

WORKERS WORLD

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Oct. 7 national day of protest

Activists defend public education

By Ben Carroll
Raleigh, N.C.

Nearly 80 demonstrations in 25 states were organized on Oct. 7, the second National Day of Action to Defend Education, as thousands of students and workers took to the streets to fight back against the attacks on education being leveled across the country in the form of devastating budget cuts, tuition hikes and the growing threat of privatization.

As the economic crisis drags into its fourth year with no end in sight, public services like education are once again in the crosshairs to be drastically cut, with many states facing the worst budget shortfalls yet seen as federal stimulus money dries up. The burden of the crisis is forced onto students and workers, yet the federal government continues to pour billions upon billions into bank bailouts and the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

With Oct. 7 also marking the ninth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, many demonstrations drew the connections between funding for wars and corporate bailouts versus funding for education, jobs, and other public services and social needs. The Oct. 7 protests were significant as an indication of the growing will to fight back against the effects of this crisis and also for the unity that was built between education struggles against cutbacks, privatization and the rise of charter schools, and with the struggle being led by immigrant youth to pass the DREAM Act.

The following are reports from some of these actions that took place across the country.

In **New York**, demonstrations on campuses across the city throughout the day convened for a central rally and march in Harlem later that afternoon. A march of several hundred drew students from universities and high schools, teachers, organizations fighting against gentrification, a doctors group from Harlem Hospital, a Harlem group against police brutality and community members from nearly every borough. Dwight Peters, the president of the Bronx Community College Student Government Association, announced from the stage that students at his school conducted a boycott of classes and walked out of class to protest the cuts to education. As the march swelled through the streets of Harlem, chants of "Education is a right — Fight, fight, fight!" and "Schools, not jails!" filled the air. Many who spoke at the demonstration drew the connections between the billions being given to the Pentagon to wage wars abroad and the lack of funding for education, health care, jobs and other human needs here at home.

In **Detroit**, a diverse range of labor-community-student supporters rallied against education cuts at Wayne State University. Chanting, "Bail out the students, not the banks!" in the center of campus, the protesters held a speak-out, passed out fliers and held aloft placards with slogans such as "Cancel student debt," "Solidarity with LGBTQ students," "Money for education, not war," and "You can't cut solidarity." Representatives of organizations at the rally included all American Federation of Teacher locals

at Wayne State; the Union of Part-Time Faculty and the Graduate Employee Organizing Committee, which represent teaching assistants; the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice; the Moratorium NOW! Coalition; Workers World Party; the Green Party; the Socialist Party; By Any Means Necessary; and the National Lawyers Guild-Wayne State Chapter. Later in the day, BAMN and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees held a rally at Cass Technical High School in Detroit and marched to the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center.

In **Raleigh, N.C.**, more than 100 young people and community members came

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Harlem, New York

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Detroit

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Buffalo, New York

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Latest attack on women: Bill seeks to codify Hyde Amendment, end private insurance coverage

By Sue Davis

Passage of stringent anti-woman restrictions on abortion funding in the new health care system isn't enough to satisfy Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ). Chair of the so-called Pro-Life Caucus for 28 years, Smith introduced HR 5939, the "No Taxpayer Funding for Abortion Act," on July 29. As of Oct. 10 there were 183 cosponsors.

Smith's law seeks to change the Hyde Amendment — which has denied more than 1 million poor women Medicaid funding for abortion since 1976 — into a permanent law. In 2008 one in eight or 7.5 million reproductive-age women, who are disproportionately women of color, qualified for Medicaid health coverage.

If that isn't bad enough, HR 5939 includes such stringent tax penalties on private insurance providers that they would be forced not to offer any coverage for abortion services. That means the vast majority of women of childbearing age — approximately 62 million women in the U.S. between the ages of 15 and 44 — would have to pay out of pocket to have an abortion. The current average cost of a first-trimester abortion is \$413; later abortions cost four or five times that.

Designed to severely restrict access to abortion, the sinister, blatantly discriminatory law poses the most serious threat to U.S. women's reproductive rights since the Supreme Court declared abortion a constitutional right in 1973. If passed, HR 5939 would function like an unofficial tax on women of childbearing age. This would impose a heartless burden on women in this jobless recovery, in which women and people of color comprise the majority of those laid off.

Having to pay the full cost of abortion, Smith prays, would mean that many more women — who currently earn only 77 cents for every dollar that men earn, with women of color earning even less, would share the misery and desperation that women on Medicaid have been experiencing for the past 34 years.

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Mumia Abu-Jamal focus of anti-death penalty protest

By Monica Moorehead
Philadelphia

The World Day Against the Death Penalty was commemorated on Oct. 10 with a major emphasis on the United States, where more executions take place than any other industrialized country. Since the death penalty was reinstated by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1976, 1,229 executions have taken place, with 41 in 2010 alone and counting. (Death Penalty Information Center, Oct. 6)

In Philadelphia a march and all-day forum took place against the death penalty, organized by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC). Philadelphia has sent more Black men to death row than any other U.S. city.

