

WORKERS WORLD

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Tens of thousands protest at pro-bank summit

Cops riot, arrest 900 youths and workers

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

On the streets of downtown Toronto on June 26-27, police arrested more than 900 people protesting the capitalist economic policies of the imperialist states meeting under the banner of the G-8 and the G-20.

The G-8 met on Muskoka Island in Huntsville, Ont., north of Toronto. Meeting in Toronto, the G-20 proceedings at the downtown convention center were cordoned off by a large security fence and 20,000 Canadian police drawn from various agencies throughout the region.

Police attacked tens of thousands of protesters with teargas, rubber bullets and batons on June 26. The marchers opposed the worsening crisis impacting workers in the industrialized states and the so-called Third World. In response to the police violence, hundreds of activists broke away from the main marches and struck out against symbols of capitalist exploitation, breaking windows and setting at least two police cars on fire.

The city of Toronto spent nearly \$1 billion on security measures aimed at keeping protesters well away from the G-20. Nonetheless, this did not prevent mass demonstrations and damage to large-scale corporate outlets.

On June 26 tens of thousands of demonstrators representing a myriad of social movements fighting against environmental destruction and for rights for Native people, solidarity with Palestine, workers' rights, and an end to police misconduct marched down University Avenue from Queen's Park under the theme "Put people before banks."

When the demonstrators refused to back down, police began to push against the crowd and use teargas and rubber bullets. Hundreds of demonstrators then began to smash windows of major capitalist corporations and police cruisers.

One demonstrator, Sid Ryan, from the Ontario Federation of Labour, told AFP: "It wasn't the workers of the world that caused the financial crisis. We don't want to see a transfer of wealth from the public sector to the private sector." (June 26)

Chants of "The people united will never be defeated" by a large contingent of steelworkers reverberated throughout the crowd. Some banners read "Long live socialism" and "Scrap the summits."

Delegations of trade unionists and students reinforced the demonstrations the entire first day. Jeff Atkinson, a spokesperson for the Canadian Labour Congress, told AFP reporters, "We don't want G20 countries to cut stimulus spending until jobs recover."

Kumi Naidoo, the international director of Greenpeace, commented that if the G-20 countries could spend billions on bailing out the banks, then why couldn't money be allocated to support the unemployed in the industrial states?

Liana Salvador, a student activist, told AFP that she was \$50,000 in debt due to expenses incurred from pursuing her education. "I'm an ordinary student whose parents taught me that knowledge is power, but whose government says education is just expensive. Do only the rich deserve to learn?"

Although the police denied using rubber bullets, they did admit to using other weapons including tear gas. A police spokesperson said that officers had fired "muzzle blasts" — or individual applications of tear gas — that are typically used against people at close range.

At June 27 demonstrations police surrounded and detained over 500 people who had gathered to demonstrate and speak out. Many within the crowd were targeted and arrested.

Police also invaded the Uni-

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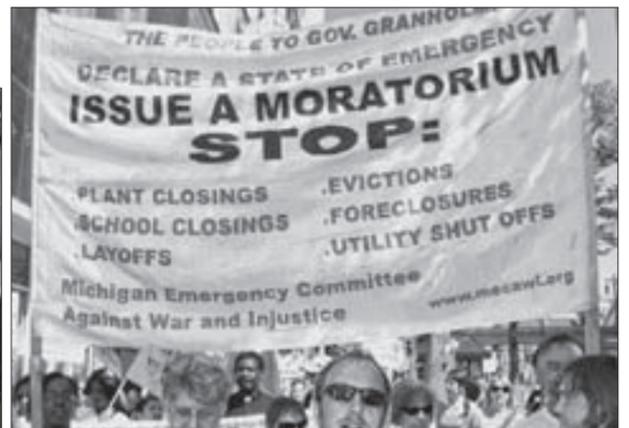
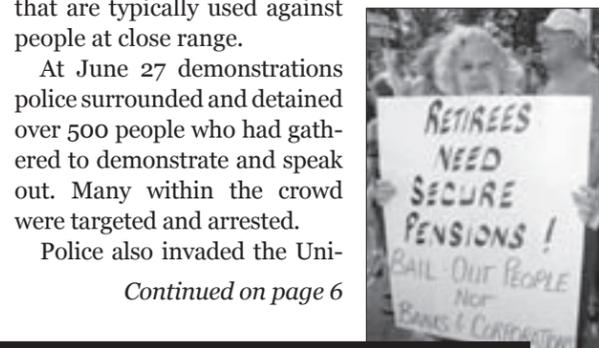
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EDITORIAL 10

Thousands at U.S. Social Forum say: 'FIGHT CAPITALISM'

Activists of many nationalities and ages marched June 25 to the Chase bank to make the links between the struggles at home and abroad during the Social Forum in Detroit. Go to pages 6-7 to read more.



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WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

LGBT Pride celebrated

Just like in the fable, "The Emperor's New Clothes," the U.S. military machine was stripped and paraded through the streets of **SAN FRANCISCO** for all to see. A small but vocal contingent of lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer activists used the June 27 LGBTQ Pride parade to condemn the homophobic U.S. military and its many interventions abroad and to demand, "Ban the Army, not the queers!"

The contingent, organized and led by Queers Undermining Israeli Terrorism, also carried signs protesting Israeli apartheid and the purchase of Israeli goods. Chants of "Free, free Palestine! Queers say no to Israel's crimes!" echoed up and down Market Street. The radical, queer, anti-war statement was witnessed by more than one million Pride parade spectators, many of whom cheered and showed their strong support.

Trans and gender non-conforming (TGNC) people and their allies marched through the streets of **NEW YORK** on June 25 in the sixth Trans Day of Action for Social and Economic Justice. The annual event, which is organized by the Audre Lorde Project, demanded equal access to employment and education opportunities for TGNC people; access to respectful and safe living spaces and community spaces; full legalization of all immigrants; and justice for the many TGNC people who have been beaten, assaulted, raped and murdered.

An anti-capitalist contingent was one of several social justice groupings participating in the annual lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer Pride march on June 27 in Manhattan. The contingent included members of Workers World Party, the Bail Out the People Movement, the International Action Center and the youth group Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.

— Judy Greenspan and Leilani Dowell



Above, San Francisco; Below, NYC, June 25.



WW PHOTO: LEILANI DOWELL

Seattle protest against Arizona law

Hundreds of people rallied for immigrant rights in Seattle on June 23. Over 20 people were arrested as demonstrators demanding their democratic rights blocked streets for three hours during rush hour. The action, which lasted six hours, demanded a repeal of the racist, anti-immigrant SB 1070 law in Arizona.

Demonstrators came from around the state, including Latinos/as and Asians. Children came from El Centro de la Raza. Participating union delegations included the Service Employees union, UNITE HERE and the Food and Commercial Workers union.

Performers at the opening rally at the federal building included Blue Scholars MC Geologic, Gabriel Teodoros, and Def Jam Poet Mark Gonzales. The demonstration was a follow-up to an earlier militant action on May 20.

— Jim McMahan



Seattle, June 23.

Opposing SB 1070 Tucson activists plan month of resistance

A coalition of Tucson activists and organizations has called for a month of resistance to the implementation of the racist SB 1070 law, which goes into effect on July 29. The coalition, representing community and political organizations, labor unions, student organizations and churches, has issued the statement "¡Ya Basta/Enough! Our Communities Are Uniting in Resistance!" Their plans call for escalating mobilizations over the next month, culminating with a major demonstration in Tucson on July 29.

July 29 will be a day of resistance throughout the state, including a demonstration in Phoenix and actions in smaller cities.

As migrant deaths continue to rise, more troops are sent to the border, and public education is decimated by draconian budget cuts, it is urgent that this fightback is launched and spreads as far and wide as possible. Anyone interested in working on the July resistance activities should contact Tucson@workers.org or info@tucsonmay1st.org.

— Paul Teitelbaum

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

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Gray-Haired Witnesses, supporters bring Scott Sisters' case to Washington

Special to Workers World
Washington, D.C.

The Gray-Haired Witnesses Fast for Justice held on June 21 in Washington, D.C., called attention to the growing number of incarcerated Black women and the gross oversentencing in cases such as the Mississippi Scott Sisters, Jamie and Gladys. The Scott Sisters received double-life sentences each in an alleged armed robbery of \$11 in which no one was harmed or injured and for which they have steadfastly maintained their innocence.

This outrageous case became all the more urgent when Jamie Scott, now in the 16th year of this draconian sentence, suffered kidney failure in January, and has had several close calls with death as a result of poor medical treatment in the Mississippi prison.

The June 21 rally began at the Department of Justice with a small but spirited protest and speakout against the prison-industrial complex and the disparity in arrests, sentencing and treatment during and after incarceration of Black people.

Supporters came from as far as Boston and Mississippi to proclaim that the Scott Sisters must be released from prison, as well as all those suffering under the Mississippi Department of Corrections system. MDC is one of the worst prison systems in the country when it comes to medical care.

"We are here to represent those who came before us," stated Gray-Haired Witness B.J. Peak-Graham, "Our ancestors

cry through us, demanding all justices denied." Attorney Sam Jordan was very thorough and spoke with great conviction, as well as Gloria Bolls, Clarence Bolls, Donnie Finley, Chioma Oruh and more.

Each was eloquent and adamant that an investigation into the case of the Scott Sisters needs to be a top item on the Washington agenda and that enough is truly enough for this devastating case.

Later that afternoon at Lafayette Park, the energy was still very high and a lot of information was shared with attendees and passers-by. Brenda Branson, Spoken Word and Slangston Hughes were among those who brought the power to bear on this system during their hard-hitting and impassioned spoken-word presentations. The crowd was visibly moved by a beautiful musical performance by Khadijah "Moon" Ali-Coleman.

Speakers who brought dynamic information to the rally included Returning Citizens United, Universal Negro Improvement Association President General Senghor Jawara Baye, Clinton Alexander, attorney Nkechi Taifa, Mike Johnson, revered community mother and esteemed elder Mama Nia, and more. Attorney Ann Wilcox also spoke in solidarity on behalf of the local Green Party and the Gray Panthers.

Portions of the rally were very mov-



PHOTO: MIKE JOHNSON

Standing up for justice, June 21.

ing, and being in the shadow of the White House made them all the more poignant. Gray-Haired Witness Jamia Shepherd read from heartbreaking letters from Jamie and Gladys. In one Jamie wrote: "I've been robbed of so much by the state of Mississippi until I can't feel anymore. But in the midst of this pain, I do also feel the love and support from each of you. Please stay strong in your stand for justice. One day we shall overcome. I just pray my day won't be too late."

The organizers were uplifted by those

who attended as well as by all those who supported but were unable to attend. All expressed their love and admiration for the awe-inspiring courage and fortitude of Evelyn Rasco, the true engine behind all the organizing that goes on with respect to her beloved and long-suffering daughters.

The movement is growing, and all who are organizing on behalf of the Scott Sisters around the country and the world will be heard. "We come from a history of struggle. We must relearn that we don't just lie down and accept injustice!"

said Gray-Haired Witness Marpessa Kupendua.

The GHWJ women vowed to remain consistent and continue in the future to move forward in the spirit of Ida B. Wells on this case and in other efforts to demand an end to the demonization and dehumanization of the Black community in general and Black women in particular.

For more information, call 866-968-1188, ext. 2; email ghwitnesses@gmail.com; and visit www.grayhairedwitnesses.blogspot.com.



Leonard Peltier on 35th anniversary of the firefight

In days past, some among our people were induced to become "scouts." For whatever reasons, these individuals made possible the treacherous campaigns that resulted in the deaths of countless innocent people. These days — sadly — there are still these types amongst us. The government preys on the weaknesses of these people, inducing them to turn against the rest of us. The government uses this treachery to cover up state-sanctioned murder and terrorism. They do this and then tell us that what we remember didn't really happen at all, as though memory or truth is something to be shaped and molded to fit a preconceived outcome. So don't forget. Not ever.

We gather today after decades and generations of blood and trauma. We gather in defiance. And we remember.

