

WORKERS WORLD

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100,000 march in Puerto Rico

National work stoppage protests mass layoffs

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The masses in Puerto Rico sent a strong message to the pro-statehood administration of Gov. Luis Fortuño and his capitalist allies when more than 100,000 people came out on Oct. 15 in San Juan and Hato Rey to protest the current government's neoliberal policies, including more than 20,000 layoffs in the public sector.

Despite a heavy police presence, National Guard assistance and the police chief's threat of invoking the Patriot Act against the protesters, the people converged from several points in the city on Plaza Las Américas shopping mall, which had closed out of fear of the demonstration. The police chief is also an FBI agent.

During the march, a sizable youth contingent blocked access to the heavily trafficked intersection of Las Américas and Roosevelt avenues for five whole hours.

Organizers characterized El Paro Nacional—the national work stoppage—as a complete success. The closing of the largest mall in the area and the virtual paralysis of the financial center of the nation—a mile-long section of Ponce de León Avenue known as the Milla de Oro [the Golden Mile], which is home to the main banks and mortgages firms—symbolized the Paro's message: Shut down the creators of the economic crisis. One of the Paro's slogans was “Que la crisis la paguen los ricos,” which in English means “Let the rich pay for the crisis.”

An Oct. 15 Univisión article reads, “According to economists, the national stoppage caused economic losses upwards of \$30 million.”

Background of the Paro

The world economic crisis hit Puerto Rico severely. The announced layoffs are one more blow to the already untenable conditions of the majority of Puerto Ricans, who already suffer from 16-percent official unemployment. The new sales tax, along with higher costs for essential basic services like water, electricity, telephone, health and transportation, plus increased property taxes, have been a heavy burden that they can no longer endure.

The government has issued two laws that protect capital at the expense of the livelihood of millions of Puerto Ricans. Law No. 7, known as the “Special Law Declaring a State of Fiscal Emergency and Establishing an Integral Plan to Save Puerto Rico's Credit,” was passed last March. This law promoted the layoffs and the Paro's number one priority was to get it repealed. Law No. 29 is the “Law of Public-Private Alliances (the LAPP),” which seeks to privatize everything that was not privatized by



PHOTO: INDYMEDIAPR.ORG

Banner carried by Puerto Rican youth in Oct. 15 protest reads ‘No to the privatization of the minds of the future.’

the previous Pedro Roselló pro-statehood administration of the late 1990s.

Interview with National Paro leader Pedraza

Luis Pedraza Leduc, leader of the Program of Solidarity of the militant union PROSOL-UTIER (the union of workers in the electricity and hydropower industry) and a spokesperson of the Labor Coordinating Committee (CS) and the Broad Front of Solidarity and Struggle (FAdSyL), one of the two general organizations behind the Paro, spoke with Workers World.

WW: How did the Paro develop?

LPL: It was an attempt to put pressure on the government on Oct. 15, precipitated by the layoffs of 20,000 workers on Sept. 25. The response from some labor sectors was to turn the activity that was planned for that day against a convention of investors at the Convention Center into a national work stoppage. This initiative started to take form and got the support of all the labor and social sectors of Puerto Rico.

One of the main achievements was that the convention got postponed because of the Paro. This was going to be a meeting of 250 investors from around the world representing different companies. As a result of the LAPP, the government had hired a consultant company based in London to promote Puerto Rico as a destiny for investors to accelerate privatization.

WW: Who initiated the Paro?

LPL: In Puerto Rico we have two groups that have been dealing with the labor and political issues around these neoliberal policies. One is the FAdSyL and the CS and the other is the Coalition All Puerto Rico with Puerto Rico (TPRcPR) with three labor sectors that are grouped under the Labor Coalition [This labor group is different from

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Analyzing crisis at home and abroad

Workers World Party conference is timely

By **Monica Moorehead**

In 1959 Workers World Party was founded by Sam Marcy, Dorothy Ballan, Vince Copeland and other U.S. working-class leaders based on the teachings of Karl Marx and Vladimir Lenin. This Nov. 14-15 Workers World Party will hold a national conference in New York City marking its 50th anniversary.

More than just marking a landmark anniversary, the conference will take up the contributions Workers World Party has made to the worldwide class struggle with its consistent revolutionary theory and practice.

Two goals of the conference will be to analyze the current state of the global class struggle and the capitalist economic crisis and to show why only socialism can end exploitation, racism and war.

This conference comes in the midst of deepening impoverishment among hundreds of millions of people worldwide in the biggest crisis of the capitalist economic system since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The conference will explore important questions, including what is the next stage of this crisis and what does a "jobless recovery" mean? Will the working class and oppressed peoples, in the U.S. and around the world, be able to mount a real struggle in their own defense?

With Barack Obama as the first African-American president of the U.S. imperialist government, what unique challenges does this create for Black workers, immigrant workers, the whole working class and anti-imperialist movements?

The two-day conference will evaluate important mass

organizing in many cities against foreclosures, evictions, layoffs, utility shut-offs and plant closings and for united mobilizations against the multibillion-dollar bank bailout.

The conference will take up the enormous opposition within Honduras to the right-wing coup d'état and what activists and revolutionaries in the U.S. can do to aid the popular resistance there and elsewhere around the world, including in Palestine, Puerto Rico, Africa and Afghanistan.

Thoughtful consideration will be given to how the deepening capitalist economic crisis, the endless wars and occupations, and the development of the class struggle can contribute to forging greater unity and solidarity against national oppression, women's oppression and lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression in the United States.

The conference will feature plenaries, discussion groups and strategy sessions with activists and Workers World Party members from across the country representing many different struggles. There will also be music and spoken-word performances. Spanish translation for some plenaries will be provided.

Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) organizers are planning a special workshop for youth and student activists. Guest speakers representing labor, community, youth and anti-imperialist struggles will share their important experiences and join others in conference deliberations.

For more information about the conference, including venue, literature, pre-registration, housing and more, visit www.workersworld.net or call 212-627-2994. □

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

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

West Coast Editor: John Parker
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Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator
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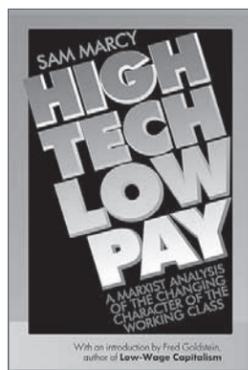
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World View Forum has reissued this classic work by Sam Marcy, Workers World Party founder.

As wages fall and unemployment rises, this 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.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low-Wage Capitalism," explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, which has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

"High Tech, Low Pay" is a must-read for working people—employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized—and activists nationwide.

Books available online at Leftbooks.com and on sale at bookstores around the country.

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

National Office
 55 W. 17 St.,
 New York, NY 10011
 212-627-2994;
 Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org
Atlanta
 c/o Solidarity Center
 2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.
 Baltimore, MD 21218
 443-909-8964
baltimore@workers.org
Boston
 284 Amory St.,
 Boston, MA 02130
 617-983-3835
 Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
 367 Delaware Ave.
 Buffalo, NY 14202
 716-883-2534
buffalo@workers.org
Chicago
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138
 Chicago, IL 60606
 773-381-5839
chicago@workers.org
Cleveland
 P.O. Box 5963
 Cleveland, OH 44101
 216-531-4004
cleveland@workers.org
Denver
denver@workers.org
Detroit
 5920 Second Ave.,
 Detroit, MI 48202
 313-831-0750
detroit@workers.org

Durham, NC
Durham@workers.org
Houston
 P.O. Box 595
 Houston,
 TX 77001-0595
 713-861-5965
houston@workers.org
Los Angeles
 5274 W Pico Blvd
 Suite # 207
 Los Angeles, CA 90019
la@workers.org
Milwaukee
milwaukee@workers.org
Philadelphia
 P.O. Box 23843,
 Philadelphia,
 PA 19143
 610-931-2615
phila@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
 585-436-6458
rochester@workers.org
San Diego, Calif.
 P.O. Box 33447
 San Diego,
 CA 92163
 619-692-0355
San Francisco
 2940 16th St., #207
 San Francisco,
 CA 94103
 415-738-4739
sf@workers.org
Tucson, Ariz.
tucson@workers.org
Washington, D.C.
 P.O. Box 57300,
 Washington, DC 20037
dc@workers.org

150 years later

Spirit of Harper's Ferry raid lives

By Shelley Ettinger

For the masses of workers and oppressed people in this country—those whose days are consumed with trying to survive and feed their families, keep a roof over their heads and get some kind of minimal health care or education—for the majority, that is, who grab their news in quick gulps on TV or radio, Web sites or tabloid newspapers, Oct. 16 was just another day.

They never heard a word about its import. That's not surprising, but it is a damn shame, for Oct. 16 is one of the most important dates in U.S. history. And this year was the 150th anniversary of the vitally significant event that happened on that date.

That event is the raid on the U.S. Army arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Va. This military assault by an armed, well-trained, united band of Black and white militants was intended to be the opening battle in what would then develop into a widespread guerrilla war that would topple the system of chattel slavery.

The troop had written, hashed out and agreed upon a revised, improved Constitution guaranteeing race and sex equality. It was to be a new charter for the new country they envisioned rising out of the ashes of the old one that had been built on the backs of enslaved Africans and wholesale theft of Indigenous lands.

With this Constitution in hand, with a pledge to succeed or die, with almost unimaginable courage, 23 people went to Harper's Ferry on Oct. 16, 1859, to take on the slaveocracy.

Their leader was John Brown. He was known as "Captain Brown" or "Old Osawatomie" because of his heroic exploits three years earlier, in 1856 in Kansas, where he and his troops waged a series of victorious battles that proved decisive in bringing Kansas into the Union as a free rather than a slave state. Brown's tactical brilliance; his unwavering spirit and optimism even in the face of the death of one of his sons and disabling of another; an utter absence of the racism that tainted most of the prominent white abolitionists; and, above all, his bone-deep commitment to the cause to which he devoted his entire life—all this led the group that assembled

to plan and carry out the raid on Harper's Ferry to determine that Brown must lead the charge.

The group was unprecedented in every way. It was made up of Black and white together, just as the farming community Brown had founded and led during the preceding years in North Elba, N.Y., was made up of Black and white families—the first such integrated community in U.S. history. Among the Harper's Ferry squad, decisions were made democratically, not handed down hierarchically. Black and white combatants took part equally in every way.

The plan of attack was crafted based on Brown's long years of study of the tactics of Nat Turner, Denmark Vesey and other enslaved African-American leaders of U.S. slave revolts; of the Seminole nation that had resisted domination by colonial settlers; of the Maroons of the South and of Jamaica and Surinam, escaped slaves who fought the settler state forces in daring raids from bases in the hills and mountains; and of Toussaint L'Ouverture, one of the great liberators of Haiti.

In Brown's view, there were several African-American members of the Harper's Ferry troop any one of whom ought to take the leadership post for the action. However, the group overruled him, arguing that because of his experience in Kansas and his proven military prowess, it was Brown who must captain their squad.

And so this small band of warriors moved in. They were self-trained. They carried a minimal cache of smuggled weapons. The idea was to seize the arsenal, distribute its contents to the nearby population of enslaved laborers, join with them to liberate the region, establish a base of operations in the woods which would swiftly expand to many bases as ever more freed slaves joined up, and wage full-scale war until the abomination of slavery was defeated for good and the new liberationist Constitution was instituted.

John Brown's real legacy

The initial steps of the plan went well. Brown and his troop had the element of surprise on their side. They easily overwhelmed the arsenal's defenses, took hostages and occupied the site. After

these early achievements, however, there was a series of setbacks. The government, initially caught off guard, were able to rally. Ultimately, through sheer strength of numbers and with all the armed might of the state behind it, the Army—under the command of none other than Robert E. Lee, who only a few short months later would take the helm of the secessionist Confederate forces—beat back the brave band of anti-racist heroes.

