in Ohio, 9 percent in Indiana and a mere 2.5 percent in Iowa.

McCain and Palin made numerous visits to Ohio. They made a superstar of a plumber who dreamed he was going to get so many customers he'd be making \$250,000 a year, although he wasn't even a licensed plumber, and wasn't it awful that he would be put in a higher tax bracket than someone making minimum wage. Appealing to the petit-bourgeoisie and petit-bourgeois wannabe is a classic technique for building a right-wing base, but while this dangerous element should not be underestimated, neither should we underestimate the fact that they lost, and the shift in consciousness that that represents.

Looking at the map of my state, broken down by how each county voted, it's clear that Obama's support came from the whole industrial part; from Toledo to Youngstown and down into Akron and Canton. This is where the union members live, and the latest polls show six in 10, and in some states seven in 10, union



Martha Grevatt

WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

voters backed Obama. The real Joe the Plumber, Joe the Union Plumber, said no to racism. And in even higher numbers, Josephine the Union Plumber voted no on racism.

Sam was right. Class consciousness is moving forward. And it's a reflection of material conditions.

All the polls said the number one issue on workers' minds was the economy. Just look at the auto industry, where I've worked for the past 21 years. Union jobs and union wages have come under attack like never before. There are now only 200,000 workers in the whole country who work for the Big Three, and last year the United Auto Workers reluctantly agreed to major wage and benefit cuts.

Every day the papers have more bad news on the front page. Eight days ago GM announced that 3,600 hourly jobs would be cut, and three days later another 1,900 layoffs were announced. The day after that GM reported it had reached its target of cutting 3,500 salaried positions, so now it was going to cut another 3,500. The pattern is being replicated at Ford and Chrysler. The loss of jobs in Michigan and Ohio, the two states with the highest unemployment rates, has made them leaders in the home foreclosure crisis that triggered this general crisis of finance capital.

Now the Big Three bosses are begging for government aid; they've asked for \$25 billion of the \$700 billion earmarked for the banks. But the banks told them, "Oh no, you can't have any of that, that's our money." And GM is saying it will run out of money and won't even be able to make payroll after the first of the year. They say they don't have the money to put into the fund that was set up to relieve them of future obligations for retirees' health insurance, and they're protesting legislation that would force them to keep the pension funds at a certain level, because if they do that they won't have any money and will have to lay off more workers!

Some 780,000 UAW retirees, and huge numbers of non-union retirees, have a lot to fear. While all this crying was going on, GM opened a brand-new plant in Russia.

The UAW has jumped on the bandwagon of getting federal money to the auto companies. Given the alternatives it's understandable, but does the union really think that the companies will use that money to save jobs? Won't they just squander the fortunes we've created by continuing the restructuring that has devastated the economy already?

It's past time for the UAW to call for workers' control. If there is to be a bailout, let it be for us, the workers. Who dare say we're unqualified? In the 1920s Italian workers at Fiat and Alfa Romeo

Continued on page 10

# OBAMA National oppression & class struggle

By Monica Moorehead

This year marks the 140th anniversary of the birth of the great Black historian and Pan-Africanist, W.E.B. Du Bois. In his 1903 masterpiece book, "Souls of Black Folks," Du Bois wrote that "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color line," referring to racism and national oppression in the U.S. at a time when the majority of the Black masses were living in semislavery conditions in the South.

Sam Marcy, the chairperson of Workers World Party, having been born in Czarist Russia, once referred to as "the prison house of nations," wrote an article 80 years later called "The right to self-determination and the class struggle," which begins, "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."

These two great revolutionary thinkers of the 20th century came to the same conclusion: being correct on why and how to merge the struggles against racism and national oppression with the overall class struggle is the greatest challenge and obstacle facing all of the movements for social change inside the U.S.

It is important to understand the Obama presidency within its historical and political context.

Up until the Nov. 4 election, no one ever thought that they would ever see a Black president in the largest imperialist country in their lifetime. Barack Obama was the only Black U.S. senator before the elections and only the third elected in the last century. Now that he is president-elect, there are zero Black senators. While the Black population officially represents 13 percent of the U.S. population, only 9.5 percent of the House of Representatives is Black; that amounts to 42 representatives out of a total of 540.

These facts alone are enough reason for Black people here and other people of African descent worldwide to be overwhelmed with joy and pride that a Black man named Obama is the president-elect of the U.S. 250 plus years after George Washington—a slave owner—became the first president.