We remember not just one day or one event, because remembering what occurred on June 25 or June 26 — or any particular date — is important, but not as important as an understanding of the ongoing campaign of colonization. This is a continuing human drama of slaughter and uncontrollable bloodlust and we're still here, engaged in our running defense; praying for balance, peace and justice; and trying to make some sense of it all. Perhaps, in the face of such a menace, the most important thing we can do is remember. So teach your children. Pass this knowledge. Don't forget. Not ever.

Remembering is resisting, and if we remember, then we'll be free one day. Free of their mindset. Free of their theft. Free of their guns and their bombs. Free of their cages. Free to be who we are.

And free of their fear. That's the truest freedom of all, and true freedom is what this is really all about, not the illusion of freedom they offer us.

**So don't forget. Not ever.
In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,
Leonard Peltier**

The following excerpts are from a June 26 message written by Indigenous political prisoner Leonard Peltier, who was falsely arrested by the U.S. government months after June 26, 1975, shooting deaths of two FBI agents at the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota. Peltier has been serving two life sentences since 1976. Go to tiny.cc/4zoqh/ to read the entire statement and tiny.cc/tv3bz to read about and get involved in his case.

It is vengeance that preoccupies the mind of the colonizer. It is this fervor to show us who is boss that led to the [1890] massacre at Wounded Knee, the theft of the Black Hills, the establishment of boarding schools, and the criminalization of our languages and traditional ways. It is vengeance that armed the goon squads, killed our leaders, and surrounded our people at Wounded Knee again in 1973. Revenge is why they today prosecute Indian people for the crimes they know the government committed during their murderous campaigns of the last generation. Vengeance is what killed Joe Stuntz, Anna Mae Aquash, Buddy Lamont and so many others. Getting even is what keeps me in prison. So don't forget. Not ever.

All of these events are bound together, interrelated and interdependent. And quite clearly the lesson they intend for us to learn is: Don't defend yourselves. Don't stand up for what is right. Don't think for yourselves. Don't choose to be who you are. Don't remember your ancestors. Don't live in defense of the Earth. Don't you do it! Don't even think about it. If you do, this government — this mindset of control — will unleash an attack so vast it will even seek to destroy our genetic memories. So don't forget. Not ever.

From Mumia Abu-Jamal on death row

'Gaza prison'

Taken from a June 13 audio column. Go to www.millions4mumia.org for updates on Mumia's case.

There are over a million people "living" in the Gaza Strip, the small land area on the southwestern coast of Israel.

Their lives are an unmitigated hell, and made bitter as gall by their Israeli occupiers and the support of the Americans, the Europeans and the Egyptians.

They have been punished as a people for voting for Hamas in their last parliamentary elections, over their rivals, the Palestinian Authority.

They have endured not just the crippling occupation, but a mean and small-minded blockade that has driven their economy into the dust. They are being punished for practicing democracy.

The recent Israeli commando attack on peaceful protesters in the Freedom Flotilla — carrying boatloads of supplies and foodstuffs for the beleaguered Palestinians — is the latest demonstration of a paranoid state that sees enemies everywhere and treats them as such. The U.S., for sheer domestic political reasons, is an enabler that can't say no to anything Israel wants to do.

The same shortsightedness that armed, trained and funded the groups that would later emerge as Al Qaeda and the Taliban is sowing the seeds of enmity and hatred among millions of Palestinians and other Arabs.

They have turned their lands, homes, schools and public institutions into prisons that one day will explode where least expected. □

Be in Philadelphia! JULY 4 Annual protest to demand MUMIA'S FREEDOM!

July 3rd is the day that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal was sentenced to death for a killing he did not commit. This year's July 4 theme is "ancestral uprising!" featuring dramatic presentations through performances of heroic anti-slavery fighters. The protest will also include a special presentation on the year-long struggle to demand a civil rights investigation for Mumia on the part of the U.S. Justice Department.

Join Immortal Technique, the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC), the International Action Center, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST) and many others on Sunday, July 4, to say, **"Free Mumia & all political prisoners!"**

Go to www.freemumia.com and www.millions4mumia.org or call ICFFMAJ at 215-724-1618 for more updates, bus information and July 4 literature.



If cop beats murder charge

Protests expected in BART shooting

By Larry Hales

Media in the San Francisco Bay Area are full of warnings that the Oakland Police Department, police of the Bay Area Rapid Transit, the California Highway Patrol and the Alameda Sheriff's Office have all been practicing "riot control" maneuvers in anticipation of a verdict in the trial of former BART cop Johannes Mehserle.

Mehserle has been on trial since June 12 on charges of murdering Oscar Grant III. He was videotaped kneeling on a prone Grant and shooting him in the back at the Fruitvale BART stop on Jan. 1, 2009. Mehserle is white; Grant was Black.

The authorities anticipate outrage if Mehserle's trial ends with anything less than a murder conviction. The OPD has been conducting crowd-control tactics and exercises to squash any rebellion, as well as spying on social networking sites, and most likely on public meetings, to determine where people might gather when they hear the news.

BART police have also been doing "intelligence work," according to chief communications officer Linton Johnson, and will focus their efforts on Oakland and San Francisco, where they expect mass outrage.

The strategy of the Bay Area police

forces points to an ambush being set up against activists and community members, who are preparing to demonstrate against any unjust verdict.

There have already been setbacks in the case, starting with a venue change to Los Angeles. Defense attorneys successfully argued that their client, Mehserle, could not receive an impartial hearing in and around Oakland. The switch of the trial helped secure a jury with no Black jurors. Mehserle's defense attorney used peremptory challenges to remove three of the five Black jurors in the jury pool. L.A. Superior Court Judge Robert Perry excluded the other two.

Oakland and L.A. have very different demographics. Black people make up 32 percent of Oakland but only 10 percent of L.A. Moving the trial was important, seeing as this case highlights the low-intensity war being waged against Black people by police departments across the country, made more evident by reports from Oregon to Missouri to New York citing that Black people are significantly more likely to be stopped by police.

Before the start of the trial, Judge Perry granted some rulings favorable to the defense. He allowed Mehserle's lawyer to use Oscar Grant's prison record and the fact that he was on parole to demonize him in the eyes of the jury, thereby "justifying" his execution. The defense will also

be allowed to have a so-called expert testify about what he sees in the six videos to be used during the trial. Perry will also allow a San Leandro cop to testify about having used a Taser on Oscar Grant in 2006.

Defense attorney Michael Rains tried also to have excluded from the trial key witnesses for the prosecution, such as Sophina Mesa, Oscar Grant's partner and mother of their 4-year-old daughter, but these motions were denied by the judge. Rains sought to have excluded from evidence a racial slur used by fired BART cop Tony Pirone, who was there when Grant was shot in the back and who punched Grant in the face, as well as a synchronized video. All these motions were denied by Judge Perry.

While vilifying Grant, Rains has presented Mehserle as an upstanding father and husband who simply made the mistake of pulling out his gun instead of his Taser. The former BART cop in his testimony even resorted to shedding tears, eliciting a spectator to shout, "Save your fucking tears, dude." The 24-year-old friend of Grant was arrested.

Officers Tony Pirone and Marysol Domenici had testified earlier. Domenici, who has contradicted her testimony at various times, had to admit that Grant and his friends on the BART platform complied with her orders and did not re-

sist. She had insisted there were 50 people on the platform and they heckled her, but was shown video from several angles that showed an empty platform. She then conceded that the platform was indeed empty, but said she considered the people on the train as being on the platform and felt threatened by their presence.

Pirone, who was fired in April for his actions on the day Grant was killed, said on the stand that Grant and friends sat down when he, using harsh language, told them to.

The trial, which is expected to end by the beginning of July, has been a long time coming. Many people are anticipating the outcome, including those from southern California to the Bay Area.

Were it not for the movement that sprang up after the ruthless killing of the 22-year-old Grant, which included a mini rebellion, Mehserle would doubtless have been allowed to go free with no charges at all. That has been the racist tradition regarding many other cops who have killed oppressed and working people.

If the verdict is anything less than the second-degree murder charge for which Mehserle is being tried, it will take a movement to win justice, which is best determined by the community in Oakland. That community desires that Mehserle be locked up and never again see the light of day. □

Muslim students targeted after anti-Zionist protest

By Caleb T. Maupin

The University of California at Irvine is a hotbed of opposition to the Israeli government. Four months ago, the administration and the world looked on with amazement as student after student disrupted the speech of Israeli Ambassador Michael Oren. Video was circulated on YouTube.com and other media sources showing Muslim students call out Oren to his face about the crimes of the Israeli government against the Palestinian people.

Oren, who is U.S. born, began his career in the service of Israel as a paratrooper in the Israeli Defense Forces. In his teens, he had been indoctrinated by various Zionist youth organizations and temporarily

lived on a kibbutz in Israel while away from his family's home in upstate New York. As an Israeli soldier, Oren participated in the invasion of south Lebanon in 1982, during which 1,500 Palestinians and an estimated 17,000 Lebanese were killed. Much of his published writings are devoted to bragging about his role in the invasion.

Oren recently defended Israel's brutal attack on the Freedom Flotilla bringing aid to Gaza. He has smeared the organization of Turkish supporters of Palestine as "terrorist." He continues to repeat the lie that the flotilla was bringing guns, not aid, to the Palestinians.

Oren has also dismissed the Goldstone Report, a U.N. investigation documenting Israeli crimes against Palestinians

and Lebanese during the 2008-09 invasion of Lebanon, comparing it to Holocaust denial.

Eleven Irvine students were arrested for their activities protesting Ambassador Oren. One was grabbed after shouting out to him, "How many Palestinians did you kill?"

After a mass campaign on their behalf, all criminal charges were dropped. However, the university administration has responded harshly to the student protest, declaring that it intends to ban the Muslim Student Union for one year. The MSU, a campus organization of more than 300 young people, was key in leading the protest.

Campus President Mark Yudof, who openly calls himself a Zionist, supports

the administration's ban. Furthermore, the Zionist Organization of America and other supporters of Israel have called for all Jewish donors to halt contributions to the university unless the students are repressed and punished to their satisfaction.

The MSU students consider this an attack on their freedom of expression and plan to protest it further, demanding that the ban not be implemented. In an article published online, Omar Kurdi, a former member of the MSU and an alumnus of UC Irvine, compared the tactics to McCarthyism. He hailed the planned next wave of aid flotillas to Gaza and added that the students "will continue to speak truth to power, no matter what price they have to pay." □

Bail denied in Newburgh 4 entrapment case as

Opposition grows to anti-Muslim campaigns

By Dee Knight

After a federal judge in White Plains, N.Y., denied bail for the Newburgh Four on June 25, the defendants' family and friends mapped plans for a campaign to expose the government's ongoing massive anti-Muslim campaign. The trial is expected to resume in August.

On June 14 Judge Colleen McMahon had postponed the trial, criticizing the government for covering up FBI entrapment of the men. The FBI had induced them to participate in a plot to blow up two Bronx synagogues and shoot down a military plane at Stewart International Airport in Newburgh. The FBI's role included procuring everything, identifying targets, persuading the men to participate, and offering them cars and large sums of money to go along.

A week later, McMahon said, "I have

referred to the case ... in the privacy of my chambers, as the 'un-terrorism case.'" But for the record she decided for the prosecutors and for Robert Fuller, the FBI agent in charge of the case, who sat in front of her during the bail hearing.

Alicia McWilliams, aunt of defendant David Williams, responded bitterly: "If it's the 'un-terrorism case,'" she said to Workers World, "why are they still in jail?" She said the government used these four impoverished African-American men as ploys in a fake war on terror. She added that she asked leaders of the Riverdale Jewish community if they were also angry at being used. "One rabbi told me, 'You don't see us out there protesting or in the newspapers or at the trial, but we're embarrassed.'"

Friends and supporters are planning a forum in Newburgh before the trial resumes and a rally at New York's City Hall

in the near future. The rally will answer one called by New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg on the same spot a year ago to "celebrate the heroes who foiled the terrorists" in Newburgh. Alicia McWilliams wants an apology and wants to vindicate the four framed defendants.