Commentary from bourgeois historians and military analysts fixes on various faults in the planning and execution of the raid on Harper's Ferry to explain why it did not succeed. Most of it blames Brown, tagging him as some variation of insane, a crazed terrorist or the like. This slander against one of the towering figures in the history of the struggle against racism is clearly politically motivated. Even now, 150 years later, racism is so integral, so crucial to the capitalist enterprise, that it is vital to portray the willingness of this white warrior to give his life in the effort to end it as sheer madness.

A truer image of Brown can be gleaned from the words of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois and Malcolm X, all of

whom praised him. Or from his comrade and collaborator, the great Harriet Tubman, who years later said he had been her "dearest friend."

Factual inaccuracies also riddle the standard version. African-American journalist and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal offers an example in his essay "The Neglected Voices from Harper's Ferry" in a recent edition of "A Voice from Harper's Ferry" by Osborne P. Anderson. Anderson was the only Black participant in the assault on the arsenal who escaped and survived; so his account, Abu-Jamal points out, ought to be regarded as definitive.

Anderson's account contradicts those who claim that, before they arrived at Harper's Ferry, the troop's attempts to rally support among slaves on nearby plantations were unsuccessful. On the contrary, Abu-Jamal points out, "Anderson was in a perfect position to speak to the issue of slave betrayal. Instead, he sees none. He found the slaves supportive and overjoyed by the revolt, and counts them among the first to fall during the armed conflict. He was among the contingent that visited the plantations, where he found 'the greatest enthusiasm.'" *Continued on page 4*

A monument to Harper's Ferry combatants

This monument in Oberlin, Ohio, honors the three Black town residents who fought with John Brown at Harper's Ferry. The accompanying plaque explains:

"This marble cenotaph, erected by the citizens of Oberlin in 1860 in Westwood Cemetery, was moved to this site [Martin Luther King Memorial Park] by the Neighborhood Youth Corps in 1971. The original inscription [now partially worn away] reads:

"These Colored Citizens of Oberlin, the Heroic Associates of the immortal John Brown, gave their lives for the slave. Et nunc servitudo etiam mortua est, laus Deo. S. Green, died at Charleston, Va., Dec. 16, 1859, age 23 years. J.A. Copeland, died at Charleston, Va., Dec. 16, 1859. L.S. Leary, died at Harper's Ferry, Va., Oct. 20, 1859, 24 years."

Shields Green, also called "Emperor," escaped slavery in Virginia and was living in Oberlin leading up to the Harper's Ferry raid. His first meeting with John Brown was in 1858 in the Rochester, N.Y., home of Frederick Douglass. Douglass said later, "Shields Green was not one to shrink from hardships or dangers. He was a man of few words ... but his courage and self-respect made him quite a dignified character."

John A. Copeland Jr. was the son of prominent Oberlin abolitionists John A. Copeland Sr. and Delilah Evans Copeland. He was recruited to Brown's army by his uncle, Lewis Sheridan Leary. Both Leary and Copeland had participated in the "Oberlin-Wellington Rescue"—the freeing of escaped slave John Price from a hotel in Wellington, Ohio, where he was held captive by slave catchers in 1858.

Leary was wounded in battle and died eight hours later. Green and Copeland were hanged two weeks after the hanging of John Brown. An abolitionist minister, James Monroe, failed in his attempt

to recover their bodies so their families could give them a proper burial. White medical students insisted the bodies were theirs for dissection purposes.

Leary's widow, Mary Leary, later married another prominent Oberlin abolitionist, John Mercer Langston. One of the couple's grandsons was the renowned poet Langston Hughes.

Ohio has other strong connections to the heroes of Harper's Ferry. A white abolitionist from Salem, Edwin Coppock, was hanged for his participation in the raid on the same day that Green and Copeland were executed. Brown himself lived in Ohio on and off for a total of 35 years.

Six days before his execution, Copeland wrote in a letter to his brother: "It was a sense of the wrongs which we have suffered that prompted the noble but unfortunate Captain Brown and his associates to attempt to give freedom to a small number, at least of those who are now held by cruel and unusual laws, and by no less cruel and unjust men. To this freedom they were entitled by every known [principle] of justice and humanity, and for the enjoyment of it God created them. And how, dear brother, could I die in a more noble cause?"

—Report and photo by Martha Grevatt

WORLD VIEW FORUM

Hails 150th anniversary of historic action at Harper's Ferry

A Voice from Harper's Ferry
by Osborne P. Anderson,
a Black revolutionary who was there.

Few history books give Anderson the recognition he deserves; he was the only African-American combatant to survive the raid on Harper's Ferry and to write about it. This is his account of this historic turning point in the struggle against slavery. With essays by Monica Moorehead, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Vince Copeland.

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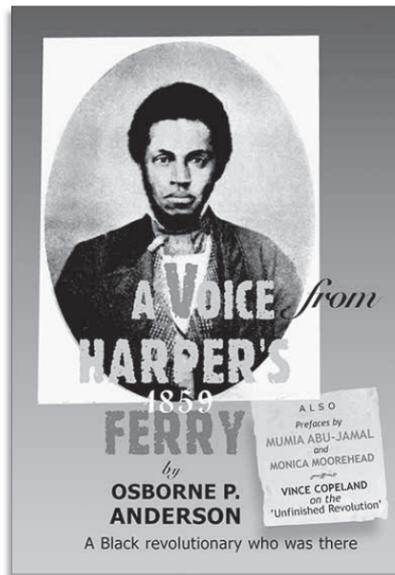
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The role of poverty and racism in The death of Derrion Albert

By Larry Hales

Read the entire article at workers.org.

On Sept. 24 in Chicago, 16-year-old honor student Derrion Albert, apparently heading to a school bus to go home, was caught in the middle of a fight between other students. Albert was killed in a scuffle witnesses say he was trying to avoid.

Four Black youth, Silvonus Shannon, 19; Eugene Riley, 18; Eugene Bailey, 18; and Eric Carson, 16, have been arrested for Albert's death.

Chicago, like many cities in the U.S., has a long history of oppression and poverty concentrated in communities of color.

According to a Chicago Reporter article, more than 80 percent of the students in Chicago public schools live in poverty. (chicagoreporter.com)

According to a Heartland Alliance report dated April 30 poverty throughout Illinois and specifically in Chicago has increased greatly. The report indicates that for the year 2007, 11 percent

of Chicago area residents—an estimated 930,000 people—lived below 50 percent of the federal poverty threshold or between 50 percent and 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

The killing of Derrion is a horrific tragedy. But it did not happen in a vacuum.

On Oct. 7, U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder and Secretary of Education Arne Duncan took part in a Chicago press conference with Mayor Richard M. Daley to address the violence in the schools.

Daley spoke about the responsibilities of local, state and federal agencies to stop violence, while scantily mentioning the need for after-school programs. His focus on "law enforcement" should come as no surprise. He after all is the son of the late notorious Richard J. Daley, the other mayor for life in Chicago, who oversaw one of the most brutal police departments in the country; a department that waged a war against the liberation movements of oppressed people.

This war included the Dec. 4, 1969, assassination of Fred Hampton, the chairperson of the Illinois state chapter of the Black Panther Party, and Mark Clark, another Panther member. The Chicago police also brutally attacked demonstrators at the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

So, what is to be expected of the state then in the wake of this horrific incident and what should happen to Shannon, Riley, Bailey and Carson? The mother of Derrion, Anjanette Albert, is within her rights to call for justice, as the loss of her son is a horror that no parent should have to experience.

The community, however, should have the ultimate say in what happens to the young people responsible because it is the community that best understands that the young men responsible for Albert's death are not monsters.

Young Black men caught up in a fight, oppressed by harsh conditions, and in

an environment of extreme youth unemployment, are portrayed in this society as monsters and as if they should be locked up for life in a prison system here that is the largest in the entire world. Over 2.3 million people are locked away in prison, with almost 8 million in jails, prison or on parole, the largest percentage of whom are Black and Latino/a.

A Northeastern University report details much more dire circumstances for youth who didn't finish high school. According to the Northeastern report, 54 percent of all high school dropouts are unemployed, including 69 percent of Blacks, 54 percent of whites and 47 percent of Latinos/as. The rates of incarceration are even more staggering. For example, one in four young Black men without a high school equivalent education is in jail, prison or juvenile detention. (www.nytimes.com, Oct. 9)

Hales is a national organizer of the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group.

Workers, students, faculty target AVI

By Easton Smith
New York

On Oct. 5 workers, faculty and students from both Hunter and Sarah Lawrence colleges were joined by union representatives and New York activists for a rally in front of Manhattan's Hunter College against AVIFresh, an anti-union dining service corporation.

Demonstrators held UNITE HERE Local 100 flags, placards showing solidarity with the workers, and signs calling for justice and a boycott. The crowd sang chants like "No justice, no peace" and "Solidarity Forever."

Hunter College workers explained how AVIFresh has given them nothing and how the company wants them to get a 401k when the workers don't want a 401k. Workers shared stories of living with kids while the threat of no health care lingers over them and of their worries about not having a pension plan. Students and faculty spoke about possible boycotts. One faculty member addressed the crowd, saying, "It seems like they have not got the news: slavery days are over. ... We are not the criminals. They are the criminals!"

As the rally was ending, workers, students and union representatives attempted to present a petition to the president of Hunter College, Jennifer Raab. As they attempted to get on the elevator they were stopped by security guards, who explained that since the people there (including the AVI workers) were not employees of the college they were not allowed to go to the president's office. After some negotiating a few of the workers were allowed to go up, where they were met not by the president but by a representative who took the petitions.

This rally caught the attention of hundreds of onlookers including the heads of AVI. It was a rally aimed at reminding AVI that its dream of a submissive, weak and disconnected workforce will not become a reality. They had so ignorantly hoped that they could disconnect the workers at Hunter College from those at Sarah Lawrence, and that they could rely on physical distance, size, relative cost and the public and private sectors of these colleges to destroy any sense of solidarity. These hopes of AVI were exemplified on Oct. 8, at negotiations between Hunter College AVI workers

and AVI company representatives.

AVI's dishonest advertising

AVI, which touts itself as an Ohio-based "family-owned" business, has made an assault on the working people of New York. Grabbing hold of new food service contracts in the New York area in 2009 at Hunter and Sarah Lawrence colleges, AVI is quickly becoming a force in the Northeast school cafeteria scene. AVI boasts a subtitle of "The Family Difference in Dining Services" on their Web site and markets their business as a conscious and friendly one. Looking at their Web site or talking to their "Human Relations" people, one would think of the words "honest" and "fair," but since their arrival at Sarah Lawrence College and Hunter, the word that seems to loom in the air is "union-busting."

AVI began their assault quietly, over the summer, as students and faculty left the campuses and turned their minds away from their respective college communities. At Sarah Lawrence all workers who wished to transfer their employment from Flik (the former food service provider at the school for over 30 years) were promised employment. Despite this promise, 14 workers were suddenly fired right after being "hired."

Hunter College workers, many of whom have seen multiple food service contractors come and go, were equally caught by surprise when they learned that their long-held and seemingly standard benefits of free family health care and pensions

were denied by AVI outright. These injustices only marked the beginning of a long and continuing campaign by AVI aimed at destroying any sense of dignity, unity, justice or hope in the workplace.

A few examples of the injustices show that this company has launched an intentional and well-organized crusade to establish dominance in the workplace and destroy any worker's hope for better working conditions. Reported incidences at Sarah Lawrence include managerial verbal and physical abuse, unpaid hours, loss of seniority, insufficient pay increases, disrespect of workers' basic scheduling needs and the use of racial slurs in the workplace. Many of these violations are connected to the concerted anti-union campaign that has been launched at Sarah Lawrence. These violations prove that from the onsite managers to the heads of the company, AVI could not care less about their "team members," as Human Resources manager, Bob Farmer, and vice president for Business Development, Richard Martin, so cheerfully label them.

