

# WORKERS WORLD

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## In Detroit, epicenter of crisis Fight grows against downsizing, privatizing

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Detroit

A new round of rallies and demonstrations began during the week of March 29 in efforts to halt the closing of 45 schools and other attacks involving the downsizing of Detroit and the sale of the nonprofit Medical Center. Residents came out in the hundreds to community meetings seeking answers and methods of struggle to stop the escalating attacks on the largely African-American and working-class municipality.

On March 29, 200 students, staff and alumni from Cooley High rallied in front of the building requesting that the plan to shut down the school be reversed. The state-appointed Detroit Public Schools emergency financial manager, Robert Bobb, has scheduled to close the school at the end of the semester in June.

Alumni extending back to the 1950s and 1960s attended the rally and voiced their concerns to the media that the closing of the school would be devastating to the community. State Rep. Leslie Love, a Cooley alumnus, played a leading role in the gathering.

After the rally, the crowd took the streets and marched along the business district on Fenkell Street. Even though traffic was blocked along the way, motorists honked their horns and gave the Black power salute and thumbs up in support of the demonstration to save the school.

This demonstration lasted for an hour and drew people out of their homes and small businesses to join in the protest. Residents of the neighborhood were unanimous in their sentiment that the closing of Cooley would further damage the social fabric of the community, which has been severely impacted by the deepening economic crisis in Detroit.

Later that evening the first in a series of community meetings called by the DPS emergency financial manager to discuss school closings was held at Henry Ford High School, also located on the northwest side. Four hundred people showed up at the meet-

ing representing Coffey, Holcomb, Langston Hughes, McKenny, Taft and Charles Wright schools.

Both parents and students gave detailed and impassioned presentations in support of keeping their schools open. In addition, Detroit Federation of Teachers President Keith Johnson spoke as well as in opposition to the closings.

The school closings are being promoted in the corporate media as a cost-cutting mechanism for the cash-strapped district, which is facing a deficit of over \$300 million. Yet since the appointment of the emergency financial manager by Democratic Gov. Jennifer Granholm one year ago, the red ink has increased by \$100 million.

When the emergency financial manager for DPS took control in 2009, he laid off 1,500 employees but was forced to bring back 1,100 because personnel shortages were so severe that many schools could not even operate. Due to financial mismanagement by the state appointee, the district was forced to take out a short-term loan of \$256 million in order to meet payroll and other expenses. (Detroit News, April 4)

The Detroit News, whose editorial stance is in support of the emergency financial manager and state control of the school district, was forced to admit, "Now the district

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## The struggle hasn't changed—fight racism, war and poverty!

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was shot to death in Memphis on April 4, 1968, at the height of the civil rights movement that he led. He did not live to see the end of segregation, even in the schools. While the Supreme Court back in 1954 had ruled in *Brown v. Board of Education* that public schools be desegregated, it had added the words "with all deliberate speed." This gave the racists a loophole.

It wasn't until Oct. 29, 1969, that the court ruled desegregation was the law "now and hereafter." By that time, the movement which began in the 1950s had engaged in years of powerful battles against racist repression. Not intimidated by the assassinations of Dr. King, Black Muslim leader Malcolm X and

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Philadelphia strike: 'Patients before profits'

Temple University Hospital nurses, on day four of their strike, protest in front of the home of the hospital's CEO. Read more on page 6.

PHOTO: KELLY VALDEZ

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# Filipino group demands apology from racist radio host

By Bernadette Ellorin

April 3 — BAYAN USA joins the millions of Filipinos in the United States and around the world in taking collective offense to the tasteless remarks recently made by radio personality Adam Carolla regarding Manny Pacquiao, the Philippines and the Filipino people on his nationally syndicated show, “The Adam Carolla Podcast.” We also agree with the demand that Carolla issue an official apology for his insensitive and vulgar insinuations about [world boxing welterweight champion] Manny Pacquiao, Filipinos, and most especially Filipina women and children in the sex trade industry.

It’s sad that in 2010 it must still be pointed out that the two unfortunate realities of the Filipino people that Carolla despicably chose to goad with ridicule — the Filipino people’s overwhelming pride in Manny Pacquiao’s success and the existence of the sex trade industry that consumes mainly young Filipina women and children — stem from the most unfortunate reality of all, widespread poverty and joblessness in the country.

Only in a very poor country such as the Philippines, where people are afforded very few economic opportunities to rise from impoverishment, can the sex trade or any black market industry proliferate into a cultural norm.

Carolla’s tirade against Manny Pacquiao being “illiterate” and “praying to chicken bones” is no different than mocking Filipinos for being poor. Carolla mocks further by stating that all that Filipinos have going for them is “Manny Pacquiao and sex tours.” Clearly, poverty and the choices it leads people to make in the so-called Third World are game material for comedy and cheap laughs from the likes of Adam Carolla.

Perhaps the even bigger offense beyond Carolla’s words that should not go unchecked is the mainstream corporate media’s tolerance and allowance of such derogatory and racist comments to even air. That a white radio personality such as Adam Carolla can boldly make those remarks against a racial minority with seemingly no air of reservation for the social ramifications ultimately reveals that corporate media here in the U.S. have barely progressed from the turn of the 20th century when, during the long-forgotten Philippine-American War, mainstream U.S. newspapers blatantly depicted caricatures of Filipinos as “n — rs”, monkeys and dog-eating savages, all in the effort to justify what was to be the U.S.’s first colonial project abroad.

CBS Radio Inc., which broadcasts “The Adam Carolla Podcast,” is one of the largest owners and operators of radio stations in the U.S., with more than 140 radio stations across the country, reaching millions of listeners everyday. In 2007, CBS Radio fired radio host Don Imus for racial slurs made against African Americans on his now-cancelled show, “Imus in the Morning.” Incidentally, CBS Radio was also the former home of notorious radio personality Howard Stern, who in 1992 used his nationally syndicated radio show to issue a warning that the Philippines “is a country where fathers sell their own daughters for sex” and that he wouldn’t recommend anyone go to the Philippines “unless you want to get laid.”

Despite making contributions to the U.S. for more than



WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

Bernadette Ellorin speaks at Sept. 20 March for Jobs during G-20 Summit in Pittsburgh.

100 years, Filipinos — one of the largest Asian groups in the country, numbering at nearly 4 million — are still painfully absent from mainstream media. With the likes of Adam Carolla, Howard Stern, Alec Baldwin, David Letterman and even the writing team of ABC’s Desperate Housewives each taking very public jabs against Filipinos and Filipino culture, it is no wonder why Filipinos would welcome and rally in support when one of their own rises from underdog obscurity to become perhaps the most successful boxing champion in recent history and deservedly earning worldwide respect and admiration.

Corporate media outlets such as CBS Radio Inc., Clear Channel Communications, Citadel Broadcasting and the media oligarchs such as Viacom that own them, literally profit in the billions annually off one task — disseminating information to the public and shaping public opinion. When left in the hands and interests of multinational corporations, we see how racists such as Adam Carolla, Don Imus and Howard Stern are offered lucrative deals and the power of their own nationally syndicated shows. While it remains to be seen how CBS Radio Inc. will respond to Carolla’s remarks now that the Filipino community is rightfully taking issue with it, clearly the bigger fight remains in the struggle against systemic institutional racism and for responsible media messaging that entails inclusion and representation of all racial minorities that suffer from marginalization.

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# Charges dropped against police brutality survivor

By Sean Schafron  
Pittsburgh

Jordan Miles is one of millions of young Black people in the United States trying to escape the deplorable conditions the racist capitalist establishment subjects African Americans to on a daily basis.

A talented youth who attends a private performing arts school in Pittsburgh, Miles had never been in trouble in his mere 18 years, but late in the evening of January 12 trouble would find him.

Miles was walking to his grandmother's home when three white undercover police jumped from an unmarked car, yelling things such as, "Where's the drugs?"

As a terrified Miles turned to run from the police in the freezing weather he quickly fell. That's when the three officers — Richard Ewing, Michael Saldutte and David Sisak — began beating him. After a torrent of kicks, punches and choking that Miles was subjected to for 15 minutes, a police van and uniformed officers arrived.

Miles was treated twice at a local hospital for the injuries sustained in the unprovoked attack. The cops claimed Miles had an object under his jacket, which they stated at first was a gun and later revised to a bottle of Mountain Dew. Miles was charged with aggravated assault and resisting arrest while the three cops were assigned to desk duties.

Reaction was swift and resolute. Jordan's mother, Terez Miles, undertook an extensive media awareness campaign, releasing horrific photos of her brutalized son to the public. Miles stated that her son, unarmed and at 150 pounds, was certainly no threat.

On Jan. 26, around 60 of Miles' fellow students joined with activists in an emotionally charged march in the cold Pittsburgh weather demanding, "Justice for Jordan!" Mayor Luke Ravenstahl launched another so-called investigation into the incident, as the cops were given what amounts to a paid vacation.

After hearings and a lie detector test, which Jordan passed with flying colors,

the outcry for charges against Miles to be dropped was finally acknowledged. On March 4 Magisterial District Judge Oscar Petite dismissed all charges, ostensibly because of perjured information from a witness and the lack of the mythical Mountain Dew bottle being turned in as evidence. Mass pressure proved to be decisive in exonerating Miles.

Meanwhile, the notorious Fraternal Order of Police immediately expressed outrage at the dismissed charges and be-

gan an unsuccessful campaign to have them reinstated and the officers' probation ended. FOP vice president Charles Hanlon would even say, "I have three of the hardest working Pittsburgh police officers that saw their careers take a dive." (kdka.com, March 4)

Jordan Miles is now one of millions in the U.S. who must deal not only with institutional oppression but also the physical brutality of living while Black. □

## Anti-racists to protest Tea Party April 14

*The Boston chapter of the Bail Out the People Movement will be holding a protest against Sarah Palin and the Tea Party on April 14 at 9:30 a.m. The protest will take place at the Boston Common Bandstand, where these extreme ultra-right reactionaries will be holding a rally. The major theme of the BOPM protest is calling for a fightback movement against racism, sexism, anti-lesbian/gay/bi and trans bigotry and anti-immigrant bigotry. Call 617-522-6626 or e-mail bopmboston@gmail.com for more information. Following are excerpts from BOPM's call for the April 14 action.*

On April 14 Sarah Palin and the so-called "Tea Party Express" have announced that they will hold a rally at the Boston Common Bandstand starting at 10 a.m. This is the same group of ultra-right-wing, neofascist racists that have tried to exploit the current economic crisis by using the vilest racist tactics to attack Obama, unions, immigration, health

care and the environment. While the demagogues — including Fox News and many others that are in control of this group — may try and hide behind populist slogans, it should be clear to all that their true goal is to further the political and economic program of Wall Street, Big Oil, the wealthy and the corporations and they will stop at nothing in order to do so. Let's be clear — there is nothing grassroots about any of the Tea Party factions; they are all funded by the same racist, ultraright organizations such as Freedomworks and Americans for Prosperity.

We cannot stand by and allow Sarah Palin and the Tea Party to gather and try to use racism to divide us without a response. History has shown that only through organizing and mobilizing a strong, anti-racist, pro-working-class counterattack against both the economic crisis and racist division will we be able to successfully defeat right-wing, neofascist organizations and their supporters once and for all! □

## Students organize against bank 'takeover' of commencement

Students at Syracuse University are mobilizing to stop the head banker of JPMorgan Chase from delivering their 2010 graduation address in May. CEO Jamie Dimon has run the financial giant, the second biggest bank in the U.S., since 2005. That year, JPMorgan Chase admitted the company was built on profits from slavery, noting its earlier banks had owned at least 1,250 enslaved people. In 2008 JPMorgan piled up further profits by buying failed savings bank Washington Mutual and continuing its massive loan foreclosures.