Newburgh is an economically depressed town of 30,000 people about 60 miles north of New York City, on the Hudson River. According to Wikipedia.com, the town's annual per capita income is about \$13,000. Black and Latino/a people make up two-thirds of the population.

Globalization wiped out the town's once vibrant industrial base, and many river port jobs were lost as shippers changed over to trucks following deregulation in the early Reagan years.

Today in Newburgh there are no jobs, no job training and no re-entry programs for the many young people convicted of

victimless criminal offenses, McWilliams said. "If just half the money the FBI spent on the entrapment and sting operation had been used for job programs in Newburgh, this tragedy would have never happened."

Professor Shamsad Ahmad, who teaches at the State University of New York in Albany and is co-founder of Project SALAM, told Workers World the Newburgh case is similar to "pre-emptive prosecution programs" against hundreds of Muslims all over the country. He is author of a book published in 2009: "Rounded Up: Artificial Terrorists and Muslim Entrapment After 9/11."

In April, the Albany Common Council called on the Justice Department to carry out the recommendation of its own inspector general and establish an independent panel to review convictions of Muslims who have been "preemptively prosecuted." The inspector general's re-

In the Gulf

Judge lifts injunction on drilling moratorium

By Gene Clancy

Last weekend British Petroleum CEO Tony Hayward took a break. As sticky, gooey oil continued to gush into the Gulf of Mexico, he watched the yacht he owns race in an event called (no kidding!) the “J.P. Morgan Asset Management Round the Island Race.”

The mainstream media in the U.S. were aghast. Within days, BP announced that Hayward was being replaced by Bob Dudley, an “American” executive of BP, to head the public response and cleanup efforts in the Gulf region. The media forgot to mention that the yacht race’s sponsor, JP Morgan, has a 40 percent stake in BP or that more than 50 percent of the company’s stock is U.S. owned.

Meanwhile, ExxonMobil, which had previously accused BP of cutting corners and putting profits ahead of the safety of workers and the environment, announced that the moratorium on new deepwater drilling imposed by President Barack Obama was severely limiting its operations in the Gulf.

Until the BP catastrophe, Exxon held the dubious distinction of causing the largest oil spill in U.S. history — the Exxon Valdez disaster of 1989.

A few days later, Federal Judge Martin Feldman of New Orleans blocked Obama’s six-month moratorium.

An oily judge

Some environmentalists were surprised by Feldman’s order mainly because Obama’s moratorium was moderate and very limited. It only forbade exploratory drilling in the deepest water, about which little is currently known.

Six months actually seems like a short period in which to determine the causes of such a catastrophe as the BP explosion and constant leak. The administration immediately announced that it would appeal, but on June 24 Feldman refused to put his ruling on hold.

Financial statements released by Feldman in 2009 reveal that he was heavily invested in the oil and gas industry. Among his holdings is Transocean, the leasing company involved in the BP disaster. Others include EV Energy Partners, an oil and gas exploration firm; Enterprise Products Partners, which builds onshore and offshore pipelines; Energy Transfer, which also builds pipelines; Basic Energy Services; Provident Energy; Petrohawk Energy; Valero Energy, an oil refiner; Crosstex Energy, a natural-gas provider; and (significantly) ExxonMobil.

But Judge Feldman is not alone. An Associated Press analysis found that more than half of the federal judges in districts where the bulk of Gulf oil disaster-related lawsuits are pending have financial connections to the oil and gas industry. Finding judges without conflicts to hear the cases will be difficult, if not impossible.

Federal judicial rules require judges to

disqualify themselves from hearing cases involving a company in which they have a direct financial interest. Feldman claims that he divested himself of some (but not all) of his energy holdings before issuing his injunction. This is like a police officer taking off his Ku Klux Klan robe just before making an arrest. It doesn’t mean much.

Injunctions, corporations and the Constitution

The use of court injunctions (which are basically orders issued by a judge) has been and remains a potent weapon of the bosses against unions and progressive causes. It seems incredible that a federal judge like Feldman — appointed by President Ronald Reagan more than 20 years ago, elected by no one and acting at the behest of a single industry — has just overruled an order of the president of the United States who was elected less than

two years ago by an overwhelming majority of voters.

Something can and must be done. In February another federal judge (ironically recently appointed by Obama) issued an injunction against demonstrators who for more than a year have occupied another environmental disaster site: a mountaintop removal coal strip mine in West Virginia.

The site is the property of Massey Energy, the coal company responsible for the deaths of 29 miners in an explosion at the Upper Big Branch mine earlier this year. Judge Irene C. Berger felt it necessary to issue the injunction because the protesters, ignoring a previous injunction, had “prevented Massey Energy from mining coal from the site for over a year.” (Charleston Gazette, Feb. 1)

It is mass actions such as this that are needed to truly protect the workers and the environment in the Gulf region. □

Newburgh 4

Continued from page 4

port was declassified in July 2009.

Lynne Jackson, speaking for Project SALAM, told Workers World, “We hope passage of this resolution encourages other cities and counties to pass similar resolutions, to show that citizens demand a second look into some of the most unjust prosecutions that withheld classified evidence, such as the Fort Dix Five, the Newburgh Four, Betim Kaziu, Fahad Hashmi and hundreds of other cases.” Jackson extended an invitation to all concerned to attend the National Peace Conference in Albany July 23-25, where there will be a workshop on fighting these unjust prosecutions.

Project SALAM has written numerous letters on this matter to President Barack Obama and Attorney General Eric Holder. Albany Common Council member Dominick Calsolaro also notified Obama of the Common Council resolution. To date they have not received a response. □

NYC braces for more transit cuts

By G. Dunkel
New York

June 27 saw the biggest cuts to mass transit in New York City in the last 30 years while fares remained the same.

Two subway lines, the V and W, have been eliminated, 38 bus routes are being abolished by the Metropolitan Transit Authority, and dozens of bus routes are being modified, particularly express service from the outer reaches of the Queens, Bronx and Staten Island boroughs into Manhattan.

TransportAzumah, a private bus operator with June 28 plans to start some express routes being cut, said it would disregard an order from the city’s Department of Transportation to cease operations.

DETROIT

‘Jobs, yes! Banks, no!’

On June 23 more than 800 demonstrators gathered at the Michigan Labor Legacy Monument at Hart Plaza in Detroit for a rally demanding jobs and denouncing the role of the banks in destroying the lives of working people. Organized by AFSCME, other Detroit unions and Jobs with Justice, demonstrators marched to the Detroit City County building, circling

the building in a massive picket while demanding no more city layoffs, no more cuts in city services, and an end to the raid on the city workers’ pension funds. Marchers then proceeded to the Bank of America to demand a bailout of the people and a return of the money taken from the workers.

— Michael Shane

Low-Wage Capitalism

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

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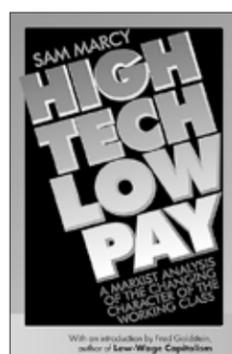
Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

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

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

Low-Wage Capitalism



“The Department of Transportation doesn’t understand state regulations and we’re running tomorrow,” the company’s owner, Joel Azumah, told the Wall Street Journal. (June 27)

The city reportedly wants to replace the public mass transportation provided by MTA buses — where riders can use MetroCards or wheelchair lifts if they need access — with so-called dollar vans, which generally charge \$1.50 to \$2.00 and mainly run in Black and Latino/a communities.

A few hundred dollar vans currently operate semilegally, with permits and insurance that run around \$14,000 per year; few reportedly follow all the rules.

The New York Times estimated in 1999 that anywhere between 2,500 and 5,000 vans were operating illegally. Nothing has changed in the transit mix in New York that would affect this estimate.

While billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg doesn’t publicly approve of illegal operators, he is calling for dollar vans on the avenues where bus service has been cut. Transport Workers Union Local 100 President John Samuelsen has pointed out, “(Dollar vans) are a backdoor way to cut bus service.” (am New York, June 22)

Dollar vans not only cut bus service, they also lead to privatization of this service. □

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WWP & FIST are Fighting for Socialism —

a world without oppression, exploitation, poverty and war — where all the wealth of society belongs to the people and is used to meet human need not corporate greed. Don’t wait until the Nov. conference. Workers World holds weekly meetings and discussions in addition to organizing. If you are interested call us at 212-627-2994, email wwp@workers.org and go to workersworld.net for updates on the Nov. 12-14 conference.

Workers World Party, FIST activists, friends mobilize for USSF

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Members and friends of Workers World Party and the youth organization Fight Imperialism, Stand Together carried out a bold intervention in the name of revolutionary socialism during the United States Social Forum held in Detroit June 22-26.

Comrades and friends of WWP and FIST activists from Detroit and other Michigan cities were joined by dozens of WWP and/or FIST members from around the country, including California, Texas, Georgia, North Carolina, New York, New Jersey, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

The goal was to make a major push for uniting around the need to overturn capitalism and fight for socialism and to join Workers World Party and FIST if you really want to change the system. Thousands of radical youth and activists of all ages from around the U.S. and the world

heard and agreed with WWP's message and eagerly took revolutionary literature and information.

The WWP contingent could be seen in yellow T-shirts emblazoned with the likeness of assassinated revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara and the slogan "Fight for Socialism/Lucha por Socialismo/Workers World Party/Partido Mundo Obrero/www.workers.org." The shirts were also sold to help raise funds for the organizing effort.

More than 2,500 copies of Workers World newspaper were sold or distributed during the five-day event, and dozens of trial subscriptions were sold. A front-page article by Abayomi Azikiwe about the crisis in Detroit, with the main headline "Abolish Racism, Capitalism," and a WWP statement "Fight for Socialism" made the issue especially attractive to USSF participants. Activists also distributed 1,600 copies and sold subscriptions



Mumia Abu-Jamal supporters in Detroit.

WW PHOTO

to Left Hook, FIST's quarterly newspaper.

The Leftbooks.com table was stocked with dozens of revolutionary and progressive titles and attracted a steady stream of visitors throughout the conference. It was organized and staffed primarily by Atlanta WWP and International Action Center organizer Dianne Mathiowetz.

WWP, along with its mass affiliates and related organizations, hosted and spoke at many workshops and discussions during the USSF. They included three well-attended workshops by the Detroit-based Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs; "Creating 30 Million Jobs" by the Bail Out the People Movement; "Youth and Students to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal" organized by FIST and International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal; "Capitalism Is Killing Us — Fight For Socialism!" by WWP and FIST; "Stopping War, Fighting for Jobs" by the International Action Center; and "Fight for Education Rights" co-sponsored by FIST and Students for a Democratic Society.

WWP organizers and friends played a major role in the June 25 march and rally at Chase Bank, due in large part to the work and reputation of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, which has helped pull together religious and labor leaders in support of a moratorium on foreclosures. The coalition had speakers at both the opening and the closing rallies.

Staffers at the Workers World table in the main hall at Cobo Conference Center said they were struck by how activists are fighting back in every city to defend people's rights. "Many clearly have an anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist perspective," said WWP leader Jerry Goldberg. "There was tremendous openness to Workers World newspaper and to discussing socialism. Hundreds signed up on the party's mailing list, and many people were interested in party conferences in the fall."

Hundreds of activists took palm cards about the Nov. 12-14 WWP national conference in New York. Regional conferences in Chicago and Los Angeles are also in the works. □

Tens of thousands protest at pro-bank summit

Continued from page 1

iversity of Toronto and arrested 70 students on suspicion of plotting to foment disorder. However, one demonstrator responded: "This isn't violence. This is vandalism against violent corporations. We did not hurt anybody. The corporations are the ones hurting people." (Toronto Star, June 27)

By early June 27, public outrage at the use of excessive force by the police was mounting. In scenes broadcast live over Canadian television, a riot police officer was shown viciously beating an unarmed demonstrator.