AVI's campaign against working people is ultimately, however, a naïve one that lacks any knowledge of the Hunter and Sarah Lawrence cafeteria workers' strong will and fighting spirit. AVI's assault on workers has only emboldened the workers and those who stand in solidarity with them to not stand down until justice is obtained.

Smith is a member of the Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) youth group.

Spirit of Harper's Ferry lives

Continued from page 3

Abu-Jamal continues, "Of the 17 revolutionaries who died at Harper's Ferry, nine were Black men!" This number includes not only those who had trained and arrived together, but several who must have joined the troop when it swept through the plantations along the route. In all, "The majority of men who died at the Ferry were Black men; the majority of Black men who fought and died (five of nine) were slaves fighting for their freedom!"

Seven other freedom fighters, including John Brown, were captured. All were hanged before the end of the year. World-wide outrage and mourning followed. From Haiti to France to Cuba to Canada, in Detroit, Boston, Chicago and many other U.S. cities, bells tolled, orators spoke, and thousands upon thousands rallied, marched and cried out in fury at the injustice.

In his jail cell, just before he was led to

the gallows on Dec. 2, 1859, the great soldier for human liberation wrote these last words: "I John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but with blood." Indeed, the Civil War began just a year and a half later in April 1861.

As Union troops marched into battle, they sang the newly penned "Battle Hymn of the Republic" with its famous opening words: "John Brown's body lies a-moldering in its grave but his spirit marches on."

The war had really begun on Oct. 16, 1859. That was the day of the first battle, when a small troop of Black and white guerrilla fighters took up arms against the slave state.

By any honest measure, the raid on Harper's Ferry was a success. It was a clarion call for freedom, and it echoes down the years.

Read Ettinger's 2006 "Legacy of John Brown" article in WW at <http://tiny.cc/ubc5t>.

CUNY students mobilize against budget cuts, tuition hikes

Fifty students, faculty and community supporters protested at the Department of Education Oct. 15 to demand an immediate rollback of tuition hikes and budget cuts at the City University of New York.

The protest was called by the CUNY Campaign to Defend Education. Larry Hales of the youth and student organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) emceed the event. Student organizers from the International Socialist Organization, Socialist Alternative and Radical Women also spoke.

A public organizing meeting is called for Oct. 27 at the CUNY Graduate Center, Room 5414 at 7 p.m. to strategize for further mobi-



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

lizations against recent proposals to cut an additional \$53 million from the CUNY budget. —David Hoskins

ON THE PICKET LINE

by Sue Davis

'No contract, no peace!'

More than 38,000 transit workers in New York City are on the move in their fight for a decent contract. After staging a heroic three-day strike in 2005, for which Transport Workers Union Local 100 was severely punished by the courts and city and state governments, the workers played by the book and submitted their latest contract to binding arbitration. When the arbitration panel recommended an 11 percent wage hike over three years—desperately needed to make up for piddling raises in the 2006 contract—the multimillion-dollar Metropolitan Transportation Authority appealed. A decision is scheduled for Oct. 20.

Thousands of workers—accompanied by the huge inflated rat that symbolizes a bad deal for workers—picketed outside MTA offices on Sept. 29 under the slogan “No contract, no peace!” On Oct. 14 they held a “Day of Outrage” with local actions at various transit hubs. A second day of outrage is planned for Oct. 28 with a march across the Brooklyn Bridge. (www.twulocal100.org)

Teachers rally against layoffs in D.C.

Several thousand teachers in D.C. schools and their supporters rallied at Freedom Plaza on Oct. 8 to protest layoffs, which were announced in early October, of 388 school employees, including 229 classroom teachers. Though supposedly needed to close a \$43.9 million budget gap, the layoffs are really a purge of higher-paid veteran teachers, say Washington Teachers' Union leaders. The day before the rally, WTU filed a lawsuit in D.C. Superior Court to stop the city from implementing the cuts. The suit also challenges the hiring of 934 new teachers this summer, when newly hired teachers usually number 300. (Washington Post, Oct. 9)

Carhauler jobs in jeopardy

Part of the fallout from General Motors' and Chrysler's bailout and restructuring is that 5,000 Teamster carhauling jobs may be on the chopping block. Over the past year more than 1,000 carhauler jobs have already been lost. Chrysler has recently shifted 28 percent of its carhauling business—workers drive new vehicles from factories to dealers—to nonunion companies. And GM is demanding a 26 percent cost reduction from one union carrier. The union is worried that Ford may jump on the layoff bandwagon. The companies defend the layoffs and wage cuts by saying they need them to stay “competitive.” But that's just a fig leaf. The bosses are determined to steal more of the value the workers create to boost profits and line their own pockets. In protest, the Teamsters held picket lines on Oct. 16 at 70 GM and Chrysler dealerships around the country. (Detroit News, Oct. 16) □

Stella D'Oro workers say:**No to taking of machinery**By Mike Eilenfeldt
Bronx, N.Y.

On Oct. 14 Lance Inc. and their Brynwood Partners were thwarted at 8 a.m. by protesters, including Stella D'Oro workers and their supporters, with unexpected help from nearby elevated subway tracks, when the bosses tried to remove equipment from the Stella D'Oro plant in Bronx, N.Y. Following a hard-won, 11-month-long strike by the unionized workers, Brynwood recently announced that it was closing the Bronx factory and Lance would reopen it in Ashland, Ohio, as a non-union plant.

The removal in broad daylight of taxpayer-financed machinery from the Stella D'Oro factory was blocked when a semi-trailer truck accidentally became wedged under subway girders too low for the

trailer. The truck blocked street traffic for two hours before being hauled away. The “attempted robbery” was aided and abetted by billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg, his Wall Street cohorts and the New York Police Department.

But Brynwood's greatest crime is the taking of livelihoods. A job is a property right. The machines are instruments in the hands of workers who devoted their lives to learning the secret of making cookies people once loved to eat. Strike captain Oscar Hernandez expressed outrage when he told Workers World, “It took 78 years to build this place, and they are going to destroy it in two weeks.”

Hendrik Hartong of Brynwood Partners has brought bogus harassment charges against strike captain Eddie Marrero, who put his life on the line to save the jobs of fellow workers. Marrero told WW, “We

have a lot of class in there, with all the cultures from different continents. We all have a lot of class.” Marrero said that he would never even think about making harassing calls to the home of the man he refers to as the “real criminal.” The charges must be dropped.

There are other outstanding issues. All severance, back pay and benefits owed the workers must be paid by Brynwood according to the union contract with Bakery Workers Local 50. The machines must not be moved. The plant belongs to the Bronx. Every Stella D'Oro worker must be guaranteed a living wage job.

The writer is a delegate to the New York City Central Labor Council for the union at Cooper Union—New York State United Teachers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers—and a member of Bail Out the People Movement.

Cuban Five suffer more injustice

By Cheryl LaBash

On Oct. 13, a 21-year-plus-10-month prison term was imposed on Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez by the same Florida U.S. District Court that initially condemned him to a life sentence plus 10 years. The steadfast support of the Cuban people and government, amplified with worldwide solidarity, forced the U.S. government to back off some of the unjust and wildly excessive life sentences imposed on Guerrero, one of the revolutionary heroes known as the Cuban Five.

Resentencing of Ramón Labañino Salazar and Fernando González Llort is postponed while defense attorneys battle for the right to see U.S. national security damage assessments in the Cuban Five cases. These documents—or lack of them—bolster arguments for reduced prison terms. The prosecution presented

no evidence of damage to the U.S. or possession of or transfer of classified material during the six-month trial held in Miami.

The 1998 original trial was so biased that a three-judge panel of the U.S. 11th Circuit Court called it a “perfect storm of prejudice” when it ordered a new trial. Although that decision was later overturned by the entire 11th Circuit Court, it documents in detail a major injustice in their conviction. Even a former National Security Advisor for Latin America during the Carter administration declared it was impossible for the Five to receive a fair trial in Miami. (<http://tiny.cc/crVC4>)

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo's life sentence was not remanded. Further appeals are planned. He is serving two life terms plus 15 years at the federal prison in Victorville, Calif. The U.S. government refuses to allow his life partner, Adriana Perez, to enter the U.S. to visit him. An

international campaign is exposing this cruel act that violates U.S. law and international standards and inflicts additional pain and suffering above the legal sentence. Olga Salanueva, spouse of René González Schwerert, is also refused entry to visit her loved one.

Nothing less than immediate freedom for the Cuban Five is acceptable. Antonio, Ramón, Fernando, Gerardo and René are innocent and should never have spent one day deprived of liberty. They have been imprisoned since 1998—more than 11 years—for trying to prevent bombings and other terror attacks on Cuban hotels, airlines and other civilian targets that were planned and launched from Florida.

The struggle to free the Cuban Five is growing inside the U.S. For more information visit www.antiterroristas.cu, www.thecubanfive.org or www.freethefive.org. □

Fascist Phelps not welcome in San Diego

A small group organized by Kansas-based fascist Fred Phelps appeared in San Diego on Oct. 16 to spread their message of racism, anti-Semitism and homophobia. This same group brought the message “He got what he deserved” to the funeral of gay-bashing victim Matthew Shepard in 1998. An outpouring of hundreds of counterprotesters gathered in front of the San Diego City High School. Students played an active role in the protest, with many same-sex teenage couples holding hands in defiance of the fascists. The school's Gay Straight Alliance unfurled pro-LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi and transgender) signs and banners on the hill above the chanting crowd.

—Report and photo by Bob McCubbin

**National sit-ins at health insurance companies**

Fifty-four activists and health care workers were arrested Oct. 15 during sit-ins at health insurance company offices in New York, Washington, Phoenix, Palm Beach, Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Reno and Portland, Ore. The protestors, chanting “Patients not Profits,” occupied the offices to demand “Medicare for All”—a public single-payer health plan that improves Medicare and expands it to cover everyone.

The sit-ins were organized by the

Patients Not Profit campaign of the Mobilization for Health Care for All. More than 1,000 people have signed up to engage in civil disobedience at insurance company offices around the country through the mobilizeforhealthcare.org Web site. The crisis in health care has left an estimated 47 million people in the United States uninsured and another 25 million underinsured.

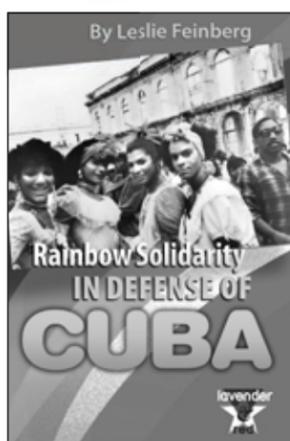
Another wave of actions is planned at insurance company offices on Oct. 28.

—David Hoskins

Rainbow Solidarity**In Defense of CUBA**

By Leslie Feinberg

This new book is a compilation of 25 articles from the Lavender & Red series in Workers World newspaper; it shows how the Cuban Revolution has worked to overturn prejudice against same-sex love inherited from the colonial and imperial eras. The book shows the Cuban Revolution's trajectory of progress in hard facts. It's a must-read to understand the revolutionary process required to uproot prejudice.

www.leftbooks.com

Lenin had it right

Role of the banks in the economic crisis

By Fred Goldstein

When the workers at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago seized the factory last winter, their heroism in defying both their boss and the Bank of America electrified workers and progressive people all over the country and even around the world.

When they walked out of the factory in victory—with their demands for severance pay, wages and other benefits agreed to by BOA—they had accomplished what seemed impossible. Some 250 or more workers, mostly immigrants, had forced a giant financial behemoth, which controls hundreds of billions of dollars through its banking empire, to back up and meet their demands.

Revealed in that struggle was an important relationship that all class-conscious workers should take to heart. The capitalist boss of Republic Windows and Doors, the exploiter of the workers in his factory, was just a dependent of his giant creditor.