Outraged SU students posted a petition online explaining why they oppose Dimon: "We, the students, alumni and friends of the university, are against using the 2010 commencement to restore the public image of the banking industry and validate the anti-environmental and anti-humanitarian interests of JPMorgan Chase. We demand a graduation speaker sensitive to the current global climate that this class is poised to inherit on May 16th, 2010." The SU chapter of Students for a Democratic Society has been leading the organizing.

The petition drew hundreds of signatures within days. Signers include students, alums, faculty and community

members, and other supporters. Many have added short messages indicting the role of the banks in the current economic crisis, citing suicides, homelessness and family suffering from foreclosures, crushing student debt, predatory credit card practices and job cuts. Campus Citrus TV noted JPMorgan Chase's role in environmental destruction by financing the coal mine industry in mountain top "removal."

One signer said, "This graduating class of individuals has a very small chance of gaining meaningful employment as a direct result of the unchecked abuses of [Dimon's] own financial industry."

Students and supporters have tweeted and retweeted, MySpaced and Facebooked, emailed and reposted news about the struggle. On April 5 the petition ranked in the top 25 on PetitionOnline.com, a free online host for public petitions. To read the petition and comments and add signatures, visit [www.petitiononline.com/SUGRADUA/petition.html](http://www.petitiononline.com/SUGRADUA/petition.html).

— Minnie Bruce Pratt

*Pratt is a professor of Women's & Gender Studies and Writing & Rhetoric at Syracuse University.*

## Mumia events on his birthday

Writers for Mumia, an afternoon of readings and testimonials by poets, playwrights, journalists, book authors, wordsmiths and activists, will be held April 24 from 2:30 to 6 p.m. at St. Mary's Church, 512 W. 126th St. in Harlem. The New York Chapter of the National Writers Union and the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition of New York City are co-sponsoring the event, which precedes a rally in front of the Justice Department's headquarters in Washington, D.C., on April 26. Unjustly held captive on Pennsylvania's death row since 1982, Abu-Jamal is being threatened by the courts with another execution date for a killing he didn't commit in 1981.

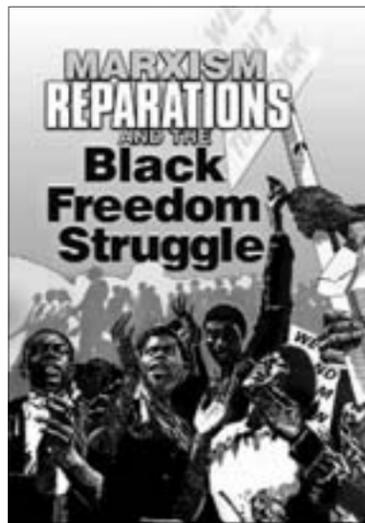
"Mumia needs public support at this critical time, so that's why fellow writers want to pay tribute to the power of his words and his struggle for freedom and justice on April 24," Susan Elizabeth Davis told Workers World. Davis founded Writers for Mumia as a project of the International Action Center in 1997 and organized two public events in 1999 and 2007. "As the 'voice of the voiceless,' Mumia inspires others to write as truthfully, eloquently and purposefully as he does. We must fight to free him with our words as we seek to write truth to power." Davis noted that Mumia has been an honorary member of the National Writers Union since 1995. The gathering will also celebrate his 56th birthday, which is on April 24. For more information call 212-633-6646; 212-254-0279 ext. 18; or 212-330-8029.

There will also be a Birthday Celebra-

tion and Organizing Party for Mumia Abu-Jamal on April 24 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the S.H.A.P.E. Center, 3815 Live Oak in Houston, Texas. The event is sponsored by the Texas Death Penalty Abolition Movement. The program will include poetry, music and a birthday cake, along with strategizing to support the campaign for a civil rights investigation by the U.S. Justice Department into violations of Mumia's civil rights. For more information call 713-503-2633 or email [Abolition.Movement@hotmail.com](mailto:Abolition.Movement@hotmail.com).

— Workers World bureau, New York

*Gloria Rubac contributed to this report.*



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON

### MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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**Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery** Sam Marcy

**Black Youth: Repression & Resistance** LeiLani Dowell

**The Struggle for Socialism Is Key** Monica Moorehead

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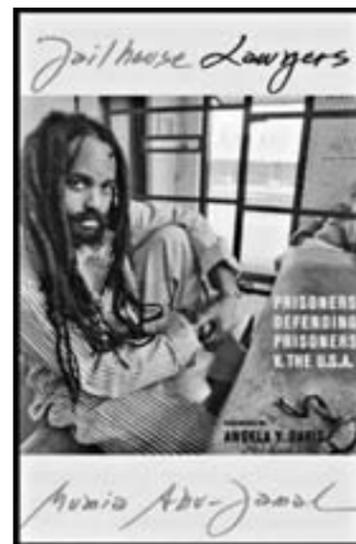
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Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com) and bookstores around the country



Mumia Abu-Jamal's book, "Jailhouse Lawyers: Prisoners defending prisoners v. the U.S.A." is available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com).

## At Detroit City Council meeting

# Plan to steal pensions opposed

By Cheryl LaBash  
Detroit

On March 29 more than 500 Detroit workers, retirees and community members filled the Detroit City Council's auditorium to oppose the \$6 billion giveaway of city pension assets initiated by Mayor Dave Bing. They shouted out, applauded each other's one-minute public comments and challenged the City Council to stand up against the backdoor maneuver. Bypassing not only the City Council but the elected pension boards and unions, the mayor secretly initiated state legislation for "distressed pensions" that, if passed, will allow him to transfer the control of the city's two fully funded pension plans to a state-authorized Municipal Employees Retirement System. In a unanimous rebuke, the City Council demanded the mayor reverse his action. But it cannot be withdrawn, only blocked in the legislative committees.

Councilmember JoAnn Watson pointed out, "It is not our pension systems which are 'distressed,' It is Detroit that is distressed. We need a state of emergency declared so we can enact a moratorium on foreclosures and sell city-owned homes to Detroiters for a dollar."

This majority African-American city has suffered racist disinvestment for decades as auto plants closed, moving jobs to rural areas. Automation increased productivity and profits using fewer workers. Highly profitable new housing construction spread suburbs farther and farther from the city center while insurance and mortgage redlining disadvantaged city residents. Underfunded schools dete-

riorated. Freeway construction destroyed Paradise Valley, the historic Black business center, and then bypassed neighborhood businesses on major city streets. During the housing mania, subprime loans were disproportionately forced on African-American homeowners in Detroit fueling foreclosures and causing the transfer of assets built through generations of homeownership. More than 50 percent of Detroiters are unemployed, especially youth, whose futures are being stolen. It is a crisis imposed on Detroit residents.

Now a substantial concentration of pension capital — \$6 billion — controlled by Detroiters is on its way to being handed over to be controlled by a nine-person pension board assembled from small towns across the state. Detroit pension funds have subsidized hotel and other development in Detroit, where its residents now work. It's like having an absentee landlord, said a firefighter at the council meeting.

Certainly the most concerned about this shock and awe attack are city workers and retirees who gave up wage increases to lock in some security for their post-work years. Currently the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees is resisting the imposition of a 10 percent pay cut through furlough days. AFSCME represents the lowest paid job classifications; many of their members are women single heads of households.

The city administration claims the move is to protect the pensions of city workers — still traditional, defined-benefit, lifetime pensions for most — and also save the city \$20 million per year to help offset a much publicized \$350 million bud-

get deficit. Although no reduction of current pensions has been suggested yet, the practice of distributing earnings in excess of 7.9 percent to retirees, which especially helps pensioners and survivors whose income has been eroded by inflation — termed thirteenth check — will disappear. Instead, the mayor proposes to reduce the city's required contribution to the pension fund. And it is the mayor's stated position that new hires will be forced into defined contribution, 401(k) type retirement plans instead of the "for-life" pensions for current workers and retirees.

### Banks deepen debt crises

The global capitalist economic contraction is exposing the ruthless rule of the banks, which demands more and more from local and state governments, forcing them to borrow to cover debts incurred before the crash as the tax base is eroded by unemployment and foreclosures and capitalist laws that prohibit unbalanced budgets for any but the federal government. In one transaction, a full one-seventh of Detroit's reported budget deficit — \$50 million annually — is mandated to pay international financial giant UBS and other banks and financiers for pension obligation certificates and an interest rate swap that crashed. In the renegotiation, payment is essentially garnished from the city just like creditors take part of a worker's pay before it is even received. All of Detroit's proceeds from casino taxes are currently deposited with a third-party bank to pay \$4.2 million per month before the remainder goes to the city accounts. How much of the "deficit" is owed to the banks remains an unanswered question.

The pension obligation certificates fully funded the two Detroit pension funds that the mayor is giving away.

Detroit and the state of Michigan are not alone. "California, New York and other states are showing many of the same signs of debt overload that recently took Greece to the brink — budgets that will not balance, accounting that masks debt, the use of derivatives to plug holes, and armies of retired public workers who are counting on benefits that are proving harder and harder to pay." (N.Y. Times, Mar. 29) The banks were bailed out with tax dollars, are paid full value by federal mortgage insurance for inflated mortgages in foreclosure, and squeeze cities and states to cut budgets, wages and benefits to transfer wealth from the workers who created it to capitalist financiers as production for profit contracts.

Squeezing wealth from the working class and our communities is not the only possible solution. The urban Marshall Plan advocated by Councilmember Watson calls for massive federal funding for jobs and community-driven economic development. In 1935 the Works Progress Administration provided jobs for more than eight million unemployed. The WPA in Detroit dismantled blighted buildings, and constructed roads and schools. More than 33,000 Detroit structures are on the city's demolition list, providing enough work to absorb every unemployed Detroiters immediately in a deconstruct/recycle program. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s last struggle was for jobs or income for all. It is still an urgent task that calls out for completion now. Pension benefits are deferred wages. □

## Fight grows against downsizing, privatizing

Continued from page 1

is so broke it has had to plead to state officials for permission to take on yet another short-term loan." (April 4)

Despite threats by financial manager Bobb to put the school district into receivership or bankruptcy last year if the unions did not accept huge pay and benefit cuts, this plan is no longer advocated because of the damage it has done to the overall bond ratings for both the city and the state of Michigan.

At present the state superintendent, Michael Flanagan, is attempting to force a deal between the elected Detroit School Board and the emergency financial manager in order to secure a \$115 million grant from the federal government. The board has filed suit against the emergency financial manager in order to win an injunction to stop the school closings.

Bobb wrote to Otis Mathis, the Detroit Board of Education president, asking for the elected body to drop its lawsuit against his office in exchange for some compromise over control of the district. The Detroit board had sued earlier to stop Bobb from exercising academic control over the district as well.

Yet the question of academic control of the district is superfluous with the impending closure of 45 schools, the possible layoff of over 2,000 employees and the burgeoning deficit. The vice president of the Detroit board, Anthony Adams, said on April 1, "The board has been ignored. The issue is whether he's prepared to accept us as a partner." (Detroit Free Press, April 2)

However, the question is what the board and the emergency financial man-

ager will be partnering to accomplish. The community is demanding that all of the school closings be rescinded and that funding be supplied by the state to maintain personnel levels in the district.

In a leaflet being circulated at the anti-school-closing rallies and demonstrations, as well as among the people throughout the city, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs states, "Both Robert Bobb, the unelected DPS emergency financial manager, and Mayor Dave Bing are serving the rich, who are responsible for creating the worst economic crisis this city, state and country has seen since the Great Depression."