Putting aside Barack Obama's pro-Democratic Party orientation and the class interests he truly represents, political and economic equality under capitalism is still being systematically denied to Black people and other people of color, including the right to political representation. We can never take for granted that it took a bloody struggle in the South for Black people to win the basic right to vote, a right that rich white men were born with centuries before the 1965 Voting Rights Act was signed.

On the flip side, a big faction of the U.S. ruling class, many of whom are racist to the core, backed Obama for president out of fear for their decaying system. Some of these billionaire forces see Obama as a safe buffer between the tens of millions of people who voted for him—Black, Latin@, white, women, LGBT and the young—on one side, and their system that they are desperately trying to save—riddled with the unprecedented numbers of foreclosures, evictions, layoffs, budget cuts, close to 50 million people without health care, utility shutoffs as well as the rise in school tuition and food prices—on the other side. And what does the ruling class expect Obama to do for them?

They expect him to create a favorable



Monica Moorehead

WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

political atmosphere to carry out their plans of more cutbacks and assaults on top of the already devastating decline in living standards. An important decisive factor that led to Obama winning the presidency was that Bush and the Republicans became the face for the capitalist economic crisis and the extremely unpopular Iraq war.

What is not understood by the masses in general is that whoever occupies the White House, including Obama, their main job will be to administer the capitalist state—its military, all of its repressive institutions and last but not least, the multitrillion dollar federal budget.

The McCain-Palin supporters are well aware that the votes, especially of white workers suffering in economically depressed areas, were decisive in sending Obama to the White House, a fact which threatens the grip of white supremacy upon which this country was built.

The Obama victory helps to lay the basis for talking to the workers and oppressed about what's wrong with the entire capitalist system, including how racism has been used to scapegoat people of color for every ill in society.

We must continue to be in the streets to demand freedom for political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and the Cuban Five; to challenge the anti-poor, racist death penalty; to expose racist lynchings, including those in New York of Sean Bell by the police and more recently that of an Ecuadorian immigrant, Marcelo Lucero, by racist vigilante teenagers and the dragging death of Brandon McClelland in Paris, Texas; to fight against the terrorist ICE raids against our immigrant sisters and brothers and to support the right of return of Katrina and Rita survivors who are still internally displaced; and to come out against the assaults on women which threaten reproductive justice and the right to raise healthy children.

We must be in the streets opposing the attacks on LGBT communities, like the recent passage of Prop. 8 in California. We must fight against the attacks on our youth, opposing the mass incarcerations and exposing the lack of education and job opportunities. And we must continue to challenge the ongoing wars and occupations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine and the threats against Iran and other nations, whose connections to the war at home must be explained to the workers and oppressed.

Clear connections must be made between all these political attacks and the worsening economic, depression-like conditions, from the massive layoffs impacting all sectors of the economy to the foreclosures, skyrocketing health care costs and much more.

Monica Moorehead is editor of the book "Marxism, Reparations and the Black Freedom Struggle."

# Messages to WWP

## Economic crisis, elections are the big questions

By John Catalinotto  
New York

Some 25 workers' organizations, communists and anti-imperialist activists from four continents sent messages of solidarity to the Nov. 15-16 Workers World Party National Conference. It was no surprise that the main themes of the messages were the worldwide capitalist economic crisis, the U.S. presidential election and the prospect for deepening international collaboration.

The messages themselves further the discussion of these questions. To read beyond the short excerpts below, see [workersworld.net](http://workersworld.net) for the full statements.

From the **Communist Party of Cuba**: "In Cuba, after the terrible blows of powerful hurricanes, our government representatives went into the streets to work day and night with the people. That is why nobody feels abandoned. That is why there is hope, when in many other places in the world the word hope is only an illusion. Even before, the Cuban government spent valuable resources to save lives, which is indeed the most valuable thing.

"Thank you for your bravery, solidarity and unconditional support for Cuba and against the blockade, which was overwhelmingly rejected recently by the United Nations, and for the freedom of our five brothers, who from the coldness of an unjust imprisonment are teaching



John Catalinotto

WW PHOTO: GARY WILSON

us a real example of resistance, courage and patriotism."

From the Central Committee of the **Workers' Party of Korea**: "The struggle by the Workers' Party of Korea and the Korean people to build a great, powerful and prosperous nation and achieve Korea's national reunification is making headway, amid ever-escalating tension fueled by the U.S. imperialists and their underlings that pursue the policy of hostility against the DPRK.

"The persistence of the United States and South Korean war hawks in their policy of hostility and war against the DPRK has only forced the DPRK's hand to opt to further boost all of its war

*Continued on page 12*

## In the midst of biggest crisis

# Pushing the class struggle forward

Holmes- Continued from page 6

that only come with time. And that will be more and more the case with the rising of immigrant workers, not only Latin@ but also Asian.