Stephan Christoff, a Montreal journalist, said he was beaten by riot police with a plastic-coated metal baton. Steve Paikin, who works for TV Ontario, witnessed the assault on a Guardian journalist: "As I was escorted away from the demonstration, I saw two officers hold a journalist. A third punched him in the stomach. The man collapsed. Then the third officer drove his elbow into the man's back." (guardian.co.uk, June 27)

According to Nathalie Des Rosiers, general counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, "Civil liberties are in rough shape today. We will have to have some accountability for what is going on." (New York Times, June 28)

Civil rights lawyers have said that the regulations imposed during the demonstrations may violate the Canadian charter of rights and freedoms, which does provide for freedom of assembly.

On June 28 police officials said they would seek to prosecute at least 400 people they claim were responsible for the destruction of property and attacks on police vehicles.

Africa marginalized at summits

Although seven African states — Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, Malawi, Ethiopia, Egypt and Algeria — were invited to the G-8 summit, their influence was negligible. Leaders were also present from Colombia, Jamaica and Haiti.

Leaders of the imperialist states only wanted to discuss such issues as efforts to curb drug trafficking and totally neglected the need to eliminate poverty in the developing world. Five years ago in

Scotland, the G-20 summit promised to provide \$50 billion to assist Africa with debt relief. However, those promises have not been fulfilled amid growing poverty related to the world economic crisis and its impact on the continent.

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan was reported to have returned home after he was apparently disinvited to the G-20. Jonathan, who attended the gathering of the G-8, had thought he was scheduled to participate in the G-20 proceeding.

A report in the June 27 Nigeria Punch newspaper indicates that Jonathan thought he would be allowed to participate in the G-20 meeting, but was only slated to appear in the sideline talks at the G-8, whose membership is restricted to the North American, European and Japanese imperialists and Russia. The G-20 has only one official African member, the Republic of South Africa. All other participants are merely observers.

According to Punch, "Although Nigeria is regarded as one of the emerging economic power houses, Jonathan returned to Abuja [the political capital] on Friday, on the eve of the summit."

In an interview with the June 26 Canadian Globe & Mail newspaper, Jonathan made his case for African involvement in the G-20. "Africa should be well represented in the G20 because we are talking about the global village. What affects one nation invariably affects the others. If African nations have challenges, the West also pays for it."

Jacob Zuma, president of the Republic of South Africa, said in a speech at the G-20 summit: "Sub-Saharan Africa has remained resilient despite the financial crisis. Most countries in the region were able to protect pro-poor and pro-growth public spending." (South African Government Document, June 28)

Zuma also stated, "More than a third of countries in Sub-Sahara Africa remain on the periphery of international capital markets and thus dependent on official forms of external financing from the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and multilateral banks. That is why we call for this forum to take the voice of the developing world seriously in the development and implementation of new financial standards and rules." □

From 'Low Wage Capitalism' Phelps-Dodge Copper Miners to Pittston Coal Strike

The following is from the book "Low-Wage Capitalism," a Marxist analysis of globalization and its effects on the U.S. working class by Fred Goldstein, published in the fall of 2008. This excerpt is from Part 3, "Lessons from the Past for Future Struggles." Part 3 covers a wide range of struggles from the 1930s to the present showing the capacity and willingness of the U.S. working class to engage in militant struggle at great sacrifice. For more information visit www.lowwagecapitalism.com.

An excerpt from Part 3 of the book, printed in the last issue of WW, asserted that the decline in the labor movement was not inevitable because workers were willing to fight back against the anti-labor offensive of the last 30 years. The following are the first three in a series of examples illustrating this willingness of the rank-and-file to struggle.

1983: Phelps Dodge miners

Militant worker resistance to a dangerous challenge arose during the Phelps Dodge struggle in 1983. The company, a giant transnational monopoly, provoked the United Steelworkers and a number of other unions at its copper mines in Morenci, Ajo, and other towns in Arizona, as well as in Texas, into a strike by demanding across-the-board concessions. These included cuts in wages and benefits,

an end to cost-of-living adjustments, and a two-tier system with lower wages and benefits for new workers. The company refused to follow pattern bargaining that the union had established in the rest of the industry.

The workers, who were mainly Chicanos, rebelled against concessionary demands. The company advertised for scabs in the newspapers. The workers answered this challenge by massing at the Morenci mine and other mining towns with pipes, bats, and chains to stop the scabs. They forced the company to shut down the mine. But "liberal" Democratic Governor Bruce Babbitt, who had been endorsed by the union, stepped in and set up a 10-day "cooling-off" period, after which, at the behest of Phelps Dodge, he organized a massive counterattack. He sent in Huey helicopters, hundreds of state troopers, the National Guard, tanks, and other military vehicles to protect the scabs.

Various local unions raised funds and tried to give solidarity, but the national USW and the labor leadership let the miners battle on alone against Phelps Dodge, which was not only one of the largest mining corporations in the world but was aided by the capitalist state. The company evicted the miners from company-owned housing, barred them from company-owned hospitals, wore the workers down, and broke the union. It set a precedent for attacks on mineworkers throughout the region.

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2010 U.S. Social Forum in Detroit

Historic gathering advances anti-capitalist outlook

By Betsey Piette
Detroit

More than its predecessor in Atlanta in 2007, the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit June 22-26 reflected the growing awareness that although the struggles at home and internationally have many fronts, they share a common enemy — capitalism.

The growing need to unite in an anti-capitalist movement brought an estimated 20,000 people to Detroit from all over the U.S. and around the world. Overwhelmingly these forces were youth, people of color, women, workers and the oppressed.

USSF participants had over 1,000 workshops to choose from, which featured such issues as the crisis of capitalism; climate justice and sustainable resources; displace-

ment and migration; political repression and the prison industry; organizing efforts for labor; international struggles; housing, education and health care; racism and gender equality; culture; and political movements on the left, as well as how to deal with the right wing.

Workshops also addressed solutions, ranging from the struggle for more democratic rights to the fight to build a socialist world, with examples of how this is being done in Latin America, notably in Cuba and Venezuela.

Many of these workshops were organized and led by students and youth, and the broad representation of people of color was evident throughout daily events.

Detroit: Devastated but gracious host

Several workshops offered the opportunity to learn about the struggles against foreclosures and plant closings in Detroit from organizations leading these movements like the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs.

Tours of Detroit's abandoned and vandalized neighborhoods caused by epidemic foreclosures and evictions were organized, although just a drive down Woodward Avenue exposed many empty lots as well as vacant and boarded-up apartment buildings and churches. Several USSF-goers stayed at the St. Regis Hotel, which offered discounted rates, only to learn that this historic building is also facing foreclosure. Detroiters whom delegates met expressed their appreciation for the attention the Social Forum brought to their devastated city.

Special thanks should be extended to the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, whose members staffed the USSF of-

ice and handled many organizing tasks. Congratulations to Maureen Taylor and Marian Kramer, leaders of this organization, for their hard work in pulling off this dynamic event.

Words and deeds, solidarity

Those attending the social forum could, in addition to workshops, take part in People's Movement Assemblies organized around geographic regions as well as broader struggles for economic and social justice. The theme-focused PMAs drew large numbers of participants and went into depth on issues, including strategizing around tactics for movement building. Some led to direct actions during the USSF.

Plenary sessions designed to bring together everyone attending the forum were held in the evenings in a cavernous space in Cobo Hall. The sessions started June 23 with a focus on movements in Detroit as the epicenter of the economic crisis. "From National to International" was the theme of the June 24 plenary, which covered the effects of neoliberal policies at home and abroad.

The final evening plenary on June 25 featured speakers addressing alternative solutions. A highlight of this panel was the address by Amenothep Zambrano, Executive Secretary of the ALBA Permanent Commission, who presented a comprehensive explanation of why capitalism only leads to more economic and social crises and why movements to build socialism such as the ones taking place today in Venezuela and throughout Latin America offer a viable alternative. (ALBA is the Spanish acronym for the Bolivarian Alliance of the Americas.)

The Social Forum also included direct actions. In addition to the spirited opening

day "We Have a Dream" workers' march and rally on June 22, restaurant workers at the Andiamo Restaurant and their supporters organized an action in Dearborn on June 24 to demand \$125,000 in stolen wages and just treatment on the job for the mostly immigrant workforce.

On June 25 a demonstration organized by the Moratorium NOW! Coalition, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and the Spirituality and Religious PMA drew 1,000 protesters. They marched to a Chase bank to link the struggles against evictions and foreclosures in Detroit with the fight of migrant workers at R.J. Reynolds in North Carolina, where Chase is Reynolds' bank.

On June 26 at a rally called by the Zero Waste Detroit Coalition and organized through the Environmental Justice PMA, several hundred people gathered at the Detroit Public Library for a march to the world's largest incinerator. This polluting monstrosity, owned by Covanta, is located in a residential neighborhood across from a public school. Participants included residents, environmental activists, union members and youth, many carrying eight-foot sunflowers with slogans reading "Clean air," "Good jobs" and "Justice for all."

Throughout the five-day gathering, participants also attended cultural performances, movies and social gatherings, including massive impromptu dance parties, and they browsed at literature and book tables where lively discussions were held.

The 2010 U.S. Social Forum was an important step in uniting and defining the movement needed for the workers and oppressed to successfully fight against capitalism. It will stand as an historic event in building that movement. □

From Low Wage Capitalism

Continued from page 6

1985: Hormel meatpackers

The struggle of the Hormel meatpackers of Local P-9, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) in Austin, Minnesota, became a national cause within the labor movement and the progressive movement in general because the local decided to take a stand against concessions. In August 1985, after a wave of concessions, wage cuts, layoffs, and destruction of unions in the meatpacking industry, the workers of local P-9 rejected Hormel's demands for wage cuts. By a 92-percent margin they voted down a wage cut from \$10.69 to \$8.75 an hour—an 18-percent reduction in pay—and then initiated a boycott of Hormel. The UFCW leadership at first sanctioned the strike but later condemned it, ordered the workers back to work, and suspended the local.

The Hormel workers sent agitators to cities throughout the country and got material support from more than 3,000 locals. Movement activists and tens of thousands of unionists and local officials came to the area. Jesse Jackson compared the struggle to the one in Selma, Alabama. In April 1986, 6,000 labor activists from around the country came to Austin to try to shut down Hormel's operation with mass pickets and other forms of obstruction to block scabs.

The workers faced teargas, police attack, and arrests. Governor Rudy Perpich, a Democrat, sent in 300 National Guard troops against the strikers. But what made the defeat of the strike inevitable, a strike that lasted a year and a half, was the hostility of the national leadership of the UFCW and the refusal of the AFL-CIO to join the battle on a national basis in the face of company strike-breaking and the intervention of the state. This major confrontation, which had been brought on by Hormel, was recognized as a highly significant battle among the rank and file of the labor movement. The workers at Hormel and far beyond showed more than a willingness and desire to unite and fight back at great sacrifice. *

1989: Pittston Miners and Camp Solidarity

In 1989 miners at the Pittston mines in Virginia and West Virginia launched another struggle against concessions. This one lasted ten months. The UMWA called its strike headquarters Camp Solidarity. During four months more than 3,000 workers and activists came to help stop the scabs and lend support. When the court

Continued on page 9

Free the Cuban Five!

'From My Altitude' art exhibit opens at USSF

By Megan Spencer
Detroit

As a part of the U.S. Social Forum, the artwork of Antonio Guerrero, one of the Cuban Five, was displayed in an exhibit called "From My Altitude."

The Cuban Five are Antonio Guerrero, René González, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino and Fernando González. They are five Cuban men who, while fighting to protect Cuba from terrorism, were wrongly convicted on espionage and conspiracy charges against the U.S. government. They have been unjustly incarcerated in the United States since 1998.

The exhibit, which is being shown through July 8, is located at the Virgil H. Carr Cultural Arts Center in downtown Detroit. The opening of the exhibit on June 23 was attended by 100 people and included food, live music, poetry and a short film about the struggle of the Cuban Five featuring actor and activist Danny Glover. In addition, several speakers offered thoughts about the event and the struggle for justice for the Cuban Five.

