

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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If this is a recovery . . . Where are the jobs?

By Fred Goldstein

Capitalist economists, experts and stock market gamblers cannot make up their minds as to whether or not there is a "recovery."

For workers who are losing their jobs, their homes, their health care, their wages and are deeply in debt, there is no ambiguity. There is no recovery.

However, at the slightest hint of less-bad news—news that is not as bad as the news from the period before—the well-paid experts are quick to declare that a recovery is in sight.

For example, on July 31 the government announced that the economy had declined by "only" 1 percent in the second quarter, compared to 6.4 percent in the first quarter of 2009. On Aug. 6, a week later, it announced that "only" 247,000 workers lost their jobs in July and that unemployment declined—from 9.5 percent to 9.4 percent.

It turned out that, in addition, 422,000 workers had dropped out of the workforce and were not being counted. So the unemployment rate would actually have gone UP to 9.7 percent if the discouraged workers had been counted as part of the workforce.

It certainly does not take much to encourage capitalist experts who are desperately in search of optimism. After all, optimism makes stocks go up. So they paid scant attention to this little "discrepancy."

On Aug. 10, more good news. French and German capitalism had slight growth after long periods of economic downturn. This was followed two days later by the announcement that Japan had slight growth, too, after a long and drastic economic contraction.

Ben Bernanke, head of the Federal Reserve System, pronounced light at the end of the tunnel: the recovery was on the horizon in the second half of the year.

Business was supposed to be picking up. The economists could almost taste the recovery.

False promise of 'good news'

But then, on Aug. 13, came news that retail sales had fallen—even at Wal-Mart, Kohl's and other giant stores that sell to the workers. On Aug. 14, the highly re-

garded University of Michigan report on consumer confidence showed a sharp drop; a rise had been expected. U.S. stock markets fell, followed by a sharp drop in Asia and then a further decline back in the U.S.

Credit card defaults, foreclosures and layoffs are all on the rise. Close to 30 million workers are either unemployed or underemployed and the number keeps rising. Personal bankruptcies are on the rise.

How can sales do anything else but drop? The masses have little to no money. Whatever they have is being hoarded to pay off debts, get their children through school, pay for medical care, or just hold on to basic survival.

This is why more than 100 banks have failed since the crisis began. This year 77 U.S. banks have gone under. Another 300 are on the watch list of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). Five banks failed just in the week of Aug. 10-14 alone.

Capitalism's new and dangerous stage

This back-and-forth about recovery, no recovery, weak recovery, etc., goes on in the face of an unabated increase in suffering, hardship and poverty among the workers and oppressed.

Here is the contradiction.

Capitalism is traditionally not supposed to work this way. The way it is supposed to work is this: When there is an economic crisis, there is a crisis for the workers. When there is an economic recovery, there is a recovery for the workers. A downturn brings bad times. A recovery brings better times.

But what happens if there is a business recovery and it is still a crisis for the workers? Clearly capitalism is in a new and dangerous stage as far as the workers are concerned.

Not one of these experts knows if there is going to be any sort of capitalist recovery of business or if, instead, the whole economy is going to collapse once the stimulus money runs out here and in Europe and Japan—or perhaps before that.

But if they manage to engineer a recovery for the bosses and bankers by handing them trillions of dollars in bailout funds taken from the workers, the real long-

term structural crisis of the system will become apparent—a growing era of jobless recovery.

Mark Zandi, the chief economist at Moody's Economy.com, put it this way: "We're going from recession to recovery, but at least early on, it's not going to feel like one." (New York Times, Aug. 1) The threat of double-digit unemployment looms and wages are declining despite the pickup in the stock market and an uptick in corporate profits.

Jobless recovery a global problem

Workers need to pay close attention to the talk of "recovery." It clearly does not include them.

For example, reading the paragraphs buried in the announcements of revival in Europe and Japan is enlightening. After

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Troy Davis in 1991.

'Whose factory? Our factory!' Stella D'Oro workers continue fight



Aug. 15 rally at Stella D'Oro factory in Bronx, N.Y. See page 5.

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The Mellons Keeping Pittsburgh poor

This week ...



By Stephen Millies

Pittsburgh made the Mellons rich. The city was hell for workers.

A 12-hour day was standard in the steel mills.

Five hundred twenty-six workers were killed on the job in Allegheny County, which includes Pittsburgh, between July 1, 1906, and June 30, 1907.

Sixty percent of women workers earned less than \$7 per week, according to the "Pittsburgh Survey," a pioneering sociological study.

Pittsburgh had the highest death rate from typhoid fever in the country, since the water wasn't even filtrated until 1907. Children suffered the worst. Between 1900 and 1907, an average of 226 out of 1,000 babies died before their first birthday.

This misery mattered to the Mellons about as much as the Johnstown, Pa., flood did.

Henry Clay Frick established the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club for Pittsburgh's wealthy elite, including steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie. Frick's friend Andrew Mellon was one of the first members.

On May 31, 1889, the club's poorly maintained dam broke, pouring out 20 million tons of water that would kill 2,209 people in Johnstown. It conveniently put out of action the Cambria Iron and Steel works, Carnegie's biggest competitor, for more than a year.

Bighearted Andy Mellon gave \$1,000—45 cents per victim—in chump change to the relief fund.

In those "good old days" before successful lawsuits, legal cases against the South Fork Fishing and Hunting Club were thrown out of court. Club member and Mellon family lawyer Philander Knox successfully claimed the Johnstown flood was an "act of God."

Knox collected his reward by being selected to be a U.S. senator, attorney general and secretary of state. After Panama was stolen to build a canal, Attorney General Knox advised President Teddy Roosevelt, "Do not let so great an achievement suffer from any taint of legality."

Summoning Black labor to Pittsburgh

The "Great Migration" of African Americans from the South to Pittsburgh started during World War I. The Pittsburgh Courier became one of the most influential Black newspapers in the country.

By August 1917 there were 4,000 Black workers in the U.S. Steel plants around Pittsburgh. Jones and Laughlin Steel employed 1,400 African Americans. A generation later, in 1944, there were 11,500 Black workers in the area's steel mills.

The dirty and dangerous jobs that African Americans held often gave them a chokehold on production. Steel mills need coke, and apartheid in steel had reserved coke ovens for Black workers.

African Americans at U.S. Steel's Clairton, Pa., works carried out a series of strikes against discrimination between December 1943 and February 1944. They threatened to idle nearly 30,000 employees by cutting off coke and coal gas.

African-American communist Ben Careathers signed up 2,000 Black workers at J&L in the late 1930s.

In 1943, 450 Black workers at J&L's Aliquippa plant went on strike after the company refused to upgrade two



Pittsburgh steel worker.

African Americans. The same year 28 Black firemen at J&L's South Side Works in Pittsburgh—incensed that white counterparts were earning 11 cents more per hour—shut down the power plant and idled 11,000 workers.

Millions of Black sharecroppers never had the power that thousands of Black steel workers were using against the mightiest corporations in the land.

Urban removal

The Mellons didn't like this power. Pittsburgh had the worst anti-communist witch hunt.

Ben Careathers and fellow Communist Party members were framed in both state and federal courts on thought-control charges. Steve Nelson, who fought in Spain against fascists, spent two years in jail.

In 1940 the Census counted 90,060 Black people in Allegheny County. Ohio's Cuyahoga County, which includes Cleveland, had 87,145 African Americans.

By 1970 the Black population in Cuyahoga County had increased more than four times to 351,574. African Americans in Allegheny County saw their numbers increase by only 67 percent, to 150,118.

Why the difference in these two industrial areas just 130 miles apart? No other Black community in a major Northern metropolitan area grew more slowly than Pittsburgh's. No other metropolitan area is under the thumb of one billionaire family—the Mellons.

"We have saved this city from becoming a Camden or a Gary," bragged John P. Robin in 1980. The head of the local urban removal authority was actually claiming he prevented Pittsburgh from becoming a Black and Latino/a majority city.

"The philanthropist Richard King Mellon" was described by the New York Times (May 13, 2000) as having led this urban removal campaign, dubbed "Renaissance I." In the Lower Hill District 1,500 Black families were driven out so an arena and luxury apartments could be built.

One result of this relatively smaller Black community was Local 1199 being thrown back when it tried to organize Pittsburgh's hospitals in 1970. John Black, a founding member of Workers World Party who died in 2006, was one of the organizers. Even today health-care workers' wages in Pittsburgh are among the lowest in the country.

Source: "Out of the Crucible, Black Steelworkers in Western Pennsylvania, 1875-1980," by Dennis C. Dickerson

Next week: War crimes of Gulf Oil

PART 3

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Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latin@, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students.

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Sept. 20 Pittsburgh

March for jobs right on time

By Steven Ceci
Pittsburgh

On Sunday, Sept. 20, a National March for Jobs will step off from the historic Hill District in Pittsburgh, declaring that the unemployed, the homeless, the hungry and the poor must no longer be invisible and silent. The march is set for just prior to a summit of the G-20, the Group of Twenty finance ministers and central bank governors, being held in Pittsburgh Sept. 24-25.

This is particularly urgent for young workers, as highlighted by New York Times columnist Bob Herbert on Aug. 10. Herbert wrote: "Two issues that absolutely undermine any rosy assessment of last week's employment report are the swelling ranks of the long-term unemployed and the crushing levels of joblessness among young Americans. ... The plight of young workers, especially young men, is particularly frightening. The percentage of young American men who are actually working is the lowest it has been in the 61 years of record-keeping, according to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston.

"Only 65 of every 100 men aged 20 through 24 years old were working on any given day in the first six months of this year. ... For male teenagers, the numbers were disastrous: only 28 of every 100 males were employed in the 16- through 19-year-old age group. For minority teenagers, forget about it. The numbers are beyond scary; they're catastrophic."

John Smith, a 21-year-old unemployed Black resident of the Hill District, is typical of many young people. Smith told an organizer for the Sept. 20 March for Jobs: "It's hard out here. People can't take care of their responsibilities. There are no jobs; we need a march for jobs because it could bring change."

Another unemployed Black youth from the Hill District, 17-year-old Shardaya Brown, said: "The job situation is poor and I don't see things getting better. I think we need to demand jobs, but I don't know what's going to happen. Because people can't find work there is more crime and I don't feel safe."

Herbert called the 0.1 percent unemployment drop in July "wildly deceptive," because the decline was "not because more people found jobs, but because 450,000 people withdrew from the labor market. They stopped looking, so they weren't counted as unemployed."

Larry Hales, youth organizer for the Bail Out the People Movement, said: "Young workers, in particular youth of color, are demanding meaningful jobs and education, not jail or the military. The 'free market-ers' disrupting health-care town halls hide their anti-worker economic policies that increase poverty and unemployment." □

Stopping foreclosures and evictions

Gov't programs not helping homeowners, renters

By Jerry Goldberg

On Aug. 4 the U.S. Department of Treasury released its "servicer performance report" detailing the number of homeowners who have benefited from the federal Making Home Affordable Modification Program—also known as the Home Affordable Modification Program or HAMP—launched in March.

The HAMP, initiated by the Treasury pursuant to the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act (the federal bank-bailout bill), is the primary federal program aimed at helping homeowners facing foreclosures. It provides for loan modifications so that a homeowner's mortgage payments, including taxes and insurance, are set at 31 percent of gross income for five years, with interest rates reduced to as low as 2 percent based on a 40-year amortization of the loan.