In the midst of the deepening economic crisis that seems like it's headed toward a depression—as workers suffer—there will be a vacuum if there is no struggle, and we know who will try to step into that vacuum: the racists. The only way we can fight that is by prosecuting the class struggle and making sure it is what it needs to be in order to be effective. We have to begin sooner rather than later. Some of our friends on the left who don't understand the national question might run off and start attacking the government, antagonizing and alienating the Black working class and making a big mistake that will take months if not years to recover from.

Our problem is not the lack of a program of demands, of a strategy. Our comrades in Michigan and in California are fighting for a moratorium on foreclosures. We have been the organization that has raised that struggle up. There is no lack of an opening in the struggle.

Right now Secretary of Treasury Paulson is the one giving money out to the banks, not just \$750 billion but trillions of dollars. If Congress wants money for GM or whatever, they have to go visit the bankers. It's a bankers' coup. Why hasn't someone called a big demonstration?

Now, the FDIC is for taking \$24 billion and using it to renegotiate the mortgages of 1.5 million people who are facing foreclosures. And the bankers have said no. You can get into a struggle when there is an opening like that in the ruling class and the workers can rush in.

Even the minds of the ruling class itself are churning. On the one hand they'll be thinking, "We're not going to bail out the workers, we have to cut everything, we have to fire them all, we have to break the back of the unions, not bail them out, we have to cut all the wages and take everything else." But on the other hand they're thinking, "If workers don't have any money, all the levers of the economy are going to collapse, so we have to do something." They are thinking of New Deal-inspired works project programs to rebuild the infrastructure. So even before a struggle gets going, they are thinking of what they may have to do. So imagine if a struggle was going.

Our problem is the weakness of our movement. It's a sober, objective observation. A long period of reaction has had a devastating effect on the working class and revolutionary movements. Because of that our movement is not prepared to fight back. It may be, and it's not the first time in history, that the workers are more prepared to fight back than their leaders. We have to determine what it is as a party that we can do to help push things forward.

We cannot organize or unleash the struggle all by ourselves. But we can be a decisive factor. Revolutionaries have an edge. Our view is not obscured by confusion or by just being concerned about one or two issues or by being mad at somebody over something that happened 10 years ago. Nothing obscures our vision.

We cannot help this struggle that will advance the working class, its consciousness, its political level, its leadership, and put it on the road to the struggle for power unless we are stronger. Our party must take this problem and find solutions to it. We need more cadres. We need to call on all of those who want to fight capitalism, who want to enter on the socialist road but understand that that's not an abstraction

but has to do with uniting with the working class—that's what makes you stronger as revolutionary socialists and that's what makes revolutionary socialism stronger.

An understanding of the national question and imperialism, of getting the struggle going in a qualitative way here against this attack, in the midst of this economic crisis, in the end is the best way that we can show solidarity with all the oppressed people in the world who are fighting for their liberation. We can weaken imperialism at its heart.

The next period may very well be a period of preparation and not a period of huge struggle and victory, although not necessarily. It seems like the next six months will be the first test of what the working class and its allies, including ourselves, are able to do. Consider what you can do around Martin Luther King's 80th birthday. He died fighting in Memphis for workers.

A few months from now is May Day. The immigrants brought it back. Because of the crisis this is the first year where there may actually be a time for the rest of the working class—white, Black, every nationality and gender—to join the immigrant workers in a united May Day, maybe even a united May month.

There are going to be anti-war demonstrations on the sixth anniversary of the war. We need an influx of creative and imaginative ideas that we can use to go and argue with all the coalitions to unite the demonstrations with the workers' struggle at home. This would raise the level of the struggle.

We must act as socialists and communists with great discipline, great sobriety and clear thinking so that we can accomplish the things we need to do. If we do this in the short term, the chances of the fightback advancing with all its repercussions are excellent. It's really up to us. □

## A class-wide movement

Grevatt- continued from page 9

took over the plants, and they made cars without bosses. Even as we speak, workers in Venezuela are taking over plants and running them.

Only by building class solidarity can the working class hope to save itself from further destruction. White workers must do more than vote for a Black president in the privacy of the voting booth. They must be prepared, on the job and in the communities, to defend workers of color from the racist backlash that has already begun, and to unite as a class against the daily attacks on their living standards and livelihoods.

And it's literally every day that some new affront to our class takes place. The latest was that Chrysler executives would receive their so-called retention bonuses as scheduled, anywhere from \$200,000 to \$1.7 million. The excuse is—can you believe it—it's in their contract! They cut jobs right and left, violating even the concessionary 2007 contract with the UAW, but the bosses must get theirs, because it's in their contract!