Alicia Jrapko, the coordinator of the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five, spoke about the injustices inflicted upon the Cuban Five and called



WWW PHOTO: MEGAN SPENCER



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, René González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llorca. For more information: www.thecuban5.org

for increased support and activism for their liberation. The president of the Virgil H. Carr Cultural Arts Center, Oliver Ragsdale, also spoke, offering support for both the Cuban Five and Guerrero's exhibit.

Cheryl LaBash of Detroit's Justice for Cuba Coalition chaired the event, which also heard solidarity remarks from Abayomi Azikiwe of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice. T-shirts, books, DVDs and artwork in support of justice for the Cuban Five were available at the opening.

Guerrero began making art in 2003, after participating in a drawing class taught by another prisoner. In his artwork, Guerrero uses a variety of artistic media, including watercolor, acrylic paint, oil paint, airbrushing, pastel and pencil. His artwork draws on a range of images and ideas, often reflecting a love for nature and the struggle for justice.

The exhibit displays paintings of ani-

mals, including cats and birds and landscapes of nature, showing mountains in Colorado (where Guerrero is imprisoned), the ocean and beaches, as well as several nostalgic landscapes and cityscapes in Cuba. Sketched portraits of the mothers of each of the Cuban Five are also part of the display.

Guerrero's artwork conveys a definite political and struggle-oriented boldness, as evident in his multiple portraits of Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and Elián and Juan Miguel González. Despite being imprisoned, Guerrero's activism and work persists, in large part through the traveling exhibition of his artwork and its inherent messages of appreciating nature, struggle and liberation.

In addition to this event, several workshops focusing on freedom for political prisoners in the U.S. were held during the Social Forum.

Spencer is a senior at Michigan State University and a revolutionary artist.

To promote non-Western economic cooperation

Africa increases trade with China, others

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire



Kwame Nkrumah

A major impediment to economic development in Africa and other former colonial territories in the world has been the legacy of imperialism and its stronghold on the productive forces within these states. The phenomenon of neocolonialism has hampered so-called Third World countries from exercising their independence irrespective of the political and class character of the leadership within the developing nations.

In recent years numerous African governments have sought to increase their trade and economic cooperation with nations having similar histories of colonial domination. These efforts have caused much consternation in the West where the imperialist states have sought to maintain influence over the political direction taken by the developing countries.

The United States since the conclusion of World War II has become the dominant imperialist power in the world. According to Kwame Nkrumah, the first leader of independent Ghana during the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. had overtaken the European powers in regard to economic control of Africa and other developing regions of the world.

Although the official U.S. policy after the war was ostensibly in support of colonized states gaining their national independence, the actual aims of the U.S. ruling class were to replace the European imperialist system with a more sophisticated mechanism of indirect rule.

Nkrumah in his 1965 book entitled "Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism," writes: "Foremost among the neo-colonialists is the United States, which has long exercised its power in Latin America. Fumblingly at first she turned towards Europe, and then with more certainty after world war two when most countries of that continent were indebted to her. Since then, with methodical thoroughness and touching attention to detail, the Pentagon set about consolidating its ascendancy, evidence of which can be seen all around the world."

In Africa there has been a strong concentration of mineral extraction, since the continent contains large volumes of strategic natural resources that are vital to both the capitalist production process

and the U.S. military-industrial complex. Various governments have been and still are under tremendous pressure to supply key sectors of the U.S. and other industrial economies with the minerals needed to maintain their dominant positions within the international market through the maximization of profit.

Nkrumah writes: "More energetic exploration for metal and mineral resources was undertaken in Africa and elsewhere. Africa's raw materials are an important consideration in the military build-up of the NATO countries, in which are included those of the European Common Market."

This constant supply of African resources has been the guiding force behind U.S. foreign policy toward the continent. Governments have been overthrown in Africa while they attempted to exert a greater degree of independence from Western imperialism and to move the national economies of these states toward socialism. This was the motivation behind the United States in its pivotal role in toppling the Nkrumah government.

In a section of Nkrumah's "Neo-Colonialism" entitled "Monopoly Capitalism and the American Dollar," he writes: "Their industries, especially the strategic and nuclear factories, depend largely upon the primary materials that come from the less developed countries. Post-war Europe sustained a precarious shortage of basic supplies for its steel manufactures. Belgium needed more rich ores, Sweden more coal and coke, which America supplied in return for fine ores."

Recent trends

A recently released Economic Development in Africa Report 2010 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) entitled "South-South

Cooperation: Africa and the New Forms of Development Partnership" examines the rising levels of trade between the continent and other developing regions including the People's Republic of China.

This report indicates that the total trade in merchandise with developing countries outside the continent increased significantly from \$34 billion in 1995 to \$283 billion in 2008. This represents the fastest growing area of trade between Africa and other areas of the world.

Since 1980 Africa's trade with other developing regions rose from 8 percent to 29 percent in 2008. The continent's trade with other developing countries, including states within Africa itself, has surpassed that of the European Union since 2007.

As an economic bloc, the European Union still constitutes the largest trading partner with Africa, although the proportion of trade with the continent has shrunk from 55 percent during the 1980s to less than 40 percent in 2008. Nonetheless, the foreign direct investment in Africa by other developing countries outside the continent rose at a much more modest rate from 12 percent during the mid-to-late 1990s to 16 percent during the period 2000-2008.

According to UNCTAD Secretary-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, who unveiled the report at the World Expo 2010 held in Shanghai on June 18, the strongest growth in trade has taken place between Africa and Asian states, with the PRC being the most significant. China's trade with Africa was recorded at \$93 billion in 2008, making it the second largest partner after the U.S. In Nigeria alone, a recently signed oil cooperation agreement with China is reported to involve between \$32 billion to \$50 billion in trade and investment.

The report found that trade between Africa and China had increased by 1,000 percent during the period 2000-2008. Today China accounts for 11 percent of the continent's external trade, with the bulk of transactions taking place in the sectors of primary products, including fuel and minerals.

In contrast to the legacy of trade between Africa and the Western imperialist states, trade with China has been important in fostering economic and social development. UNCTAD economist Janvier Nkurunziza refutes allegations by West-

ern-based media sources that China's increasing role in Africa is not benefitting the continent.

Nkurunziza says, "The challenge is for Africa to find ways to harness and manage this relationship for better developmental outcomes." He did not view China's growing relationship with Africa as a "new form of colonialism," arguing that this emerging economic cooperation was based on the principles of "mutual respect, reciprocal benefits, respect for sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs" of the continent. (Engineering News, June 18)

Ongoing Western efforts to dominate Africa

Even though the various African states are moving to diversify their economic relations with countries and regions throughout the world, the imperialist states continue to undermine development efforts. In Nigeria various multinational firms and the Obama administration have escalated pressure on the government of Africa's most populous country, which is a large trading partner with the U.S. in the oil sector.

High-ranking U.S. officials have sought to influence the structure and pace of the Nigerian electoral process, claiming that political stability inside the West African state is vital to its financial and security interests. A Petroleum Industry Bill that has made its way through the parliamentary process is now stalled at the executive level due to the concerns expressed by multinational oil firms.

Royal Dutch Shell's representative Mutiu Sunmonu said in a June 17 Reuters interview that the firm was placing potential investments on hold pending the outcome of the final implementation of the PIB. "Just looking at deepwater alone, we have a portfolio of about \$40 billion worth of projects ... but we will not be able to make a move on these until we have a landing on the PIB. That is potential investment that we are not able to sign off on at this time."

Increased attention has been given to the role of multinational oil firms in Nigeria that have dominated that industry since 1956. In light of the oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico, it has been pointed out that there are frequent occurrences of a similar nature in Nigeria. Yet never is the same amount of publicity given to these environmental disasters as the one currently plaguing the Gulf States.

In the same article Sunmonu said, "The U.S. government's all-out fight to contain the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico is a marked contrast to the situation in the Niger Delta, leading local communities and campaigners to ask why Shell and other international oil firms in Nigeria are not paying compensation."

Sunmonu continued, "It is incorrect to draw a parallel. ... The law in Nigeria is very clear. We do not pay compensation for sabotage spills," attributing the pollution to theft and not technical malfunctions.

At the same time, in recent years the U.S. military involvement in Africa has increased, with the formation of the Africa Command and the 2009 war games that the Pentagon held in the Gulf of Guinea as well as in several West Africa states. The presence of a U.S. military base in the Horn of Africa nation Djibouti and the flotillas of warships off the coast in the Gulf of Aden demonstrates clearly that imperialism is still very much committed to maintaining its stranglehold on the continent. □

World Cup loss exposes France's racism

By G. Dunkel

Soccer's World Cup every four years is the world's most watched and followed sporting event. It consists of a first round, where the 32 teams selected are divided into eight groups and each plays the other members of the group. The best two teams from each group get to advance to the next round.

France's team didn't make it out of the first round, doing worse than South Africa's. Some of the team's leaders didn't sing France's national anthem "La Marseillaise" at the closing ceremonies.

The team included 13 men of color — from France's very large North and West African immigrant communities or the Caribbean — out of 22 players. After the team and its entourage flew back to France and landed at a small airport north of Paris, the team's union representative, Thierry Henry, a veteran of France's 1998 team that won the World Cup, was driven to a closed, one-hour meeting with French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Sarkozy called for a parliamentary inquiry on the failure of the French team after a meeting with Prime Minister François Fillon, Sports Minister Roselyne Bachelot and Rama Yade, the junior sports minister who was born in Senegal.

While Sarkozy and his ministers were restrained, members of his UMP (Union for a Popular Movement) party were venomous and racist. They called the team's mainly Black members "gang bosses" and "immature kids" with "chick peas for brains."

Fadela Amara, who was born to Algerian parents, is the secretary of state for urban policies. She is mainly concerned with the banlieus, France's impoverished suburbs where the immigrant communities are concentrated. As reaction to the team's loss intensified, she warned that it had become racially charged.

"There is a tendency to ethnicize what has happened," she told a closed meeting of the UMP. She went on to say, "Everyone condemns the lower-class neighborhoods. People doubt that those of

immigrant backgrounds are capable of respecting the nation."

Earlier this year, Sarkozy and his minister for immigration kicked off a campaign of "debates," which are the French equivalent of Town Hall meetings, on immigration and "national identity." One sticking point was the fact that the largest number of people practicing any religion in France are Muslim.

Amara criticized Sarkozy's handling of these meetings, warning that "all democrats and all republicans will be lost" in the "ethnically tinged" criticism that surfaced. As a minister in Sarkozy government, she really couldn't call this criticism what it was: racist.

"We're building a highway for the National Front (FN)," she said. The FN is a fascist party in France, founded by Jean-Marie Le Pen, who boasts of having served as a torturer in the French army that fought in Algeria. It has recently been growing in popularity, and is the UMP's main challenger from the right.

Source of quotes: *Le Point*, June 22.

Hope for low-wage workers everywhere

Strike victories in China rattle imperialist exploiters

By Deirdre Griswold

Class-conscious workers and Marxists around the world have looked at the rapid economic growth of People's China over the past two decades with both admiration and anxiety.

Whether one sees China as capitalist or as still fundamentally socialist, none can deny the astounding material progress made by this vast country, home to one-fifth of the world's people. Nor can it deny that much of China's industrial growth has come in tandem with investment by imperialist corporations that scour the globe in their search for low-wage, educated workers.

Recently, intense exploitation of workers in China by these very corporations seems to have sparked a series of suicides among employees of Taiwan-based iPhone maker Foxconn, arousing public indignation and debate over wages and working conditions.

The question for the movement has been, would Chinese workers remain passive in the face of the capitalist bosses' never-ending pressure to reduce them to nothing but wage slaves? Or would they organize and militantly demand their rights in a country that has inscribed both a central role for the working class and the goal of achieving socialism in its constitution?

Since May a highly significant sector of China's working class — mostly young migrants from the interior provinces who have traveled to the coast by the tens of millions, seeking work in both state construction and capitalist-owned plants there — has given the answer.