He needed the money from Bank of America to continue to carry out the exploitation of the workers. The boss lived off the profits sweated out of the labor of the workers. But without the money to keep going, he was unable to continue the cycle of exploitation. Thus, the workers were out of a job.

In a microcosm, that struggle revealed a basic truth. It is a class relationship that is concealed for the most part.

In capitalist society, exploitation and all economic activity begin with money. This explains the power of the banks. In order to live in the profit system, workers must sell their labor power. In order to thrive in the profit system, the boss must buy that labor power and the means of production. But that takes money.

Because of the special circumstances of their struggle, the small contingent of workers at Republic Windows and Doors was actually in combat with the real economic rulers of capitalist society.

Lenin on the special role of the banks

The dominance of the bankers was dramatically revealed on a larger scale when the financial crisis first broke out in September 2008 after the failure of Lehman Brothers. Bailout money poured into the coffers of the banks in return for the government taking shares in them. There was talk about the “nationalization” of the banks—a government takeover.

When the smoke cleared, there had been no government takeover of the banks. What really emerged was that the

biggest, most powerful banks had made great inroads in taking over the financial reins of the government.

This is a confirmation of the Marxist analysis of imperialist society which V.I. Lenin, the architect of the Bolshevik revolution, elaborated in his book “Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,” written in 1916 during World War I.

Lenin described the evolution of capitalism from its competitive stage in the 19th century to its monopoly stage in the 20th century. He showed how the means of production grew to gigantic proportions and how the imperialist powers divided up the globe among themselves into colonies and spheres of influence. He described the growth of giant monopolistic corporate cartels and syndicates that dominated the resources and markets of the globe. He pointed to the growing export of capital abroad and the super-exploitation of the colonial peoples.

Looking at the power behind it all, he singled out the role of the banks and how they came to dominate industry and created finance capital. In a famous section entitled “The Banks and Their New Role,” he wrote:

“The principal and primary function of banks is to serve as middlemen in the making of payments. In so doing they transform inactive money capital into active, that is, into capital yielding a profit; they collect all kinds of money revenues and place them at the disposal of the capitalist class.

“As banking develops and becomes concentrated in a small number of establishments, the banks grow from modest middlemen into powerful monopolies having at their command almost the whole of the money capital of all the capitalists and small businessmen and also the larger part of the means of production and sources of raw materials in any one country and in a number of countries. This transformation of numerous modest middlemen into a handful of monopolists is one of the fundamental processes in the growth of capitalism into capitalist imperialism.” (Lenin’s works can be found on www.marxists.org.)

Later in the same work, Lenin described the parasitic nature of the financiers, which is so prominent in the present crisis:

“It is characteristic of capitalism in general that the ownership of capital is separated from the application of capital to production, that money capital is separated from industrial or productive capital, and that the rentier who lives entirely on income obtained from money capital

is separated from the entrepreneur and from all who are directly concerned in the management of capital. Imperialism, or the domination of finance capital, is that highest stage of capitalism in which this separation reaches vast proportions. The supremacy of finance capital over all other forms of capital means the predominance of the rentier and of the financial oligarchy.”

Much has been written of late about the so-called “financialization of capital,” as if it were a new discovery. The wealth of the banks and the magnitude of their speculation have grown immensely with the growth of capitalist imperialism. But Lenin described its evolution and fundamental features almost a century ago. Wall Street’s insatiable lust for profit cannot be treated in isolation from the analysis of imperialism as a form of society.

Lenin showed that the dominance of finance capital is an inevitable and irreversible stage of the capitalist system. Competitive capitalism grows into monopoly capitalism—the stage in which finance capital and the financial oligarchy have risen to the pinnacle of the system of exploitation and wage slavery, at home and abroad.

Banks suck profits from everywhere

The banks are tied to big oil, big industry, the insurance companies, all the hedge funds, the private equity funds, the mortgage brokers, the stock exchange and every other institution in society that thrives off the stolen labor of the workers.

The banks profit from every war and every intervention because wars are economic enterprises that take financing and involve fees and interest. The banks get profit from the government, which borrows from them at high interest rates to pay for wars. They also get profit from the military-industrial complex itself, which they finance. Plus they profit from the spoils when the Pentagon conquers territory.

The banks profit from every layoff, every plant closing, every speed-up, because every business, large and small, is in debt to the banks and pays interest out of the surplus value it has wrung from the workers.

They profit from the debt of the workers. After workers are exploited on the job, their wages are converted into profit for the banks in the form of fees and exorbitant interest payments. Banks will make loans to corporations to break strikes but will deny loans to companies to pay workers’ benefits, as in the Republic Windows and Doors case.

Banks profit from the high cost of education, both from the interest they get from student loans and the fees from college and university trust funds that they manage. They profit from the health care crisis because they are completely intertwined with the insurance companies, the pharmaceutical companies and the medical-industrial complex.

And they make money from racism, which brings extra profits because of the lower wages paid to Black, Latino/a, Asian, Middle Eastern and Native peoples and because divisions within the working class keep all wages down and profits up.

The banks profit from sexism because women get paid less than men, to say nothing of women’s unpaid labor in the home—which, among other things, provides the next generation of workers for the bosses free of charge.

They profit from lesbian, gay, bi and

trans oppression, not only because it is divisive but because LGBT people are deprived of countless economic and social benefits available to straight people—benefits that would have to come out of the coffers of the government or the bosses.

There is no aspect of capitalist society in the imperialist epoch that is untouched by the bankers.

Banks get rich while workers sink

So it should be no surprise that Timothy Geithner, Larry Summers and other lackeys of the bankers—who are high-paid government officials but are lackeys nevertheless—scurry about trying to save their masters while the entire ship of the working class is sinking.

When the government orchestrated the bankruptcy of General Motors, tens of thousands of workers’ jobs were destroyed through plant closings. But the biggest banks—including JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup and Credit Suisse, all of whom were getting money from the government—made sure that the bankruptcy settlement guaranteed them every penny of the \$6 billion in loans they were owed. Other syndicates of bondholders also got paid off.

When the financial meltdown came in the fall of 2008 and the banks were in trouble, within days they had Henry Paulson write a three-page piece of legislation granting them \$750 billion. Paulson, a former co-chair of Goldman Sachs and secretary of the Treasury under George W. Bush, made sure the legislation specified that neither Congress nor the courts could review or alter this colossal grant.

When Congress rebelled and voted down this outrageous giveaway over fear of mass anger, the bankers simply turned up the heat and got the vote reversed over the space of a weekend.

After a struggle among the banks, a small number of them emerged stronger than before the crisis. Banks that were bailed out because they were “too big to fail” have gotten bigger, richer and financially and politically more powerful.

What was revealed in microcosm in the Republic Windows and Doors strike is now being revealed on a society-wide scale. Financial vultures are using their power to swallow up more and more of the wealth of society while the working class is plunged into economic and social disaster.

Goldman Sachs announced that it made a record \$3.1 billion in profits in the last quarter. It is scheduled to fork out \$5.3 billion in bonuses to its team of bankers. (New York Times, Oct. 16) JPMorgan Chase had third-quarter profits of \$3.6 billion, seven times higher than a year ago. (AFP, Oct. 14)

Meanwhile, home foreclosures went up 23 percent in the month of September. Workers are living out of their cars and being pushed into homeless shelters.

This is the perfect capitalist symmetry of wealth and exploitation. Bankers get rich while the masses are plunged deeper into crisis. The stock market goes up to 10,000 while unemployment edges up to 10 percent. (Real unemployment is nearer 18 percent.)

The latest numbers on the government stimulus plan reveal that \$16 billion has been spent to create 30,000 jobs—a paltry result. About 8 million jobs have been lost and the number is climbing. But the bankers’ stimulus plan has yielded billions in profits and stock market riches.

Workers’ rebellion inevitable

This situation can only be temporary. It

Continued on page 10

A worker’s top ten

Reasons why U.S. ruling class believes in magic of the market

By Paul Wilcox

1. We haven’t done one damn useful thing, and we’re filthy rich!
2. We’ve discovered how to make money from nothing—it really is magic!
3. We used to have to hire workers to make stuff in factories, but not so much any more.
4. Most people have to work hard in factories or offices to earn a living.
5. But we just sell and resell securities, derivatives, hedge funds and do other cool things like speculating in real estate.

6. We can always bribe Congress to bail us out, and use some of that bailout money to bribe them some more.
7. Centuries ago, the nobles in France got rich without doing anything useful.
8. The nobles did very, very well doing nothing ... up until they were guillotined before the cheering people.
9. But we know that nothing like that can happen to us.
10. We believe in magic.

E-mail: pwilcox@workers.org

Mexico City

Masses demand: 'Don't turn off the lights'

By John Catalinotto

Hundreds of thousands of workers marched from the Independence Column through the streets of downtown Mexico City to the Zócalo central square to demonstrate their support for the SME electrical workers union and to oppose the rightist government's plan to privatize the public electrical company, Light and Power, and eliminate tens of thousands of jobs.

The Oct. 15 mobilization followed a decree by the government of President Felipe Calderón to privatize electricity on Oct. 10, when he used federal army troops to seize the power plants from the electrical workers. The privatization decree and military takeover is seen as a challenge to all Mexican workers. Besides the gathering in the capital's Zócalo, there were demonstrations in 10 Mexican states.

Calderón, who is from the rightist, pro-U.S. National Action Party (PAN), became

president in December 2006 following a narrow election victory that most observers judged fraudulent.

Calderón has continued the policy of the last few Mexican governments of privatizing the state monopolies that were nationalized in the past. Based on the free trade agreement known as North American Free Trade Agreement, these companies are opened to foreign, mostly U.S., investment as well as to profiteering by the Mexican capitalists.

An Oct. 18 article in *La Jornada* exposed that the regime had been planning the privatization and seizure of the electrical stations since March using units of the army and federal police.

The SME is one of the strongest unions in Mexico and has been the most determined organization resisting the nationalization of Light and Power. The takeover and privatization of the company not only immediately eliminates jobs for

44,000 active workers and benefits for 22,000 retirees in a country with high and growing unemployment, it is an attempt to break this key union.

Despite the massive support for the union and opposition to privatization among the Mexican people, the regime has said it will proceed with its program. (AFP, Oct. 17)

According to a description of the demonstration on the Web site *kaosenlared.net*, "The numerous contingents of electrical workers and their families, who were booted out on the street with one day's notice, were joined by men and women from the miners, telephone workers, teachers and health workers unions, from transport and from the universities—some from the union confederations and others independent—who saw the writing on the wall: the government intends not just to continue with the policy of buying off leaders and weakening the unions, but to fin-

ish with the unions completely."

Marchers held placards that read, "Felipe Calderón: Don't put out the light," as they chanted, "Don't pay for light!" Some of the speakers called for a general strike.

Politicians from the Broad Front participated in the mass demonstration. This included Andrés Manuel López Obrador, a former Mexico City mayor known as AMLO, who narrowly lost the suspicious 2006 election. Though he does not challenge Mexico's capitalist system, AMLO is the most progressive of the major candidates and has the greatest support among Mexico's poor workers, farmers and unemployed.

Recently elected SME President Martín Esparza has said that the struggle to reverse the decree will continue. The union advised its members to refuse the government's offer of a severance package. As of Oct. 17, only one of every 17 union members affected has accepted the package. (*La Jornada*, Oct. 18). □

100,000 march in Puerto Rico to protest layoffs

Continued from page 1

the CS—BJC]. Both groups agreed to have an action on the fifteenth. The FAdSyL/CS decided to have the event in front of Plaza Las Américas with the objective of closing it down after marching from the Milla de Oro as a symbol of the finance sector and main promoter of consumerism in Puerto Rico. When we found out that the convention had been postponed, then we all agreed to end at the Plaza.