These crooks are unfit to run the plants. There should not only be no retention bonuses, there should be no retention at all! As Sam also pointed out, the development of the productive forces has made the private owners of the means of production "wholly unnecessary."

The old union song said it right, dump the bosses off your backs! □

## Obama, capitalist economic crisis

# WWP conference focuses on new situation

Moorehead- continued from page 5

Abayomi Azikiwe, editor of Pan-African News Wire from Detroit, highlighted the ongoing economic, political and military oppression of Africa by imperialism and explained why the U.S. movement must extend a hand of solidarity to African workers and peasants.

Joyce Chediak, a Lebanese activist and writer in New York, reviewed the reactions of various political forces in the Middle East to the Obama victory and said that the liberation struggle will continue in the region no matter who is in the White House.

Berta Joubert-Ceci, a Mundo Obrero editor from Philadelphia, reported on revolutionary developments in Latin America and the Caribbean, especially the struggle of people of African descent and the Indigenous in Colombia.

David Hoskins, a FIST member and trade union organizer in Washington, D.C., described the armed struggle that overturned the feudal monarchy in Nepal and the socialist process that is beginning there.

### Tasks of a revolutionary party

Gloria Verdieu, an IAC organizer and Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition leader from San Diego, chaired the plenary session on the challenges facing a revolutionary party and gave a firsthand report on the superiority of the health care system in Cuba based on her own experience when she was hospitalized there.

Deirdre Griswold, a WWP Secretariat member and Workers World editor, talked about the opportunities opened up for imperialist exploitation by the collapse of

the USSR and Eastern Europe and how this delayed, but could not prevent, the current resurgence of class consciousness. She pointed out how Goldstein's new book, "Low-Wage Capitalism," builds on the Marxist analysis of these questions developed by Sam Marcy's books "High Tech, Low Pay" and "Perestroika."

Larry Hales, a Workers World contributing editor in New York, spoke on why a party must win youth to its ranks with a correct ideology.

Gloria Rubac, a leader of the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement in Texas, and Mike Martinez, a FIST organizer from Miami and member of the Mundo Obrero staff, urged serious attention to the Workers World Party's fall fund drive and the need for deepening the influence of its revolutionary newspaper, respectively.

Steve Kirschbaum, a founding member of the United Steelworkers Local 8751 school bus drivers' union in Boston, explained the role of communist trade unionists in the struggle against racism.

John Catalinotto, a Workers World managing editor, informed the conference about the WWP's fraternal relations with global movements.

The conference ended with a summation by Larry Holmes and the singing of the International, followed by spoken-word selections by Miya Campbell and Mike Martinez. Philadelphia hip-hop artist, Tha Truth, and his partner, Colleen, also performed during the conference.

WW will be publishing excerpts from the plenary talks in the coming weeks. Go to [www.workersworld.net](http://www.workersworld.net) to see video podcasts of the talks.

## Artificial stimulus fails to reverse global contraction

*Goldstein-Continued from page 6*

create jobs. This has become a long-term trend and signifies a new phase in the general crisis of capitalism.

Historically a capitalist recovery begins slowly as inventories are liquidated and then surges until there is another bust. Engels described the process of the classical capital bust-boom-bust cycle in his great work, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific."

His description still holds today, but with this modification. In the past several decades, the boom part of the cycle has become weaker and weaker. And it is this phase that creates a labor shortage, providing workers with jobs and putting them in a stronger position to bargain for higher wages.

The debt-fueled housing boom is an example of how U.S. capitalism has reached a stage of dependence upon debt to artificially stimulate the economy. The recovery from the last recession was a jobless recovery. From 2001 to 2004, after the dot-com collapse, profits were slowly recovering but jobs were still being lost. To pump up the economy and avoid a "double dip," a lapse into a second recession, the Federal Reserve pumped billions of dollars of credit into the system by lowering borrowing costs for the banks. Much of the cheap money was used to finance the housing boom.

A housing boom is one of those areas, similar to auto, that ripples through the economy and multiplies jobs. It can help temporarily to push back a downturn. But the housing boom was all based on easy credit and speculation. It was bound to end. The price of housing went up. The supply went up. Soon there were more houses on the market than could be sold. A crisis of overproduction in housing ensued and the collapse followed, precipitating the credit crisis and the banking crisis that followed.

Without the housing boom, the economic crisis of overproduction might have come sooner.