Honda workers touch off strike wave

What has turned into a strike wave with tremendous implications for the class struggle everywhere was touched off when workers at a Honda parts plant walked out May 17.

Eventually, almost the entire plant — 1,900 workers — turned off their machines and joined the strike. The lack of auto transmission parts from this plant in Foshan, Guangdong province, and strikes at other parts plants that soon followed, forced Honda to shut down four assembly plants.

The Foshan strike was settled at the beginning of June, when Honda agreed to raise all employees' wages by more than 30 percent, as well as give the workers reg-

ular cash bonuses based on attendance.

However, no sooner was this strike underway than workers at other companies — most of them owned at least in part by Japanese firms — also hit the bricks. Besides strikes at more Honda plants, workers at Nissan and Toyota also went out seeking higher wages.

Strikes have also been reported "at a Taiwan-funded sporting goods supplier in Jiangxi province and at Japanese sewing machine maker Brother Industries in Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province." (People's Daily Online, June 23)

Just two days after the Honda settlement, between 300 and 500 workers from a Merry Electronics factory — a Taiwanese audio components manufacturer also in Guangdong — staged a walkout and blocked roads for the better part of a day. The company immediately responded by announcing a 22 percent wage increase, while denying that the increase had any relation to the strike! (China Study Group, "Wildcat Strikes in China")

From walkout to sit-in

At a Honda lock plant, also in south-eastern China's Guangdong province, the workers went even further, going from a strike to a sit-in. They walked out on June 9 but then were threatened by Honda managers with being fired and replaced by new hires.

Five days later, many of the 1,400 workers "filed through the factory gates in their crisp white uniforms, giving the appearance that the strike they began last Wednesday was over. But workers said they showed up only because they feared they would be fired after the company posted notices saying it was looking for replacement workers — at far higher pay. Once inside, they started a go-slow action to press their demands for an increase in basic pay to 1,600 yuan a month from 900 yuan." (Wall Street Journal, June 13)

These militant actions appear to reflect two important developments: One, there is a labor shortage in China, giving the workers greater leverage over their bosses; and two, the government has given the workers some encouragement in their wage demands.

Both these conditions are unheard of in capitalist countries in this time of mass unemployment, givebacks and cutbacks.

Within days of the Honda settlement, the Chinese government announced that

in four coastal provinces where foreign-owned industry is concentrated — Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Guangdong and Shanghai — the minimum wage was raised between 10 percent to 20 percent. (People's Daily Online, June 8) This brought to 14 the number of provinces that have raised the minimum wage since January.

Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao made a point of publicly urging better treatment for migrant workers. He recognized that a new generation moving from villages to work in factories would not be satisfied with the hard conditions their parents faced.

The mass media in the U.S., which are afraid to reveal too openly their anti-worker bias, seemed to take a neutral tone toward these strikes. But those speaking to investors and corporate executives could not conceal their dismay over both the workers' militancy and the role of the Chinese government.

"Executives say the Chinese central government's relatively tolerant attitude toward strikes since a series of disputes began surfacing last month may be a factor in encouraging workers to press their issues. In the recent southern China labor disputes, authorities have generally refrained from sending in police to break up strikes, a tactic often used when disputes become high-profile." (WSJ, "Toyota's China Assembly Lines Vulnerable to Labor Unrest," June 18)

This "tolerant attitude" of the government has alarmed the imperialists. And it didn't start with these strikes in the foreign-owned businesses.

Last July, when officials at the state-owned Tonghua Iron & Steel Group in Jilin province called a mass meeting to announce to thousands of workers that the plant was being privatized and most would lose their jobs, all hell broke loose. The workers actually seized a manager from the group that was to take over the plant and beat him to death. The government's response was not to come down on the workers; it cancelled the privatization. (WSJ, July 27)

Workers in state-owned industries have job security and much better conditions and benefits than those in the private sector. They've made it clear that they won't give that up.

Threats to go elsewhere

What are the foreign corporate executives saying to the Chinese government

China's spectacular growth has come in tandem with foreign imperialist firms setting up plants there to exploit low-wage, educated workers. The question has been, would the workers remain passive? Young migrant workers from the interior have now given the answer. And the imperialists are not happy with the Chinese government's attitude towards strikes, sit-ins and wage increases.

about the recent strikes? Aren't they threatening to pull out their investments if the workers keep up the pressure and the government doesn't crack down on them? Aren't they saying: "We can go to India or Indonesia, you know."

In fact, that's exactly what they are saying, through the press. The Wall Street Journal, which unapologetically speaks for U.S. finance capital, quoted an executive from the Japanese company Advanced Research:

"Mr. Endo estimates that annual compensation per worker in China could total as much as 400,000 yen to 500,000 yen, given the recent pay increases. This would be roughly double the average amount paid to a factory worker in India or 33 percent higher than that in Thailand, he said.

"Honda's China labor headache comes as the company is struggling to keep up with growing demand in the country, which became the world's biggest auto market last year." ("Honda's Long-Haul Dilemma in China," June 24)

Of course, U.S. auto companies may take some consolation from the fact that it is their Japanese rivals who are being affected by the current strike wave. But the billionaire class in the U.S. cannot forget that just a few years ago the All-China Federation of Trade Unions got Wal-Mart to sign a contract with its workers — something the huge retailer still has not agreed to inside the U.S.

Right now the ACFTU is behind an organizing drive at Yum Brands, the U.S. owner of KFC and Pizza Hut fast-food chains. With more than 3,500 KFCs, Pizza Huts and other outlets there, Yum amassed 48 percent of its first-quarter global operating profit from its China operations. (WSJ, "Firms Boost Pay for Chinese," June 13)

Clearly, not just Japanese but U.S. corporations are worried — not only about the encouragement these strikes are giving to workers in China but about their impact on low-paid workers all over the world, including in the U.S. For the last three decades there has been an unrelenting assault on U.S. workers' wages and benefits that has greatly escalated with the current capitalist economic crisis.

Workers everywhere have a big stake in this struggle.

Next: *Role of China's unions.* Email dgriswold@workers.org.

From 'Low wage capitalism': Pittston

Continued from page 7

imposed fines on the union for mass picketing, 46,000 workers went out on a wildcat in 11 states. Workers and supporters occupied one mine for four days. It was dubbed Operation Flintstone after the Flint sit-down strike of 1937. The Daughters of Mother Jones, made up of miners' wives and daughters, women miners, and community supporters, occupied Pittston's regional headquarters in Lebanon, Va.

The miners had to face police and federal marshals and were subjected to mass arrest, injunctions and \$63 million in fines. At a critical point in the strike, the Industrial Council of New Jersey voted to ask the AFL-CIO for a one-day union stoppage in support of the Pittston workers. But the AFL-CIO did the opposite,

advising state federations to stick to food banks and newspaper articles and remain within the contractual frameworks that forbid strikes.

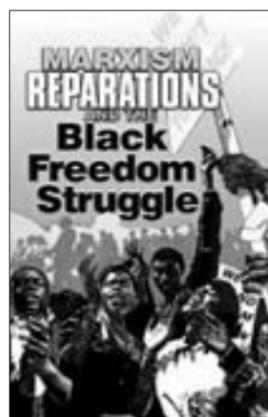
In the end the union fought off most of the concessions on pensions and retirees' health. It was a victory for the workers, but one in which they had to compromise. The AFL-CIO leadership refused to spread the strike and rally the workers as a whole to support this massive show of worker militancy and self-organization. Once the strike was settled in January of 1990, after intervention by the George H.W. Bush administration, there was no attempt to maintain the momentum of the struggle against concessions.

Next: *Decatur "War Zone," Culinary Workers, Detroit Newspaper Strike.*

* Jeremy Brecher, "Resisting Concessions," 1998, www.zmag.org/zmag/viewArticle/12731.

Continued from page 7

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle



COVER ILLUSTRATION BY SAHU BARRON

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Monica Moorehead.

Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination Larry Holmes

Black Labor from Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery Sam Marcy

Black Youth: Repression & Resistance Leilani Dowell

The Struggle for Socialism Is Key Monica Moorehead

Black & Brown Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights and Global Justice! Saladin Muhammad

Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping and Segregation Consuela Lee

Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior Mumia Abu-Jamal

Are Conditions Ripe Again Today? 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion John Parker

Racism and Poverty in the Delta Larry Hales

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions Pat Chin

Available at Leftbooks.com

Beyond the 2-1 victory

It wasn't England that eliminated the U.S. team from the quarter-finals on June 27 during the 2010 World Cup Soccer games in South Africa ... or Germany or France or Spain or any other European team. It was the West African country of Ghana that vanquished the team representing the world's most powerful imperialist country.

The Ghanaians won this historic match 2-1 in overtime, sending the U.S. home depressed and humbled. Asamoah Gyan scored the tie-breaking goal. Ghana is scheduled to play Uruguay in the semifinals of the World Cup, which is played every four years.

Many people, especially non-soccer fans, would react to this U.S. defeat with a "who cares" shrug of indifference. But for tens of millions of soccer (the original football) fans worldwide, especially throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, and for working and oppressed peoples living in the richest capitalist countries, what the Black Stars of Ghana achieved was a big deal. This win goes way beyond the extraordinary talent and tenacity of Ghana's team. This win has political and historical significance.

Ghana is approximately the size of Oregon. Its population is close to 24 million compared to the U.S. population of more than 300 million. Ghana was colonized by a number of European powers in the aftermath of the devastating slave trade. Ghana won nominal independence in 1957 from Britain, resulting in the anti-imperialist leader, Kwame Nkrumah, becoming Ghana's first prime minister. A right-wing military coup which involved the intervention of the CIA overthrew the Nkrumah government in 1966.

Today, Ghana's economy is severely underdeveloped due to the austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Ghana ranks 146 out of 170 countries with a gross national income of \$262 per capita, while the U.S. ranks fifth with over \$33,000 per person for 2010. (nationmaster.com)

The very modest funding and the facilities that the Black Stars have to train in, which can't remotely be compared to the huge advantages of the U.S. soccer team, help to put this victory into political and historical perspective.

The people of Africa, including those in Ghana, are very much aware of how colonialism and neocolonialism along with U.S. military intervention continue to undermine the continent's economic development.

In his June 26 column, "Putting Tears Aside: Celebrating Ghana's Victory," sports columnist Dave Zirin states, "It's no secret that there is resentment over the way U.S. multinationals like Coca Cola and McDonald's have taken over the country, pushing street vendors to the margins of the cities. It's no secret that the record television rights go entirely to FIFA [Federation Internationale de Football Association], while the costs of stadiums and infrastructure are on South Africa's bill. Off the field, the game is rigged and the West will win no matter the final score. On the field, revenge is sweet."

This point was confirmed on allAfrica.com: "There were celebrations across the continent from Lagos to Nairobi and from Accra to Cairo as the Black Stars sent the USA packing." (June 27) □

MUNDO OBRERO

EN SOLIDARIDAD CON GAZA

Estibadores rehúsan cruzar línea de piquete, no desembarcan buque israelí

Continúa de página 12

levante el bloqueo de Gaza. Thomas calificó la línea de piquete de hoy como "histórica" y "evocativa de la acción de 1977 en el día de Pascuas" cuando los estibadores encabezaron una acción de un día para protestar la masacre de sud africanos/as en Soweto durante el apartheid. Thomas dijo que estibadores alrededor del mundo, en Sud África, Noruega y Suecia, han declarado que rehusarán desembarcar carga israelí.

En una breve entrevista con esta periodista, Thomas habló sobre el esfuerzo organizativo en 1984 por miembros progresistas del ILWU que llevaron a cabo una huelga y boicot de 11 días para protestar el apartheid en Sud África. "Nuestras acciones ayudaron a elevar el nivel

de resistencia al apartheid en este país, especialmente entre los/as trabajadores/as," dijo Thomas. "Esta protesta de hoy también ayudará a elevar la conciencia entre los estibadores sobre la necesidad de acabar con el bloqueo israelí de Gaza," añadió Thomas.