The Coalition TPRcPR was born from an activity on June 5 protesting Law No. 7 and the LAPP. There was a march and a Peoples Assembly where a manifesto was approved, including points for struggle like the repeal of laws 7 and 29, defense of the environment and other important issues. The Labor Coalition is composed of the unions under the AFL-CIO, Change to Win and the CPT, the Puerto Rican Workers Central.

The FAdSyL started on Jan. 12, with the CS and UTIER—in total we are 18 unions. That day we made a call for the formation of a broad front with a permanent character. We are trying to overcome the experience in Puerto Rico where we unite around an issue and afterwards, goals achieved or not, we disband. We are now trying to establish a consistent, permanent work effort since we recognize that this is a long struggle. We are emphasizing the creation



PHOTOS: INDYMEDIA.ORG

of Regional Councils. These councils are formed by unions, churches and other social groups and work cooperatively. There are a dozen councils so far around the island.

WW: What is the next step?

LPL: We are proposing a general strike. To challenge the state's public and economic policies a people's general strike is necessary and unavoidable as a way to confront the government. We are not going from protest to protest and lobbying

to repeal a law that they already passed. They have stated that they will not back down because this is a project that was initiated in 1988 in Puerto Rico as a proposal of the main private groups and the Chamber of Commerce, to privatize all public works and reduce the government to a minimum, using the private sector and the municipalities and the deregulation of the market.

Since 1988 the government has pushed these points, now at an accelerated rate, and there is no room for dialogue. Therefore we have to recognize the need of organizing the people through assemblies, by sectors, forming regional councils to promote this assembly. And that the people start approving a conscious push for the development of a general strike in Puerto Rico. This would imply not an act for a particular day but a process of struggle that will effectively confront policies of this government against the people.

The government has already announced the elimination of 40 of the 134 government agencies between now and December. So we say that more layoffs are in the making, even though they say the layoffs will not happen. But it is inevitable: There will be more layoffs.

WW: At what level is the masses' political consciousness?

LPL: This economic crisis directly affects the peoples' wallets and we must take advantage of this moment, recognizing the opportunity that we have to help create consciousness. That the problem is not only the wallet, but that those running the system plan to discard the welfare state, to discard the system offering government services. They assert that people are not necessary, that what is important is the accumulation of wealth and that the Keynesian formula that required people to have incomes in order for the economy to move is not what is being proposed.

How do we explain that? How do we create a model of popular education that would help people understand and go from the defense of jobs and the stopping of layoffs to the awareness that we need a different economic system, that we need to rescue the demand for social justice and recognize that the present system will not give us that. I think that this point is the greatest contribution that we must offer during this struggle so that the level of struggle and of political consciousness goes to a new level. Fortuño is not the problem. The system he represents is the real problem.

WW: How can we help from the U.S.?

LPL: By internationalizing the struggle. Let people know about it, create unity, since the unity of workers of the different sectors is important. That way we can create a unitary process. I think that would be the most important thing since there are different places and experiences and we can help each other and learn from each other's experiences. □

"This book helps us to understand the root of the present neoliberal globalization—a new stage of the international capitalist crisis—which was imposed by U.S. imperialism and which devastated and dominated Latin American economies, forcing millions of workers to emigrate to the U.S. looking for jobs. They found exploitation and humiliation."

—Ignacio Meneses, Co-chair, U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange

Low-Wage Capitalism

What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.

A timely new book by Fred Goldstein describes in sweeping detail the drastic effect on the working class of new technology and the restructuring of global capitalism in the post-Soviet era. It uses Karl Marx's law of wages and other findings to show that these developments are not only continuing to drive down wages but are creating the material basis for future social upheaval and the end of working-class compromise and retreat, and must end up in a profound revival of the struggle against capital.

Available at www.Leftbooks.com

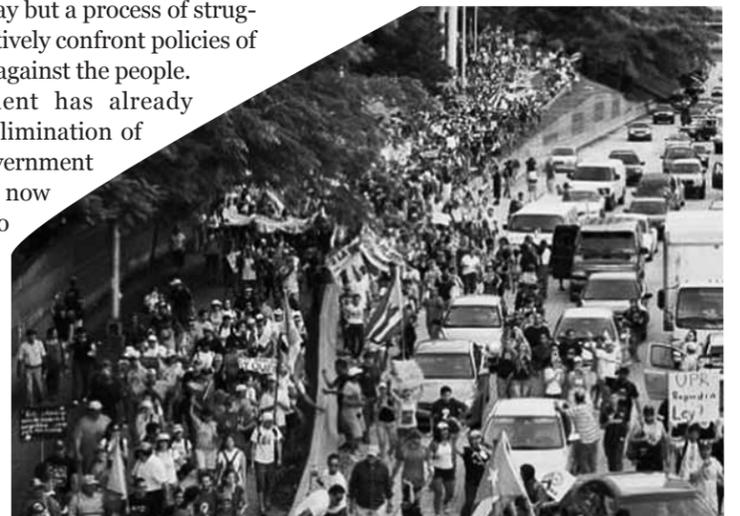
"With the capitalist system demonstrably unfair, it is useful, indeed refreshing, to see a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on working people. Fred Goldstein does exactly that."

—Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Colossus with feet of clay:
What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.



Behind the election ploy in Afghanistan

By Deirdre Griswold

Hamid Karzai, who was first foisted on the people of Afghanistan as their president in 2002 by the U.S.-NATO war and occupation, has now agreed after heavy pressure from these same imperialist powers to a runoff election on Nov. 7. What's going on here?

The war to subjugate Afghanistan and use it as a launching pad for Anglo-U.S. domination of the whole region is in big trouble. Even though they face more than 100,000 foreign troops equipped with the highest-tech weapons of death available, the Afghan resistance has been growing.

Every air strike, whether it's heavy bombing from planes that travel thousands of miles to blast the villages and mountainsides, or rockets launched against domiciles and vehicles from pilotless drones, has further alienated the population and increased the number of young Afghans joining the resistance.

The Pentagon—especially Gen. Stanley McChrystal, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan—has said they need at least 40,000 more troops to “get the job done.”

This is a hard sell in Washington, since more and more people in the U.S.—some 52 percent, according to a recent CNN poll—are now comparing this war to the 1962-75 war against Vietnam and increasingly want to see it end.

In addition to opinion polls, more people are starting to demonstrate against the U.S. war in Afghanistan, seeing it not as a response to 9/11 but as part of the “great game” for the control of Central Asia by the energy- and resource-hungry transnational corporations behind imperialist wars.

Karzai was a CIA contact during U.S. imperialism's first war in Afghanistan, when Washington built an army out of the landlords' resistance to the Afghan revolution of 1978. Some of those forces, recruited on the basis of fighting against the Soviet Union's intervention on the side of the revolution, are now fighting the Western imperialists. But Karzai remained allied with his U.S. paymasters.

However, the rampant corruption of his government, the low turnout in the August election and the popular opposition to this Western puppet led to a big embarrassment for Karzai and his spon-

sors in Washington. He was caught carrying out massive fraud in his run for reelection. Since he already was losing favor with Washington for his inability to rule the country, they and the NATO countries pushed for a negation of the vote and a runoff election with his closest rival, Abdullah Abdullah.

Where does this leave the war and a possible escalation?

It is extremely likely that the spin of the powerful corporate media will now be to assure the people here that the political obstacles to “getting the job done” are being cleared away, that a new government in Afghanistan will be cleaner, will do more for women and the poor, will inspire confidence in the masses and will therefore undermine the armed opposition—so all it will take is a few more troops to win the war and secure the occupation.

This is pure baloney.

In Vietnam, it should be remembered, the CIA actually arranged for the assassination of the Diem brothers—U.S. puppets—when they failed to be effective against the National Liberation Front. A new general was installed who was sup-

posed to be more democratic. But the imperialists not only remained—they escalated the war, which did not change its reactionary character. The strategists for U.S. imperialism—from the CIA to the Pentagon—were still trying to destroy the popular opposition in order to carry out their own agenda, which was to clear the way for the domination and exploitation of all Southeast Asia.

In the end, it was the courageous resistance of the Vietnamese people, who were ready to fight for 100 years if necessary, that forced the withdrawal of U.S. troops—whose rank and file were also refusing to fight in ever greater numbers.

McChrystal is touted as the world's authority on counterinsurgency. What he fails to recognize, however, is that any foreign occupation engineered to serve the global interests of a super-rich exploiting class will eventually bring about resistance. No amount of “brilliant” sophistry from West Point can change that.

This is no time to stop marching. Only the people's struggles can bring the troops home from Afghanistan, Iraq and the rest of the oppressed world. □

Invasions of Afghanistan, Iraq opposed in U.S. cities

By Kris Hamel

Coordinated anti-war demonstrations took place around the U.S. on Oct. 17 to mark the eighth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and to demand an end to the U.S.-led war and occupation there as well as in Iraq.

A New England-wide demonstration of 2,000 protesters rallied and marched in downtown **Boston**. The Bail Out the People Movement contingent featured a banner that read “Jobs and Health Care Are a Right! Fund Workers, Not Wall Street.” The contingent emphasized the need to link the wars against the workers and oppressed at home and abroad.

In **San Diego**, over 100 people gathered at the downtown federal building on Oct. 16 with signs denouncing the continuing U.S. wars against and occupations of Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine. Strong support for the action was expressed by passing motorists and pedestrians.

Among the many homemade signs held by protesters were ones reading “Stop the U.S.-Israeli Massacre of Gaza,” “No

to Wars and Corporate Bailouts—Yes to Jobs and Medicare for All” and “U.S. Out of the Middle East.” The protest was sponsored by the San Diego Coalition for Peace and Justice.

At Market Square in **Cleveland**, the Northeast Ohio Anti-War Coalition, Veterans for Peace, People's Fightback Center, Cleveland FIST (Fight Imperialism/Stand Together), American Friends Service Committee and several other anti-war groups held a protest.

Calling for an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, around 200 people came out in **Philadelphia**. Demonstrators gathered at City Hall where a short rally was held. Speakers there included Berta Joubert-Ceci of the International Action Center, who recently returned from a solidarity delegation to Honduras. She spoke about the importance of U.S. protests against the military coup d'état in that country.

After a march through Center City, a second rally was held across from the Liberty Bell. There, Leila Duka, the 11-year-old daughter of Fort Dix Five

defendant Dritan Duka, addressed the crowd on the cases of Muslims who have been targeted by the FBI. Award-winning author Susan Abulhawa of Playgrounds for Palestine spoke in support of the United Nations report that condemns Israel for war crimes in Gaza. The need to link wars and injustice to the fight against globalization and the economic crisis at home was addressed by several speakers.

Over 1,000 people came out in **San Francisco** to demand “U.S. Troops Out of Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan” at a demonstration organized by the

Oct. 17 Antiwar Coalition. The lead banner called for “Money for Jobs, Pensions, Education, Health Care and Housing—Not Wars and Corporate Bailouts!”

The march route went through the busy Market Street shopping area and past the offices of the San Francisco Chronicle before ending back at Civic Center. A large number of speakers addressed the crowd from labor, religious, solidarity and community organizations.

Some 50 protesters gathered in downtown **Detroit** to demand U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, Iraq and every-

where. A rally and speak-out was chaired by Abayomi Azikiwe of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, which called the action.

Speakers included representatives of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs; Detroit Green Party; Vietnam Veterans Against the War from Port Huron, Mich.; the Palestine solidarity group, Jewish Witnesses for Peace and Friends; and Fight Imperialism/Stand Together (FIST).

The speakers continually raised how the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on imperialist wars abroad are desperately needed by oppressed and working people in Detroit to stop the state of economic disaster devastating those in this hard-hit city. Passersby, including many Detroit buses, honked their support for the demonstrators.

Frank Neisser, Bob McCubbin, Caleb T. Maupin, Betsey Piette and Judy Greenspan contributed to this article.