The Treasury reported that thus far only 235,247 trial loan modifications have been offered under the program. The report noted that this constituted 9 percent of eligible homeowners. However, the financialstability.gov Web site actually states that 7 to 9 million homeowners should be benefiting from the program, so the

Labor support for unemployed march in Pittsburgh grows

The following resolution was adopted by delegates of the San Francisco Labor Council on Aug. 10. Similar resolutions were also adopted by the International Longshore Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board on Aug. 11 and by the Golden Gate Branch #214, National Association of Letter Carriers on Aug. 5 in support of the March for Jobs and Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed—Pittsburgh, Sept. 20-26:

SFLC San Francisco Labor Council

1188 Franklin St., Suite 203, San Francisco, CA 94109 • Phone: (415) 440-4809 • Fax: (415) 440-9297 • www.sflaborcouncil.org



Resolution in Support of the March for Jobs & Global week in Solidarity with the Unemployed—Pittsburgh, Sept. 20-26, 2009

Whereas, there is no recovery in sight from the current economic crisis, although government measures have enabled Wall Street to pocket hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars, still unemployment, foreclosures and poverty continue to soar; and

Whereas, in September the eyes of the world will be on Pittsburgh, where the G-20 countries will meet on what to do about the global crisis, and this will be an excellent opportunity for labor and its allies to present OUR workers' recovery agenda; and

Whereas, while the G-20 meets in Pittsburgh, a Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed will highlight the suffering, desperation and anger of the millions whose lives are being devastated by this crisis, and demand that the U.S. and other governments address their needs; and

Whereas, a March for Jobs will take place in Pittsburgh on Sunday, Sept. 20, calling for a real jobs program to provide full-time, living wage jobs. Instead of bailing out banks and funding wars, there must be money to create jobs, provide healthcare, stop foreclosures and bail out the unemployed; and

Whereas, from Sept. 19-26 a tent city dedicated to the unemployed, poor and underemployed will be erected next to Monumental Baptist Church, located in an historic part of the African-American community in Pittsburgh called The Hill, not far from the G20 summit; and

Whereas, "March for Jobs" caravans of unemployed people and supporters from across the country will converge on Pittsburgh to join the march and tent city, similar to the marches for jobs that took place in the 1930s; and

Whereas, Martin Luther King Jr. once called "the second civil rights movement" the fight for the right to a job or a guaranteed income. King dedicated the last year of his life to planning a mass movement for jobs, and his dream has to be revived; and

Whereas, the San Francisco Labor Council in January 2009 called for a National Recovery Plan, stating, "To end this recession and prevent a depression, there needs to be gainful productive employment for all" and "any bailout needs to be for workers, their families, children, students, seniors, small farmers, small business—the everyday folks," and calling for a massive, publicly supported jobs program as existed in the 1930s; therefore be it

Resolved, that the San Francisco Labor Council endorse the March for Jobs in Pittsburgh on Sept. 20, 2009, and the Global Week in Solidarity with the Unemployed, on the occasion of the G-20 summit in that city.

UNITY IS STRENGTH!

By Jerry Goldberg

actual percentage of those helped constitutes a paltry 2.6 percent.

Under federal law the Treasury announcement should have caused an immediate moratorium on foreclosures.

Title IV of the Helping Families Save Their Homes Act, signed into law on May 20, includes a foreclosure moratorium provision. It states there should be a moratorium on foreclosures until the HAMP is implemented and declared operational by the secretaries of the Treasury and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

But rather than invoking a moratorium based on the lenders' sabotage of the HAMP, the report cites a July 4 letter from Secretary Timothy Geithner to the loan executives and a July 28 meeting of Geithner and the lenders in which the Treasury secretary discussed the importance of compliance. Geithner made no demands on the bankers and lenders to comport with the terms of the HAMP or face consequences. There were no mandates or penalties threatened and there was certainly no mention of a moratorium as the law requires.

Currently all Fannie Mae- and Freddie Mac-backed loans are covered under the HAMP. About 40 mortgage lenders and servicers, including most of the major banks,

have signed contracts with the federal government to evaluate all mortgage loans in their portfolios for modifications under the program. The Treasury estimates that 85 percent of all mortgage loans should be covered. The banks and servicers receive enormous sums from the federal government—on top of the \$700 billion in bailout funds they received last fall and winter—for signing these contracts: \$2.8 billion for Wells Fargo, \$2.8 billion for Citi, \$2.6 billion for Bank of America (including Countrywide), and \$2 billion for JP Morgan Chase, for example.

Moratorium must be enforced by struggle

A July 30 article in the New York Times discussed how loan servicers are not implementing the HAMP because of the profits they make by charging enormous fees for delinquent home loans. As a home moves toward foreclosure, the servicers charge for title searches, insurance policies, appraisals and legal filings, and typically funnel these orders to companies they own or with whom they share revenues. The National Consumer Law Center noted recently that Countrywide made \$400,000,000

Continued on page 6

From new intro to 'High Tech, Low Pay'

Today's capitalist crisis in light of Marxist theory

Here is the third installment of excerpts from a new introduction to the ground-breaking work "High Tech, Low Pay." The book, written by Sam Marcy during the early stages of capitalist restructuring and first published in 1986, has long been out of print and will soon be reissued. Fred Goldstein, who wrote this introduction, is author of "Low-Wage Capitalism: Colossus with Feet of Clay." Parts one and two of the excerpts from Goldstein's introduction can be read in the Aug. 13 and Aug. 20 issues of WW, available at www.workers.org.

Analyzing the present crisis

The meaning of the crisis and its ultimate direction are questions for the ruling class and for the working class, from diametrically opposed points of view. The bourgeoisie has no theoretical framework within which to begin to approach the question. Their system is anarchic. Even government intervention and some limited planning cannot eradicate the anarchy imposed on a system based on private profit.

The bosses operate in competition and in secrecy. Their economists can really only look backward over time at what has happened and hope to divine some pattern that can be used for the future. But they cannot, dare not, analyze the system; they can only describe its behavior in a pragmatic, strictly empirical fashion.

Marxists have a broad theoretical framework combined with powerful, scientific analytical tools at their disposal. These tools must be wielded on behalf of the struggle of the workers and therefore cannot be based upon wishful thinking or pure speculation.

The broad theoretical framework within which to analyze the present situation was laid out by Marx in 1857, in his Preface to "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy":

"In the social production of their life, men enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will, relations of production which correspond to a definite stage of development of their material productive forces. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. ... At a certain stage of their development, the material productive forces of society come in conflict with existing relations of production, or—what is but a legal expression for the same thing—with the property relations within which they have been at work hitherto. From forms of development of the productive forces these relations turn into their fetters. Then begins an epoch of social revolution. With the change in the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed."

This is Marx's most general statement about the basis for the revolutionary transformation of society. In numerous places throughout his writings he applies this theory to the capitalist system. He describes how capitalism concentrates the proletariat into factories and workplaces, creating an increasingly complex division of labor in the productive process that involves more and varied types of labor from geographically diverse regions.

Marx showed how capitalism, by constantly revolutionizing the means of pro-

duction under the internal compulsion of the system, socializes the productive forces—bringing workers everywhere into objective cooperation in the production of commodities. He scientifically demonstrated how this socialized production comes into conflict with private property, resulting in repetitive crises for the workers and, ultimately, for society in general.

The fundamental assertion implied by the paragraph quoted above is that sooner or later, capitalist property relations become a "fetter," a brake on further development of the productive forces. Society cannot move forward any longer because of the stranglehold of private property. Revolution then ensues. The clash between socialized production and private ownership can only be resolved by socializing the ownership—that is, by bringing socialized ownership into harmony with socialized production and setting society on a new course of planned production for human need.

Marx was referring not just to the periodic crises and suffering brought about by capitalism. Nor does his point refer to capitalism holding back development that would be of great benefit to society—such as environmentally safe methods of production and green products. Nor is it a question of the enormous waste and gross inefficiency produced by capitalism. These are relative brakes on development.

Marx posits that at some point, capitalism inevitably becomes an absolute brake on the development of the productive forces, with a consequent crisis for the masses. Society is stymied by capitalist private property and cannot go on in the old way.

It is always helpful for clarity and educational purposes to discuss this fundamental premise put forward by Marx. It is the starting point of understanding Marxism. But it is only at rare historical moments that the discussion goes beyond making a general historical point and is raised in relation to imminent developments.

This question arose at the end of World War I when the economies of Europe had collapsed in the face of military devastation. There was revolutionary ferment in Germany, Hungary and other countries in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution. Capitalism seemed to be on the ropes. World War I had signified the beginning of the historic crisis of the capitalist system.

March for justice in Cleveland

By Caleb T. Maupin
Cleveland

Revolutionary and radical activists have called for a mass demonstration on Friday, Aug. 21, the anniversary of King's legendary "I Have a Dream" speech at the March on Washington in 1963. The march will begin at noon at West 6th Street and Superior Avenue in downtown Cleveland.

The fifth annual "Poor People's March" will demand a jobs program for the unemployed, an end to home foreclosures and evictions, freedom for U.S. political prisoners, and an end to police brutality and repression. Organizers are asking that Cleveland schools practice "education, not criminalization" and that the welfare reform laws, which drive women into poverty and slavelike working conditions, be repealed.

Marchers will call for the Full Employ-

The development of imperialism soon resulted in the complete division of the globe among the imperialist powers, as described by Lenin in 1916 in his book "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism." It meant that capitalism had outgrown the national state as a framework for development. Soon it came to pass that even imperialist expansion could not give capitalism sufficient room to grow by ordinary economic means. It had reached such an impasse that it could only resolve its contradictions through a devastating imperialist war.

The ruling classes in Europe survived these post-war revolutionary crises, only to soon be plunged into the Great Depression. It was during the world depression of the 1930s that the question of the absolute decline of capitalism was widely discussed in concrete terms pertaining to the immediate perspective of proletarian revolution.

For the entire decade, save for a brief period in the mid 1930s, capitalist society appeared to be in a downward spiral with no end in sight. Capitalism had reached a dead end. It seemed to fulfill Marx's general prognosis that social revolution was on the agenda.

Capitalist property, private property in the means of production, the profit system itself, had become a "fetter" on the further development of the productive forces. Capitalism had brought about the socialization of the productive process on a world scale. Yet a small group of property owners, monopolists, owned and operated this global system for the narrow purposes of enriching themselves through exploitation and profit.

The Great Depression seemed to be the end of the line. Capitalism was unable to revive itself by economic means. In the mid thirties there was a slight upturn, but then world production continued to decline. Massive unemployment remained. The colonial countries staggered under the weight of the world depression, which struck them even more drastically than the imperialist countries. In the present period it is once again helpful from a working-class point of view to revive this discussion in order to get an accurate estimate of the period, clarify a perspective and prepare for struggle.

To be continued.

On The

Protect postal workers' bargaining rights!

The Postal Workers union issued a call Aug. 3 to protest an amendment to Senate bill S. 1507 that would completely negate postal workers' bargaining rights. The overall purpose of the bill is to eradicate the U.S. Postal Service's deficit, but, as APWU President William Burrus notes, "Relief cannot be on the backs of postal workers who would be forced to accept wages and working conditions commensurate with the USPS deficit." Mandatory arbitration, which includes comparing APWU workers' conditions to that in private industry, could easily wipe out raises, cost-of-living increases and protection against layoffs, warns Burrus. To sign APWU's online petition, visit www.apwu.org and click on "Send a message to your senators."

Rite Aid workers demand contract

Supporters of the freedom to form unions demonstrated on Aug. 10 in seven cities, including outside a pharmacy industry conference in Boston, to demand that Rite Aid workers—as well as all other workers—be able to join unions and bargain free of intimidation, coercion and illegal firings.

Why Rite Aid? After Rite Aid warehouse workers in Lancaster, Calif., attempted to join the International Longshore and Warehouse Union in 2006, the company hired a high-priced union-busting firm that carried out an intimidation campaign. Despite that, the workers voted to join ILWU Local 26 in March 2008, but due to Rite Aid's hostile tactics, they still don't have a contract. Jobs with Justice issued a special report on this struggle to show why the Employee Free Choice Act is sorely needed. To download the report, visit www.jwj.org.

CWA contract with AT&T West

More than 23,000 workers in California, Nevada and Hawaii have reached a tentative three-year contract with AT&T West, announced Communication Workers District 9 on Aug. 13. The contract provides for a 9-percent wage and pension hike, with a cost-of-living adjustment in the third year. It maintains quality health care for all, including retirees, and establishes fully funded preven-

Depressed situation demands fight back

When one walks through the streets of the Cleveland area, be it the densely populated urban districts or the residential neighborhoods of the suburbs, one cannot escape the harsh reality that the people are suffering immensely in a dying economy. The day labor centers for temporary work, where people can be hired to work for one day, find themselves packed each morning with those who long for an assignment that can sometimes mean the difference between a meal and a full day without food.

Foreclosed homes dot the neighborhoods, multiplying rapidly as so many families find themselves thrown from the homes they have inhabited for years. Countless young people near the college campuses speak of the difficulty in finding a summer job. Such jobs now belong to adults who once had better-paying

ment Act of 1978 to be enforced and for selective prosecution and unfair sentencing practices in Ohio's courts to cease. They will demand that the prison industrial complex be dismantled and the death penalty be abolished. Youth in the coalition are demanding more funding for education and a massive reduction of college tuition.