If the present crisis were caused by financial manipulation alone, it could be cured by financial measures. But the Treasury under Secretary Henry Paulson and the Federal Reserve under Ben Bernanke have poured hundreds of billions into U.S. banks and are promising hundreds of billions more.

The German central bank has poured billions into their economy. The Bank of London has nationalized banks and also poured in hundreds of billions in bailout

money. None of this has stopped the growing momentum of layoffs and short hours.

Why? Because this crisis is a crisis of overproduction. Bernanke can lower the interest rate to zero—Japan may do just that shortly. But even zero interest rates cannot produce lending if the workers are broke and there are no profits to be made in the marketplace. As they say on Wall Street, you can't push a string.

Why would banks lend in an environment of economic crisis? It is not lack of funds or a matter of distrust that is keeping them from lending. Layoffs lead to lower spending which leads to lower profits and more layoffs. That is the classical capitalist cycle, but now it is gripping the entire capitalist world at once. There are no markets that are not shrinking. There is no haven in the world capitalist economy for investment and sales sufficient to pull them out of the crisis.

This is what globalization looks like in a period of contraction.

No one knows where this crisis is going. The Obama administration and the new regime of financial advisors may take measures to ease the foreclosure crisis and put some money into workers' pockets. They may even try to create jobs building infrastructure. Of course, as a party, we support measures that will ease the suffering of the workers and the oppressed. But we also know that band-aids cannot overcome the contradictions of capitalism.

The beginning of a capitalist downturn hits the workers hard. The early phase of the struggle is defensive, to ward off the onslaught of layoffs and keep people in their homes. This was the course that the struggle took during the depression of the 1930s with the formation of the unemployed councils, and the move by working-class organizations to put hundreds of thousands of families back in their homes when they were evicted.

Our comrades in Detroit, Los Angeles, Boston and around the country are taking the initiative to begin those defensive struggles.

Later in the thirties came an offensive struggle with general strikes in San Francisco, Toledo and Minneapolis in 1934 and finally the great sit-down strikes of 1936 and 1937, which turned the tide in favor of the working class as a whole. We must be clear about what phase we are in, while retaining our revolutionary socialist perspective.

When the USSR and Eastern Europe collapsed, WWP chair Sam Marcy initiated a process of ideological rearmament—a study of Marxist and Leninist theory—in the anticipation that there would be a wholesale retreat from the revolutionary communist perspective.

From that period up until the onset of the present crisis, we have had to wage theoretical arguments to defend our position that the system of private property, in which a tiny group of millionaires and billionaires controls the means of life for billions of people around the globe, contains the seeds of crisis and disaster for the worldwide working class and the oppressed. With this current crisis, the question is no longer theoretical. The world capitalist crisis opens the door to struggle and to promoting socialism as the answer.

The workers need to own this vast, global system of production that they operate 24 hours a day and run society for human need and not for profit. This is the only way to abolish exploitation, racism, national oppression, sexism and patriarchy, oppression of LGBT people, imperialist war and intervention, and to tear down the walls of the prisons and their death houses. □

## The immigrant struggle, the economy and May Day 2009

*Gutierrez- continued from page 7*

They need a May Day that demands a bailout of the people, not the banks. They need a May Day that demands an end to the crises workers are facing here AND around the world. It cannot be limited to a moratorium on the Gestapo-like raids that have swept this country, as horrible as they are. Of course we need to stop the raids, but what will guarantee an end to the raids is solidarity among all workers fighting on their behalf.

And immigrants need the unions to get behind May Day, not by pushing aside the May Day coalitions but in solidarity with them, mobilizing the union members and providing badly need funds to do the work.

It has been hard to organize that kind of movement in the last two years. Not because good intentions were lacking. But good intentions can only take you so far.

Many of the limitations have been understandable. How can you join a demonstration that looks like it's mainly for immigrants if you still cannot return home to the Gulf Coast or if you are still living in a temporary trailer in Louisiana?

How can you not emphasize immigrant rights when immigrants are so targeted?

Many in the immigrant rights movement, including ourselves, attempted to broaden and connect the struggles.

## The housing crisis and a fight-back program

*Goldberg- continued from page 7*

and now run to Congress with the executives of the auto companies to beg for a bailout for the corporations.

The issue isn't whether GM, Ford and Chrysler will survive, especially if they continue to dismantle the auto industry. It's the workers' property rights to their jobs and pensions and benefits that matter. It's the workers and the communities they live in that should be given money by Congress to keep the plants running, and producing cars and transportation that people need, under workers' control.