"In order to defeat the banks, corporations and the private foundations like Kresge and Skillman, which are really behind these dictatorial measures to further impoverish the people and deny their right to self-determination, we must build a citywide coalition to demand a moratorium on all foreclosures, evictions, utility shutoffs, layoffs, school closings and mass dislocation."

"Tell Mayor Bing to declare a state of economic emergency and suspend debt-service payments to the banks and demand that the federal government immediately establish public works programs to create jobs for hundreds of thousands of unemployed and poor people in Detroit."

In regard to the DPS deficit and its relationship to the banks, a Detroit News editorial revealed that "80 percent of Detroit's state aid will go to debt payment instead of classrooms. That is extraordinary, given the students' dire academic needs." (April 4)

### Downsizing efforts halted over environmental concerns

Illustrating the undemocratic and chaotic character of the corporate-engineered plans to "rightsize" Detroit during the census year, a much-trumpeted plan to utilize \$20 million in federal dollars to demolish vacant homes in the city was halted on the first day by state officials due to the failure of the Bing administration to have the buildings inspected for untreated asbestos, a known carcinogen.

When the first house was being bulldozed, the project was stopped, leaving the home as a gaping eyesore and possible environmental danger. "I don't want to have to breathe this stuff," said Alex Alexander, 73, who lives next door to the abandoned home. (Detroit News, April 3)

Alexander continued, "I am worried I am going to get sick." The Detroit News reported, "State officials only learned of the city's federally funded demolition blitz — which Mayor Bing touted in his 'State of the City' speech last week — through the media. The state said the city didn't file a required 10-day notice with the Department of Natural Resources and Environment over its plans to raze the house. Such a notice would include whether the house has asbestos."

The demolition blitz is slated to carry out large-scale destruction of abandoned homes, many of which are owned by the banks, in the neighborhoods of Brightmoor, Herman Gardens, Southwest, Kettering, North End, North Central, Osborn and Far East/East English Village. The deputy director of the city's Building Safety and Engineering Department said

on April 2 that 160 houses have already been torn down without the necessary environmental permit.

### Private takeover of Medical Center challenged

In other efforts aimed at stopping the privatization of the city, a coalition of nonprofit organizations has declared that the proposed sale of the nonprofit Medical Center, located in the Wayne State University area, is illegal under state law. The three groups, calling themselves the Coalition to Protect Detroit Health Care, wrote a letter to the Michigan attorney general, Mike Cox, who must approve the sale, stating that the possible takeover by the Nashville-based Vanguard Health Systems would violate laws that prohibit nonprofit "assets to be used, conveyed or distributed for noncharitable purposes." (FierceHealthCare.com, April 1)

"We want to make sure the sale reflects the long-term best interests of the city of Detroit versus the short-term interests of Vanguard," said Marjorie Mitchell, the executive director of Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition is calling for a mass demonstration at City Hall on April 20 to unite the forces fighting around all the major issues in Detroit. In a call, the coalition says, "Corporate interests are moving rapidly to privatize public education, break the Detroit Public Schools unions, seize the municipal pension funds, sell the Detroit Medical Center and drive tens of thousands of people from their homes so that the banks can prosper at the expense of working people and youth." □

# Washington admits there's no recovery for workers

By Fred Goldstein

Cheerleaders for capitalism are talking out of both sides of their mouths about the latest job numbers, which showed the creation of 162,000 jobs in March.

President Barack Obama hailed the news as signaling that the economy "is beginning to turn the corner," but he followed this with the warning that "It will take time to achieve the strong and sustained job growth that we need." (New York Times, April 3)

Likewise, Christine Romer, head of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, hailed the numbers but said there will be a "gradual labor market healing" and that "we still have a lot of headwinds." (msnbc.com, April 2)

Larry Summers, director of the National Economic Council, said: "The trend has turned, but to get back to the surface, we've got a long way to go." (washington-times.com, April 4) And Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner said the administration is "very worried" about getting unemployment back to 5 percent. (Associated Press, April 1)

The double talk was captured in a New York Times headline of April 3 that read, "Signaling Jobs Recovery, Payrolls Surged in March." This was followed by the exuberant opening sentence, "The clouds have parted."

However, a few lines further down came the bad news: "The economy needs to add more than 100,000 jobs a month just to absorb new entrants into the labor market, let alone provide a livelihood for the 15 million Americans already looking for work. Without constant, robust growth, the unemployment rate won't budge. Indeed, the Congressional Budget Office has projected that the rate will hover around 10 percent for the rest of the year."

So the truth is that the working class has little to cheer about from the latest job numbers. The official unemployment rate is still 9.7 percent. Almost one third of the jobs created, amounting to 48,000, are temporary jobs working for the U.S. Census. These jobs last only six to eight weeks. Officially, there are still 15 million unemployed, 9.1 million doing forced part-time work and 2.3 million so-called "marginally attached" workers who have become so discouraged they've given up looking for work.

Added together, they are called "total unemployment" by the government. This number actually rose in March — from 16.8 percent to 16.9 percent. This makes for an official total of 26.4 million workers who need full-time jobs. The actual figure, according to an authoritative study by the Pew Research Center, is more than 30 million.

## 6.5 million long-term unemployed

The crisis of U.S. capitalism, as far as the workers are concerned, is getting more and more severe, big business spin masters notwithstanding. The long-term unemployed — workers out of a job for 27 weeks or more — rose 414,000 in March to 6.5 million, or 44 percent of the official number.

Black unemployment stands at 16.5 percent, with Black men at 19 percent; Latino/a joblessness is at 12.6 percent; and teenage unemployment is at 26 percent.

Right now almost six unemployed workers are looking for each available job. This dim picture for the workers is despite six months of expanded production and

profits for the bosses and a steady rise in the stock market's Dow Jones Industrial Average, which is now nearing 11,000. This is the "jobless recovery" in action.

An analysis released on April 2 of the unemployment statistics by Heidi Shierholz of the Economic Policy Institute shows in stark terms the crisis that the working class is facing in this capitalist economy.

"Since the start of the recession in December 2007," wrote Shierholz, "the labor market has shed 8.2 million payroll jobs. This number, however, understates the size of the gap in the labor market by failing to take into account the fact that simply to keep up with population growth, the labor market should have added around 2.8 million jobs since December 2007. This means the labor market is now roughly 11 million jobs below what would restore the pre-recession unemployment rate (which was 5.0 percent in December 2007). To get us back to the lower unemployment rate that existed prior to the 2001 recession (4.3 percent in March 2001), the U.S. economy is now nearly 17 million jobs short.

"Furthermore, these calculations understate slack in the labor market by failing to take into account the decline in hours worked for those who have kept their jobs. At the start of the recession in December 2007, the length of the average workweek in the private sector was 34.7 hours. In March, it was 34.0 hours. This may at first seem like a small amount, but when multiplied across the labor market, the effect is nontrivial — the decline in the total number of hours worked in the private sector since the start of the recession that is due to reduced hours alone (i.e., not job loss) is equivalent to 2.2 million jobs."

The bourgeois policy experts in Washington and in the media have read the same numbers. Thus, it is no surprise that they preach caution alongside every optimistic statement. They dare not raise expectations among the masses. In fact, according to the Washington Post of April 2, "The White House does not expect the rate to return to its healthy-economy level of 5 percent until at least 2017."

These are the experts who predicted a maximum of 8 percent unemployment by 2010. They cannot see from one quarter to the next, let alone to 2017. But the point is that the government officials themselves are profoundly pessimistic about any genuine recovery for the working class.

## Where can jobs come from?

All this speaks to the urgent necessity to organize a working-class campaign for an immediate, sweeping national jobs campaign. The idea is beginning to surface, even among liberals.

Bob Herbert, an African-American col-

umnist for the New York Times, wrote on March 29: "Those who think some kind of robust recovery is hiding around the corner, just waiting to spring a pleasant surprise on us, are deluded."

Herbert derided the Obama administration's "jobs program" of \$30 billion as "small-bore initiatives" and said that "some new variation of the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps should be developed to put economically distressed young people to work. What is happening to young, out-of-work and poorly educated American kids — not just in the big cities, but increasingly in suburban and rural areas, as well — is tragic."

Along these lines, the Bail Out the People Movement, the May 1st Coalition For Worker and Immigrant Rights, Moratorium Now! Coalition, the San Francisco Labor Council, the Million Worker March Movement, Rev. Tom Smith from Pittsburgh's Monumental Baptist Church and many others are calling for a national jobs program that would include all workers who need a job to be carried out on a scope comparable to the WPA of the 1930s. Hiring them directly, the WPA put over 8 million workers to work. This demand will be publicized at a demonstration in Washington, D.C., on May 8.

In the midst of this crisis, the bosses are ruthlessly trying to take advantage of workers in every way. There are investigations in many states of corporations that use unpaid interns as free labor.

In 2008 the National Association of Colleges and Employers found that 83 percent of graduating students had held internships, up from 9 percent in 1992. This means hundreds of thousands of students hold internships each year; some experts estimate that one-fourth to one-half are unpaid. (New York Times, April 2)

## Making money denying benefits

While workers are suffering, the bosses are using every trick to block them from getting unemployment insurance. This is to reduce employer costs because the more claims after a layoff, the higher the rates the bosses have to pay.

A billion-dollar company called Talx handles more than 30 percent of the nation's requests for jobless benefits. Pledging to save employers money in part by contesting claims, Talx helps them decide which applications to resist and how to mount effective appeals. This has made Talx a boom business in a bust economy.

Among the companies Talx represents are Wal-Mart, Countrywide, Aetna, AT&T, Best Buy, FedEx, Home Depot, Marriott, McDonald's and the United States Postal Service. (New York Times, April 3)

In addition, millions more homeowners are expected to lose their homes over the next several years. Workers are forced into homelessness, to double and triple up with their families, or to live in cars or tent cities.

The economic crisis is not making headlines. But for the working class, the communities, students and youth the crisis is spreading, not declining as the government and the apologists for the capitalist profit system would have it.

More people living in the U.S. filed for bankruptcy protection in March than during any month since the federal personal bankruptcy law was tightened in October 2005. A new report attributes this to high unemployment and the housing crash.

Federal courts reported more than 158,000 bankruptcy filings in March, or 6,900 a day, a rise of 35 percent from February, according to a report to be released April 9 by Automated Access to Court Electronic Records.

Capitalism must maximize profits at all costs. This is what drives the economic system. If the bosses have their way, there will be no recovery for the workers at all — only more pressure for those who work and a steady growth in the number of those who cannot get a job.

In a February speech, Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco President Janet Yellen warned what the recovery will look like:

"The recession has forced businesses to reexamine just about everything they do with an eye toward restraining costs and boosting efficiency," said Yellen. "Strapped by tight credit and plummeting sales, businesses have overhauled the way they manage supply chains, inventory, production practices and staffing.

"My business contacts describe this as a paradigm shift and they believe it's permanent. This process of implementing new efficiency gains may have only begun and we may be in store for further efficiency improvements and high productivity growth for some time. If so, the rate of job creation will be frustratingly slow." (Huffington Post, April 4)

The only way to stop job creation from being "frustratingly slow" or actually nonexistent is for the working class to mobilize and fight for a national, government-provided jobs program at living wages and conditions. The demonstration May 8 in Washington, D.C., will make that demand.

Goldstein is the author of the book "Low-Wage Capitalism," a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on the U.S. working class. He has also written numerous articles and spoken on the present economic crisis. For further information, visit [www.lowwagecapitalism.com](http://www.lowwagecapitalism.com).