The march plans to bring workers and oppressed people right to the offices of the elected officials in the state, federal and local government who stand in the way of the progressive demands the people need for basic survival.

The march raises the slogan "Keep the Dream Alive," and organizers expect workers to pour into the streets to demand that the dream for a world with equality, freedom and dignity for all rise into being among the ruins of capitalism that haunt the Cleveland area and fill so many with despair and sadness.

Picket Line

By Sue Davis

tive care and company-funded, tax-free health reimbursement accounts. This settlement follows the Aug. 7 ratification of a similar three-year contract by CWA members at AT&T Midwest. Negotiations are continuing in four other districts.

Even though the billion-dollar corporation tried to impose draconian cuts on workers' health care coverage and totally cut it for retirees, the workers' willingness to strike and to expose AT&T's greed in public protests all over the country are proving to be a winning strategy.

Court OKs use of company e-mail for union business

It took nine years, but workers at the Eugene, Ore., Register-Guard newspaper finally won the right to use company e-mail to discuss union business. In a sharply worded ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit overturned a National Labor Relations Board decision and exonerated Newspaper Guild-Communication Workers Local 37194 for sending three e-mail messages about Guild business after work hours in 2000. Let's hope this ruling will help unionized workers all over the country.

Immigrant groups demand action now

On Aug. 11, the day after President Barack Obama announced that immigration reform legislation would have to wait until 2010, twelve groups supporting immigrant rights, headed by the Mexican American Political Association, demanded an immediate moratorium on all punitive enforcement procedures and policies. A brief excerpt of their statement reads: "If we can't have reform this year, we absolutely require relief in the form of a moratorium of the enforcement of employer sanctions, raids, deportations, e-Verify, and prolonged detention for immigration-related offenses, which are civil in nature. All non-violent tactics need to be put on the table. ... We demand a fair and humane immigration reform for all NOW." □

jobs. In this economic collapse, they have been forced to take the low-wage jobs that youth depend on.

Priscilla Cooper, an organizer for the Family Connection Center, works to help unemployed women find work before government assistance is cut off. Every day she sees more and more women lose their benefits and have their homes foreclosed or face eviction from their apartments. Many even have their children taken away from them. These women's inability to find work in a jobless economy makes them "unfit" mothers in the eyes of the state. The government gives billions to help banks, yet continues to treat unemployed women trying to feed their children as a "burden."

Many of Cleveland's activists and organizers see the situation in their city, not simply as a tragedy to mourn, but as a call for militant action in defense of people's basic human needs.

Endorsers of the Aug. 21 march include the Family Connection Center, Stop Targeting Ohio's Poor, Black on Black Crime Inc., Oct. 22nd Coalition, Bail Out the People Movement, "We Demand Jobs" Coalition, Cleveland FIST, Baldwin-Walace Food Justice Council and Cleveland New Black Panthers. □

'Whose factory? Our factory!'

Stella D'Oro workers still rise

By Sara Catalinotto
Bronx, N.Y.

A mood of working-class pride was in the air on Aug. 15 as hundreds crowded in front of the Stella D'Oro Biscuit Company plant gates for a two-hour rally. The occasion was the one-year anniversary of the strike of Bakery Workers Local 50 members against barbaric concessions that were being demanded by the owners, the vulture capitalist Brynwood Partners.

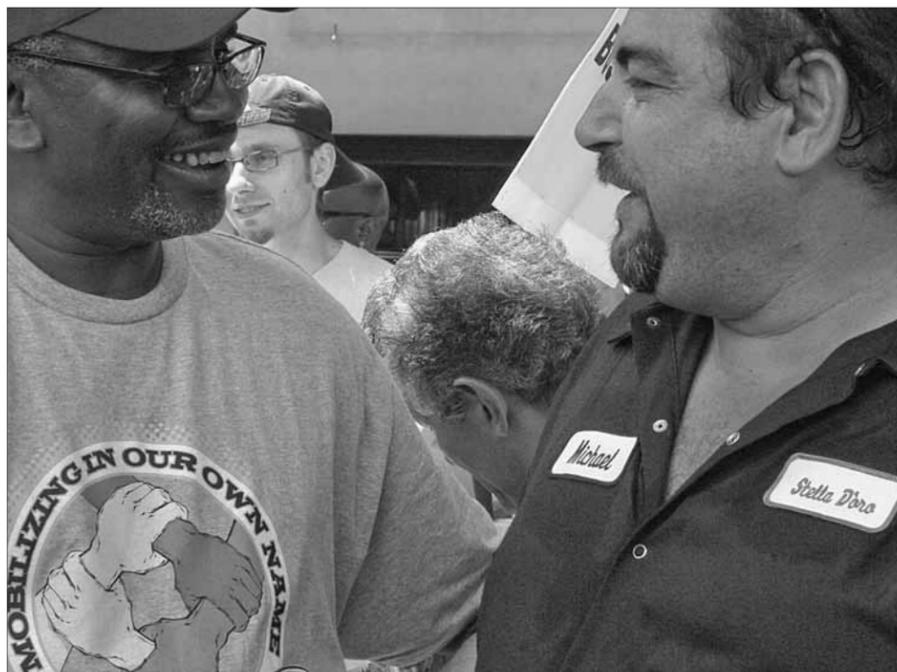
Speakers recalled picket lines in the heat, rain and freezing cold; the fact that not one of the approximately 135 workers crossed the line; Brynwood's use of temporary scabs; winning a National Labor Relations Board case against the company; returning to work on July 7, with back pay until May, only to learn that the bosses are scheming to sell and possibly relocate production as early as October; and a July 29 N.Y. City Council resolution supporting all efforts to maintain these jobs at decent pay in this community.

A common theme was the awareness that any attack on the Stella D'Oro workers is an attack on the community, and that a victory can strengthen all working and unemployed people.

While the city's top trade union officials took the longest to recognize the urgency of material aid for Local 50, the need for solidarity is well understood by a critical mass of rank-and-file activists and leaders. As individuals or through organizations, including the Stella D'Oro Strike Solidarity Committee, which still meets weekly, people have been promoting the Stella D'Oro workers' cause in unions, communities and the media, with the involvement of strikers who have become highly respected leaders, and in coordination with the Local 50 leadership.

It appeared on Aug. 15 that each of the locals, regional unions, community activists and clergy who had been there at one time or another during the strike were now here all at once—not just to celebrate but to get further marching orders for how to solidify the partial, legal victory into real lasting job and contract security for Stella D'Oro workers.

Three-fourths of the speakers were supporters, ranging from San Francisco's Clarence Thomas of the International Longshore and Warehouse union to Teresa Gutierrez of the May 1 Immigrant Rights Coalition, who invited Stella D'Oro workers to lead next year's May Day march in New York; Reverend Luis Barrios and two other clergy, who had each welcomed strike support presentations at their places of worship; and Mike Gimbel of the New York City Central Labor Council, who declared the workers to be the leadership of the labor movement at this time and



Clarence Thomas with Mike Filippou

WWW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

urged everyone to get resource commitments from every delegate assembly.

There was Ann Harrison of Hudson Valley United Teachers, representing 600,000 members "who didn't buy Stella D'Oro cookies for 11 months"; and Mike Eilenfeldt, a CLC delegate and Bail Out the People Movement organizer, who urged further pressure on the city council to act on their resolution. President Barbara Bowen of the Professional Staff Congress at the City University of New York stated that the citywide university faculty and staff union had stood "in admiration of and in solidarity with you."

In a new development, International Electrical Workers Local 3 Assistant Business Manager Luis Restrepo announced that the union is prepared to "support whatever Local 50 wants us to do, with our members and our resources." He was introduced by IBEW member and solidarity organizer Edwin Molina, a constant on the Stella D'Oro picket line, who described how pickets "turned the tables on March 11" when they prevented scabs from driving into the plant parking lot.

Bakery Workers Local 50 Treasurer Calvin Williams brought greetings from President Joyce Alston. He and strike leaders Mike Filippou, Emelia Dorsu, Sara Rodriguez and Eddie Marrero thanked supporters for their dedication and asked that people "stay with us until we win this too."

Among the union logos seen in the crowd were American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees District Council 37, Teamsters Local 138, Transit Workers Union Local 100, Empire State Labor College, Metro Area American Postal Workers Union, New York Nurses United, United Federation of Teachers Lo-

cal 2, Service Employees Local 1199 and the National Writers' Union.

The multinational crowd included a prominent number of younger faces, including electricians/apprentices, students such as Kira from the State University of New York Graduate Student Employees union, and community organizers such as Rob from the South Bronx Deserves Respect Coalition, which is fighting Yankee Stadium for the promised share of jobs and income for Bronx residents.

One can optimistically conclude that the gravity of this struggle, whose main spokespersons are African-American union officials and immigrants from Ghana, Greece, Puerto Rico and elsewhere, is strong enough to override decades of exclusionism in the building trades. The bosses' racist and sexist ideology, coupled with some level of economic privilege, has often been enough to keep a predominantly white, male sector of the labor movement from uniting with nationally oppressed workers and communities.

In the book "High Tech, Low Pay," Workers World Party founding chairperson Sam Marcy explained that it is harder to divide workers once they are together at the workplace and once actual material conditions expose who the allies are—and who, like investors such as Brynwood, are the true enemies of our class.

Those in New York are asked to help ensure that the Stella D'Oro workers' contingent at the front of this year's Labor Day parade reflects an unshakable determination to win. The contingent gathers at 10:00 a.m. on Sept. 12 at 45th Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan. Check bctgm.org and stelladorostrike2008.com for breaking news. □

Help to publish High Tech, Low Pay

World View Forum is reissuing this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder, on the party's 50th anniversary.

The book rings as true today as when it was first published in 1986. Marcy explained how the high-tech revolution was destroying high-paying jobs while changing the social composition of the working class, bringing more of the oppressed into workplaces, raising the potential for more solidarity and struggle.

Marcy's analysis, strategies and tactics are still on-target. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," explains how world developments have heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Funds are needed to republish this vital book. While the writing, editing, proofreading, design and artwork are all done by voluntary labor, the

printing, binding and promotional costs are high.

Help to get this book to working people, activists and readers nationwide—and to union halls, campuses, libraries and bookstores.

Your contribution will make a difference! Everyone who donates \$25 or more will receive a copy of "High Tech, Low Pay."

YES! I want to help with publishing and promotional costs.

Here is my donation of \$500 \$250 \$100 \$50 \$35 \$25 Other

(Write checks to World View Forum.)

Or donate \$___ by Visa or MCD.

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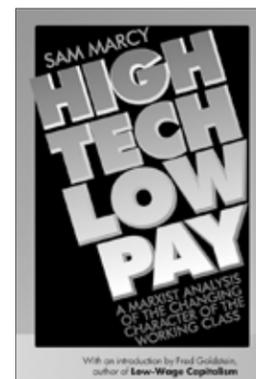
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Return to World View Forum, 55 West 17th Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011

Sickness & struggle

Cold War politics forced Truman's hand

By David Hoskins

On Nov. 19, 1945—just three months after the brutal atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan—President Harry Truman became the first sitting U.S. president to propose a national health insurance program.

Truman unveiled his five-point plan for universal health care in a special message to Congress. He emphasized that “everyone should have ready access to all necessary medical, hospital and related services.”

The plan's centerpiece was expanding compulsory insurance under the Social Security system to cover medical, hospital, nursing, laboratory and dental care. Other key points included federal funding for hospital construction, expanding public-health services, increasing investment in medical education and research, and a cash benefit in the event of sickness and long-term disability.

The Truman plan was introduced to Congress in the form of a revised Wagner-Murray-Dingell Bill. The original bill had been introduced in 1943 by Democratic Sens. Robert Wagner of New York and James Murray of Montana, along with Rep. John Dingell Sr. of Michigan—and it never came to a vote in Congress.

The revised bill was doomed to a similar fate.

The plan was supported by a coalition of workers and farmers led in part by the American Federation of Labor and the National Farmers Union.

Conservative mobilization defeated reform

The program envisioned by Truman had its own set of flaws, including an exception that allowed physicians to reject patients covered by the plan in favor of those patients who could afford to purchase private coverage or pay for services

outside of the universal insurance system.