We are not social democrats trying to cut deals with the banks to ease the foreclosure epidemic. Our program is that everyone has a right to housing. There must be a moratorium on foreclosures and evictions to keep people in their homes and stop the destruction of our communities by the racist, predatory banks. People should be making reasonable payments based on their ability to pay, not on fraudulent and usurious loans by the financial robbers. The billions being given to the mortgage companies to bail out their failing loans should be used instead to train youth as plumbers and electricians and carpenters, in a city like Detroit, to repair the 18 percent of homes that are vacant due to foreclosures and to turn these houses over to the homeless.

When a hospital or health clinic threatens a shutdown, we are for the community occupying the facility and keeping it open alongside doctors and nurses committed to serving the people. That's what the Young Lords did in the 1960s. That's

**Correction:** An article on campus cutbacks in the issue of Workers World dated Nov. 13, in a sentence on budget cuts in Pennsylvania, should have read: "Pennsylvania will be cutting \$15 million from its \$338 million appropriation for Penn State University." □

It was hard. But the conditions have changed and today there is a potential for connecting and uniting the struggles as never before.

How wonderful it was to see so many white people, especially youth, take much more of a progressive position. They understood the victory of the first Black president.

U.S. imperialism does indeed have a new look. We applaud along with the masses the fact that the first family is Black. But what a contradiction for us! Our passion is deep with hatred against imperialism. But so is our passion deep with love and solidarity for the workers and the oppressed.

This is why it is a great time to be a Marxist and most important a Leninist. Because Marxist/Leninists can explain these contradictions and show that defending self-determination for the oppressed is in the interests of white workers as well.

We can build a better, stronger and more revolutionary May Day because our class has grown, matured and become more globalized.

Let us go forward to build the class struggle. A door has been opened after decades of reaction. Communists should rush forward and open it even wider.

Long Live May Day! Long live the struggle of the working class and the oppressed! Build a Workers World! □

how universal health care will start becoming a reality—not through some incoherent plan that recognizes rights for insurance companies that are nothing but parasites.

We know where the funds are for a public works program. Just take the \$700 billion from the bailout to the banks, and dismantle the Pentagon for another \$700 billion. The problem with Iraq wasn't that it was the wrong war. Every imperialist war is the wrong war because capitalism and imperialism are the wrong system.

It is precisely because we are communists dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist system that we are in a unique position to craft the kind of programmatic demands to meet this crisis and challenge the fundamental capitalist property rights at the core of this system.

It was one year ago, at last year's party conference, that we first raised the idea of a campaign for a moratorium on foreclosures. I am proud to say that over the past year, based on advancing that program and sticking with it, we were able to build a mass organization and coalition in Detroit that has gained recognition as the leading force in fighting the foreclosure epidemic and the entire economic crisis in our hard-hit city. □

**DAY of MOURNING**  
**NOV. 27**

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

## Youth are for real change

*Dowell- continued from page 8*

capitalist government, history has shown that, especially in times of crisis, capitalist governments will always seek to erode demands in the form of social services and that the capitalist class will always seek to take away gains won against them and increase exploitation. These demands are a platform for struggle, but can ultimately be protected from bourgeois reaction by overthrowing bourgeois society for a socialist future."

I think the idea of reaching out to energetic young people is exciting. I was at the celebration in Harlem on election night and one of the things that was sung and chanted was "We did it." Like for once, the people could claim a victory that their efforts had provoked. I think we can channel that energy, say, "Okay, we did this, but we've got to keep on to win what we need to survive and thrive."

We've got big tasks ahead of us, comrades and friends, so let's take this weekend to steel ourselves for the challenge. □

# M★NDO OBRERO

¡Proletarios y oprimidos de todos los países, uníos!

EDITORIAL:

## China y el estímulo

China se ha vuelto vulnerable a las tendencias del sistema capitalista mundial desde que permitió que coexistieran los mecanismos del mercado al lado de las empresas estatales. Eso pareció muy deseable cuando las economías del mundo capitalista estuvieron expandiéndose rápidamente. China sostuvo una expansión económica de dos dígitos año tras año. Permitiendo las inversiones en compañías que exportaban todo desde electrodomésticos hasta ropa, China se convirtió en la cuarta economía más grande del mundo. También sostuvo un balance tan favorable de intercambio mercantil con los EEUU que hoy China tiene \$1,2 billones en reservas de su moneda.

Ahora que el mercado para los productos exportados por China está en declive, China está experimentando quiebras y enormes pérdidas de empleos — igual que los países capitalistas. El crecimiento económico de China ha disminuido rápidamente, cayendo de 12,6 por ciento en el segundo cuatrimestre del 2007, a cerca del 9 por ciento en el tercer cuatrimestre de este año.