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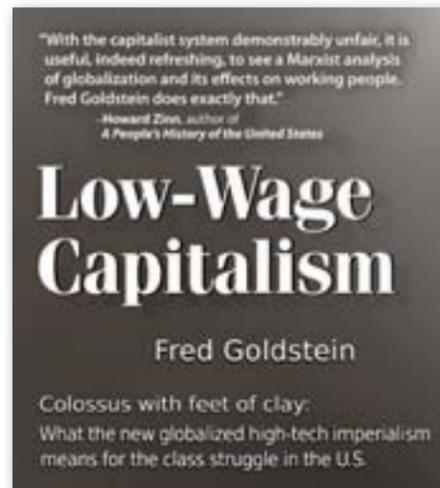
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# Striking nurses picket Temple University president's home

By Audrey Hoak  
Philadelphia

On April 3, day four of their continued effort to win a fair contract, striking nurses from Temple University Hospital brought their case to the doorstep of a luxury condominium in Rittenhouse Square — the home of Temple University President Ann Weaver Hart. If Hart didn't get the message, her neighbors and visitors in the park clearly heard it.

Hundreds of strikers gathered in the park for a rally and then marched around Rittenhouse Square. They were supported by friends, family, former patients and a motorcycle club; there was also a vigorous show of support from people honking their car horns as they drove past. Using her walker, an elderly woman from the neighborhood came to the rally to applaud the strike and acknowledge the excellent home care she receives from a Temple nurse.

In a show of solidarity, the 85,000-member California Nurses Association sent a delegation including Donna Smith, a nurse featured in Michael Moore's 2007 documentary "Sicko." Smith and her spouse were forced to move into their daughter's basement when they lost everything after major illnesses and surgeries because their insurance company refused to pay for their care.

On March 31, the 1,500 members of the Pennsylvania Association of Staff Nurses and Allied Professionals walked off their jobs after six months of negotiations failed to produce a contract.

According to Hart and the hospital administration, the unions are the problem. To them everything would be peachy if PASNAP members would simply accept the proposed gag clause, the hike in the cost of their health insurance, and the illegal repeal of the Tuition Remission/Reimbursement Program for dependents, among other contract givebacks proposed by management.



April 3 protest.

PHOTO: KELLY VALDEZ

But the strikers have their feet planted firmly on the ground; they know very well that they are the solution and not the problem at Temple University Hospital. They understand that their own rights are anatomically connected to the quality of patient care. They refuse to be silenced.

## Nurses' appeal to the public

An open letter appealing for public support, written by two Medical Respiratory Intensive Care Unit nurses, stated, "In caring for some of the most acutely ill patients in the tri-state area, we operate daily with the burden of short staffing, lack of ancillary help, profound supply shortages and lack of protective equipment to guard our health."

In her blog covering the PASNAP strike, Smith noted that according to a report in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Temple's CEO Ann Weaver Hart, the key architect of the plan to bust the nurses' union and avoid giving them well deserved benefits, earns more than \$602,000 annually.

She also gets a car, a house and \$75,000 in deferred compensation.

Union leaders have also pointed out that the hospital administration has been willing to invest millions of dollars to hire scab RNs and technicians in their effort to break the union. Using [healthsourceglobal.com](http://healthsourceglobal.com) the hospital administration advertised salaries of up to \$10,388 per week plus transportation and accommodations for strikebreakers.

The Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board agrees with the PASNAP that Temple University Hospital violated the contract and the law in 2009 when it abruptly cut the Tuition Remission/Reimbursement Program for workers' dependents.

This was an outright theft of a perk that has been taxed as income. This illegal act betrayed a promise that attracted experienced, professional staff from across the country for the past 25 years and continues to be enjoyed by Temple University professors and secretaries. It left many parents scrambling for loans to cover tu-

ition costs in the middle of a school year. And at a time when college tuitions are rocketing, it pulled the rug out from under many people who have worked at Temple University Hospital for years banking on the program for their children's future.

When it comes to the price tag for health coverage, most of the marchers at Rittenhouse Square Park made it clear that they expected a rate increase since everybody's rate is rising. They are willing to pay more at the rate of inflation, they say, but the proposed doubling or tripling of the cost proposed by the Temple Administration is pure greed.

The marchers know very well that a strong voice and a strong contract are necessary to retain the experienced staff the patients and their families deserve. As one of the rank-and-file strikers, Lisa Bryant, said, "People understand that when we advocate for ourselves, we are advocating for them."

Go to [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) to read day one coverage of the strike.

# Sentencing of killer of pro-choice doctor raises larger issues

By Kathy Durkin

On April 1, Scott Roeder was sentenced to life in prison for murdering Dr. George Tiller. Kansas District Judge Warren Wilbert ordered him to serve 50 years without parole.

Dr. Tiller's family and attorneys and pro-choice activists sought this sentence, the severest possible. However, it does not bring back the dedicated, compassionate and courageous doctor who, despite years of death threats, stalking and assaults, provided essential health care for women from all over the country who sought his help, the doctor whose motto was, "Trust women."

The Tiller family stated that "the cruel and heinous" murder "was [not only] a hate crime committed against George — but also against all women and their constitutional rights. We only can hope that this sentence will serve as a deterrent to those who have conspired and continue to conspire to murder abortion providers." ([kwhc.com](http://kwhc.com))

Dr. Tiller provided lifesaving care for women who needed late abortions for medically complex pregnancies. His death was a big loss for women who today face greater obstacles to this health care. The

medical practitioners who perform these services, most notably Dr. Warren Hern and Dr. LeRoy Carhart, face threats, harassment and violence every day — in fact, they risk their lives — standing up to far-right extremists.

So, too, do doctors and clinic providers and staff nationwide, who have faced increased vigilante violence since the start of 2009, and even more so since Dr. Tiller's murder. Fourteen clinics are now under siege.

Roeder's trial uncovered his 10-year association with the Army of God, a domestic terror network which has a history of harassing abortion providers and lesbians and gays. The group has taken credit for bombing abortion clinics, causing death and injuries. Its Web site lionizes the murderers of doctors.

Since anti-abortion violence began, nine people have been murdered, more than 24 wounded and many medical facilities attacked. Yet, pro-choice advocates ask, why was only one individual found culpable each time, in spite of evidence of national coordination?

They ask why there were no federal charges filed against anyone responsible for Dr. Tiller's murder and are urging the government to prosecute others who may

have colluded with Roeder and to clamp down on pro-violence networks to prevent further horrific acts.

"Doctors are being threatened at their clinics, stalked at their homes and plastered on Wanted posters. There will be more victims unless the federal government acts swiftly. ... Until we stop the network of zealots who recruit, arm, conspire, advise, coordinate and support the Scott Roeders of their movement, the next murder is just around the corner," said Feminist Majority Foundation Executive Vice President Katherine Spillar, and the head of its National Clinic Access Project. ([feminist.org](http://feminist.org))

The National Organization for Women has called on the U.S. Justice Department to investigate "this hostile campaign and to prosecute ... the assassins and the ring-leaders of what rightly can be termed terrorism." ([now.org](http://now.org))

Women's rights activists have also asked why there hasn't been federal prosecution of the ultraright Operation Rescue/Operation Save America for violating clinic access laws and threatening physicians. This group, which harasses clinic staff and clients, stalks physicians and publicizes their whereabouts on the Internet, is relentlessly trying to shut down the Family Reproductive Health clinic in Charlotte, N.C.

Yet the government has not taken these rightwing extremists seriously and protected doctors and clinic staffs and is allowing the abuse to continue in North Carolina and elsewhere. Anti-abortion forces incite violence against physicians on the Internet with impunity. Right-wing talk show hosts are free to whip up this violence and use inflammatory language on television.

These fascist-leaning groups have shown that they will stop at nothing, resorting to the worst violence, to get what they want: a complete shut down of all medical providers of reproductive health services for women and to stop women from exercising their legal and medical rights and options.

They are even more emboldened by the federal government's capitulation to the extreme right on the abortion issue in the healthcare "reform" law, and as their reactionary allies in state legislatures are pushing new anti-abortion laws.

The last year has been difficult for women's rights advocates. It's vital to show solidarity with the courageous medical practitioners and clinic staff that bravely face down the ultraright to provide essential medical care for women. And it's as crucial to join with pro-choice activists who are defending women's basic rights, and organizing clinic support. □

# Unity needed to fight Arizona budget cuts, racism

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed a state budget for 2011 that slashes \$1.1 billion from needed social programs, eliminates more state workers and cripples public education and health care.

The budget, which takes effect on July 1, cuts approximately three-quarters of a billion dollars from public education. Additionally, university tuition will increase by 20 percent and the university residence hall rate (dormitory rent) will increase by 7 percent.

The attack on health care is just as severe. The budget tosses 310,000 Arizona adults off of the state's Medicaid program and completely eliminates the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The S-CHIP, known as KidsCare, provides health insurance for some 47,000 Arizona children. When asked where these uninsured people should go for health care, Brewer callously remarked, "We cannot take care of everybody." (Arizona Daily Star, March 19)

Brewer included in her budget proposal a one-cent sales tax increase. Lawmakers, seeing taxes as very unpopular in an election year, decided to refer this to voters in a special election scheduled for May 18. If this one-cent sales tax is not implemented, then another \$687 million will be slashed from the education budget. This special election is just a sleight-of-hand. Voters will decide if they should suffer by taking a pay cut by handing over more of their wages in the form of taxes or if they should suffer by taking cuts in public education. Neither option is acceptable.

## Stop immigrant bashing

While preparing this anti-worker and anti-poor budget, legislators whipped up anti-immigrant racism by introducing a series of bills targeting the Latino/a and immigrant communities. These bills range from outlawing the popular Ethnic Studies education program where Latino/a and Indigenous students learn their history and their culture to allowing police to arrest a person for "trespassing" if that person cannot prove his or her residency. A recent law passed at the beginning of 2010 forces all state employees who work for social service agencies to determine an applicant's immigration status and report the person to Immigra-

tion and Customs Enforcement if the person is undocumented. Failure to do so will result in the state employee being fired.

These laws are designed to terrorize the oppressed communities while confusing and disorienting the white workers who are losing their jobs, their savings and their homes in record numbers. By filling the air with the stench of racism, legislators think they can serve the bosses' interests: pushing the burden of the economic crisis onto the backs of the workers and poor while keeping everyone divided and fighting against each other.

These racist legislators, their anti-people budget and their immigrant-bashing must be opposed. The cops, sheriffs, and

the fascistic Minutemen and the Tea Party, which are allowed to operate openly, must also be confronted and opposed. Solidarity and unity are the keys to stopping this onslaught of budget cuts and bigoted laws. Bringing together all workers, employed and unemployed, regardless of national origin, sexuality, language, religion, or so-called immigration status is imperative.

Arizona is preparing for May Day 2010. On May 1st, solidarity and unity can be shown by joining with those who are fighting against the attacks on education and health care, those struggling against layoffs and foreclosures and by opposing the militarization of the border and the community. □

## Immigrants demand 'reform now'!



Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and all over Latin America united under banners demanding dignity and respect, an end to raids, passage of the Dream Act for college students, an end to deportations, and an end to 287(g). The march was led by the Living Hope Wheel Chair Association, a group of immigrants with spinal cord injuries who no longer can receive any financial aid for their disabilities if they are undocumented. A town hall meeting organized by the Coalition in

Almost one thousand immigrants and their supporters took their demands for comprehensive immigration reform to the streets of Houston on March 21. Families from

Defense of the Community is set for April 10 at Plaza Americas from 2:30-5:30, to develop strategies to pressure the Obama administration and Congress to pass reform. The meeting will also begin the community organizing for Houston's May 1 march and rally.