Truman went to great lengths to assure potential opponents that his plan was not a form of “socialized” medicine. It certainly was not like the totally free, non-profit state health systems being set up in East European countries where capitalism had been uprooted. Nor did it go as far in building government-owned health facilities as Britain's national health system, which was set up by the Labor Party after the war under great pressure from the working class.

However, Truman's attempt to inoculate himself from criticism did not prevent opponents from red-baiting the plan. The American Medical Association took the lead in mobilizing opposition.

The Journal of the American Medical Association described the plan as “the discredited system of decadent nations which are now living off the bounty of the American people—and if adopted here it would not only jeopardize the health of our people but

would gravely endanger our freedom. It is one of the final, irrevocable steps toward state socialism and every American should be alerted to the danger.”

Reaction was riding so high that in 1947 a key House subcommittee investigating national health insurance charged that Truman's plan was a communist plot supported by known communist sympathizers working within federal agencies.

The AMA spent millions of dollars and hired the public relations firm Whitaker and Baxter in 1948 to help wage its aggressive anti-reform campaign. The Chamber of Commerce, the American Bar Association and the American Legion were among the organizations backing the AMA drive to block universal coverage. The campaign was the most expensive in U.S. history at the time.

The accusations leveled by the conservative opposition were emblematic of the

emerging McCarthy period of anti-communist repression. The legislation effectively died in committee before Truman's term ended.

Cold war influenced Truman plan

Truman did not launch the struggle for health reform. The American Association of Labor Legislation had pushed for a form of national health insurance back in 1906. The American Federation of Labor actually opposed this effort, acting in its narrow bureaucratic interests out of fear that universal coverage would undermine the importance of union membership.

In 1912 Theodore Roosevelt's Bull Moose Party platform called for “a system of social insurance adapted to American use.” The 1906 and 1912 efforts were unable to gain significant momentum, and President Franklin Roosevelt later failed to throw his support behind calls to include national health insurance as part of the New Deal legislation.

Truman did not have a reputation as a committed progressive reformer. In fact, FDR's selection of Truman as his running mate in the 1944 election was part of a shift to the right.

Vince Copeland, a founding leader of Workers World Party, described Truman's selection in his book “Market Elections: How Democracy Serves the Rich.” Copeland wrote: “In 1940, the ‘left’ New Dealer and Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace was chosen for the second spot. ... In 1944 Roosevelt maneuvered Wallace out of consideration and gave the vice president slot on the ticket to Harry Truman, who was in the right wing of the New Deal. ... A great number of commentators, including some radicals, have observed that U.S. history was changed by this decision, since Truman became an architect of the Cold War, whereas Wallace was a fierce opponent of it.”

Truman took office following Roos-

evelt's death early in 1945. By the time he proposed his national health insurance plan, World War II had come to a close.

The war had brought about the defeat of German, Italian and Japanese imperialism; severely diminished the capacity of Britain and France; and positioned the U.S. as the dominant imperialist power. The war also ended with the Soviet Union's historic victory over fascism and the defeat of the German Nazi armies. A new dynamic thus emerged which lent itself to the intense competition between the systems of capitalism and socialism known as the Cold War.

Truman's health reform plan was tied to the U.S. ruling class's attempt to prevent the rise of widespread revolutionary sentiment at home and abroad. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had brought with it a form of socialist medicine and the promise of health care as a right to workers across the globe. Truman's plan was an attempted appeal to convince workers at home that capitalism could provide for their health. This appeal died in committee alongside the plan.

Truman also explicitly linked his health

Stopping foreclosure Gov't program homeowners,

Continued from page 3

just from late fees in a one-year period.

In addition, the lenders and servicers are not set up to carry out millions of loan modifications. They are in the business of collecting debts, not helping consumers. Borrowers who call the banks to discuss a loan modification are frustrated by their inability to find someone with knowledge of the HAMP. Oftentimes modification documents sent in by homeowners are misplaced or “lost.”

Borrowers who are eligible for loan modifications are summarily denied. The government has no mechanism set up to enforce its own program. Calls to Treasury result in borrowers being told to contact the same lenders who are frustrating them every day.

The Making Home Affordable Program is not the only federal program that is being violated continuously. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, both government owned, have initiated programs to protect renters in foreclosed properties. Under the Fannie Mae program, a renter who is not an immediate relative of the foreclosed owner is entitled to continue staying in the property as a renter or receive \$4,500 in relocation funds.

Under the Freddie Mac program, the rental option and relocation funds are available to any residents of foreclosed homes. These programs are not being enforced because the private property management companies hired by Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac find it too bothersome to inform residents of their rights, and instead carry out illegal summary evictions.

Similarly, any resident of a Federal

If this is a recovery . . .

Where are the jobs?

Continued from page 1

trumpeting the “strong rebound” of Europe in its headline, the New York Times of Aug. 13 reminds its readers of the possibility that the recovery could stall. “[U]nemployment is expected to rise sharply this year as government programs that kept people on private payrolls throughout Europe begin to expire. Already, the euro area's unemployment rate stands at 9.4 percent, its highest level in 10 years, and the anemic growth of the coming quarters will not be enough to arrest the slide.”

The same type of optimistic headline followed by the real grim news appeared in the Times of Aug. 16: “Still the outlook for Japan remains unclear, and some analysts question whether the economy can sustain this recovery after the stimulus measures at home and elsewhere run their course. Falling employment and wages are also expected to weigh on consumer spending for some time. Japan's jobless rate hit a six-year high of 5.4 percent and wages showed a record drop in June.”

“A self-sustaining recovery is still not in sight,” declared a Japanese economist.

In other words, even if there is a recovery for the capitalists worldwide, for the workers there will still be a crisis of unemployment and declining wages. And

that crisis will keep the capitalist system from reviving as it used to.

Increase in rate of exploitation deepens crisis

A very important figure that was published but not well publicized on Aug. 11 showed a surge in the productivity of labor in the midst of the crisis. Reuters put things quite bluntly in announcing a jump of 6.4 percent in the hourly output per worker (annual rate).

“U.S. output per worker rose at its fastest pace in six years during the second quarter as businesses wrung more from shrinking staff in a sign that recovery from recession will be slow and unlikely to create a surge in hiring.”

Thus, the bosses have used the crisis to shed workers on a permanent basis through the use of technology, reorganization, speedup or other means. What this really means is that the capitalists have increased the rate of exploitation of the workers.

Workers' hours plunged 7.6 percent, but production fell only 1.7 percent. Thus the workers produced more in less time. This is what has caused a rise in corporate profits, despite a declining economy.

The struggle of each capitalist to squeeze more and more out of the workers means the bosses will not have to rehire many of

the tens of millions of workers out of a job or underemployed, even during a recovery.

It also means that if there is a recovery—and that is not guaranteed at all—it will be weak, short-lived and will come at the expense of the workers, who will be left to compete for fewer and fewer jobs.

Capitalism has no automatic revival for the workers. The only way to revive the fortunes of the workers and the communities is to open up a massive struggle for jobs, for income, for social services, health care, housing, food and all the needs of life.

The bosses and bankers have made us pay for this crisis with trillions of dollars in bailouts while we are thrown out of our jobs and homes.

It is time that workers organize to push back. It is time to declare that a job is a right; housing is a right; health care is a right; education is a right. And it is time to mobilize unions, the communities and all mass organizations in a united struggle to turn things around. □

Before the G20 Summit
ON SEPT. 20 MA
If you don't have a job fight to get one

Interview with

Healthcare—NOW's Ajamu Sankofa

plan to the needs of the U.S. military, which he saw as a necessary force to smash the emerging tide of revolutions and national liberation struggles.

In his 1945 message to Congress, Truman spoke of the connection between inadequate health care and military service: "As of April 1, 1945, nearly 5,000,000 male registrants between the ages of 18 and 37 had been examined and classified as unfit for military service. ... After actual induction, about a million and a half men had to be discharged from the Army and Navy for physical or mental disability, exclusive of wounds. ... Among the young women who applied for admission to the Women's Army corps there was similar disability."

Then he added, "These men and women who were rejected for military service are not necessarily incapable of civilian work."

Truman's statement makes it clear that, for a sizable wing of the U.S. ruling class, health-care reform was not an issue of justice but rather a matter of "national"—that is, class—security.

Next: Soviet medicine—a workers' health plan

Some 50 million people in the U.S. have no health care insurance and 25 million more are underinsured. Existing programs such as Medicare, Medicaid and Children's Insurance, each state administered, are under attack. In California, where budget cuts have drastically reduced access, 8,000 people lined up when a volunteer health group recently offered free service.

On Aug. 13, WW reporter Gavrielle Gemma interviewed Ajamu Sankofa, a Harlem attorney who is also former national organizer for Healthcare-NOW! and co-founder of the Private Health Insurance Must Go Coalition. WW asked him to explain his group's Single Payer plan.

Single Payer is based on the principle that health care is a human right and would provide coverage for everybody in the country. It is modeled after Medicare. You would never be asked, "Can you pay?" If you already have insurance, love your doctor and your hospital, your choice remains the same. There would be no premiums, deductibles, co-pays, nor discrimination in service. Health care would be publicly delivered, privately provided.

Now, even if you have employer-based insurance or buy your own, you have no health care security. Each year employers change plans, usually covering less. Many employers now require workers to pay part or all of the premiums, and co-pays and deductibles are going up. Your choice is greater with Single Payer legislation—HR 676—in the House of Representatives, sponsored by Rep. John Conyers.

Virtually all the industrialized countries have some national health plan. The U.S. has the best health technology in the world, but it is wasted in the interest of profit and not accessible to everyone.

The attitude of medical professionals has evolved to predominant support for Single Payer. During the Franklin Roosevelt administration the American Medical Association (AMA) destroyed the move to Single Payer as an obstacle to doctors making huge amounts of money. Now the leading voices for Single Payer are organized nurses throughout the U.S. and the majority of doctors.

This spring the "Baucus 13" challenged this. Sen. Baucus (R-Montana) chairs the Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over health care. They had a hearing on reform and denied single-payer advocates the right to be heard. Thirteen members of Healthcare-NOW!, including doctors and nurses, were arrested, as well as members of Labor for Single Payer.

A couple of weeks ago in Iowa nine protesters walked into the boardroom of an insurance company. They were young and old, doctors and nurses. They disrupted the board meeting because the company was denying people coverage for previous medical conditions and undiagnosed symptoms.

One-third of premiums paid to insurance companies go to the corporate departments that deny you care and provide a rationale for it. The more I know, the angrier I get.

A 2002 study showed that 18,000 people die each year because they do not

have health insurance. With the current economic crisis, layoffs will make this skyrocket exponentially.

The U.S. pays more than twice as much per person as any other industrialized country for health insurance, yet it is 37th in the world in health outcomes, mortality, morbidity and chronic disease, according to the World Health Organization.

Working people and unions are being forced to bargain away salary increases to maintain health benefits.

The proportion of the deduction workers pay for employer-based coverage is continuing to rise. The premiums are rising and co-pays are going up too. In most plans, if a worker has a chronic condition, there is a lifetime benefit and it will run out. Even if they've been paying for 30 years, they're left with no coverage at all.

The financing in HR 676 would come from a payroll tax that the employer pays and a progressive income tax, a tax on stock transactions and an increase in the rate of taxes on the upper 5 percent—the richest will have to pay more. Some 95 percent of the people will experience a net saving on health care. So taxes are really a nonissue.

The corporate-controlled Republican and Democratic parties are not permitting the Single Payer plan to be discussed in Congress. A significant irony is that a Single Payer national health care plan saves between \$300-\$400 billion a year just because the 30 percent administrative cost is gone. It stimulates the economy because people will spend less on medical care and more on other goods—and have the health to enjoy them.

The 'Obama plan'

Obama's plan is modeled on Massachusetts. It keeps the private health insurance industry in existence. The plan's "Public Option" is a government-subsidized insurance plan. It is a giveaway to the insurance industry and perpetuates their profits. Massachusetts mandated everyone must buy this insurance. While



WW PHOTO: GAVRIELLE GEMMA

the cost may be lower, it's still high and many can't afford it. Massachusetts then tried to penalize those who can't buy the insurance by having them pay higher taxes. It's insane.