Sin embargo, China es diferente porque experimentó una gran revolución contra la opresión de los terratenientes y contra la dominación imperialista que resultó en los esfuerzos de las masas por construir el socialismo. Aunque el retroceso hacia el mercado comenzó ya hace 30 años, el papel del estado en la economía es todavía una fuerza importante. Y el estado, a diferencia de tantos en el mundo hoy en día, todavía tiene mucho dinero disponible.

Así que no sorprende el que China haya ofrecido un plan de estímulo para su economía que es muy, muy diferente al de los Estados Unidos y Europa. No está regalando miles de millones de dólares para ayudar a los bancos y a las compañías aseguradoras.

En cambio, bajo su plan, China gastará \$586 miles de millones en los próximos dos años “para financiar programas en diez áreas importantes tales como viviendas a bajo costo, infraestructura rural, agua, electricidad, transporte, medio ambiente, innovación tecnológica y en reconstrucción luego de varios desastres naturales, como lo fue el terremoto del 12 de mayo.” (Xinhua, 10 de noviembre)

L@s ecologistas en China ven esta época como ideal para aumentar los esfuerzos para reducir las emisiones de gas que producen los efectos de invernadero. Algunos de los miles de millones de dólares estarán dirigidos a desarrollar el transporte público — especialmente los trenes y los subterráneos.

La Asociación Americana de Ingenieros Civiles estimó en marzo que Estados Unidos necesita \$1,6 billones en los próximos cinco años para restaurar la infraestructura deteriorada de este país, incluyendo la reparación de carreteras, puentes, sistemas de agua potable, parques públicos, trenes y la red de energía eléctrica. El presupuesto que debate el Congreso este año cubre menos de una quinta parte de lo que se necesita.

Si China puede construir viviendas públicas y trenes subterráneos, y puede poner al día su sistema eléctrico, ¿por qué no lo puede hacer Estados Unidos? Millones de empleos podrían ser creados para parcialmente compensar por la crisis de desempleo que se avecina. Pero requerirá un movimiento masivo y militante para forzar este sistema político dirigido por los bancos, a que cambie sus prioridades aunque sea por un sólo centavo. □

## Las elecciones del 2008 y las posibilidades de lucha

A continuación presentamos una declaración publicada por el grupo juvenil *Combatamos el Imperialismo, Luchemos Juntos*, (FIST, por sus siglas en inglés) [Visitefistyouth.org](http://Visitefistyouth.org).

4 de noviembre—La elección del Senador Barack Obama como el primer presidente negro de los Estados Unidos, es histórica. No hay cinismo que pueda borrar este hecho.

Aún más histórico fueron las grandes concentraciones de personas que hicieron fila frente a iglesias, bares, centros comunitarios, oficinas de sindicatos y hogares. En Chicago, cientos de miles llenaron el parque Grant. En Harlem, N.Y. miles vitoreaban frente a una gran pantalla de televisión al ver los resultados. Después de que fue anunciada la victoria, la multitud estalló en aplausos y vitoreo. So oían las bocinas de los carros, los niños corrían y gritaban, “¡Tenemos un presidente negro! ¡Lo merecemos! ¡Lo merecemos!”

Y de hecho, luego de cientos de años de opresión—desde cuando l@s primer@s esclav@s fueron traíd@s a las costas de América del Norte encadenad@s después de haber sobrevivido lo que debió haberse sentido como un tiempo interminable, hacinad@s como carga en los barcos, después de haber visto como tiraban por la borda a otr@s african@s, cuyos cuerpos todavía cubren las aguas del Atlántico—las masas oprimidas negras se merecen un presidente negro.

Después de años de opresión y represión— de esclavitud en la práctica, apartheid, linchamientos, asesinatos de líderes, pobreza y exclusión, hasta el estado actual de racismo y represión—y a solo tres años del Huracán Katrina, esta victoria simbólica y las lágrimas de gozo y alivio, las sonrisas y las exclamaciones del pueblo negro, joven y viejo, no puede negarse o descartarse.

¿Cómo deben interpretar l@s revolucionari@s y l@s antiimperialistas el fenómeno de Obama y los logros del Partido Demócrata en el Congreso?

Es el deber de l@s revolucionari@s marxistas analizar cualquier levantamiento de l@s oprimid@s y l@s trabajador@s. Fue Federico Engels, compañero de Karl Marx y co-escritor del “Manifiesto Comunista,” quien escribió que el sufragio universal es “la medida de madurez de la clase obrera. No puede y nunca podrá ser más de eso en el estado actual.”