La manifestación fue auspiciada por una amplia coalición de organizaciones progresistas, incluyendo al Concilio de Miembros/as Sindicales Árabes-Americanos/as, Al-Awda, la Coalición Palestina por el Derecho a Regresar, ANSWER, la Red de la Juventud Palestina, el Centro de Acción Internacional, el Comité de Solidaridad con los/as Trabajadores/as del Transporte, y muchas otras organizaciones sindicales y comunitarias del Área de la Bahía. □

Time to end U.S.-NATO occupation of Afghanistan

McChrystal fired after exposing rifts in U.S. war policy

By John Catalinotto

A look at Google News shows that tens of thousands of articles have reported or commented on President Barack Obama's firing of Gen. Stanley McChrystal and his replacement by Gen. David Petraeus. This exposure of disarray and demoralization within U.S. imperialism's military and civilian leadership provides a welcome opportunity to accelerate efforts to force Washington and its allies to withdraw and end the illegal U.S.-NATO war and occupation of Afghanistan.

It is time to increase writing, speaking and acting against this unjust, colonial occupation.

There is little doubt that the surge of publicity about the war in Afghanistan has awakened more interest in it. The BP oil spill and the failure of the capitalist economy to generate jobs are still on the front burner, but for a few days they had competition in the media.

Here's what happened. McChrystal, his press secretary and his adjutants let freelance reporter and war critic Michael Hastings join their inner circle for a dinner in Paris as they were waiting out the Iceland volcano's ash to fly out during the spring.

During that dinner the adjutants made some snide remarks insulting U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry — himself a former three-star general — Vice President Joe Biden and Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Richard Holbrooke. They called National Security Adviser and former four-star Gen. James Jones "a clown." McChrystal also said Obama seemed uncomfortable at a meeting they had in the fall.

McChrystal's team also let loose with a few comments that indicated the "counterinsurgency" strategy that both McChrystal and Petraeus champion is not going well for the occupation. McChrystal himself called the re-occupation of the Marja region a "bleeding ulcer." That was the region whose retaking was supposed to turn the tide for the war against the Taliban.

A senior adviser to McChrystal added, "If Americans [sic] pulled back and started paying attention to this war, it would become even less popular."

Though Hastings' article opened with some of the remarks that made it "go viral" on the Internet, it was otherwise a carefully written piece examining the difficulties of the U.S. position in Afghanistan — without questioning Washington's motives for the occupation or for the Pentagon's aggressive role worldwide.

Hastings concludes, "Whatever the nature of the new plan [for Kandahar], the delay underscores the fundamental flaws of counterinsurgency. After nine years of war, the Taliban simply remains too strongly entrenched for the U.S. military to openly attack. The very people that COIN seeks to win over — the Afghan people — do not want us there."

Expanding U.S. interests

Some 36 hours after the article appeared, Obama accepted McChrystal's resignation. By offering no excuse or denial, McChrystal appeared almost relieved to be relieved of his command.

Given the infighting among U.S. officials directing the war; the near collapse of the announced offensive in Kandahar; the announcement by the Netherlands and Poland that their troop withdrawals would proceed; growing

war opposition in Germany and Britain; increased deaths among U.S.-NATO forces; and the instability of the puppet President Hamid Karzai, one can see why the general might have wanted to quit.

Much of the discussion in the corporate media was on civilian-military conflicts, on the problems with the Afghan occupation and on the differing strategies to obtain a U.S. victory. None come close to exposing the central truth that U.S. intervention in Afghanistan is based not on "ending terror" but on expanding U.S. imperialism's geopolitical interests.

Washington first supported groups like al-Qaida in the 1980s against the Soviet troops invited in by a progressive Afghan government. Later it allowed the Pakistan military regime to place the Taliban in power. The U.S. then invaded Afghanistan in 2001 using an alleged "war on terror" as the pretext.

Now the war has gone on longer than the war against Vietnam, with more than 1,000 U.S. troops dead and more coming. The Taliban has gone from being a reactionary and unpopular government to being the leading force in a resistance war of the Afghan people.

Both civilian and military officials here are committed to pursuing U.S. imperialist interests. In front of the Rolling Stones writer, McChrystal and his gang attacked Eikenberry and Jones even though the two are former top generals. They attacked Biden, a civilian official, who is the author of the strategy of dividing Iraq with ethnic and religious-based militias, a strategy that has brought untold hardships upon millions of ordinary Iraqis.

They attacked Holbrooke, the "Af-Pak czar," a State Department official who authored NATO's war of aggression that tore Yugoslavia apart.

In Iraq, McChrystal carried out secret operations for five years targeting groups and individual Iraqis. He is the author of the counterinsurgency plan for Afghanistan. This plan includes an attempt to avoid civilian deaths — mainly because civilian deaths tend to increase support for the resistance forces. McChrystal is also supposed to be closest to Afghan President Karzai.

Petraeus, McChrystal's replacement, also represents the Pentagon. According to all reports he too is committed to this counterinsurgency plan and the continuation of U.S. policy in Afghanistan.

Exposing high cost of war

Most if not all of these officials, civilian and military, would be candidates for charges of war crimes in a world where U.S. military and economic power no longer decided right and wrong.

Like any other U.S. presidency, the current administration is captive of the giant U.S. military machine in running foreign policy, just as it is captive of Wall Street and the big banks regarding economic policy and of the big oil firms regarding the environment. One general's firing can't change that balance.

But in a time of unprecedented budget cuts of social services and extended unemployment benefits, it is easier for the population, especially the workers and oppressed and youth, to see that a costly war in Afghanistan is both a drain and a crime. That the war's leadership is unraveling opens the door to a potential mass struggle that can make a difference in ending the war in Afghanistan. □

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Interview with Gerardo Torres

Honduran people are building resistance to coup regime

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

As this article is being written, the people of Honduras are again in the streets. This time they are celebrating the consolidation of the resistance to the military coup of June 28, 2009 — a coup that removed the democratically elected government of Manuel Zelaya Rosales from office.

It has been a year of repression from both the regime of coup leader Roberto Micheletti and then the illegally elected Porfirio “Pepe” Lobo administration. Both have had the backing of the U.S. government that, through U.S. Ambassador Hugo Llorens and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, has tried relentlessly to gather international support for this crime.

What is the situation in Honduras one year after the infamous coup d’état? During the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit, Workers World had the opportunity to interview Gerardo Torres, in charge of International Relations of the National Popular Front of Resistance to the Military Coup in Honduras (FNRP).

WW: What has happened since the coup?

GT: Many people have been killed, jailed, beaten. We are in a military regime. On the other hand we have the biggest political movement in the history of our country. We have overcome difficulties and we are still in the streets.

The big problem for the golpistas [coup leaders] is that there has been an ideological change in the people’s way of thinking. In the first days of the coup we were mainly asking for Zelaya to come back. Then we were asking for a national constitutional assembly. But now the people are demanding the refoundation of Honduras. That is the golpistas’ problem. You can have the biggest army but, when the will of a whole country is against you, it is impossible to stop things. That’s what’s happening right now in Honduras.

The Resistance is a national movement with assemblies all around the country,

with political formations, with the creation of alternative media and with the clarity that what we want is not a dialogue with the government, we don’t want little changes, we want the refoundation of the country. We are building the country from bases of Popular Power and everybody is putting in something for the new Honduras that they envision. For example, people who work in the environmental movement say we have to talk about the environment, the campesinos [farm workers] say we have to talk about the rights of campesinos, the sexual diversity movement says we are going to have respect, we are going to live like we are all equal, we have to respect everything. So the golpistas are backed to the wall and every day the pressure is getting bigger. That’s why the repression is also getting bigger. Pepe Lobo has killed more people than Micheletti killed. The problem is that during the first days we were in the top headlines around the world and now nothing is said about Honduras. So our effort in the FNRP is to let the people outside know. We are doing great work inside, but it is necessary for the people outside to know. That is why it is so important to be here.

WW: Tell me about the events planned for June 28.

GT: The commemoration of the coup starts today [June 24] with the presentation of a book, “Tierra del nunca más”

[“Land of Nevermore”], coming out of an art exhibition a couple of months ago. Artists from Honduras and other parts got together and showed the things they had captured on the streets. There will be other activities. We have an important march on Sunday, June 27, the first the barrios will do by themselves — a candlelight vigil and march at 8 p.m. All the barrios will start marching and will meet in front of the National Congress in downtown Tegucigalpa. On Monday, the 28th, we start at 7 a.m. We’ll have the “statements of sovereignty” — a document we wrote that people have to read and sign. It says that the people themselves are initiating a new Constitution for Honduras. We are not asking for Pepe Lobo or the National Congress to make a new Constitution. Then we will march to a very popular plaza in Tegucigalpa where we will inaugurate the True Commission. Not the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was prepared by the same people who were in the coup. Our True Commission is the real thing and is very important.

This will start a new chapter in our struggle. We have been a whole year in the streets and now we are going after those who were behind the coup and are asking and demanding justice. We are demanding that the people who planned and made this crime against democracy and against the people of Honduras pay

for what they did.

And finally, from 3 p.m. on there will be a concert of all the different groups that call themselves Resistance. We have an enormous variety of groups, from heavy metal and rock bands to rancheras singing about the Resistance. People from all over Honduras will take part and we will celebrate the creation of the Resistance. We are not going to talk about the coup, we are going to talk about what has happened in the country after that and about what we are going to do. This is the first year of the refoundation of Honduras, so that is what we are going to celebrate next Monday.

WW: Can you explain the difference between the call for a constitutional assembly and the refoundation of the country?

GT: The new Constitution is a tool for the refoundation of the country, the first step. We have to take the power from that small group that has controlled Honduras for the last 100 years and the Constitution is the first step. The refoundation is a more long-term process in which we have to change ourselves and the country. That is the main goal. Maybe even if my generation, which is the youngest in the leadership of the FNRP, doesn’t get to see it, we all try to push it to be as soon as possible. This is not a six months plan; it is a lifetime project. That is why the golpistas are in trouble. □

Honduras coup protested one year later

June 28 marked the first year since the military coup in Honduras — the worst political, social and economic disaster in Honduran history. On that day in 2009, more than 200 military officers broke into the residence of constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, beat him, tied him down, put him still in his pajamas on a plane, and dropped him off in Costa Rica.

President Zelaya and his family remain in exile and wish to go back to Honduras. The National Resistance Popular Front was born as a reaction to and condemnation of the rupture of constitutional and democratic order and

has since become the most important political movement in Honduras’ modern history. This June 28 a march in New York City from Times Square to the Honduran Embassy at the United Nations protested the tragic events of 2009. The march was organized by Resistencia Honduras NY/NJ and supported by the International Action Center, May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, and Troops Out Now Coalition. On June 26, Gerardo Torres, a coordinator of the NRP in Canada and the U.S., spoke at a forum on the current crisis in Honduras at the IAC office in Manhattan.

— Special to Workers World



WW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTON

At Social Forum

Venezuelan union leader brings message of solidarity

By Cheryl LaBash
Detroit

On June 25 Tony León, Secretary-General of Venezuela’s National Workers Union of the Ministry of People’s Power for Energy and Petroleum, met with U.S. workers and union leaders during the U.S. Social Forum in Detroit.

The two-hour meeting explored deepening collaboration, exchange and solidarity efforts. Current and retired U.S. autoworkers, letter carriers, and public service workers, including union leaders from the United Electrical workers, participated in the round-table discussion along with Mexicans, Colombians and others from Latin America.

The June 24 reflection by Fidel Castro, “How I wish I was wrong,” was read in English and Spanish and warned that while the world was watching the World Cup soccer match, U.S. and Israeli warships were moving toward Iran to impose a naval inspection zone for ships entering and leaving Iranian ports. This aggression threatens a wider imperialist war there and also against the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea where the sinking of a South Korean military vessel was used to

inflame war fever against the DPRK.

Fidel’s message reinforced the urgent need for uniting working class forces in unions and social movements internationally to confront the intractable global capitalist crisis that, without intervention by working and oppressed people, drives relentlessly to war.