Companies still have the incentive to market their plans to the healthiest people and the richest people. This plan is an apartheidlike system and the health care crisis remains. It creates a huge windfall for the insurance companies, which will be free to continue to accelerate costs and the plan will go under.

The right-wing disruptions of the hearings on HR 3200—the "Obama" plan—are financed by the pharmaceutical and insurance companies. Now the right wing enters calling Obama's plan socialism. The right-wing attacks are all bogus—they want to destroy any public health care.

The challenge of the left is building independent political institutions that are of, by and for working people. If we don't get busy, we will be living with the right wing everywhere.

Single Payer has the capacity to win. It would take a campaign of a similar intensity to what was needed to dismantle Jim Crow. We are talking about one-sixth of the U.S. economy.

It is not an accident that Brown and Black people have the greatest health disparities in the U.S. There is one level of service for people of color and another for those of European descent and wealth.

For more information: Healthcare-Now.org, PHIMG.org. □

es and evictions ns not helping renters

Housing Authority-insured home is entitled to an occupied conveyance and continued occupancy (a rental lease until HUD sells the home) after foreclosure. But these options are routinely denied renters and homeowners. In Detroit, for example, where there are thousands of FHA-insured homes, only a couple of residents have been offered this option and in both cases only after lawsuits were filed. Not only are residents deprived of the right to stay in their homes, but the homes end up being sold for a fraction of their values as the emptied-out and vacant houses are stripped and vandalized. In the meantime, the lender is being paid full value for the mortgage.

The unwillingness and inability of the federal government to enforce the few programs it has initiated to help homeowners and renters speak to the need for independent, militant, direct action by victims of banks and lenders—supported by their communities—to defend their homes.

In the 1930s the unemployed councils led by communists and socialists stopped tens of thousands of evictions and foreclosures by preventing bailiffs from carrying them out, or moving families and their possessions back into their homes after evictions. Moratoriums on foreclosures and evictions were implemented through direct action, and then laws were passed in 25 states and upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court ratifying the foreclosure moratorium. History teaches that justice for the workers and poor and defense of their legal rights will be won through militant action, not government reliance. □

Commit in Pittsburgh ARCH FOR JOBS —if you have one—fight to keep it

Letter to the editor:

200-MILLION-DOLLAR CLUNKERS

The Pentagon and Congress are trading in their aging clunker C-20 jets for newer \$200 million C-37 jets. As reported in the Aug. 8 Pittsburgh Tribune, the Pentagon asked for one new C-20 jet but Congress insisted that the Pentagon should have three new C-20 jets. The justification for the three newer jets was that the old C-20 operates at a cost of \$6,100, while the newer C-37 jets operate at a cost of \$2,700.

The planes will be based at Andrews Air Force Base, conveniently located in a Washington suburb for Pentagon staff and Congressional members. Congressional members that generally fly these noncommercial jets include House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who flies between Washington, D.C., and her home in San Francisco. According to the Pittsburgh Tribune, "The Pentagon describes the mission of the planes as flying 'worldwide special air missions for



Congress' newer \$200 million C-37 jets—'A must have.'

high-ranking government and Defense Department officials."

Conveniently, \$200 million for comfy planes can be found hidden in the Pentagon's \$636 billion war budget and approved by the House. Amazing that some of that \$200 million could not be removed from the war chests and comfy planes cost and put into health care for the poor and working poor.

Nevertheless, while the Pentagon and Congress ride in \$200 million comfy jets, the residents of Pittsburgh—where thousands of jobs have been lost and caused a high rise in unemployment—will be joined by thousands of poor and working poor in Pittsburgh on Sept. 20 to demand jobs, health care, and other human needs.

—Louise Covington

Behind the Clinton tour

Secretary of State reveals U.S. imperialist policy toward Africa

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

There was much anticipation on the African continent about Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's 11-day recent visit to seven countries. However, the tour's outcome largely reaffirmed the continuance of past U.S. policy toward Africa.

President Barack Obama has a direct connection to the East African nation of Kenya. African heads of state hope that this historic link will inspire the administration to look more seriously at U.S. foreign policy towards Africa.

However, the same economic and political interests that have driven U.S. policy still prevail. U.S. imperialism's strategy has been one of domination through mineral extraction, trade, political engagement and military involvement.

Starting with Sudan in 1956 and Ghana in 1957, former British colonies, and with former French possession Guinea-Conakry in 1958, the national liberation movements in Africa gained tremendous momentum.

In 1960, 18 countries gained their independence from England, France and Belgium. Algeria won independence from France in 1962. By 1963 there were more than 30 independent states on the continent.

Nevertheless, the former European colonial powers and, increasingly, the U.S., still sought to dominate Africa's politics and economies.

In 1965, Kwame Nkrumah, the former president of Ghana and a key leader of the post-World War II African liberation struggle, said that the U.S. had become the dominant imperialist power.

In his book, "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism," Nkrumah said: "Faced with the militant peoples of the ex-colonial territories ... imperialism simply switches tactics. Without a qualm, it dispenses with its flags, and even with certain of its more hated expatriate officials. This means, so it claims, that it is 'giving' independence to its former subjects, to be followed by 'aid' for their development.

"Under cover of such phrases, however, it devises innumerable ways to accomplish objectives formerly achieved by naked colonialism. It is this sum total of these modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism while at the same time talking about 'freedom,' which has come to be known as neo-colonialism."

Nkrumah stressed, "Foremost among the neo-colonialists is the United States. ... With methodical thoroughness and touching attention to detail, the Pentagon set about consolidating its ascendancy, evidence of which can be seen all around the world."

In the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. supported the most reactionary policies towards Africa. Republican and Democratic administrations opposed and undermined national liberation movements and progressive states. The International Monetary Fund, World Bank, CIA and the Pentagon sabotaged economic development efforts.

After white minority rule was abolished on the subcontinent with the independence of Namibia and South Africa during the early 1990s, the U.S. militarily intervened in Somalia from 1991-93, escalated its military involvement with Mubarak's government in Egypt and, in 1998, bombed Sudan.

Developments indicate clearly that the interest in African affairs by the U.S. administration means a continuation of promoting and advancing the economic & political priorities of the U.S. ruling class

Following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the U.S. increased its intervention in Somalia and intensified efforts to overthrow the governments of Zimbabwe and Sudan.

U.S.-Africa policy under Obama

At a regional trade conference in Kenya, Clinton emphasized the administration's intentions to increase trade between the U.S. and African countries in the region. She also met with the president of the U.S.-backed Transitional Federal Government in neighboring Somalia.

At a joint press conference in Nairobi Aug. 6, Clinton and Somali President Sheik Sharif Ahmed discussed how Washington can provide additional financial, political and military support to the fledgling government that is largely propped-up by the African Union's "peacekeeping forces" (AMISOM). Clinton is the highest-ranking U.S. diplomat to make direct contact with the Somali regime.

Somalia has been without an internationally recognized government since the U.S.-backed Siad Barre regime collapsed in 1991. Although Bush's administration provided assistance for the AMISOM forces in Somalia, most of the aid was funneled through the United Nations and the A.U.

In its coverage of the meeting, the Los Angeles Times reported, "Somali officials said discussions centered on providing additional weapons, boosting humanitarian assistance and formalizing ties." The U.S. government recently announced that it is sending 40 tons of weapons and munitions, in addition to training a re-configured military force to protect the Ahmed government.

U.S. military involvement in Somalia escalated during Bush's administration. In 2006, when the Islamic Courts Union took control of much of the country, the CIA was suspected of funding warlords inside Somalia who sought to promote U.S. aims there. In December 2006, the U.S.-backed government in Ethiopia militarily invaded Somalia on behalf of the Bush administration, supposedly to curb the rising tide of "Islamic extremism," which was linked to Al-Qaeda.

During Ethiopia's occupation, the U.S. Air Force carried out six aerial bombardments in Somalia, leading to the worst humanitarian crisis on the continent. However, the Somali people's resistance forced the Ethiopian military to retreat in January of 2009.

Somali government officials see U.S. assistance as their only hope to counter the radical resistance movements of Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam. However, Ahmed's government has limited control there. Even Mogadishu, the capital, is largely under the influence of Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam.

The Al-Shabab and Hizbul Islam organizations have appealed to the Somali people based on U.S. pledges of greater support to the transitional regime. Al-Shabab Commander Sheik Muse Hassan Ali stated, "There is no difference between Bush and Obama. Both are against Islam and are trying to eradicate Islamic governments." (Los Angeles Times, Aug. 7)

Ali said he welcomed the shipment of military equipment to the transitional

government because, "We are ready to confiscate all these weapons."

In South Africa, Clinton attempted to persuade the newly elected African National Congress government of President Jacob Zuma to work with the U.S. to remove Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front party from the recently created inclusive government. South Africa has worked with the Zimbabwe government to form a coalition with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, and to get Western sanctions lifted. The U.S., Britain and the European Union imposed the sanctions in response to the country's land redistribution program, which was enacted in 2000.

The ANC government resisted Bush administration pressure to cut off power supplies and implement an economic blockade against Zimbabwe. South Africa has extended credit to the Mugabe government to offset the impact of Western sanctions. Obama has continued sanctions against Zimbabwe despite the coalition government's formation.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Clinton raised the impact of the ongoing civil war in the eastern region of the mineral-rich central African nation. The DRC has a long history of U.S. involvement. During the early days of independence in 1960-61, the CIA plotted the overthrow and murder of nationalist leader Patrice Lumumba, and later backed Colonel Mobutu Sese Seko, who ruled for 37 years at imperialism's behest.

After Mobutu was overthrown in 1997, the U.S. sought to continue its domination of the DRC by supporting the governments in neighboring Rwanda and Uganda. A regional war erupted in 1998, largely at the instigation of former President Bill Clinton's administration. The U.S. encouraged and financed the Rwandan and Ugandan armies' invasion of the DRC. A five-year war ensued that drew in Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia on the side of the Congolese government. Millions died in this war between 1998 and 2003.

U.S. mining firms are still extracting huge amounts of wealth from the eastern and southern regions of the country. The Obama administration has announced new initiatives to provide military training to the Congolese army. The U.S. also supplies material and financial assistance to the U.N. Mission to the Congo (MONUC) and its 17,000 peacekeepers, who are stationed in the country's eastern region.

In Angola, Clinton lectured the government run by the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) about the need for transparency there. Angola is now the leading oil producer in Africa.

During the first years of Angola's independence, from 1975 to 1989, the U.S. encouraged the efforts to undermine the former Portuguese colony by supporting the counterrevolutionary UNITA movement, which was working on behalf of the former apartheid regime in South Africa.

In Nigeria, Clinton criticized the government for corrupt practices and the lack of good governance. Yet no mention was made of the role of U.S. and European oil firms that dominate the economy and

provide no benefit to the majority of Nigeria's people. Recent unrest stems largely from its reliance on the same oil firms that make huge profits at the expense of workers and farmers.

Clinton raised the purported threat of "Islamic terrorism" during her Nigerian visit. "Al-Qaeda has a presence in Northern Africa," she said.

Such statements by the U.S. secretary of state reflect recent U.S. military policy towards Africa. The 2008 establishment of the Africa Command (Africom) signaled U.S. willingness to intensify its interventions on the continent.

Presently the U.S. has a military base in the Horn of Africa nation of Djibouti. U.S. warships are patrolling the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean under the guise of fighting "piracy." Other military operations are being conducted in the Gulf of Guinea off the West African coast—a major source of oil exports to the U.S.

Daniel Volman of the African Security Research Project in Washington, D.C., revealed: "In May 2008, the United States Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., hosted 'Unified Quest 2008,' the army's annual war games to test the American military's ability to deal with the kind of crises that it might face in the near future. [This] was especially noteworthy because it was the first time the war games included African scenarios as part of the Pentagon's plan to create a new military command for the continent: the Africa Command or Africom." (AllAfrica.com, August 14)

In an earlier article, Volman reviewed the military budget submitted to Congress by the Obama administration for 2010, which "proposes significant increases in U.S. security assistance programmes for African countries and for the operations of the new U.S. Africa Command (Africom). This shows that—at least initially—the administration is following the course laid down for Africom by the Bush administration." (AllAfrica.com, June 11) Volman says this budget includes funding for military education and training programs in at least 17 African nations.