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL



WW PHOTO: JUDY GREENSPAN

On 113th day of resistance

Honduran people demand 'No elections without President Zelaya'

By Teresa Gutierrez
member of U.S. delegation in Honduras

Oct. 19—This article is being written on the 113th day of resistance by the Honduran people against the illegal military coup that ousted democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya.

Despite military and police repression, a ban on civil liberties and the shut-down of several radio stations and news agencies, the people continue to resist, demanding the restoration of Zelaya as well as a Constitutional Assembly.

The pivotal demand that the previously scheduled Nov. 29 general elections not occur unless Zelaya is restored to government gathers momentum around the world.

Organizers of the resistance describe the country's climate as a "calm tension"—calm because the presence of Organization of American States officials buys the people a little space.

The criminal, fraudulent Micheletti coup regime calculates that repression must be tempered in the face of international bodies. Even so, when protesters heroically gather at the Clarion Hotel, where the OAS discussions take place, troops wave their hefty batons and explode tear gas.

The U.S. Delegation of Labor, Community and Clergy witnessed this repression as it gathered with the people on Oct. 8. Inside, OAS representatives met with Zelaya supporters and Micheletti representatives to hammer out a deal on the political crisis. Despite a heavy media presence,

troops amassed with SWAT-team type armor, gas masks and heavy weapons.

The Honduran people are absolutely right when they declare, "They fear us because we have no fear." Women, youth, children and men come to the street actions with vinegar-soaked bandannas, wearing running shoes and prepared to fight. The people even held an Oct. 17 protest in front of Micheletti's house!

This fierceness bolsters the OAS discussions in favor of Zelaya. Nonetheless, Micheletti and the reactionary ruling class and military elements he represents, in alliance with Wall Street and the Pentagon, are completely dug in. It presents a dangerous situation.

OAS discussions stall

After almost two weeks, the OAS discussions are in a complete stalemate.

The Honduran daily newspaper *El Heraldo* recently editorialized that "the current situation is untenable."

Micheletti continues to demand that the Supreme Court decide Zelaya's restoration. But the Supreme Court is thoroughly in the hands of right-wing forces on the side of the wealthy elite. The outcome would not represent the interests of the people in the streets, most of whom are unemployed and hungry.

Patricia Rodas, who served as foreign minister in Zelaya's administration, told reporters, "The process of dialogue initiated by the Organization of American States at the request of our foreign ministers ... has definitely broken down," (CNN, Oct. 16)

It is worthwhile to note an Oct. 17 Washington Post editorial written by former Secretary of State Jim Baker, in which he warns the U.S. ruling class of the danger in Honduras. The editorial beckons a colonialist-type attitude, reminiscent of the glory days of imperialism. Those days are fortunately waning, especially in Latin America.

Baker writes: "Matters will only deteriorate if the international community refuses to recognize the results of the coming Honduran elections. ... In the United States, the crisis risks reawakening the divisive domestic political debates between the left and right that were the rule before 1990."

He continues: "It doesn't have to be this way. ... In 1990 free elections supported by the U.S. Congress and the Bush administration and by both sides of our polity, helped end a destructive civil conflict in Nicaragua that had poisoned American domestic politics for years. Once the people of Nicaragua had the chance to express themselves through free and fair elections, the country's constitutional crisis ended and the issue disappeared from America's political debate. ...

"In the midst of a constitutional crisis and on the verge of civil strife, a free and fair election may be the only way to bring Honduras back from the brink. A refusal to recognize the results of the Honduran election would almost certainly prolong and deepen the constitutional crisis there, and it may plunge the country into more violence. It could also ramp up a divisive

debate in the United States that has been largely dormant for almost two decades," he concludes.

The solidarity movement's main demand must be: No elections without the return of Zelaya as president!

Presidential elections without Zelaya's restoration would be thoroughly undemocratic and a complete sham. Surely the people of Nicaragua have learned that an election held under conditions favorable only to imperialism is an election that should not be held.

The National Front of Resistance against the Coup is clear. At a gathering this weekend at the STIBYS [Beverage and Related Industry Workers] union, a center of resistance in Tegucigalpa, Front leader Juan Barahona said: "The Front met to make some decisions about events this week. ... Whether Mel [Zelaya] is reinstated or not, we are going on with our demand for a Constitutional Assembly."

Barahona urged everyone to attend the funeral of union leader Jairo Sánchez, who died from an injury sustained after being attacked by the police in September. He laid out the week's plans, including a boycott of Grupo Intur fast food.

Zelaya spoke by cell phone: "Victory will only result with our unity. Nothing can stop a people who are organized and demanding their rights. ... I call on you to strengthen the resistance. To our sisters and brothers who struggle in the Resistance, I am so proud of you. I support all the decisions of the Resistance. We are not divided." □

Youth resist, organize in Honduras

By LeiLani Dowell

Youth and students are an important sector participating in the struggle against the illegal coup d'état in Honduras. Video after video of the resistance actions that have taken place since the July 28 coup have shown youth in the streets and facing repression as well.

The U.S. Delegation of Labor, Community and Clergy in Solidarity with the Honduran Resistance was able to meet with several student organizers on Oct. 9 and 10. However, as a result of the repression, the delegation was not able to meet with as many youth as expected. On Oct. 9, two men attempted to kidnap one of the student leaders; while the young woman was able to escape with a fractured hand, it prevented her organization from meeting with the U.S. delegation. Instead, they needed to meet collectively to discuss security measures and tactics.

Digna Rodríguez is a student at the pedagogical university, which has become the meeting point for many of the daily marches and rallies taking place in Tegucigalpa. She reported that the entire university has been militarized and used as a detention center by the police, who torture their detainees on the campus grounds. The school administration has threatened students with academic discipline for participating in resistance activities and has denied permission for activities on campus. Meanwhile, teachers in the resistance have also faced harassment from the administration.

A member of the U.S. delegation from the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism,



U.S. delegation meet with Honduran youth.

Stand Together—described the use of massive amounts of tear gas and long-range acoustic devices in Pittsburgh to attack the mostly young protesters at the G-20 summit in September. These same weapons have been used against youth in Honduras.

Ian Díaz, leader of the youth group Los Necios, is a student at the National University, the largest university in the country with some 70,000 students. Díaz told the delegation that the resistance movement at the university includes teachers, students and workers. While the university itself has attempted to hold itself apart from the political situation within Honduras, resistance members on campus work hard to raise the political consciousness of those attending and working at the college. He said that with

the extreme violence occurring throughout the country, more students are now able to relate the political situation in the country to their everyday lives.

Díaz explained: "Before, people weren't aware of theory, of what it meant to belong to a class. Now workers see it very clearly. [President Manuel] Zelaya took politics that had been neglected for a while and pushed for change that affected the biggest sector of society—stopping privatization, raising the minimum wage.

"Over the past three years, people saw that these things were negatively affecting some, and benefiting others. They realized that there were marked differences; that the workers benefited while the businesspeople, the owners of the means of production, were affected adversely. This gave the people their class consciousness—it's

very noticeable who the coup is for. There's no better way to learn something than through action. You can also see which students are at the marches."

The two are members of a broader Youth Front against the Military Coup, which is a part of the larger National Resistance Front against the coup and includes students as well as youth from the rural, peasant and Indigenous populations of the country, the majority of whom cannot afford to attend college.

On Oct. 10, the delegation was able to briefly attend a class on revolutionary studies that is organized and held every Saturday afternoon by Los Necios. A class of about 30 youth listened raptly and took notes on Marxist theory. Los Necios (whose name roughly translates to "the troublemakers") identifies as a socialist organization, taking its ideology from a combination of revolutionaries from Marx and Lenin to Trotsky, Mao and others.

When asked what their message to youth in the U.S. and worldwide would be, a member of Los Necios answered: "Our message would be that youth need to get involved politically. As young people, we are obliged to get involved. Being a revolutionary is a moral obligation."

Dowell represented the youth group FIST on the U.S. delegation. An interview with her about the delegation's experiences in Honduras can be found at www.blogtalkradio.com/FIST-Youth.

Stand up against racism

The racism of Keith Bardwell, Louisiana justice of the peace in Tangipahoa Parish, sent shock waves and cries of condemnation throughout the United States and around the world. On Oct. 6 Bardwell refused to issue a marriage license to Beth Humphrey and Terence McKay because she is white and he is Black. It's Bardwell's policy not to marry interracial couples because he alleges the children born of such unions will "suffer." Bardwell is no doubt outraged that President Barack Obama had an African father and a white mother.

This elected judicial official still abides by Civil War-era "miscegenation" laws like the ones implemented in Nazi Germany and apartheid South Africa. Apparently, he disagrees with the historic U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Loving v. Virginia* that struck down that state's laws banning interracial unions. The court found unconstitutional all race-based restrictions against marriage throughout the country.

The high court's 1967 landmark ruling did not occur in a vacuum. It happened at the height of the civil rights and Black Liberation struggles that involved millions throughout the U.S. Other struggles for national liberation, both internationally and inside the U.S., were also taking place, with Indigenous and Latino/a peoples demanding an end to centuries of racism, oppression and inequality.

Humphrey and McKay plan to file a complaint with the U.S. Justice Department concerning Bardwell. The American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana sent a letter to the Judicial Administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court, which oversees state justices of the peace, asking for an investigation of Bardwell, and requesting the imposition of the severest sanctions against him. The national headquarters of the NAACP, the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights, and several

Louisiana politicians have also called for Bardwell's immediate resignation.

While we join in the demand for Bardwell's sanctioning and removal from office, these legal efforts are not enough. Bigots like Bardwell brazenly espouse their racist attitudes and misdeeds because institutionalized racism is still a fact of life in the United States, along with women's oppression and lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression. There is still no federal law recognizing same-sex marriages.

In fact, on the 40th anniversary of the *Loving v. Virginia* ruling in 2007, Mildred Loving, who is African-American, issued a public statement that reads in part: "I believe all Americans, no matter their race, no matter their sex, no matter their sexual orientation, should have that same freedom to marry." Loving passed away in 2008. (Read Loving's entire statement on www.workers.org)

Bardwell should be forced to apologize publicly and pay restitution to all those he has insulted and harmed over the years by imposing his racist superiority. He should also be jailed for federal violations of individuals' civil liberties and civil rights.

White supremacist ideology is an integral tool the ruling class uses to divide workers so they cannot effectively fight back against the capitalist class and the many miseries it visits upon the working class and the oppressed. Lowered wages and high unemployment, record foreclosures, evictions and homelessness, health care out of reach for tens of millions—these realities demand a unified response from all workers of all nationalities.

The outrage sparked by Bardwell's actions shows how crucial is the pursuit of the struggle against racism every day. As the movement grows for jobs and economic justice and against the capitalist profit system, fighting racism in all forms must be at the top of the agenda. □

Lenin had it right

Role of the banks

Continued from page 6

is all based on the fact that the workers have not yet begun to fight back on a wide scale. The relationship of class forces is temporarily on the side of the bankers and the bosses.

They are pushing everyone around now, including the Obama administration, which has catered to them. The banks have spent \$220 million lobbying against even a minimal financial reform bill designed to restrain them from wild speculation and gambling—which touched off the present crisis in the first place.

The banks are the central nervous system and the organizers of capitalist imperialism. They dominate capitalist politics. Their representatives are always high up in every administration, Republican or Democrat. They break through every attempt to hold them back from plundering the workers because, as Lenin said, they gather all the financial resources of society into their hands. Money capital is the beginning point of the exploitation of labor, because capitalist industry must

have funds. But the banks also use this financial power to promote speculation, gambling and financial extortion.