— Report & photo by Gloria Rubac

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## Protest ties school crisis to war

"They say cut back, we say fight back!" demanded protesters outside Granby High School on March 24 in Norfolk, Va., home to the largest U.S. naval base. Called by the Committee to Stop Budget



Norfolk March 24 protest.

Cuts, the protest took place during a meeting of the Norfolk school board, which plans to close some local schools and lay off 410 staff members. Part of the Committee statement reads: "Tens of millions of people in the U.S. face terror on a daily basis with growing unemployment and underemployment; watching a loved one unable to obtain health care, notwithstanding the recent passage of a healthcare bill that still falls short of providing universal health care; parents putting their children to bed or sending them off to school hungry or malnourished; or families living in fear that at any

moment the sheriff's department will come to evict them from their home only to face life on the street."

Along with calling for a bailout for the people throughout Virginia, the Committee demanded money for human needs, not war. Two local TV stations covered the demonstration as drivers in passing cars honked in agreement with the placard and banner slogans. Larry Hales, a national organizer with the March 4 Defend Education Day of Action and New York spokesperson for the Bail Out the People Movement, and Sue Kelly, a former president of the Virginia Education Association, spoke at the protest.

— Anne Pruden

# As Special Forces commit more atrocities

## U.S. occupation of Afghanistan disintegrates

By John Catalinotto

On the eve of what is supposed to be a major U.S.-NATO offensive against the resistance stronghold of Kandahar, the more than eight-year-old occupation is crumbling.

Afghan puppet President Hamid Karzai promised local elders in Kandahar he would call the operation off if they were too worried about its results. He also stunned one Parliament member when he said, "If you and the international community pressure me more, I swear that I am going to join the Taliban." (New York Times, April 4)

Also, U.S. Special Forces troops have been forced to admit to more war crimes in Afghanistan. The admission followed a familiar pattern. Afghan survivors accused U.S. troops of shooting three women to death in an operation in February. These three included a pregnant mother of 10 and another pregnant mother of six children.

The military command first denied it and tried to blame it on an earlier stabbing. Finally, the officers had to admit that these trained killers had slaughtered the women. In addition, the guilty troops pruned their bullets out of the women's bodies in an attempt to cover up their war crime.

The standard procedure is that the NATO military command denies its forces killed civilians. It apparently hopes the story will vanish. Only when Afghans or the reporters manage to dig out the facts are the U.S. or NATO officers compelled to reveal the truth.

For example, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, who for political reasons is publicly committed to reducing civilian casualties, had to apologize for the killing of civilians during the well-covered Marjah offensive in February.

The latest exposure created more prob-

lems for the occupation. The New York Times summarized the situation in an April 5 article: "The disclosure could not come at a worse moment for the [U.S.] American military: NATO officials are struggling to contain fallout from a series of tirades against the foreign military presence by the Afghan president, Hamid Karzai, who has also railed against the killing of civilians by Western forces."

On March 28, President Barack Obama landed in the infamous Bagram air base and gave a pep talk to U.S. troops in Afghanistan while wearing a bomber jacket. He also met with Karzai in Kabul and chided the Afghan leader for his failure to eliminate corruption — or at least that was the public explanation of Obama's comments. Both presidents refused to speak with reporters after their meeting.

### Puppet and puppet master

Karzai's record as the Afghan president under occupation, just like McChrystal's history of organizing search-and-destroy missions in Iraq, belies his claim that humanitarian concerns compel his complaints about civilian deaths. Chicago's long history of scandals makes it unlikely that Obama is shocked to discover corruption.

In a March 30 article in Asia Times, Indian career diplomat M. K. Bhadrakumar gave one explanation for what was really behind the words. Karzai was flirting with improving his relations with Beijing and Tehran, Bhadrakumar wrote, and Obama was warning him to stay in line. This idea was picked up in the New York Times in an April 4 article. This possibility and Karzai's statement regarding joining the Taliban raise questions about the relationship between the puppet Afghan government and its U.S. imperialist puppet masters.

The U.S. occupation created the Karzai presidency. Even with the full backing of U.S.-NATO troops, Karzai was scornfully

known as "the mayor of Kabul." His power was and is limited to the capital, and he undoubtedly would be pushed aside — most likely by the Taliban — should the U.S.-NATO forces suddenly withdraw. Nevertheless, he had made enough deals and exerted enough power to fix the national elections last year.

It appears Washington would prefer to replace Karzai as its agent in Afghanistan. Like the British Empire, U.S. imperialism has shown it has no permanent allies. In the 1960s Washington arranged the assassination of its favored Rafael Trujillo, dictator of the Dominican Republic, and also overthrew the Diem regime in Vietnam — both when these ruling groups had grown too unpopular to be useful. In the 1990s, for similar if less urgent reasons, Wash-

ington expedited the removal of its client dictators Mobutu Sese Seku from Zaire (now Congo) and Suharto from Indonesia.

But in Afghanistan, who can the U.S. find to replace Karzai?

From his side, Karzai knows he is already out of favor in Washington, and that his presidency and perhaps his life will be over when the U.S. rulers find an alternative. Thus he has opened discussions with Iran and China to try to find more outside support.

With 100,000 troops and a like number of "contractors/mercenaries," the U.S. still has the upper hand. And the Pentagon can still do much damage in the region. But that is far from being in firm control of its own puppet, let alone of Afghanistan. □

### BERKELEY, CALIF.

## Calls for unconditional amnesty for military resisters

By Dee Knight

In the first action of its type during the current U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the Berkeley, Calif., City Council on March 9 passed a resolution entitled, "Universal and Unconditional Amnesty for Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan War Military Resisters and Veterans Who Acted In Opposition to the War for Matters of Conscience," according to a report from Courage to Resist.

"Amnesty" means that any charges or remaining punishment are officially "forgotten." "Unconditional" means no strings attached. "Universal" means it would apply to all convictions or pending charges related to resistance to or refusal to serve in the current U.S. wars, as well as going absent without leave.

This amnesty would include all veterans with less than honorable discharges for such resistance. The call adds that such veterans should have their discharges automatically upgraded to honorable, and that they should be entitled to all benefits.

Bob Meola, Berkeley peace and justice commissioner who wrote the original draft of the resolution, stated, "I hope this resolution will serve as a model and inspire cities and towns across the United States to pass similar resolutions and ignite a movement which will result in Universal and Unconditional Amnesty for Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan war resisters and veterans."

"The troops who have had the courage to resist have been traumatized enough. They have followed their consciences and deserve healing and support and appreciation from people everywhere. The GI Resistance movement is growing. Its members are heroes and sheroes and should be treated as such when they are welcomed back into civilian society."

The new resolution deepens the city's anti-war commitment, which in 2007 made Berkeley a "sanctuary city" for military resisters and draft registration resisters.

### First demanded during war on Vietnam

To end punishment of U.S. resisters to the Vietnam war, the newsletter of U.S. war resisters in Canada at that time, AMEX/Canada, in 1973 was first to formulate the demand for universal unconditional amnesty. The demand became the focus of a broad campaign based on an alliance of exiled war resisters, anti-

war veterans and active-duty GIs, with strong support from pacifist, civil liberties and religious groups.

The campaign featured bold defiance of government efforts to punish resisters, who would "surface" at anti-war conferences, political conventions and congressional hearings — most often unannounced — demonstrating widespread support for resistance and amnesty.

This campaign induced President Jimmy Carter to grant unconditional amnesty to resisters following the U.S. War in Vietnam, in January 1977. Carter felt the pressure after one exiled resister, Fritz Efav, surfaced at the 1976 National Democratic Convention as part of the "Democrats Abroad" delegation, and was nominated for vice president by Gold Star mother Louise Ransom (whose son was killed in Vietnam combat). Disabled Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July," seconded the nomination, and stunned the delegates into total silence followed by a standing ovation.

### Amnesty for all!

In the wake of last month's gigantic demonstration in Washington, D.C., by immigrants and their supporters calling for full and complete legalization for all people in this country without official documentation, the new call for amnesty for war resisters should simply extend to include both groups.

The same is true for sanctuary — a type of solidarity that has been extended for decades to both groups by churches, unions, cities and individuals. The concept of sanctuary actually emerged in the Middle Ages, when churches often had parallel power with civil authorities. A person or group could seek protection in a church from oppressive authorities and thus avoid capture and punishment.

Today, just as in the past, the fight for amnesty and sanctuary is a battle for the right to resist unjust governmental power. And it is a way for progressive people to exercise their own power and force an end to militarism and racism.

For regular updates on the GI resistance, see [www.CourageToResist.org](http://www.CourageToResist.org).

Dee Knight was an editor of AMEX/Canada from 1968 to 1974 and served as a coordinator of the National Council for Universal Unconditional Amnesty from 1974 to 1975.

## Amidst growing casualties

# Germans question Afghan war

By Caleb T. Maupin

The U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan, begun in 2001 under President George W. Bush's leadership, continues nine years and hundreds of billions of dollars later. Another episode typifying this criminal war recently took place when German troops shot and killed a group of soldiers in the puppet Afghan National Army who were delivering supplies to a German military base.

The German troops claimed they mistook the Afghan soldiers for resistance fighters, as they were incorrectly making deliveries in civilian cars. Afghan spokespeople said the soldiers were in fact driving standard military vehicles. The Afghan Defense Ministry also noted that the six Afghans killed had just returned from aiding these very German troops in a nearby battle earlier that day where three German soldiers had been killed. (New York Times, April 3)

German participation in Afghanistan's occupation remains unpopular at home. Last November, government minister Franz Josef Jung resigned after it was revealed that he helped to conceal a German airstrike that killed more than 100 Afghan civilians. German Chancellor An-

gela Merkel's announcement that an additional 850 German troops would be sent to raise German strength to more than 5,000 aroused public hostility.

As German involvement and casualties grow, the various voices of organized opposition are finding more public support. The anti-war Left Party (Die Linke), a socialist electoral coalition, gained representatives in the Bundestag (parliament) in the recent elections. The Left Party made big gains in Western Germany for the first time.

On March 30, the Left Party released a statement proclaiming, "Stop the War in Afghanistan." The statement warned, "The number of the victims will rise." It also noted, "The employment of the German Federal Armed Forces in Afghanistan is the clearest expression for the increasing militarization of the German foreign policy." ([die-linke.de](http://die-linke.de), March 30.)

Protests continue in Germany and throughout the world demanding an end to the occupation of Afghanistan. Thirty anti-war rallies were held throughout Germany on April 3 as part of 50 years of annual anti-war actions on Easter weekend. This year's actions put Germany's role in Afghanistan front and center. (Presstv.ir April 3) □

## Under siege by repressive regime

# Resistance movement vows to create a new Honduras

By Berta Joubert-Ceci  
Washington, D.C.

Eight Honduran lawyers testified in Washington, D.C., at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights of the Organization of American States. The eight hope that the IACHR will expose and condemn the escalating human rights abuses perpetrated in that country after the June 28 coup that removed democratically elected President Manuel Zelaya Rosales from office. Above all, the lawyers hope the IACHR will force the Honduran state to investigate and punish these crimes.

Brenda Mejía, one of the lawyers and a member of Lawyers in Resistance, told Workers World that the eight came to the IACHR with a sense of great urgency because of the deteriorating situation in Honduras since the Jan. 27 inauguration of Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo. Lobo, who really continues the coup regime, was “elected” president last November in a process from which a large majority of the population abstained. They shunned the election to protest the massive repression against the movement grouped under the National Popular Front of Resistance Against the Coup d’état (FNRP).