Administration policy continues imperialist aims

These developments indicate clearly that the interest in African affairs by the current U.S. administration means a continuation of promoting and advancing the economic and political priorities of the U.S. ruling class.

Gitau Warigi, a political analyst in Kenya, wrote in the Daily Nation that that there were "strategic interests involved" behind Clinton's visit. This referred to U.S. attempts to regain ground lost during the Bush administration, and Clinton's criticism of the growing role of the People's Republic of China in Africa.

These attempts at increasing U.S. military involvement in Africa will not win the hearts and minds of the continent's people. The majority have not significantly benefited from trade agreements and the presence of large-scale business ventures. U.S. imperialism's military adventures are always designed to enforce existing relations of production and unequal terms of trade.

It is only when the majority of the people in Africa take control of the ownership and production of their economic resources that the potential will exist for genuine independence and national development. □

Phony election shows bankruptcy of Afghan occupation

By John Catalinotto

More than 100,000 troops from the Pentagon and its NATO allies now occupy Afghanistan. They are inflicting more deaths and terror on the Afghans. They are also dying in record numbers now, nearly eight years after the initial U.S. invasion.

The occupation forces plan to impose a presidential election on that suffering country on Aug. 20.

Incumbent Hamid Karzai, who the U.S. appointed interim leader in 2001 and made sure came out on top of the 2002 infighting, won the first U.S.-managed election in 2004. Because of his scant popular support across Afghanistan and his narrow area of control, Karzai has been derisively referred to as the “mayor of Kabul.”

He is still Washington’s first choice for president, and favored to win the Aug. 20 election.

Only the pro-U.S., pro-NATO, corporate media could possibly argue that an election in an occupied country will give “legitimacy” to the leaders there.

Despite the strong U.S. backing for Karzai, the corporate media hedge their bets by explaining how he might lose, or at least not win in the first round. Unless he gets more than 50 percent of the vote, a run-off will be needed in October. Polls show Karzai with only 45 percent support. (Reuters, Aug. 17)

The Aug. 17 New York Times made further excuses for Karzai, blaming a loss in votes for the incumbent on threats from the resistance in Pashtun areas. Karzai is from the Pashtun ethnic group, so those areas are supposed to be his stronghold, although they are also areas where the Taliban—the major group in the resistance—is strongest.

Karzai himself made a last-minute deal with “former Uzbek militia leader, Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostum, [who] jetted back into Afghanistan from exile in Turkey, perhaps to deliver enough support to swing the election for Karzai in a single round.” (Reuters, Aug. 17) Even the pro-U.S./NATO corporate media call Dostum a “warlord.”

Casualties grow among NATO troops

With an explosion that killed three British troops—who now number over 9,000—the total killed of those soldiers went up to 204. Popular anti-war sentiment is growing in Britain, which has a long history, dating from the 19th century,

of taking heavy casualties while failing to conquer Afghanistan.

Despite this popular hostility to the war, Britain’s incoming army chief, Gen. David Richards, has said, “I believe that the UK will be committed to Afghanistan in some manner, development, governance, security sector reform, for the next 30 to 40 years.” (BBC, Aug. 7) And Prime Minister Gordon Brown has continued to defend British participation in the U.S.-led occupation.

A similar scenario is playing out in Italy, Germany, France and Spain, where the governments are trying to increase their military’s role, but where the populations are a majority to three-quarters for leaving Afghanistan either now or within a year. These governments have taken advantage of U.S. President Barack Obama’s popularity in Europe to defend participation in the unpopular occupation.

The reality is that Washington has made

participation in the Afghanistan occupation a condition for each of these countries sharing in the domination and exploitation of the world. Thus the governments push for war while the vast majority of the people prefer to stay out of the conflict. It’s a recipe for a collapse of the effort similar to what happened in Iraq.

A sober assessment from a U.S. officer

The U.S. 10th Mountain Division—which does its training at Fort Drum in upstate New York near the Canadian border—is now in Afghanistan taking part in the U.S. offensive aimed at holding things together for the election. Col. David Haight commands the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of that division in Logar and Wardak provinces near Kabul.

Haight had this assessment of the attitude of the Afghans should Karzai win the election: “I think that apathy is going to

turn into some anger when the administration doesn’t change, and I don’t think that anybody believes that Karzai is going to lose. There is going to be frustration from people who realize there is not going to be a change. The bottom line is they are going to be thinking: ‘Four more years of this crap?’” (guardian.co.uk, July 9)

More of the occupation troops were killed in July—71—than in any other month since 2001. August is following that trend. U.S. Vice President Joe Biden has been openly defending the war, as does the president.

And they are openly backing the unpopular Karzai, who is allied with the military leaders who ran Afghanistan into the ground and restored the opium trade. Just as in Europe—as well as in Afghanistan—the people in the United States are unlikely to be ready to take “four more years of this crap.”

E-mail: jcat@workers.org

Urgent: Ahmad Sa’adat transferred to isolation in Ramon prison!

The following statement was issued by the International Action Center.

Imprisoned Palestinian national leader Ahmad Sa’adat, the general secretary of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, was transferred on Aug. 11 to Ramon prison in the Naqab desert from Asqalan prison, where he had been held for a number of months. He remains in isolation; prior to his transfer from Asqalan, he had been held since Aug. 1 in a tiny isolation cell of 140 cm. by 240 cm. after being penalized for communicating with another prisoner in the isolation unit.

Attorney Buthaina Duqmaq, president of the Mandela Association for prisoners’ and detainees’ rights, reported that this transfer is yet another continuation of the policy of repression and isolation directed at Sa’adat by the Israeli prison administration, aimed at undermining his steadfastness and weakening his health and his leadership in the prisoners’ movement. Sa’adat has been moved repeatedly from prison to prison and subjected to fines, harsh conditions, isolation and solitary confinement, and medical neglect. Further reports have indicated that he is being denied attorney visits upon his transfer to Ramon.

Ahmad Sa’adat undertook a nine-day hunger strike in June in order to protest the increasing use of isolation against Palestinian prisoners and the denial of prisoners’ rights, won through long and hard struggle. The isolation unit at Ramon prison is reported to be one of the worst isolation units in terms of conditions and repeated violations of prisoners’ rights in the Israeli prison system.

Sa’adat is serving a 30-year sentence in Israeli military prisons. He was sentenced on political charges on Dec. 25 after a long and illegitimate military trial, which he boycotted. He was kidnapped by force in a military siege on the Palestinian Authority prison in Jericho, where he had been held since 2002 under U.S., British and P.A. guard.

Sa’adat is suffering from back injuries that require medical assistance and treatment. Instead of receiving the medical care he needs, the Israeli prison officials are refusing him access to specialists and engaging in medical neglect and maltreatment.

The Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa’adat demands an end to this isolation and calls upon all to protest at local Israeli embassies and consulates (the list is available at <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+>

the+Ministry/Diplomatic+misions/Website+of+Israeli+Missions+Abroad.htm) and to write to the International Committee of the Red Cross and other human rights organizations asking that they exercise their responsibilities and act swiftly to demand that the Israelis ensure that Ahmad Sa’adat and all Palestinian prisoners receive needed medical care and that this punitive isolation be ended. E-mail the ICRC, whose humanitarian mission includes monitoring the conditions of prisoners, at jer@icrc.org, and inform them about the urgent situation of Ahmad Sa’adat!

Ahmad Sa’adat has been repeatedly moved in an attempt to punish him for his steadfastness and leadership and to undermine his leadership in the prisoners’ movement. Of course, these tactics have done nothing of the sort. The Palestinian prisoners are daily on the front lines, confronting Israeli oppression and crimes. Today, it is urgent that we stand with Ahmad Sa’adat and all Palestinian prisoners against these abuses and for freedom for all Palestinian prisoners and for all of Palestine!

Visit the Campaign to Free Ahmad Sa’adat at www.freeahmadsaadat.org.

Sentenced to 30 days

GI refuses to go to Afghanistan

By Dee Knight

Iraq war veteran Victor Agosto was sentenced to 30 days in jail on Aug. 5 for refusing to deploy to Afghanistan after the Army extended his enlistment.

Agosto returned from a 13-month combat tour in Iraq in late 2007. He told the court in Texas he believes the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan violate international law. (New York Times, August 6) At the hearing, in response to his sentence, which included a reduction to the rank of private, he ripped a patch showing his specialist rank off his uniform, to cheers from several dozen members of the Killeen, Texas, anti-war community.

As guards escorted him away, “he flashed a peace sign as supporters did the same and raised fists. Despite a guard’s repeated warnings of ‘no pictures,’ cameras clicked and film rolled,” according to Alice Embree of the Austin-based Rag Blog. (<http://theragblog.blogspot.com/>)

“At 7:00,” the Rag Blog report says, “under a still unforgiving Texas sun, about 60 supporters gathered at the East Gate of Fort Hood. Active duty soldiers in Iraq Veterans Against the War were joined by people from Killeen, Belton, Austin, and as far away as Fort Worth. Protesters stood across from the sprawling military base—the country’s largest—holding signs of support for Victor

and chanting. Drivers passing by flashed peace signs, held thumbs up and honked, proving that there is more of a bond than most would suspect between the peace movement and the soldiers and military families ground down by multiple deployments in seemingly unending wars.”

Attorney James Branum, who co-chairs the National Lawyers Guild’s Military Law Task Force and served as Agosto’s legal adviser, said Agosto will most likely be held in a county detention center in Belton, Texas, and then be returned to his unit at Fort Hood before receiving an other-than-honorable discharge. He was not charged with desertion or being absent without leave, but with disobeying

orders. The penalty was the maximum specified under a plea agreement with military prosecutors.

Agosto refused deployment to Afghanistan in April, after learning the Army was keeping him beyond his enlistment date under the hated “stop-loss” policy. “There is no way I will deploy to Afghanistan,” Agosto wrote on a military counseling statement (a routine piece of Army paperwork) which he turned in on May 1 to the commander of a Fort Hood unit headed for Afghanistan. “The occupation is immoral and unjust. It does not make the American people any safer. It has the opposite effect.”

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What those guns signify

When a man dropped his gun at a town hall forum in Arizona, it was a sign that the town hall disruptions around the country were about much more than health care reform.

Just a few days after the Arizona incident, a man bearing a sidearm appeared outside President Barack Obama's Aug. 11 town hall meeting in Portsmouth, N.H. He was holding a sign stating, "It is time to water the tree of liberty." It was a reference to Thomas Jefferson's famous statement, "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." It represented a clear threat to the life of President Obama.

Most recently about a dozen armed right-wingers were seen carrying guns outside the Phoenix Convention Center, where Obama spoke to veterans on Aug. 17.

It is now safe to say what most observers already know in their heart—the town hall disruptions have little to do with health reform.

Yes, the topic of discussion at many of these forums is health care. And yes, there is a severe health care crisis in the United States that the Democratic health care plan does far too little to address.

That, however, is not why right-wingers are bringing their guns to town.

Health care is not the reason conservative radio host Mike Levin stated that Obama is "literally at war with the American people." Anger over health care does not explain Fox News host Glenn Beck's comment that Obama "has a deep-seated hatred for white people." It is insufficient to explain former Republican vice presidential candidate Sara Palin's lie that Obama was planning "death panels" for the elderly and the disabled.

No, what these words and actions expose is an orchestrated campaign by the extreme right to whip up the most backward whites into a racist frenzy by using President Obama as a fall guy for the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

It is an attempt to channel the legitimate anger over joblessness and lack of health care into a racist backlash that divides the multinational working class, separates white workers from their Black and Latino/a brothers and sisters, and

prevents a unified class struggle capable of taking on the ruling class, from Washington to Wall Street.

In this respect health care is being used as a wedge issue much the same as abortion, same-sex marriage and immigration are used by the ruling class to divide workers.

Why aren't the leaders of organized labor mobilizing the rank and file against racism and for jobs as well as health care?

Where are the mass marches of workers demanding a jobs program at a living wage? Where are the caravans of uninsured and unemployed workers traveling the country in a dramatic call for jobs and health care for all?

With more than 16 million workers organized at the points of production and service delivery and hundreds of millions of dollars in union dues at their disposal, the only thing stopping the labor unions from mobilizing a mass movement around these issues is the will to do so.

In the absence of a sizeable left movement in this country, the most reactionary elements of the right wing have been emboldened.