U.S. military aggressive moves are aimed at Latin America, too. The U.S. Fourth Fleet and expanded U.S. bases in Colombia target Venezuela and Cuba. León characterized that as a grab for natural resources, since the U.S. has only a 10-year supply of remaining oil.

León extended an open invitation to the Third Union Conference of Nuestra America (Our America) scheduled for July 22-24 in Caracas. Ecuadoran and Brazilian national central unions hosted the previous meetings, first in Quito and next in Sao Paolo, to develop a common understanding of the global economic crisis and agenda for united struggle for workers and their organizations.

The benefits of unity and collaboration for improving the lives and futures of the workers, Indigenous and socially excluded people are evident in Venezuela. The ad-

vances achieved there in the past 10 years, particularly in education and health care through the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America and the Peoples Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP), are exemplary.

U.S. slander that Venezuela gives “free” oil to Cuba under the ALBA trade agreements was debunked by León. Venezuelan oil is exchanged at market rate, but it is not traded in U.S. dollars. This form of exchange using the sucre international trade currency is outside the imperialist-dominated capitalist economy.

Not only Cuba and Venezuela have benefited, but Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras prior to the 2009 coup, Haiti through Petro-Caribe, and more. Through this collaborative effort, illiteracy has been abolished in Venezuela and Bolivia using Cuba’s ‘Yo si puedo’ (Yes I can) program, and the international mobilization is determined to help all ALBA countries develop their most basic important resource — the people.

What we aspire to from this point forward, summarized León, as he opened the floor for questions and discussion, is to have meetings to see how we can work together with ALBA, including workers from

the United States.

In response to a question about unions hearing the voice of their members, León said that a political view of union work was necessary. Workers cannot continue losing rights; organizing has to focus on more than shop issues.

A San Francisco labor council delegate described how a massive labor-community solidarity action in the Port of Oakland stopped the unloading of an Israeli ship for 24 hours on June 20 in solidarity with the Palestinians under siege in Gaza as well as the victims of the Israeli pirate attack on the Mavi Marmara and the Freedom Flotilla.

León pointed out that solidarity is urgently needed with the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas — the electrical workers in Mexico who provided electricity and were driven from their jobs by the military. Demonstrations are needed at Mexican consulates demanding that President Felipe Calderon respect the right of labor unions to organize and restore jobs to SME members.

To join a U.S. delegation to Venezuela for the Nuestra America III, e-mail labor-exchange@aol.com. □

Después de 58 días de huelga y toma Estudiantes ganan en la Universidad de Puerto Rico

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

Cantando jubilosamente “¡Victoria, victoria, victoria para la historia!” y “Once recintos, una UPR!”, los/as estudiantes de la Universidad de Puerto Rico en el día 58 de su huelga, salieron de una sesión final de negociación con la Junta de Síndicos luego de haber logrado un acuerdo. Después sería ratificado en una asamblea de todos/as los/as estudiantes en conjunto.

¿Qué se logró?

La Junta aceptó las cuatro demandas principales de los/as estudiantes: no habrá Certificación 98, que habría eliminado las exenciones de matrícula para estudiantes que también reciben la beca federal Pell de EEUU por excelencia académica; no se privatizarán los recintos bajo la ley neoliberal de Alianzas Público-Privadas del gobernador Luis Fortuño, un intento por parte del actual gobierno pro estadista de privatizar el patrimonio de Puerto Rico; no habrá cargos contra los/as estudiantes, profesores/as y trabajadores/as que, en ejercicio de su libertad de expresión y de reunión, participaron en numerosas manifestaciones durante la huelga; y no se impondrá una cuota especial en agosto que habría duplicado la matrícula.

La administración de la UPR, respaldada por Fortuño, sigue decidida a aumentar la matrícula. La declaración escrita de la Junta de Síndicos dice que “la Junta de Síndicos considera necesario el establecimiento de una cuota a partir de enero de 2011”.

Pero los/as estudiantes están igualmente decididos/as a defender la educación pública. Incluyeron una declaración diciendo que “los acuerdos antes mencionados no deben entenderse como una aceptación” de la cuota por los/as estudiantes. Ellos/as han declarado públicamente que seguirán organizando, defendiendo la educación pública en contra de cualquier intento por aumentar la matrícula en el mes de enero.

Esto era necesario para romper el es-

tancamiento que había impedido la conclusión de la huelga. Permitió reabrir la universidad y que los/as estudiantes terminen el semestre.

¿Cuáles fueron los obstáculos?

Es interesante observar que la mayoría de las demandas de los/as estudiantes no han cambiado desde que comenzó la huelga. Tanto el presidente de la UPR José de la Torre y la presidenta de la Junta de Síndicos, Ygrí Rivera habían adoptado una posición totalmente intransigente en contra de los/as estudiantes, impidiendo así una negociación efectiva. Tomó la imposición de un mediador por el Tribunal Superior para obligar a la JS a negociar. El mediador, Pedro López Oliver, un ex juez del Tribunal de Apelaciones, cuyo hijo está en la Escuela de Derecho de la UPR, fue aceptado por los estudiantes y la JS. Esto ayudó a llevar a toda la Junta de Síndicos a la mesa, una de las demandas de los/as estudiantes, quienes acusaban a Rivera de hablar en nombre de toda la Junta, mientras que ella les mantenía en la oscuridad.

Resultó que ese era el caso. Una vez que todo el colectivo de síndicos estuvo involucrado en las negociaciones, la mayoría se opuso a Rivera y votó por aceptar las demandas de los/as estudiantes.

Ygrí Rivera ha sido una pieza clave que representa la administración derechista de la isla. Ella es muy conocida por su colaboración con los gobiernos más represivos. En la década de 1970, fue asesora especial del entonces gobernador Carlos Romero Barceló en el área de “seguridad pública”. Eran los años en que un agente encubierto del FBI engañó y asesinó a dos jóvenes independentistas inocentes en lo que se conoció como el Caso del Cerro Maravilla. Ella ahora continúa ese papel anti pueblo, anti progresista y en contra de la independencia a través de su trabajo como presidenta de la JS.

Esto pone de relieve el papel crucial de la administración colonial en esta huelga. Fortuño mismo había declarado que la cuota era necesaria. Los/as estudiantes

sin embargo, siempre han declarado que el déficit de la UPR no surgió únicamente de la fallida administración fiscal pasada y presente. Ellos/as han resaltado la falta de recaudación de millones de dólares adeudados a la UPR por los diferentes organismos gubernamentales y no gubernamentales y sobre todo, el recorte de los fondos bajo la Ley 7 de Fortuño.

Esta ley, impuesta para hacer frente a la crisis económica de Puerto Rico, en efecto recortó la financiación del 9,6 por ciento que por ley se provee a la UPR de todos los recaudos del gobierno. Fortuño, dicen los/as estudiantes, quería declarar la UPR insolvente, facilitando así la privatización bajo el plan neoliberal de Wall Street para la isla. La ley respalda un plan para pagar a Wall Street una oscura cifra de \$700 millones que supuestamente le debe la UPR en bonos emitidos para la construcción de edificios costosos y otros gastos no revelados.

Una de las reivindicaciones iniciales de los/as estudiantes era que la administración abra los libros financieros. Hasta la fecha, la administración se ha negado.

La Asamblea Nacional, la ‘ruta para la historia’

El acuerdo fue discutido en una Asamblea Nacional el 21 de junio en un estadio en la ciudad de Ponce. Autobuses y caravanas de autos convergieron en lo que los/as estudiantes han llamado la ‘ruta para la historia’. Estudiantes de los 11 recintos estuvieron presentes para ratificar el acuerdo y discutir las acciones futuras y las perspectivas para el próximo año académico.

Shirley Rosado, presidenta del Consejo de Estudiantes del Recinto de Ponce, estaba ocupada preparando la asamblea. Ella le dijo a WW/MO: “Estamos coordinando la Asamblea Nacional que es clave para terminar con la huelga que hemos tenido durante 58 días. Tenemos responsabilidades que cumplir para terminar el semestre. Sin embargo, los y las estudiantes han demostrado y han expresado a la administración la preocupación que tenemos

y que hemos estado y seguiremos estando vigilantes sobre todo lo que sucede en la UPR y estaremos en alerta para la defensa de la educación superior pública”.

Las asambleas han sido una parte esencial de la huelga; las voces de todos/as los/as estudiantes son escuchadas y tomadas en consideración por el Comité Negociador Nacional. Por eso ahora hay un esfuerzo de los miembros derechistas de la Legislatura miembros del gobernante pro estadista Partido Nuevo Progresista, para destruir esa capacidad. Ellos están proponiendo un proyecto de ley que daría por concluida las reuniones públicas y remplazarlas con un sistema de consultas en secreto, por correo electrónico, a fin de evitar la asamblea de los/as estudiantes.

Historia de lucha en la UPR

No tendrán un camino fácil, como se ha demostrado por los/as estudiantes.

El cuerpo estudiantil de la UPR tiene una rica historia de conciencia de clase y lucha anti-colonial. Muchas huelgas y movilizaciones famosas se han celebrado allí.

Papo Coss, un veterano de la UPR en los años setenta, recuerda la lucha de 1973. En un correo electrónico distribuido a través del Internet escribe, “La Huelga Nacional del 15 de Octubre de 1973, del movimiento estudiantil universitario también fue victoriosa. Duro treinta días porque el tercero por la noche, la Fuerza de Choque de la Policía invadió y nos expulsó del Recinto de Río Piedras. Entonces tomamos el Edificio de la Residencia de Varones durante un mes, donde se celebraron decenas de actividades educativas, foros, charlas, artísticas, deportivas, etc. Se paralizaron todos los recintos públicos y algunos privados en solidaridad, como la Universidad Interamericana y la Católica”.

Una cosa es segura: en Puerto Rico, bajo las condiciones críticas actuales, la lucha continuará.

La autora visitó el Recinto de Río Piedras a finales de mayo. Puede comunicarse a través de bjceci@workers.org.

EN SOLIDARIDAD CON GAZA

Estibadores rehúsan cruzar línea de piquete, no desembarcan buque israelí

Por Judy Greenspan
Oakland, California

Cuando un buque de carga israelí arribó al atracadero núm. 58 en el Puerto de Oakland en la noche del 20 de junio, no habían estibadores presentes para descargarlo. Los trabajadores del puerto rehusaron cruzar la línea de piquete de cientos de activistas sindicales y comunitarios/as que protestaban el bloqueo israelí de Gaza y su ataque violento contra la Flotilla de Libertad para Gaza.

El día había comenzado a las cinco de la

mañana en la estación de trenes de BART, en el oeste de Oakland. Miembros/as del Comité Sindical/Comunitario en Solidaridad con el Pueblo Palestino se habían reunido antes de la madrugada para marchar al atracadero núm. 58, donde un buque israelí de la empresa naviera Zim iba a llegar. Ya para las cinco y media de la mañana una militante línea de piquete se había organizado con cientos de personas que bloquearon las cuatro entradas al atracadero del Puerto de Oakland.

Se podían oír las consignas “Libertad, libertad para Palestina, no crucen nues-

tra línea de piquete” por toda la zona del puerto. Los camioneros que estaban haciendo entregas temprano en la mañana al atracadero núm. 58 tocaban las bocinas y rehusaban cruzar la línea de piquete. A las 7 am el primer turno de estibadores apareció y uno por uno, regresó a su casa, respetando la fuerte protesta.

La línea de piquete continuó hasta por la tarde y tuvo éxito al hacer que el segundo turno de estibadores también respetara la línea de piquete y regresara a su casa.

Miembros/as del Sindicato Internacio-

nal de Estibadores (ILWU por las siglas en inglés), Local 10, estuvieron todo el día en la línea de piquete, hablando con los/as manifestantes y mostrando su apoyo por la acción. Clarence Thomas, un líder del ILWU, agradeció al Comité Sindical/Comunitario y a los Concilios Sindicales de San Francisco y del Condado Alameda por su apoyo a la acción.

Los dos consejos sindicales recientemente pasaron resoluciones criticando el ataque de Israel contra la Flotilla de Libertad de Gaza y demandaron que Israel

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