Mejía summarized the deposition’s most important points:

1. They have no positive expectations for the Lobo government since it continues the coup regime. Those who were involved in the coup are in Lobo’s government — with the same Supreme Court and Public Ministry;
2. Crimes committed by the police and the army have not been investigated. Judges generally dismiss cases brought to the judicial system, so not one single person has been punished for all the crimes and human rights violations;
3. The lawyers have defended hundreds of people in the resistance falsely accused of subversion, rebellion, terrorism, illegal demonstrations, aggra-

vated theft and arson;

4. The majority of the people detained were tortured by the police and army;
5. The amnesty announced by the government has been applied only to the coup leaders (golpistas) and not to resistance members.

### Political murder in Tegucigalpa

Just as these lawyers were giving evidence of the murders, illegal detentions and the many other abuses by the government’s repressive forces, another cruel assassination was committed in Tegucigalpa, the Honduran capital.

José Manuel Flores, a social science teacher, was shot by three masked men in front of his students in the San Jose del Pedregal High School. Flores, who was active in the resistance, was a leader of the College of High School Teachers and a member of the Central American Socialist Party. Resistance members consider the flagrant and public execution of Flores an attempt to frighten activists.

In the two months Lobo has been in office, the situation has grown even more repressive. Eleven resistance members have been murdered. In the first month alone, his regime committed 254 cases of human rights violations, according to a report given at a Feb. 24 press conference by the Committee of Families of the Disappeared and Detained. ([www.cofadeh.org](http://www.cofadeh.org))

COFADEH’s statistics show that in the first 28 days of the Lobo administration there were 53 illegal detentions, two sexual attacks, two murders, eight cases of torture, two kidnappings and 14 house searches. Twenty-three neighborhoods have been targeted for searches because the security forces have identified them with the resistance. Beside those, 150 people had to leave the country because of political persecution, 25 had to move to another city, and 30 had to move from their homes.

All these violations happen while Lobo

claims before the world — and he is echoed by the U.S. Department of State — that his government respects people’s rights.

### Aguan: crimes against peasants

In the northern Atlantic region of Aguan the peasantry in resistance is organized under the Unified Peasant Movement of the Aguan (MUCA). The peasants have been defending themselves from the furious aggression of the police, army and paramilitary groups hired by the big landowners to force them off the land.

MUCA has been trying to recover the land allotted to the peasants in the mid-1970s under the Agrarian Reform. A law passed in the early 1990s under the administration of Rafael Leonardo Callejas had reversed the earlier law and allowed rich landowners to expropriate peasant cooperatives created under the Agrarian Reform.

Landlords plant tens of thousands of acres of land with African Palm used for biofuel. Because of the increase in value of this commodity, the rich landowners — Miguel Facusse, René Morales and Rinaldo Canales — suddenly became interested in expanding this crop. Using deceptive tactics, they expropriated dozens of peasants’ cooperatives in the early 1990s.

The peasants who sold their cooperatives eventually became aware of the deception and initiated an investigation. At the same time that the landowners were buying the land, they began a campaign of intimidation and death threats against the peasants who refused to sell. This struggle led to the formation of MUCA in 2001.

Under Zelaya’s presidency, negotiations were started to settle the problem. After the June coup, the wealthy landowners regained the support of the government and its corrupted institutions.

Now the Aguan region has been militarized. Paramilitaries run wild, threatening, displacing and killing peasants from MUCA who had begun a process of



WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Lucy Pagoada speaks on women resisting in her home country, Honduras, at March 27 rally in New York.

recovering their land. The latest murder took place April 1, when a young peasant, Miguel Alonso Oliva, was shot in the back while trying to recover land along the Aguan River.

These attacks occur while the Lobo government says that it is “negotiating” with the peasants. MUCA has sent an alert to the national and international community stating that there is the possibility of an open attack by the state’s repressive forces in early April.

### The FNRP plans to reestablish Honduras

But in spite of the continuous threats, arrests, searches, harassment and all kinds of attacks, including assassination of leaders, the resistance is determined to reestablish Honduras under a new constitution the peoples themselves create. To that end they are calling for a Peoples’ Assembly on the anniversary of the coup, June 28.

The resistance movement has decided to develop as a political movement to win state power.

It is now up to the international solidarity movement to do its part, particularly in the United States. As well-known resistance leader Juan Almdares said: “The unity of organized and mobilized peoples is the only force capable of untangling the infinite maze of violence of international, military and religious financial capital in Latin America and transform the essence of the colonial power and the new criminal world order so that peace, social justice, climatic stability and planetary love prevail in our Mother Earth.” ([www.quotha.net/node/794](http://www.quotha.net/node/794), March 6) □

# Bolivian climate change conference offers peoples’ alternative

By LeiLani Dowell  
New York

A Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth’s Rights, scheduled for April 19-22 in Cochabamba, Bolivia, will present a people’s alternative to the failed Copenhagen conference on climate change that took place in December.

The U.N.-sponsored Copenhagen conference was supposed to review and to renew commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions first framed as the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. However, the U.S. and other imperialist nations at the conference, at the behest of corporations, prevented the participation of people’s organizations and blocked any meaningful commitment to these goals. The resulting Copenhagen accord includes no legal commitments and no time frame to achieve emissions reductions.

On Jan. 5, Evo Morales Ayma, president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, issued an invitation for the peoples’ conference that calls on “the peoples of the

world, social movements and Mother Earth’s defenders, and invites scientists, academics, lawyers and governments that want to work with their citizens” to attend.

The call noted, among other things, that “climate change is a product of the capitalist system” and that the poor will suffer the most from the effects of climate change. Morales asserted, “In order to ensure the full fulfillment of human rights in the 21st century, it is necessary to recognize and respect Mother Earth’s rights.”

The statement expresses confidence “that the peoples of the world, guided by the principles of solidarity, justice and respect for life, will be able to save humanity and Mother Earth.”

Conference objectives include analysis of the structural and systemic causes of climate change and the proposal of radical measures to combat it; the initiation of a project to create a Universal Declaration of Mother Earth Rights; and the organization of a Peoples’ World Referendum on Climate Change and a Climate Justice Tribunal.

### Climate change a result of profit system

At a meeting in New York on March 24, Pablo Solón, ambassador of Bolivia to the United Nations, explained that the upcoming conference reflects the desire to deepen the discussion on climate change.

“Greenhouse gas emissions are not the cause of this crisis,” Solón stated. “They are an effect of a system of consumption, production and profit — a system of exploitation and a culture that helps to accomplish the goal of more and more profit. This system is not based on humans as they are, but based on what they have.”

Solón continued: “None of these points are part of the official discussion. There is no talk of the structural causes of this crisis, or the real deep costs. The real discussion has not yet begun. This is the main reason for the conference in Bolivia. Alternatives to the current ways of doing things must be built at a global level. ... Climate change is not just about the weather — it is a discussion about ways of living. We must learn to share and build a new society based on sharing.”

Solón explained that the conference will discuss “the rights of Mother Earth” because nature should have rights as well, including the right to live, to exist and to regenerate. He asserted that as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations in 1948, represented one step, there was now a need for an “environmental and social contract” to defend the rights of all.

As an example of the current crisis, Solón stated that a 30-year-old territorial dispute between India and Bangladesh over a tiny, uninhabited island recently came to an end when the island disappeared into the ocean — a result of rising ocean levels due to climate change. Sugata Hazra, a professor from the School of Oceanographic Studies at Jadavpur University in Kolkata, told Agence France-Presse that temperatures in the region had been rising at an annual rate of 0.8 degrees Fahrenheit. (March 25)

For more information on the Peoples’ World Conference on Climate Change and Mother Earth’s Rights, see [cmccc.org](http://cmccc.org). □

# Stop criminalizing Haitians

News of the detention of Haitian earthquake survivors in prison-like detention facilities in the U.S. have exposed, once again, just how little the U.S. relief effort in Haiti is about actual relief for the suffering Haitian people.

At least 65 Haitians have been imprisoned throughout the U.S. after arriving here following the Jan. 12 earthquake. Some 30 of them were put on planes by U.S. Marines. These detainees have received little-to-no mental health care, according to the New York Times, “despite an offer of free treatment at [one] jail by a local Creole-speaking psychotherapist.” (March 31) Only Haitians who were in the U.S. before the earthquake have been granted temporary protected status.

The Times reported that one young man, 20-year-old Jackson, who, in his request for release from detention, “describes how even the sound of someone on the jail stairs makes him fear another earthquake and worry that because he is

locked up, he will be unable to escape.” Meanwhile, his 25-year-old brother, Reagan, has inexplicably been moved to three different prisons in the past two months.

Such abuse is part of a racist policy that sees Black people as criminals and immigrants as illegal — whether they’re fleeing devastating U.S.-imposed economic policies, the effects of a natural disaster or, as is often the case, a country that has endured the effects of both. The policy is used to increase the numbers — and therefore the profit — in privately run detention centers.

It’s another reason why Haitians deserve full reparations for the legacy of slavery as well as the current-day imperialist plunder of the country. The Haitian people deserve every right to determine their own future.

It’s also why we should all be in the streets throughout the U.S. on May Day, May 1, to demand full immigrant and worker rights. □

# 42 years after Dr. King’s assassination

*Continued from page 1*

dozens of members of the Black Panther Party, the Black masses had shown they were more than ready to fight for their long-delayed freedom.

The grief and anger caused by the King assassination led to rebellions in at least 110 cities, including Washington, D.C., the U.S. capital.

This year, there was little media attention on the anniversary of Dr. King’s assassination. It is more acceptable to the ruling class to celebrate his birthday and minimize the enormous struggles he helped unleash. In the myth created by the corporate media, the ugly days of racism are behind us, except for a right-wing “lunatic fringe” movement.

It is true that the civil rights movement brought monumental changes to the United States. The segregation laws were struck down. Black representatives won election to local, state and federal offices across the South, reinforcing those from areas in the North where African Americans were concentrated, like Harlem, Detroit and Los Angeles.

Thurgood Marshall in 1967 became the first Black justice on the Supreme Court. Other appointments followed: Colin Powell was the first Black person to head the Joint Chiefs of Staff and to be Secretary of State. A conservative, he did not come to politics through the civil rights movement, but he benefited from it.

And finally, in a tremendous rebuff to the reactionary politics of the Bush administration, whites joined Black voters in 2008 to elect the first African-American president.

However, racism is still rampant in the United States. Beside the abundance of painful personal experiences that every Black person endures, statistics show how bad it is.

The oppressed status of Black people in this country is undeniable, starting with the rate of incarceration and running through layoffs and unemployment, income, personal debt, housing foreclosures and evictions, life expectancy, maternal and infant mortality, and ill-

ness and early death. Now the capitalist economic crisis, which has dashed the dreams of so many millions, is hitting people of color the hardest, widening the social gap again.

While during most of his career Dr. King focused on ending segregation, by the end of his life he had spoken out forcefully on other issues deeply affecting the Black community.

Exactly one year to the day before his assassination, King spoke to an historic meeting against the Vietnam War held in New York’s Riverside Church. In explaining how he had come to a decision to speak out on a subject that he knew he would be attacked for — and he was — he said, among other reasons, that the war had destroyed the poverty program of the Johnson administration:

“I watched this program broken and eviscerated, as if it were some idle political plaything of a society gone mad on war, and I knew that America would never invest the necessary funds or energies in rehabilitation of its poor so long as adventures like Vietnam continued to draw men and skills and money like some demonic destructive suction tube. So, I was increasingly compelled to see the war as an enemy of the poor and to attack it as such.”

He was in Memphis to support the demands of striking sanitation workers for decent wages and treatment when he was killed. Who arranged and paid for his assassination is still a government secret. Rep. John Lewis, a hero of the civil rights struggle who was spit upon by racists last month when he went to vote for the health care bill, is co-sponsoring the Martin Luther King Assassination Records Act, which would force the FBI and other investigative agencies to open up to the public tons of records on the assassination that have never been released. Some are due to be destroyed soon.