A highly significant step in building a working-class response to the economic crisis is the September 20 National March for Jobs in Pittsburgh. The jobs march is scheduled just days before government leaders and finance ministers from some of the world's richest countries meet there as part of the G-20 Summit to figure out how to save themselves in the midst of the global economic crisis.

Some brave local union leaders, including the San Francisco Labor Council, the International Longshore and Warehouse Local 10 and the Letter Carriers Local 214, have endorsed the call for a jobs march. Where will you be on Sept. 20?

For information on the National March for Jobs, see bailoutpeople.org.

••• Bulletin •••

Troy Davis wins new hearing

Troy Davis, 40, who has been imprisoned for half his life, may finally have a chance to prove his innocence.

The Supreme Court, in a highly unusual ruling, on Aug. 17 ordered a federal judge in Georgia to hold a hearing at which Davis could present evidence to disprove that he killed an Atlanta police officer in 1989. Davis has three times come within hours of execution, but a worldwide outcry has stayed the hand of the state.

Why should this ruling come as a surprise? Seven of the nine witnesses who testified against Davis have recanted. One of the two remaining may be the real shooter. A hearing and/or a new trial should be a no-brainer.

Yet until now Davis has been unable to get a court to hear this new evidence. Justice Antonin Scalia said in his dissent that the Supreme Court has never held that the Constitution forbids the execution of an innocent person. Yes, you heard it right. But this time, Scalia was in a minority.

U.S. "justice" is seen around the world as a racist system that locks up people without money, especially people of color, by the millions. The Davis case has been proof of that. This ruling is a victory for all who have been fighting the system. □

Sentenced to 30 days

GI refuses to go to Afghanistan

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Rather than going AWOL or trying to escape punishment, Agosto reported for work, but refused all orders that directly supported the war, according to the Rag Blog report.

Agosto received strong support from Under the Hood, a GI coffee house near Fort Hood in Killeen, Texas, as well as from a whole network of supporters both local and national. Courage to Resist, based in Oakland, Calif., set up a defense fund for him, as it has for many GI resisters (see www.couragetoresist.org).

In a statement on his court martial, Agosto said: "I have learned that nothing is more frightening to power than a direct and principled challenge to its authority. The truth is on our side and those who have incarcerated me know it."

Widespread resistance 'under the radar'

"While some GI resisters go public," writes Courage to Resist organizer Sarah Lazar, "much resistance happens silently, under the radar, in circles of trusted friends, in the small acts that fly in the face of military obedience and command. Their stories serve as a reminder that there are multiple ways to resist military control, and despite military efforts to quash dissent, these varied forms of resistance are as ongoing as the wars themselves."

Army AWOL rates are the highest since 1980, and the desertion rate has jumped 80 percent since the start of the Iraq War, Lazar observes.

In early August Lazar published an interview with two GIs who recently won

discharges (available at www.truthout.org). Their stories "give a glimpse into the world of GI resistance—the oft-hidden side of the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," which includes widespread "work slowdowns, letter-writing campaigns, and one-on-one organizing with fellow soldiers."

The GIs tell "how they convinced several in their unit to deliberately fail physical training, called public attention to the insufficient training and gear ... and found creative ways to encourage soldiers to 'drop the military before the military drops you.'"

Courage to Resist presented a workshop on supporting GI resistance on Aug. 7 at the annual Veterans For Peace/Iraq Veterans Against the War convention in College Park, Md. Both organizations, with a combined membership approaching 10,000, have committed to ongoing support for organizing resistance among active-duty GIs.

British soldier refuses to fight in Afghanistan

In England, court martial proceedings have begun against Lance Cpl. Joe Glenton, the first British soldier to speak out publicly against the war in Afghanistan. Glenton has joined the Stop the War Coalition. On July 30 he delivered a letter to British Prime Minister Gordon Brown giving his reasons for refusing to fight an unjust war (See <http://stopwar.org.uk/>). His case has received widespread media coverage, including on British Broadcasting Corp.'s TV News. Email support to joeinnocent@hotmail.co.uk. □

BEFORE THE G-20 SUMMIT A CALL TO JOIN A NATIONAL



MARCH FOR JOBS

IN PITTSBURGH SUNDAY, SEPT. 20

The Unemployed, the Homeless, the Hungry & the Poor must no longer be INVISIBLE & SILENT

TENT CITY ON THE HILL Sept. 20-25

Revive Dr. King's dream of a movement for a right to a job.

If you don't have a job, fight to get one – if you have one – fight to keep it.

DEMAND: A Jobs Program for ALL Now!

- A Moratorium on Layoffs, Foreclosures & Evictions.
- No Cuts in Social Services. • Fund Peoples Needs, Not War & Greed.
- Take the profit out of Healthcare. Single Payer Yes, Racism No.

Join the "Jobs or Income Now" caravans (cars, vans, buses) from across the country.

Volunteers & funds needed
Organizing meetings every Wed. at 6:30 p.m. at the Solidarity Center, 55 W. 17th St., 5th Fl. between 5th & 6th Ave., Manhattan

Contact: **Bail Out the People Movement**
BailOutPeople.org March4Jobs@gmail.com
NYC: **212-633-6646** PITTSBURGH: **412-780-3813**

Buses departing from NYC Sat. night, Sept. 19 at 11:30 p.m. • Tickets \$60/\$30 for fixed & low-income
Solidarity Center 55 W. 17th St. 5th Fl., between 5th & 6th Ave., Manhattan

U.S. offensive in Latin America: A continent resists

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Hondurans continue the struggle in the streets. Defying criminal police and military who repress, arrest and shoot tear and pepper gas, rubber bullets and live ammunition at them, the people have protested the military coup regime every day for seven long weeks.

Through marches, cultural gatherings of resistance, assemblies and the multiple other ways the collective ingenuity has been displayed, the National Popular Front of Resistance Against the Coup D'état has fought. The labor movement, women and men, young and old, the Afro-Honduran Garifuna people and the Indigenous peoples have given the world a revolutionary lesson in united resilience and determination.

They have earned the name, "Los Incansables" (the tireless ones), whose main slogan is "Nos tienen miedo porque no tenemos miedo" (They are afraid of us because we are unafraid).

Their only weapons are matches to set tires on fire and rocks, stones and sticks to defend themselves from the rifle and machinegun toting repressive forces of the coup regime. This brave people have taken on a historic task—defending their right to have the kind of government that they want and desperately need.

They are aware that their struggle will determine the future not only for Honduras, but for all Latin America. They know that their struggle is not only against coup leader Roberto Micheletti's illegal and criminal regime, but against U.S. imperialism as well. Through the coup in Honduras and other recent offensive moves on the continent, Washington is trying to reverse the progressive processes unfolding throughout Latin America.

On Aug. 16 at the latest of a series of meetings and assemblies the Beverage Workers Union (STIBYS) has held to organize the resistance and report about developments, the Popular Front shared the following information:

- An international delegation of human rights observers read their final report documenting an extensive list of the coup regime's violations.
- A representative of the Popular Labor Union Federation of Brazil called the coup a threat to all Latin America and said that his organization was joining the Honduran struggle.
- Artists affiliated with the Popular Front announced a political-cultural concert for Aug. 23.
- Regional sections of the Popular Front have been established in several cities.

- The Human Rights International Commission of the OAS will arrive on Monday to witness the violations. And a commission of foreign ministers of the OAS countries is supposed to arrive soon also. The resistance hopes that the findings of these commissions will force the United States to pressure the Micheletti's government into resigning.

Washington tries to revive Monroe Doctrine

The Democratic administration in Washington has made public statements supporting legitimate Honduran President Manuel Zelaya's right to return to office. The administration has also denied that seven military bases set for Colombia will be U.S. bases. Both statements are sheer hypocrisy, and both events are part of a deliberate plan carefully orchestrated by the Pentagon to regain control of the region.

With growing frustration, Washington has witnessed how Latin American countries are detaching themselves from the North's imperialist control and asserting their sovereignty. Even countries like Brazil, with a moderate president, have often questioned U.S. policies toward Latin America. Washington has watched with horror as Latin American countries establish relations and trade with China, Iran and Russia.

To the U.S. rulers, these moves toward sovereignty are a danger for "national security," meaning their freedom to freely exploit the continent.

For example, Brazil, with the largest economy of the region, has had since 1990 a strategic alliance with China. According to an article in the Aug. 14 Mexican daily La Jornada, "20 years ago China was the 12th trading partner for Latin America, with just \$8 billion in trade; but since 2007 it has been in second place, with more than \$100 billion in trade. And this year China was the first trading partner of Brazil, surpassing the United States. It has also strengthened ties with Venezuela, Argentina and Ecuador."

So, what does Washington do to try to contain these advances? What the U.S.

does best: militarize! Last year the U.S. resurrected the infamous IV Fleet, which now dangerously roams throughout the waters off Latin America, and goes as far as into the heart of the countries, through their rivers. The Plan Mérida, a copy of military Plan Colombia, but this time targeting Mexico, was signed into law on June 30, 2008.

The most recent and most dangerous military maneuver is the Pentagon Southern Command's use of seven military bases in Colombia. This move has faced the firmest opposition from Latin American countries and movements, who see this military expansion as an enormous threat to the region, particularly to Colombia's neighboring countries of Ecuador and Venezuela, whose governments consider the Pentagon's takeover of the bases as an act of war.

Ecuador broke relations with Colombia after the Colombian military in 2008 bombed a FARC diplomatic camp inside Ecuador. Just now Venezuela stopped trade with Colombia after Colombia accused Venezuela of providing weapons to the FARC, a charge that both Venezuela and the FARC deny.

The question of these U.S. bases in Colombia was a major topic at a UNASUR meeting in Ecuador on Aug. 10. Colombian President Álvaro Uribe, anticipating broad condemnation, refused to attend the meeting. Instead he toured seven countries—Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay—to give his spin regarding the bases and at the same time gather support for his accusations against Venezuela.

Except for his stop in Peru, a country already politically in line with Colombia and the U.S., Uribe's efforts were wasted. During the UNASUR meeting the countries present called an urgent and special meeting in Argentina for Aug. 28, which Uribe will be forced to attend to discuss the issue of the bases.

Brazilian President Lula Da Silva added that UNASUR should talk directly with U.S. President Barack Obama to let him know about "our opinion and disgust." Argentina's President Cristina Fernández also addressed the need to

meet with the U.S. to clarify that country's relationship with Latin America. (Telesurtv.net)

Ecuador, the Citizens' Revolution advances

An example of the advances that Washington opposes is Ecuador's. Last Aug. 10, the same day as the UNASUR meeting, Ecuador was celebrating the 200th anniversary of its independence and the second term in office of President Rafael Correa, mandated by the new constitution. The day before, Correa participated in an Indigenous ceremony accompanied by Guatemalan Nobel laureate Rigoberta Menchú and Bolivian President Evo Morales, where Correa was given a symbolic baton of leadership crafted by the community.

In his speech, Ecuador's leader repeated what he has been trying to practice through his administration: that "preferential option for the poor, the young and ancestral peoples ... for whom justice has been too long delayed." (Reuter, Aug. 9)

Correa initiates his second term in office with 66-percent popularity in a country that previously had seven presidents in 10 years. He spoke vehemently and movingly at the three events of the day: during the UNASUR meeting where he succeeded Chilean President Michelle Bachelet in the presidency of that organization, at the official ceremony and at the evening popular celebration.

Correa gave an overview of the accomplishments of his government and presented his plans for the new term. He spoke about the deepening of the revolution, the path of Ecuador towards "21st century socialism," and the formation of Committees for the Defense of the Revolution, among many other topics. Correa has an excellent relation with Ecuador's people. He and they demonstrate mutual respect and admiration.

Saying, "This Revolution belongs to the people," Correa got great applause when he added, "Human beings are above capital and will never again be victims of the neoliberal machine and savage capitalism." (Earth Times, Aug. 10)

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More U.N. repression in Haiti

By G. Dunkel

After two days of a general strike, the people of Lascahobas, Haiti, held a peaceful rally Aug. 6 and set up blockades on the road to the Dominican Republic. They were upset that, even though they had been without electricity for a few months,

the Haitian electricity company, EDH, had decided to cannibalize their generator to repair the one in Mirebalais. (Haïti-Liberté, Aug. 12-18).