They think that they can go on like this forever. But they will soon see that there is a force mightier than capital, mightier than bankers. It is the force of tens of millions of workers and oppressed people, who will get to the point where they can't take it any more. All the capitalists' money will not be able to stop the class struggle and a class war against capitalism itself. □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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Massive protests rock Guatemala

By Daoud Brown
Guatemala City

Oct. 13—In massive national protests, tens of thousands of campesinos, union workers, students and Indigenous people blocked roads and bridges on Oct. 12—El Día de la Raza—effectively paralyzing many parts of the country including this capital city of 3 million.

The mainly Indigenous protestors, holding oversized red flags, hit the streets in Huahuatenango, Quiché, San Marcos and at least 10 other cities in the countryside—some reportedly carrying machetes, sticks, paving stones and slingshots—and halted traffic on the main roads to the Caribbean and Pacific coasts and the Inter-American Highway. Blockades snarled traffic on most routes into the capital.

They are demanding that certain mining concessions, a cement factory and a hydroelectric plant that they believe will destroy their environment with toxic waste be shut down; that land reform including access to scarce arable land be enacted; that pure water springs be protected from contamination; that the jailing, persecution and violence directed against farm worker leaders be halted; that four campesino political prisoners be released; and that the use of private security guards and armed paramilitaries to assassinate and persecute Indigenous and campesino leaders be investigated.

Daniel Pascual, leader of the National Indigenous & Campesino Coordinadora (CONIC), told the newspaper *Diario de Centro América* that the protests "were called to exert pressure on the government to live up to their commitments" earlier agreed to but ignored. (Oct. 13)

The Oct. 12 actions were exactly 90 days after a march of 10,000 Indigenous and campesinos from San Juan Sacatepéquez to the capital on July 14, when President Álvaro Colom met with protest leaders.

"In this country, if we were not doing this, no one would listen to us," said Pascual. "There is no justice. The judges are corrupt. Campesinos are murdered. People are dying of hunger and no one says anything. Only by taking this road can we get a hearing."

The marches and blockades got under way before dawn at 4 a.m. Oct. 12 and lasted long into the night, when thousands gathered in the capital around the

Casa Presidencial. Fifteen protesters held a six-hour sit-in and hunger strike there and vowed to continue until President Colom agreed to meet with them on their demands—which he did, just before midnight. After hours of intense negotiations, the government also agreed there would be no reprisals against protesters.

One 19-year-old marcher was killed by gunfire during the tumultuous day, in what campesino leaders described as an assassination aimed at organizations of the rural poor. Two others were wounded in the attack. Business leaders said the protests had resulted in big financial losses to industry and commerce.

Students from San Carlos National University commandeered five buses to block traffic in the south of the capital for six hours. In Chimaltenango, farm workers demanded cancellation of the debt owed by 70 rural communities to the Fondo Nacional de Tierras (Land Fund). In Quiché, campesinos from the Farm Workers Unity Committee (CUC) threatened to put down their tools if the government did not act quickly on their demands.

The huge plaza around the National Palace was jammed with buses that had ferried thousands from the countryside. Colorful hand-lettered banners told local stories of the daily struggle of workers and farmers against the bosses and landowners.

Facing the plaza was a giant portrait of Jacobo Arbenz, elected Guatemala's president by a landslide in 1950. The popular Arbenz presided over real land reform, expanded democratic and labor rights, and the expropriation of land from the powerful United Fruit Company—until he was overthrown in a 1954 coup with the help of the United Fruit Company and the CIA.

Graffiti covered the walls in the crowded working-class quarter called Zona 1: "No more militarism," "For the disappeared—Memory, Truth, Justice," "No to capitalism," "Urban resistance" and "Guatemala desperate—For work, for land, for food." Venezuela chose the day to announce emergency donations of yucca products to alleviate the food crisis in Guatemala.

The Day of Dignity and Resistance of the Indigenous Peoples, or El Día de la Raza, was also celebrated on Oct. 12 in Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile, as well as in Guatemala where Indigenous people are more than 60 percent of the population. □

200,000 in Rome in solidarity with immigrants

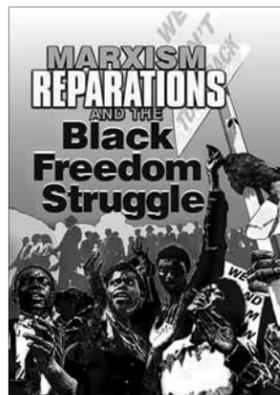
Denouncing a viciously racist anti-immigrant law passed by the government of scandal-ridden billionaire media magnate Silvio Berlusconi, as many as 200,000 people marched from the Piazza della Repubblica to the Roman forum on Oct. 17. The CGIL labor confederation played a major role in the march along

with immigrants from Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East and South Asia.

The new law fines immigrants between 5,000 and 10,000 euros (7,400 to 14,900 dollars) for entering or living in Italy without legal papers and makes this act a criminal offense. People who rent or provide housing to illegal immigrants can be jailed for up to three years.

This provocation awoke a strong reaction. Like the Sensenbrenner Bill that was rejected in 2006 after a massive May Day turnout in the U.S., the Italian law aroused a furious opposition and led to a massive turnout in what has become, since 1989, an annual anti-racist protest in Italy. The demonstrators also raised slogans against the oppression of lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, and against the racist attacks directed at immigrants and Roma people.

—John Catalinotto



Using arrest of colonial farmer

U.S. still seeks regime change in Zimbabwe

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

Zimbabwe's inclusive government was thrown into crisis in the aftermath of the arrest of the Western-backed Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai Treasurer Roy Bennett on Oct. 14. Bennett, who has been charged with possessing arms for the purpose of criminal activity, terrorism and inciting acts of insurgency, had been out on bail since March.

Bennett was released on Oct. 16 pending the beginning of his trial, which was initially scheduled to begin on Oct. 19 but has been postponed. Bennett, a white coffee farmer whose business was taken over through the Zimbabwe land reform program, had been recommended by the MDC-T prime minister to be appointed deputy agricultural minister.

As a result of Bennett's arrest, the MDC-T leader and prime minister in the government, Morgan Tsvangirai, has suspended his party's participation in cabinet meetings with the party of President Robert Mugabe, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front.

The arrest of Bennett has drawn a sharp response from the Obama administration, which immediately issued a statement criticizing President Mugabe. According to the British Broadcasting Corporation, "The U.S. has called for Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe to stop 'harassing' his rivals, a day after a senior politician was imprisoned." (Oct. 15)

These developments are taking place in the aftermath of U.S. Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs hearings held on Sept. 30. U.S. Agency for International Development's acting assistant administrator for Africa, Earl Gast, submitted a paper on Zimbabwe at the hearings that was highly critical of President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party.

In addition to funding MDC-T, the U.S. is also calling for new elections in Zimbabwe, despite the fact that general elections were held in 2008, which resulted in the victory of the ZANU-PF party.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Johnnie Carson has openly admitted that the administration is fund-

ing the MDC-T exclusively, even though Prime Minister Tsvangirai had joined the Zimbabwe government in February. (Sunday Mail, Oct. 18)

Roy Bennett and the class forces he represents

Although the MDC-T has joined with ZANU-PF in an inclusive government, the Western-backed party is continuing to pursue the foreign policy objectives of the United States and Britain. Since the implementation of the land reform process in Zimbabwe, the Western imperialist states have sought the removal of President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF party.

As a result of the legacy of colonialism, the British controlled most of the arable land in Zimbabwe. Colonialism took control of the Southern African nation during the late 19th century resulting in the large-scale displacement of the majority African population. Africans resisted the imposition of colonialism in a series of uprisings during the 1890s that were led by both the Mashona and Ndebele peoples of the region.

After the consolidation of British colonial rule, the African population was relegated to servitude and landlessness. Their traditional cultures were disregarded, and any opposition to the colonial system was met with imprisonment and death.

The colony was named after racist settler Cecil Rhodes, who through military suppression and slavlike conditions in the mining industry, turned Rhodesia into one of the most prosperous holdings for British imperialism.

With the rise of the African independence movements in the aftermath of World War II, the entire region of the subcontinent witnessed the formation of mass organizations and popular struggles. When the nonviolent resistance campaigns failed to make significant gains during the 1950s and early 1960s, the Zimbabwe masses began to form guerrilla armies to fight for the end of settler-colonialism.

In 1965, after pressure from the African masses, the Organization of African Unity and the international community escalated against the British settlers

in Zimbabwe, the whites proclaimed a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, formally breaking with the colonial rulers in London.

Weak sanctions leveled against Rhodesia after 1965 failed to force the Rhodesians to negotiate a political settlement with representatives of the African people. In 1966 an armed struggle erupted that lasted until late 1979 when the white settlers realized that if they did not negotiate, the liberation movements would win an outright military victory.

Both the Zimbabwe African People's Union and the Zimbabwe African National Union formed an alliance under the banner of the Patriot Front. When the negotiations took place at Lancaster House in Britain during late 1979, Britain and the United States agreed to compensate the white settlers for the purported value of their land holdings in Zimbabwe over a 10-year period.

A settlement was reached that led to nonracial elections and the rise to power of both ZANU and ZAPU in April 1980. Twenty percent of parliamentary seats were reserved for whites for 10 years, and the land question was supposed to be settled during the first decade of national independence.

According to Obi Egbuna, the U.S. correspondent for the Zimbabwe Herald newspaper, who appeared on the "Fighting for Justice" radio program aired in Detroit on Oct. 18: "When Reagan came into office in 1981 he declared that the U.S. would not honor the Lancaster House Agreements related to the land question. Margaret Thatcher of Britain did likewise." Egbuna went on to say, "John Major of the U.K. attempted to adhere to the agreement. However, when Tony Blair came into office, he said that he would not honor the land agreement.

"After waiting for two decades, the Zimbabwe government instituted the land reform process relocating over 300,000 families to the land that was taken from their forebears over a century before," continued Egbuna. He also pointed out that most members of the U.S. Congress voted in favor of sanctions against Zimbabwe. Members of the

Congressional Black Caucus either voted in favor of sanctions or abstained.

The Movement for Democratic Change was formed in Zimbabwe in order to contest the parliamentary elections in 2000. The party is financed and supported by the white settlers and governments in the industrialized West. The funding of the MDC by the Obama administration represents a continuation of the same policy that has been enacted over the last decade.

Roy Bennett, representing the displaced white settlers, has been placed as the principal financial officer of the MDC-T. Therefore he is responsible for handling and managing the funds given to the MDC-T from white settlers and the imperialist interests seeking regime change in Zimbabwe.

He was elected to parliament as a representative of the MDC. In 2004 he was arrested and jailed for pushing a government minister in the Zimbabwe parliament. The most serious charges against him stemmed from a plot to assassinate President Mugabe in 2006.

According to the Zimbabwe Herald, "[Bennett] is facing charges of allegedly giving money between 2002 and March 2006 to buy 26 grenades, two signal smoke hand flares, 12 rifles and other weapons. After that, the State alleges, Bennett is accused of inciting a Mr. Hirschmann to use the weapons to knock down a microwave link situated at a [small hill] along Melfort-Bromley Loop Road. It is alleged Mr. Hirschmann used cellphone disabling devices to block cellphone signals and to detonate anti-riot water cannon trucks used by police." (Oct. 19)

Bennett fled to South Africa in 2006, saying that his life was endangered by the Zimbabwe government. He sought asylum there in 2007. He returned to Zimbabwe in February 2009 after the formation of the inclusive government.

The people of Zimbabwe have a right to their land and to control the natural resources and national economy of the country. Anti-imperialist forces in the United States must demand that the Obama administration cease its interference in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe.

Go to panafricannews.blogspot.com.

GUINEA

General strike protests killings

By **G. Dunkel**

A general strike called to protest the Sept. 28 killings of over 150 people and the wounding of over 1,200 took place in Guinea on Oct. 12-13. The two-day nationwide strike was called by a confederation of trade unions and brought much of the country to a standstill. (aljazeera.net, Oct. 13)

On Sept. 28 in the capital city of Conakry, tens of thousands of people came together in an unauthorized rally to demand that Captain Moussa Dadis Camara, the head of the military junta running the government, not run for president in the upcoming elections. The rally was called by opposition parties, trade unions and community groups.