Capitalism needs cheap labor and will scour the globe for it. Since King was killed, the U.S. government has continued to wage wars in the interests of the rich corporations. These days it relies

# Offshore drilling: new gift to Big Oil

By Kris Hamel

President Barack Obama announced a new energy plan on March 31 that includes a huge new expansion of oil and natural gas drilling along the eastern, southern and Alaskan shores of the United States.

The announcement, made at Andrews Air Force Base in Washington, D.C., signaled the end of a longstanding moratorium on offshore drilling on the Eastern seaboard. Some 167 million acres of ocean, from Delaware to mid-Florida, will be opened up for exploration and gas and oil extraction.

Open for oil company exploration and drilling from 2011 to 2017 will be new areas of coastal Virginia and other parts of the mid-Atlantic region, and two-thirds of the eastern Gulf of Mexico and Alaska. The plan includes viability studies for drilling in Alaska’s Beaufort and Chukchi Seas. It will overturn a plan by former President George W. Bush to open for drilling Bristol Bay, Alaska — which provides about 40 percent of U.S. seafood. (latimes.com, March 31)

When shortly after Obama’s inauguration, his Interior Department retracted a Bush administration proposal for drilling from 2012 to 2017, this led to hope that the president was genuinely concerned about correcting serious environmental problems.

During his election campaign, however, Obama had several times publicly supported the “hard decision” to increase offshore drilling. And in his recent State of the Union address on Jan. 27, Obama said that weaning the country from imported oil would require “tough decisions about opening new offshore areas for oil and gas development.”

This decision grants the big and still highly profitable oil corporations one of the biggest items on their wish list: access to the vast regions of the outer continental shelf for drilling. But environmental and conservation advocates and activists, as well as many residents of affected states, have widely denounced the plan, contending it will lead to an increase in oil spills and the destruction of fragile ecosystems.

Drilling in the eastern Gulf of Mexico has already “been strongly opposed by officials from both political parties in Alabama and Florida, who fear damage to coastlines, fisheries, popular beaches and wildlife. Interior Department officials said no wells would be allowed within 125 miles of the Florida and Alabama coasts, making them invisible from shore.” (New York Times, March 30)

## Administration defies widespread opposition

Despite widespread opposition to increased offshore drilling from rank-and-file environmentalists and even Republican Party politicians in the affected areas, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar developed the administration’s plan after conducting four public meetings over the past year in Alaska, California, Louisiana and New Jersey.

Sierra Club executive director Michael Brune noted that “the oil industry already has access to drilling on millions of acres of America’s public lands and water. We don’t need to hand over our last protected pristine coastal areas just so oil companies can break more profit records.”

Greenpeace executive director Phil Radford, stated: “Is this President Obama’s clean energy plan or Palin’s drill-baby-drill campaign? While China and Germany are winning the clean energy race, this act furthers [the U.S.’s] addiction to oil. Expanding offshore drilling in areas that

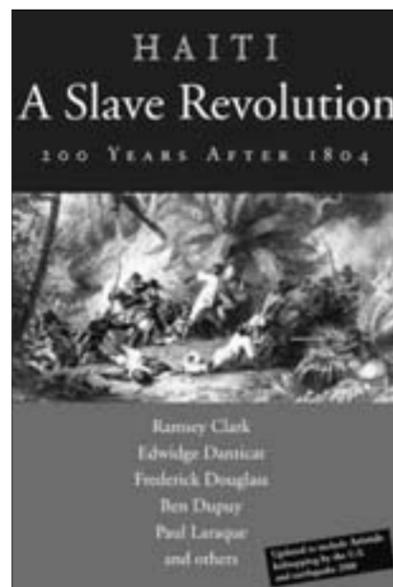
on the poverty draft to provide youth of color for its military adventures abroad.

While a lot has changed, the fundamental reason behind racism in the U.S. — the need of capital to divide the working class in order to super-exploit a large section of it — has not. The Black working class is in a deep crisis, from Detroit to Washington, D.C. Millions of immigrants are also fighting for the right to live and work without persecution.

The super-rich are putting money behind a racist, fascist movement trying to exploit the frustration and anger of working-class and middle-class whites, who for the first time in decades also face a deep economic crisis.

In his final years, King sought to combine the struggles against racism, poverty and war. The need to do so is greater than ever. The demonstrations coming up on May Day that address these issues and call for the legalization of immigrant workers will be an opportunity to put such a program into action. One week later, on May 8, a grassroots demonstration for jobs in Washington, D.C., will carry on the struggle.

Be there! □



Will be available At [Leftbooks.org](http://Leftbooks.org) and bookstores around the country

## HAITI: A Slave Revolution 200 Years after 1804

Look for the release of a second edition that includes Aristide’s kidnapping by the U.S. and the 2010 earthquake.

First published in 2004 as a joint project of the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network. This is not a traditional history book or textbook, but a people’s history. In the preface the editors state: “This book is going to combat 200 years of racist indoctrination and propaganda about the Haitian Revolution. It is essential to challenge these stereotypes in order to build true, informed solidarity with Haiti.” Currently out of print, “Haiti: A Slave Revolution” can be read online at [www.iacenter.org/haiti](http://www.iacenter.org/haiti).

## On the eve of Sudanese elections

# U.S., E.U. intervention poses problems

have been protected for decades threatens our oceans and the coastal communities that depend on them with devastating oil spills, more pollution and climate change.” (Associated Press, April 1)

It appears that the exploitation of oceanic gas and oil reserves — despite the potential of increased environmental disaster and degradation — will yield only a limited supply of oil. While it may increase company profits in the short run, eventually “the wells dry up.”

Multibillionaire oil magnate T. Boone Pickens, the chair and CEO of PB Capital, said: “I heard some guy on TV said [the plan] accesses you to 14 billion barrels immediately. ... There’s not 14 billion barrels there to be accessed to. I would say that East Coast, Anwar [Alaska National Wildlife Reserve] and the eastern Gulf of Mexico, all added up, I would be surprised if you could get one to two million barrels a day out of it.

“... we’re importing daily 14 million barrels of oil and we’re producing seven in the United States. So, we’re importing two-thirds of what we use.

### U.S. oil usage ‘unsustainable’

“And there’s 85 million barrels a day produced in the world every day, and we’re using 21 million barrels of that. So, we’re using 25 percent of all the oil with 4 percent of the population. I don’t think that’s sustainable.” (npr.org, April 3)

Environmental journalist David Roberts, the staff writer for grist.org, wrote, “According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, there likely won’t be any oil from these new offshore areas until 2017, and full production won’t ramp up until 2030. Even when it does, it will produce some 100,000 new barrels a day — about 1/1,000 of total global supply.” (roomfordebate.blogs.nytimes.com, March 31)

Nevertheless, Obama appears to be using expanded offshore exploration as a bargaining chip in his administration’s attempts to enact sweeping legislation to curb both oil imports and greenhouse gas emissions. The only beneficiary of this policy is Big Oil, which continues to dominate the U.S. economy and political establishment.

If the new energy plan proves anything, it’s that it doesn’t matter which individual or which of the two big-business-controlled political parties sits in the White House. Obama’s concession to Big Oil and the Pentagon — the largest consumer of fossil fuels — made during a speech in front of military leaders and personnel as well as members of Obama’s “green team” and other politicians, means these forces are still firmly in charge of civilian life in the U.S.

Only an anti-imperialist, anti-capitalist struggle can truly stop and reverse environmental degradation, provide clean and renewable sources of energy, and put people back to work. It is either “people and the environment before profits” or “profits first.” There is no middle ground or solution within the confines of the profit-driven capitalist system, which has as its motor force the imperative to “expand or die.” □

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

Despite widely publicized claims that the opposition parties in Sudan will boycott the elections scheduled for April 11-13, President Omar al-Bashir has reiterated that the national poll will not be derailed.

Moktar Al-Ahsan, a member of Sudan’s National Election Commission, says, “We are confident that the elections will be completed on time and they will be supported by the people to vote.” The official maintains that the people are “keen to participate in the process.” (Christian Science Monitor, April 5)

Election Commission officials pointed out that 84 percent of the people in Sudan of voting age have registered to participate. One opposition party, The Democratic Unionists, which had withdrawn, is now back in the race.

The presidential candidate for the Sudanese People’s Liberation Movement, Yasir Arman, withdrew from the elections, saying that the process has not been fair. However, Al-Ahsan of the National Election Commission says in the same article that “There is nothing new in what the opposition is saying. We have reviewed their complaints, and accepted some of their objections and others; the opposition went to court and we were obliged to make changes. But now, we are bound by the timetable as it is.”

A spokesman for the ruling National Congress Party of President al-Bashir noted that there is no basis for the withdrawal of the SPLM from the elections. Rabbie Abdelatti Ebaid, a NCP official, indicated in the same article that “Until this time there was no information that the opposition parties will withdraw. I think the political parties are not justified to withdraw. They feel that if they enter these competitions, they will lose. So instead of losing, they start to make chaos.”

Even though both the United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions on Sudan over the conflict with rebel secessionist groups in the western Darfur region, efforts have been made under the Obama administration to open up dialogue with the government in Khartoum. The U.S. special envoy to Sudan Scott Gration visited the country in early April to assess the political situation leading up to the national elections.

Gration stated on April 4 that “They (National Election Commission) have given me confidence that the elections will start on time and they would be as free and as fair as possible. These people have gone to great lengths to ensure that the people of Sudan will have access to polling places and that the procedures and processes will ensure transparency.” (Sudan Tribune, April 5)

Gration’s statements have angered various political elements in the country who saw the upcoming elections as a means to weaken and destabilize the NCP

government. The northern-based Umma Party met with the government on April 2 and later said that their participation was contingent upon the fulfillment of eight conditions which included access to the media and electoral funding.

Nonetheless, the U.S. State Department pointed out that the U.S. wanted the Sudan National Election Commission to make changes in the way the upcoming vote is organized. Philip Crowley, a State Department spokesman, said that Washington was still “concerned with troubling developments including serious restrictions on political freedom.” (AFP, April 5)

Crowley also said that it was “important for the government of Sudan to immediately lift restrictions on political parties and the civil society.”

Sudan presidential assistant Nafie Ali Nafie expressed his belief that the major opposition parties will agree to participation in the elections. In the April 5 article in the Sudan Tribune, Nafie was quoted from an interview held at the NCP headquarters as saying that “opposition parties will have no choice but to take part in the elections after losing external support.”

The April 11-13 elections are crucial in the success of the 2005 peace deal signed between Khartoum and the southern-based SPLM and other parties in the region. The success of a projected 2011 referendum on the future of the southern region will probably be determined by the outcome of the April poll.

### Sanctions remain in force by the U.S. and E.U.

President al-Bashir’s government is hoping that with the advent of national elections existing sanctions imposed by the imperialist countries against this central African state will be lifted. These sanctions were recently highlighted when the European Commission reiterated its ban on Sudanese carriers landing at airports controlled by the E.U.’s 27-country bloc.

A March 30 Reuters article says that the European Commission will continue to place restrictions on aircraft that do not meet certain safety standards. “We cannot accept that airlines fly into the EU if they do not fully comply with international safety standards,” said European Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas. Reuters reported that “In many airports in Sudan, travelers are greeted by the sight of a crashed plane lying beside the runway. Sudan blames U.S. sanctions, imposed in 1997, for difficulties in obtaining spare parts.”