Lascahobas has just 7,500 people, according to the geography database Geonames. It is located on Haiti's central plateau, about 70 miles northeast of Port-au-Prince, and is the administrative center for a larger region of about 135,000 people.

Its mayor, Gérard Joseph, told the Haitian press that Minustah, the U.N.'s occupation force in Haiti, killed two protesters and injured six. He said, "I saw soldiers firing from an armored personnel carrier." He urged human rights organizations and the Haitian authorities to investigate this situation.

While some of the figures varied slightly, all the Haitian press reported that there was a serious confrontation in Lascahobas. For example, Radio Kontak Inter reported that, in addition to Haitian police reports that two people were shot dead, seven more were injured, and two of them later died. A number of Haitian sources report that one of the dead was a 7-year-old child.

Minustah spokesperson Sophie Boutaud de Lacombe claimed that the Nepalese soldiers involved in the incident did not fire on the crowd, because it contained women and children, but she did admit that they fired in the air over protesters' heads. (Radio Metropole)

One of the protesters, interviewed in the Zanmi Lasante hospital, stated: "After I was shot in the arm, I couldn't keep on marching. I was leaning against a car, when some Minustah soldiers came up and shot me in the other arm. Then one of them kicked me." (Haïti-Liberté, Aug. 12-18)

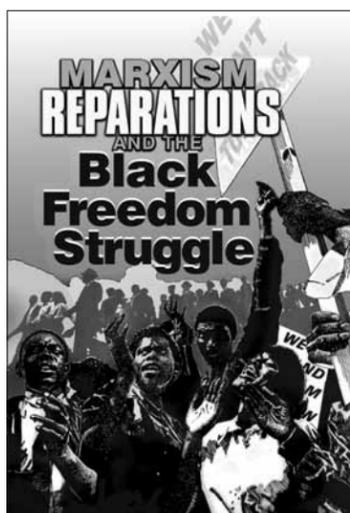
The Haitian cops claimed that they did not participate in this confrontation in any fashion, but to avoid retaliation they withdrew to Mirebalais, about an hour away by car.

Minustah is in Haiti to protect the political and economic interests of the United States, along with those of Canada and France. Instead of its proclaimed, lofty goals of "peace and security leading to economic development," Minustah has brought Haiti terror, murder and heartache. It is just an occupying power with blue helmets. □

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DE HONDURAS A COLOMBIA

La política de Estados Unidos amenaza a América Latina

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El viejo refrán, “Las acciones dicen más que las palabras”, resalta una peligrosa realidad en lo que se refiere a cualquier supuesto cambio en las relaciones de Estados Unidos con América Latina, especialmente en cuanto a Honduras y Colombia se refiere.

En la última Cumbre de las Américas en Puerto España, en Trinidad y Tobago, el Presidente Barack Obama rompió con la fuerte retórica del ex Presidente George W. Bush. Habló en un tono un poco más conciliatorio hacia América Latina, y aún sobre Cuba, diciendo, “Nosotros no estamos enraizados en las políticas que fueron formuladas antes de que yo naciera”. Esta aparente nueva actitud del norte trajo la esperanza de que la larga intervención imperialista en la región pudiera disminuir.

Pero los eventos en Honduras y Colombia muestran que las famosas palabras de Simón Bolívar, “Los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica parecen destinados por la Providencia a plagar la América toda de miserias en nombre de la libertad”, parece prevalecer.

HONDURAS, una encrucijada decisiva

Apenas dos meses después de la cumbre, un golpe de estado reminiscente de las dictaduras respaldadas por Estados Unidos en América Latina en los años setenta, se llevó a cabo en Honduras con la ayuda de Washington. Inicialmente, las palabras de Obama y la Secretaria de Estado Hillary Clinton parecieron tomar el lado del pueblo hondureño. Y aunque hablaron mucho después de que los lí-

deres de América Latina y del mundo condenaran el golpe, Obama y Clinton también condenaron el golpe criminal y dijeron que Washington reconocía sólo al legítimo Presidente de Honduras, Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

Desde entonces, la administración Obama ha ayudado a los líderes del golpe a través de diferentes maniobras y ha suavizado su oposición a los golpistas. Clinton incluso públicamente se ha opuesto al intento de Zelaya de regresar a Honduras, llamando a Zelaya un “imprudente” por tratar de cruzar la frontera antes de lograrse un acuerdo.

A pesar de la ayuda del imperialismo estadounidense que incluye una monumental campaña mediática a favor de los golpistas criminales, el régimen golpista tiene serios problemas. Una potente resistencia ha surgido uniendo a todos los sectores que se oponen al golpe de estado, que han puesto todas las diferencias políticas a un lado y están trabajando incesantemente y en cooperación con un solo objetivo principal: la derrota del golpe de estado.

Frente a la represión, asesinatos, detenciones masivas, torturas, toques de queda constantes, etc., este movimiento, organizado bajo el Frente Nacional Popular de Resistencia Contra el Golpe de Estado, contrariamente a las expectativas de los EEUU, ha crecido y se ha fortalecido.

Juan Barahona, de la Federación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Honduras (FUTH) y líder del Frente Popular puso de manifiesto la fuerza de la resistencia en una entrevista el 8 de agosto. La primera llamada de Mundo Obrero (Workers World), encontró a Barahona en medio de una asamblea, que a su vez refleja el

actual carácter consultativo del movimiento, que evalúa cuidadosamente cada acontecimiento y desarrollo a fin de planificar las acciones adecuadas.

Barahona agradeció a MO/WW y el Centro de Acción Internacional su apoyo y solidaridad: “Para nosotros, la solidaridad y el apoyo que los pueblos del mundo nos han dado es lo que nos mantiene en alta nuestra moral, con la firmeza y la convicción de que vamos a derrotar a los golpistas”.

El dirigente de la resistencia continuó diciendo: “Aquí estamos luchando firmemente, resistiendo, organizando movilizaciones masivas en contra del golpe de estado. El próximo martes y el miércoles [12 de agosto], miles de hondureños llegarán a San Pedro Sula y Tegucigalpa, procedentes de todo el país para fortalecer la resistencia. Esta semana una comisión de la OEA [Organización de Estados Americanos] encabezada por Insulza, acompañado por cinco cancilleres llegará aquí. Esperamos que el tiempo de los golpistas esté próximo y [que] entreguen el poder al presidente legítimo”.

“Estamos exigiendo que Obama aumente la presión en contra de los golpistas, ya que hasta ahora nos parece que el gobierno de los EEUU no ha hecho lo suficiente para presionar a los golpistas para que se rindan. Lo más importante es la demanda de suspender todo el apoyo financiero y militar a Honduras. Esa es la razón por la que no se rinden, porque es como el oxígeno que les mantiene vivo”.

Más tarde, MO/WW se enteró de que el régimen golpista de Roberto Micheletti había impedido que la delegación de la OEA llegara a Honduras, indicando que el Secretario General José Miguel Insulza

no era bienvenido porque no era neutral.

Más de 40 días de constantes acciones en las calles han ilustrado la aseveración de Barahona de que el movimiento de resistencia es cada vez más amplio y nuevos sectores se están sumando. El país está prácticamente paralizado. Hospitales y escuelas han cerrado. Los trabajadores de la Compañía Nacional de Energía Eléctrica se han sumado a la huelga. La Asociación Nacional de Meteorólogos de Honduras ha declarado una huelga indefinida que afecta el tránsito aéreo en todos los aeropuertos, los cuales han tenido que cerrarse. Los taxistas también se han sumado a la huelga.

COLOMBIA— la esperanza de EEUU para desestabilizar la región

Mientras Washington titubea en condenar el golpe en Honduras, militariza masivamente a Colombia, la que muchos llaman el “Israel de América Latina” por su papel como flagrante títere militar de EEUU. El Pentágono tiene previsto aumentar su presencia en Colombia mucho más allá de lo que fuera una simple sustitución de funciones de la base de Manta en Ecuador luego de que el Presidente Rafael Correa se negara a renovar el contrato de 10 años.

El Pentágono ahora tendrá un amplio acceso a otras siete bases militares en Colombia—tres del ejército, dos de la fuerza aérea y dos navales, una de ellas en el Pacífico y la otra en el Caribe, muy cerca de la Guajira, región fronteriza con Venezuela.

Washington y su títere presidente paramilitar colombiano, Álvaro Uribe mantienen que las bases son necesarias para luchar contra el narcotráfico y el “terrorismo” y que esto es simplemente una extensión del Plan Colombia. Ni siquiera las llaman bases militares de EEUU.

Durante una reciente reunión con periodistas de habla hispana, Obama dijo: “Ha habido algunos en la región que han estado tratando de mostrar esto como parte de la retórica tradicional anti-yanqui. Esto no es exacto. Hemos tenido un acuerdo de seguridad con Colombia desde hace muchos años. Hemos actualizado dicho acuerdo. No tenemos ninguna intención de establecer una base militar estadounidense en Colombia”.

“Esta es la continuación”, dijo Obama, “de la ayuda que les hemos estado proporcionado. No tenemos ninguna intención de enviar un gran número de tropas adicionales a Colombia, y tenemos todo el interés en que Colombia y sus vecinos operen pacíficamente”. (Reuters.com, 7 de agosto)

Pero los líderes de América Latina lo ven de manera distinta. Se han pronunciado en contra de la creación de dichas bases como un suceso peligroso que puede conducir a una guerra en la región y actuar en contra de sus países vecinos, Ecuador y Venezuela, cuyos presidentes ya han denunciado la instalación de nuevas bases militares de EEUU en Colombia.

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Carta a la redacción

Los bancos estrangulan a California

John Parker en su artículo del 13 de agosto titulado, “Tax the corporations”, (Que paguen las corporaciones), está en lo correcto al decir que los ricos paguen por el déficit presupuestario de California. Ellos se han chupado todos los recursos humanos, financieros, y ambientales por siglos sin tener que pagar un centavo.

Hace aproximadamente 50 años, un nuevo plan fue lanzado en Estados Unidos para asegurar que los banqueros y los súper inversionistas tuvieran una forma legal y libre de impuestos para transferir a sus bolsillos anualmente el dinero que paga la población en impuestos—servicio por la deuda. Hace cincuenta años California pagaba sus cuentas con los fondos de sus ingresos generales. Después comenzó a vender bonos a los bancos inversionistas y a compañías de accionistas. Cada año se rendía el interés de estos bonos libres de impuestos. Y cada año se vendían nuevos bonos y los intereses debidos (servicio de deuda), crecían aún más.

Los bancos comenzaron a preocuparse

al ver que el porcentaje del presupuesto del estado para el pago del servicio de la deuda iba creciendo. Entonces lograron que sus amigos en la legislatura de California modificaran la constitución estatal para que se pagara el servicio de deuda antes de que se pagara cualquier otra cuenta.

Qué gran ventaja para los bancos. Pronto descubrieron formas adicionales para robar. El estado formó “autoridades” de todas clases—fuera del control público, que también vendía bonos—que dando el presupuesto de California como responsable por el servicio de la deuda. Es casi un secreto estatal poder encontrar la cantidad exacta de la deuda y el servicio por la deuda que se paga anualmente. Pero estos son algunos ejemplos:

En el presupuesto actual, el pago directo por el servicio de la deuda es de aproximadamente \$7,0 mil millones. Si a esto se suma el Departamento de Recursos del Agua (\$1,3 mil millones), el sistema de universidades de California (el total no se sabe, es estimado a \$2,7

mil millones), y una agencia que vende bonos para cubrir el déficit presupuestario (\$1,4 mil millones) da un total de \$12,4 mil millones sin incluir las otras autoridades. Los bancos compran bonos de California con dinero de los impuestos federales bajo el Programa de Asistencia para los Activos en Problemas, y después tenemos que pagarles nuevamente con interés, y los bancos no pagan impuestos sobre estas ganancias.

El estado podría declarar una emergencia y posponer o no pagar el servicio de la deuda y no tomar más prestado. Todos los economistas burgueses gritarían, ¡Qué horror! La capacidad crediticia de California se iría al fondo. Bueno, ya está en el fondo forzando al estado pagar tasas de interés más altas. Hay que imponer impuestos a las corporaciones, las empresas agrícolas y especialmente a los bancos y aumentar los beneficios a los/as trabajadores/as quienes son los/as que producen toda la riqueza.

—Gavrielle Gemma, Jersey City, N.J.