Sept. 28 was the 51st anniversary of the referendum that saw Guinea, under the leadership of Sekou Touré, reject membership in the French West African

Commonwealth, which was a major step in ending direct French colonial rule in West Africa.

According to press reports, the army attacked the demonstration with live fire and bayonets. Opposition parties claimed that 157 people were killed and 1,253 injured, while the government only admitted to 56 people being killed and did not give a number for the wounded. (The Guardian, Sept. 30)

The blatant brutality even brought public condemnation from the U.S. and French imperialists, most notably from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. Their real concern in Guinea, however, is the power of its working class and trade union movement.

Guinea, though its people are poor, most surviving on less than \$1 a day, has vast mineral wealth. It is the world's

second biggest producer of bauxite, the source of aluminum, and possesses about one-third of the world's reserves. It is also a major producer of gold.

To combat its growing international isolation, Guinea announced that a Chinese company was going to invest up to \$7 billion in its infrastructure. The Chinese government issued a statement Oct. 16 pointing out that this deal was between Guinea and a private Hong Kong company. (Radio Canada Int'l, Oct. 17)

In 2007, three successful general strikes against the previous military government defeated its attempt to raise food and fuel prices.

Given the grief and anger that the people in Guinea are feeling, the union movement called for the people "to observe two days of homage, compassion and meditation to express their protest and solidarity" over the Sept. 28 attack.



Yamodou Touré, the secretary general of the National Organization of the Free Unions of Guinea (ONSLG), told Agence France-Presse, "This was an invitation to all the workers of Guinea—public, private and informal—to stay home and pray in memory of those who fell under fire during the massacre of Sept. 28."

A number of Guinean blogs and Web sites reported that 80 to 90 percent of the people followed the union call throughout the country. Gas stations, banks, schools, markets and government offices were all closed. Taxis were rare and the streets were empty.

The working class made its power felt. □

WW/MO entrevista a líderes del PFLP

‘El derecho a retornar’ todavía la demanda más importante después de 61 años en el Líbano

Por Joyce Chediak

Cuando los oficiales de Washington están frente a las cámaras, algunas veces expresan cierta “preocupación” por la calamidad del pueblo palestino. Pero ni siquiera esta falsa preocupación se extiende a los/as 4,5 millones de palestinos/as que por 61 años han permanecido sin un estado propio, sin una nacionalidad oficial, abandonados/as en países árabes.

El derecho al retorno nunca ha sido mencionado en las susodichas negociaciones de paz Palestina-Israelita que Washington conduce. El gobierno de Estados Unidos ignora el derecho de los/as palestinos/as a regresar a sus pueblos y villas originales porque se opone a ese derecho. Los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano viven en campos de refugiados superpoblados, sin derecho a servicios sociales. Aquí, los/as niños/as del campo Bourj al Barejneh en Beirut sólo tiene las calles llenas de desperdicios humanos para jugar.

Workers World/Mundo Obrero recientemente visitó cinco campamentos palestinos en el Líbano a invitación del Frente Popular para la Liberación de Palestina, una organización marxista con una larga historia de lucha palestina. La situación de los/as refugiados/as palestinos/as en el Líbano enfatiza el porqué el derecho al retorno es tan importante, y porqué toda persona progresista que se preocupe por la situación palestina debe activamente apoyar este derecho y nunca dejarlo caer.

Una guerra lenta contra los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano

Para los/as 400.000 refugiados/as palestinos/as en el Líbano, la guerra civil no terminó en el 1990. Fuerzas derechistas dentro y fuera del gobierno libanés todavía están llevando una guerra lenta en contra de ellos/as.

En el Líbano de hoy, no se permite a los/as palestinos/as vivir fuera del campamento de refugiados. No pueden tener propiedades. No pueden ser ciudadanos/as y no pueden votar. No tienen derecho a ningún tipo de servicio social. No pueden trabajar en la mayoría de los empleos.

Son el chivo expiatorio de la derecha del Líbano, acusados/as de ser la causa de los problemas políticos y sociales, y tienen que cuidarse constantemente de ataques por las milicias paramilitares y el ejército libanés.

Desde 1970 hasta 1982 la Organización para la Liberación de Palestina y sus luchadores/as estaban basados en el Líbano. Durante la Guerra Civil de 1975 al 1990, los/as libaneses pobres se unieron a la resistencia palestina en una lucha por la liberación de todos. Y aunque la lucha fue derrotada por la reacción árabe e Israel, los gobernantes reaccionarios del Líbano nunca se olvidarán o perdonarán el papel jugado por la lucha palestina. Es por esto que los gobernantes del Líbano están lentamente sofocando a los/as palestinos/as por todos lados. Sin embargo, hasta que puedan regresar a Palestina, no tienen adónde ir.



Campo palestino Bourj al Barejneh en Beirut.

MO FOTO: JOYCE CHEDIAC

“En el Líbano, los/as palestinos/as tienen el derecho de libre expresión, pero no derechos económicos o sociales”, dijo Abu Ali Hassan, un líder nacional del FPLP en el Líbano. “En otros países árabes los/as palestinos/as tienen un mejor nivel de vida, pero no pueden hablar. Los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano tienen la peor situación económica.

“La mayoría de los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano quiere el derecho a regresar” a Palestina, continuó, “pero para ello necesitan apoyo en forma de derechos sociales, derecho al trabajo, derecho a comprar un apartamento, y el derecho a vivir fuera de los campamentos”.

‘La situación de vida peor que la de Gaza’

Abu Jabad es el líder del FPLP responsable de las actividades políticas en el Líbano. Su casa está en el campamento de Nahar al Bared, que fue destruido por el ejército libanés hace dos años. Él dijo: “La situación que viven los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano es peor que en Gaza y los territorios ocupados. Los/as palestinos/as en Gaza y Cisjordania tienen una universidad. Los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano no. De hecho, porque los/as palestinos/as son considerados extranjeros, la educación aquí es más costosa”.

Decretos del gobierno libanés aprobados en 1964 y 1995 prohíben que refugiados/as palestinos/as trabajen en más de 70 profesiones.

“Los/as palestinos/as trabajan como trabajadores/as del campo y como obreros de la construcción. Este es un trabajo temporero. No hay beneficios”, dijo Hassan. “Los/as palestinos/as tienen que trabajar fuera del Líbano. Muchos/as van a Europa de forma ilegal o como refugiados/as, asistidos [por el Organismo de Socorro de las Naciones Unidas para los Refugiados de Palestina en el Cercano Oriente, UNRWA]”.

Fuad, un líder del FPLP en el campamento de Burj al Barejneh, dijo: “Todas las familias aquí tienen personas que trabajan en el Golfo y en Europa”. Y agregó: “Sólo hay una escuela secundaria de la UNRWA para los/as palestinos/as en todo Beirut. Hay 600-700 estudiantes allí”.

Raafat El Najjar es el director médico de

una clínica en el campamento de Bidawi en Trípoli. Él dijo que a los/as médicos palestinos/as “no se les permite trabajar fuera de los campamentos. Un [médico] libanés obtiene \$40 por paciente. Yo, \$3 por paciente. Los trabajadores de sanidad, las personas que reparan los coches afuera ganan más dinero que los profesionales en el campamento”.

No pueden tener propiedades

Mientras tanto, una enmienda a la ley nacional de propiedad del Líbano del 2002 prohíbe que “las personas no libanesas, que no posean una nacionalidad expedida por un Estado reconocido por el Líbano, hereden o compren una propiedad”. Esta prohíbe a los/as palestinos/as ser propietarios/as de tierras o poseer un apartamento fuera de los campamentos de refugiados. Y si ya son dueños/as de propiedad, no pueden transmitirla a sus hijos/as.

Dependen de la ONU para los servicios básicos

Por no poder trabajar en el Líbano y tener acceso a servicios sociales, los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano deben depender de los escasos recursos del UNRWA como proveedor principal de los servicios básicos de educación, salud, socorro y servicios sociales.

Esta relación tiene un carácter dual, señaló Hassan: “Las Naciones Unidas aceptan el Estado de Israel. Sin embargo, también aprobaron la Resolución Número 194, que apoya el derecho a regresar de los/as palestinos/as, y de obtener una compensación financiera por lo que han sufrido”.

Hay 422.188 refugiados/as palestinos/as registrados/as con la UNRWA, una cifra que representa el 10 por ciento de la población del Líbano. Según la UNRWA, “El Campo Libanés tiene el porcentaje más alto de refugiados/as palestinos/as que están viviendo en pobreza abyecta y que están registrados/as con el programa de ‘penuria especial’ de la Agencia”.

Diariamente tienen miedo por su seguridad

Hassan explicó que dos de los 13 campamentos en el Líbano fueron completa-

mente destruidos y nunca fueron reemplazados. Israel destruyó el campamento Nabatiyah, cerca de la frontera con Israel. Fascistas libaneses destruyeron Tel Al Zaatar en Beirut, y masacraron la población. En 1982, fascistas israelíes y libaneses masacraron a los/as habitantes de los campamentos Sabra y Shatila. En el 2007, el Ejército Libanés bombardeó y destruyó Nahar al Bared. Sus habitantes aún se encuentran desplazados/as.

Abu Jabad, el líder del FPLP responsable de las actividades políticas en el Líbano, explicó que los/as palestinos/as que vivían en estos campamentos fueron asesinados/as, deportados/as o forzados/as a huir a otros campamentos, lo cual incrementó el número de habitantes en los campamentos que ya estaban abarrotados. “La situación es muy peligrosa. La vida de los/as palestinos/as está amenazada”, añadió. “No ha terminado, como se puede ver por la destrucción de Nahar al Bared hace dos años”.

“No hay un futuro seguro, y siempre tenemos el temor a una guerra”, dijo Dr. El Najjar. “Algunos/as palestinos/as en el campamento de Badawi que perdieron sus tarjetas de identidad, no pueden salir del campamento. Otros/as tienen miedo a salir fuera de los campamentos”.

‘¿Dónde está la justicia?’

Imad Audeh, el líder del FPLP responsable por el norte del Líbano, añadió: “La gente no está viviendo de la forma en que debiera vivir. ¿Dónde está la justicia? Hay una resolución de la ONU que dice que tenemos el derecho a regresar, pero todavía estamos esperando por 61 años para volver.

El gobierno libanés dice, ‘¿Van a regresar? ¿Entonces para qué les debemos dar la ciudadanía?’ Esto es una excusa. Mientras vivan aquí, dele por lo menos a los/as palestinos/as algunos derechos, igual que los/as libaneses/as”. El gobierno “no quiere nacionalizar a los/as palestinos/as porque eso rompería el equilibrio”.

Audeh se refería al anticuado sistema político del Líbano basado en la religión que otorga gran autoridad a los grupos dominantes en las comunidades musulmana suni y cristiana maronita, basado en un censo obsoleto conducido hace más de 75 años. “Los/as palestinos/as no tienen discriminación religiosa”, dijo. “Los/as palestinos/as estarán con cualquiera que les apoye.”

¿Qué quieren los/as palestinos/as en el Líbano?

“Nosotros/as queremos los derechos humanos que necesitamos para seguir viviendo aquí, y el cumplimiento de la decisión 194 de la ONU”, dijo Abu Jabad. “Tenemos el derecho de retornar a nuestra patria. El gobierno estadounidense debe participar en esto y no impedir los derechos palestinos”.

A pesar de las difíciles condiciones, la chispa de la lucha queda todavía. Imad Audeh habló por todos/as los/as palestinos/as entrevistados/as durante esta visita cuando dijo, “Estamos seguros/as que vamos a retomar a Palestina”. □