Sudan has been at odds with the U.S. since the first military invasion of Iraq in 1991. The Sudan government refused to support the coalition led by the U.S. and Britain whose military actions resulted in the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait and the imposition of more than a decade of draconian United Nations sanctions against the previous government of the late President Saddam Hussein.

With Sudan emerging as a major oil-producing state during the previous decade, the country has moved closer to the People’s Republic of China. Consequently, Britain, the European Union and the U.S. have given political support to the Darfur rebel groups fighting the Sudan government in the western region near the border with Chad, a state which is backed by the conservative government in France.

Sudan is often accused by Israel of supplying arms to the Hamas government in Gaza. During 2009, reports indicated that the Israeli Air Force bombed a number of convoys in Sudan alleging that they were smuggling arms from Iran into Egypt and across the border into the Gaza region of occupied Palestine. The government in Khartoum has denied allegations of arms smuggling, although it does openly support the struggle of the Palestinian people for national liberation and statehood.

President al-Bashir earlier this year signed a peace agreement with one of the leading rebel groups in Darfur, the Justice and Equality Movement. However, leading up to the elections, the JEM has charged the NCP government with violating the agreements.

On April 5 the JEM accused the Sudan Air Force of bombing areas inside the Darfur region. “The bombing started at midnight and continued this morning. ... These people [in the government] are not interested in finding a political solution to the problem,” said JEM spokesman Ahmed Hussein Adam, who spoke to Reuters by telephone from Qatar. (April 5)

In the same article, the NCP government denied the allegations by the JEM: “The Sudan Army is committed to the ceasefire it has signed with JEM. It has not bombed any JEM positions,” a military spokesman said.

Ghazi Salaheddin, the government’s negotiator for Darfur, said that the JEM rebels are really the party violating the peace agreement by moving into territories prohibited in the truce. “They (JEM) have been fanning out in the area and trying to establish themselves in Kulbus and Jabel Moun which is a violation of the ceasefire declaration.”

The International Criminal Court based in The Hague has issued several indictments calling for the arrest of President al-Bashir and other leading officials of the government. The ICC indictments have been rejected by the government in Khartoum, and their position is supported by both the African Union and the Arab League.

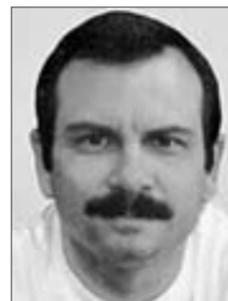
Both of these regional organizations representing Africa and the Arab world oppose the ICC actions, saying the ICC has complicated the ongoing peace process that is making progress in curbing the fighting within the Darfur region as well as in the border areas with neighboring Chad.

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## Marxistas debaten ideas en Foro de la Izquierda

Por John Catalinotto  
Nueva York

Mientras miles de personas protestaban contra la guerra de Irak y Afganistán el 20 de marzo y cientos de miles se manifestaban en pro de los derechos de inmigrantes en Washington el 21 de marzo, miles de personas interesadas en el marxismo participaron en el Foro de la Izquierda (FI) en la Universidad Pace en Nueva York para un debate en torno a las ideas.

El FI es la reunión anual más grande en los Estados Unidos para escuchar a académicos marxistas que en su mayoría viene de universidades y colegios. Los organizadores dicen que la asistencia de este año, con más de 3.500 personas inscritas, fue la más nutrida desde que el FI comenzó como Conferencia de Académicos Socialistas en 1982. Hubo más de 200 paneles con más de 700 ponentes y 90 distribuidores de libros, revistas y otros medios.

El marxismo del FI tiene un particular sesgo socialdemócrata, es decir, trata de omitir a Lenin. La fuerza principal es Socialistas Demócratas de América, por lo general aliados al Partido Demócrata. Sin embargo en el FI, los/as comunistas, anti-imperialistas, y otros/as activistas y una amplia gama de oradores/as tienen la oportunidad de pronunciar sus ideas.

Las dos sesiones plenarias sentaron el tono político. La apertura del Foro el 19 de marzo donde el activista de derechos civiles, el reverendo Jesse Jackson fue el orador principal, excedió la capacidad de los 700 asientos del auditorio y tuvo que ser transmitida por televisión en otro auditorio cercano. Jackson impulsó el activismo, pero pidió lealtad al Partido Demócrata y al actual gobierno — es decir, asoció el ac-

tivismo al imperialismo estadounidense.

La sesión plenaria de clausura estuvo a cargo de Noam Chomsky, quien criticó duramente las ocupaciones estadounidenses de Irak y Afganistán y el papel de la administración de Barack Obama, pero su crítica no tuvo ninguna sugerencia de lucha. En su comentario por lo general anti-imperialista, Chomsky sin embargo lanzó un ataque contra el fallecido líder comunista de Corea, Kim Il-Sung. El comentario no tenía nada que ver con el discurso general de Chomsky, pareciera que su único propósito fuera mostrar su posición anti-comunista.

### El papel de los/as activistas y los/as comunistas

Sin embargo, en los talleres, las fuerzas de izquierda, comunistas y activistas podían plantear sus ideas. Algunos marxistas académicos en el foro también defendieron ideas revolucionarias, aunque tienden a aislarse de cualquier forma de acción debido al bajo nivel de la lucha de clases.

Muchos/as activistas participaron en paneles o manejaron las mesas de literatura sobre presos políticos como Mumia Abu-Jamal o los Cinco Cubanos, defendiendo los movimientos revolucionarios en Cuba, Venezuela y Bolivia o hablando a favor de un sistema de salud de pagador único.

Este informe cubre principalmente los paneles que involucraron a organizaciones y personas sobre las cuales escribimos con frecuencia en Workers World/Mundo Obrero.

El panel más destacado de este tipo se llevó a cabo el domingo bajo el título "Cómo debemos luchar contra la desaparición de empleos y la caída de los salarios: Estrategias de los/as trabajadores en la

época del capitalismo con salarios bajos". Fue organizado por Dee Knight. Las/los oradores fueron la portavoz de la Marcha de Millones de Trabajadores/as, Brenda Stokeley, la Presidenta de BAYAN USA, Berna Ellorin, y el redactor contribuyente de Workers World/Mundo Obrero, Fred Goldstein, autor de "El Capitalismo de Bajos Salarios".

Los/as participantes, que incluían a personas negras, latinas y asiáticas, era mucho más representativa de las personas de color que el FI en general. Más de la mitad llenaron los formularios para mantener la comunicación entre ellos/as y los/as organizadores, lo que refleja la excelente calidad de las presentaciones. Los/as tres ponentes expusieron un panorama detallado de la crisis económica, el efecto de la globalización sobre los/as oprimidos y la lucha que se necesita.

El debate, extenso y animado, incluyó preguntas serias de la audiencia sobre el papel del Partido Demócrata y el movimiento obrero, cómo luchar contra la derecha, cómo organizar dentro del movimiento obrero desde la base hasta arriba, y cómo hacer frente a la cuestión de los/as trabajadores súper explotados/as en el exterior, tales como los centros de llamadas en las Filipinas que están configurados para competir con los/as trabajadores en los EEUU. Sobre la cuestión doméstica, el grupo debatió sobre cómo impulsar al movimiento sindical para reconocer la causa de los/as trabajadores sin hogar y el papel de la militarización en la economía.

El taller fue un ejemplo vivo de cómo toda la lucha contra la explotación, la guerra y la opresión es una lucha de los/as trabajadores, y llegó a la conclusión de que sólo el socialismo puede acabar con la crisis de la sociedad capitalista.

En un panel sobre educación, Larry Hales, un líder del grupo Luchemos con-

tra el Imperialismo, Unámonos (FIST por las siglas en inglés) habló sobre la protesta estudiantil nacional del 4 de marzo. El panel, presidido por Doug Singen de la Campaña en Defensa de la Educación de CUNY, también destacó la participación de la persona responsable de la comunicación entre la comunidad y el Sindicato de Trabajadores del Transporte, Marvin Holland; además de Tami Gold, Presidenta del Capítulo del Congreso de Personal Profesional en el Hunter College, Nueva York, y el profesor John Lawhead. Hubo un buen intercambio entre la audiencia y los/as panelistas, incluyendo un debate sobre las dos propuestas para el Primero de Mayo.

El activista de FIST, Easton Smith, también participó en un panel sobre la organización de los/as estudiantes.

Un debate se llevó a cabo en un taller sobre el Primero de Mayo, donde algunos/as sindicalistas llamaron a la reinstauración del Primero de Mayo como un día de protesta obrera en el Foley Square de Nueva York. Esta iniciativa progresista tuvo un lado negativo: excluyó a la Coalición del Primero de Mayo por los Derechos de los/as Trabajadores e Inmigrantes que ya estaba organizando su quinto Primero de Mayo consecutivo en Union Square de Nueva York en torno a las consignas de legalización para los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados y empleo para todos/as.

Interviniendo en el debate, Brenda Stokeley y otros/as de la Coalición del Primero de Mayo por los Derechos de los/as Trabajadores e Inmigrantes insistieron en que los panelistas dejaran de dividir el movimiento obrero y les preguntó por qué no podían hacer una protesta unida. Los oradores fueron evasivos, negándose a tratar la cuestión.

Naomi Cohen contribuyó a este artículo.

## Haitianos/as protestan la visita de Bush y Clinton

Por LeiLani Dowell

Cerca de 100 haitianos/as protestaron la visita de los ex-presidentes de los Estados Unidos George W. Bush y Bill Clinton a su país el 22 de marzo. Los dos estaban haciendo una gira por Haití con antelación a una conferencia de donantes auspiciada por la ONU.

Muchas personas no han olvidado que ambos, Bush y Clinton, durante su oficio como presidentes, desempeñaron papeles cruciales en los ataques contra el pueblo haitiano. Durante toda su presidencia, Clinton previno que los/as refugiados/as haitianos/as emigraran a los Estados Unidos, continuando un bloqueo marino para impedir que los/as haitianos/as entraran a Florida. Él también exigió severas reformas neoliberales al presidente democráticamente-electo Jean-Bertrand Aristide, quien había sido derrocado en un golpe de estado durante la primera administración de Bush pero regresó a la presidencia después de la presión de las masas.

Luego llegó Bush quien presidió el ilegal derrocamiento del Presidente Aristide, miembro del partido progresista Fanmi Lavalas. Infantes de Marina estadounidenses y "diplomáticos" forzaron a Aristide al exilio en 2004. Desde el terremoto del 12 de enero de este año Aristide ha insistido en la necesidad de que le

sea permitido regresar a Haití para ayudar con los esfuerzos de reconstrucción.

Una manifestante, Elizabeth Pierre, dijo: "He oído que el ex-presidente George Bush está aquí. Le pido al [ex] Presidente Clinton que se retire para que yo pueda hablar con George Bush, porque George Bush es el secuestrador del Presidente Aristide".

La manifestación tuvo lugar en frente del Palacio Nacional donde los dos ex-presidentes estaban reuniéndose con el presidente haitiano René Préval.

La administración de Obama nombró a Bush y a Clinton para dirigir el esfuerzo estadounidense de "recaudar fondos" para Haití — asegurando así que estos esfuerzos sean más la continuación del saqueo imperialista en Haití que la lucha de las masas para sobrevivir.

Un video del viaje de los dos presidentes ha engendrado una discusión sobre las intenciones de Bush. El video, que originalmente se mostró en la página de la BBC, muestra a Bush dando la mano a haitianos/as y luego limpiándose la mano en la manga de Clinton. Este gesto racista refleja las acciones de Bush hacia los/as sobrevivientes del Huracán Katrina en la Costa del Golfo de los Estados Unidos en 2005, cuando no podía molestarse en aterrizar a la zona sino que solamente sobrevoló sobre esa región. □

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