La realidad es que el fenómeno Obama y los logros del Partido Demócrata están aprisionados por dos conjuntos contradictorios de expectativas—las de la clase capitalista gobernante, imperialista y las de las masas populares oprimidas negras, de las otras naciones oprimidas y de la clase trabajadora en general.

Las masa trabajadora y oprimida quiere el fin de la guerra en Irak; empleos con salarios justos; cuidado de

salud; viviendas, incluyendo una moratoria en las retomas y desalojos; acceso a la educación; fin de las redadas y deportaciones; y que se termine la brutalidad policial, la ocupación policial de las comunidades oprimidas y el encarcelamiento de los jóvenes oprimidos en el complejo industrial de prisiones.

La clase dominante de los EEUU necesita una imagen más suave alrededor del mundo después de ocho años de reacción de la derecha. Su expectativa es una de rescates corporativos, acceso más barato a los recursos y más mercados.

El imperialismo de los EEUU no ha cambiado. ¿Qué importa si un apretón de manos y una sonrisa preceden la cuchillada por la espalda? Eso es lo que ofrecen l@s Demócratas.

La historia, sin embargo, pertenece a las masas y son las demandas de las masas las que van a comprobarse como más fuertes. Aunque algun@s en el Partido Demócrata pueden haber tenido la intención de que las palabras “cambio” y “esperanza” fueran consignas huecas, sin contenido, las expectativas de las masas son de que esas palabras tengan sustancia.

La crisis económica se va a profundizar. El mercado de viviendas está saturado, al igual que el mercado de automóviles, y ya ha habido un declive en el sector de la construcción lo que ha resultado en despidos masivos. La crisis crediticia y la disminución de gastos por l@s consumidor@s han resultado en más despidos. Todos los sectores alrededor del mundo están siendo golpeados y las bolsas de valores siguen oscilando. Puede ser que la situación empeore. La crisis capitalista puede eclipsar a la Gran Depresión y resultar en una crisis generalizada de sobreproducción.

Para l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s, esto significa más miseria. Para l@s antiimperialistas y revolucionari@s, esto representa grandes oportunidades para ejercer una influencia más amplia e impulsar la lucha hacia un nivel más alto. Podemos explicar lo que es el imperialismo y demostrar solidaridad a nuestra clase a nivel mundial—desde Harlem hasta Irak y desde Palestina y Afganistán hasta África, Latinoamérica y Asia; para demostrarle a l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s en los EEUU todo lo que tienen en común con l@s trabajador@s y oprimid@s alrededor del mundo y elevar las demandas de l@s trabajadore@s.

La lucha vendrá y las millones de personas que salieron a las calles en celebración de ese evento histórico, y las millones de personas más que lo vieron con alegría no van a desaparecer, sino que saldrán a las calles al empeorar las condiciones.

Mientras la crisis capitalista se profundiza, mejoran las perspectivas para la lucha y por el socialismo. □

## Messages to WWP

### Economic crisis, elections are the big questions

Catalinotto- continued from page 10  
deterrence.

“The Workers’ Party of Korea stands consistent in its commitment to the ‘denuclearization’ of the whole Korean Peninsula, peace and reunification of the Peninsula.

“We will continue working hard to open up a new era of independent reunification, peace and prosperity through the united efforts of the whole Korean nation.

“We would like to take this opportunity to express our profound gratitude to your Party for your precious support and encouragement to the WPK and the Korean people.”

From the Philippines: “The **National Democratic Front of the Philippines** and its 17 allied revolutionary organizations convey warmest and militant greetings of solidarity to the organizers and all the participants of the Workers World Party Conference.

“The revolutionary movement in the Philippines is determined to continue its struggle for national and social liberation against U.S. imperialism and the local

reactionaries presently headed by the fascist, U.S.-backed Arroyo regime. We call on the American people to stand in solidarity with us in our just struggles, just as the Filipino people stand in solidarity with the American people in their struggle against U.S. imperialism.”

From **Colombia**, the food and food service workers organized in **Sinaltrainal** describe the current situation: “A great labor strike of the sugar cane cutters and an immense mobilization of the Indigenous peoples are developing in our Colombia, as a response to the policy of the government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez that day to day impoverishes more and more the vast majority of the people for the benefit of the financial system and the transnational companies, many of them with their headquarters in the United States.

“The immense solidarity of the peoples of the United States and especially yours, dear comrades, has strengthened us and allows us to continue living.”

Next week: More solidarity messages with questions on the economic crisis and the U.S. elections.



Fernando González, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández y René González.