Mumia is the most well-known political prisoner in the world. An award-winning journalist and former Black Panther Party member, he was sent to death row in Philadelphia after being found guilty of first-degree murder of a white police officer in 1982. Mumia has maintained his innocence since his arrest in December 1981. He has survived two death warrants, signed in 1995 and 1999, due to international mass support for his freedom.

His appeals for a new trial to hear vital, suppressed evidence have been repeatedly rejected by the state and federal courts of appeals, including the U.S. Supreme Court. Amnesty International and others have called for a new trial for Mumia based on the injustice he received during the original trial.

On Nov. 9, the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals will hold a court hearing in Philadelphia to determine whether to bring back the death penalty for Abu-Jamal or whether he will be sentenced to life in prison with no hope of parole. The death sentence was set aside for Abu-Jamal by the federal courts in 2001 due to improper sentencing instructions to the jury that convicted him. This particular ruling did not grant a new trial for Mumia.

The Fraternal Order of Police, Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell and the district attorney's office are campaigning to bring back the death penalty for Abu-Jamal, who is known as "the voice of the voiceless." Similar forces are attempting to separate Mumia's case from other anti-death-penalty cases, in order to weaken the movement to end this form of terrorism against the poor and people of color.

The Oct. 10 protest included a march from the FOP headquarters to the forum at La Familia community center. Activists traveled from New York; New Jersey; Washington, D.C.; and elsewhere. Young people from Philadelphia were also in attendance.

The audience heard from young rap artists and saw the newly released documentary, "Justice on Trial." The film includes interviews of Abu-Jamal's family members and supporters, along with testimony from legal experts on how and why he was railroaded to death row.

Investigative reporter and legal expert Linn Washington outlined the legal and political ramifications of Mumia's case. Lawrence Hayes and Darby Tillis spoke on their experiences of being on death row before they were exonerated. Suzanne Ross from the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition (NYC) gave an update on the ongoing campaign to pressure the U.S. Justice Department to establish a civil rights investigation on behalf of Mumia.

Betsy Piette from the Philadelphia International Action Center explained the links between Abu-Jamal's case and the recent FBI raids and grand jury witch hunt against 14 political activists. Former political prisoner Fred Hampton Jr. and Cecil Gutzmore, a Pan-African scholar and activist based in Jamaica, spoke. The cases of Georgia death row inmate Troy Davis and political prisoner Lynne Stewart were acknowledged. The forum was chaired by Pam Africa from ICFMAJ.

Abu-Jamal's supporters are planning to organize for the Nov. 9 hearing from all over the country and internationally. □



PHOTO: JOHN LESLIE

EU asked to address political prisoner's plight

International struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

A critical hearing is scheduled Nov. 9 in the nearly three-decade-old case of journalist and activist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who sits on death row in Pennsylvania. Mumia was severely wounded and arrested on Dec. 9, 1981, in Philadelphia and was later charged, tried and convicted of the murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner.

After a grossly unjust prosecution was carried out in 1982, Mumia, a former Black Panther Party leader and MOVE organization supporter, was given the death penalty. Although Mumia's death sentence was subsequently overturned, the prosecution has repeatedly attempted to reinstate the penalty and carry out his execution.

A Jan. 19 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court ordered the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to reconsider the 2001 and 2008 decisions that rescinded the death penalty in Abu-Jamal's case. There is an ongoing campaign by law enforcement agencies across the country to pressure the courts into carrying out Mumia's execution.

An international defense campaign for both Abu-Jamal's freedom and the elimination of the U.S. death penalty has grown since the early 1980s. The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, MOVE and other organizations have been consistent over the years in fighting not only to save the life of this award-winning writer and hero to millions around the globe, but to raise the profile of other political prisoners incarcerated in the U.S.

Two death warrants were signed for Mumia: one in 1995 and another in 1999. Both warrants were stayed by the courts after campaigns to save Mumia's life mobilized people from all over the U.S. and the world.

A key element in building massive support was the role played by activists, journalists, trade unionists, intellectuals and political officials in Western Europe, Africa, Japan and other parts of the globe.

Leading figures such as former South African President Nelson Mandela and his ruling African National Congress, along with former Archbishop Desmond Tutu, demanded that the scheduled execution be stopped. These developments took place in the aftermath of the defeat of the racist apartheid systems in South Africa and Namibia, in which people in the U.S. and all over the world had participated.

Mumia's articles, interviews and books have been published in numerous countries and have served to win further support for his release as well as the abolition of the U.S. death penalty, which has for more than a century been implemented in a racist and class-oriented manner. In Mumia's case, the fact that he had been a leading member of the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia was used during the penalty phase of his trial to place him on death row.

European Union discusses Mumia's case

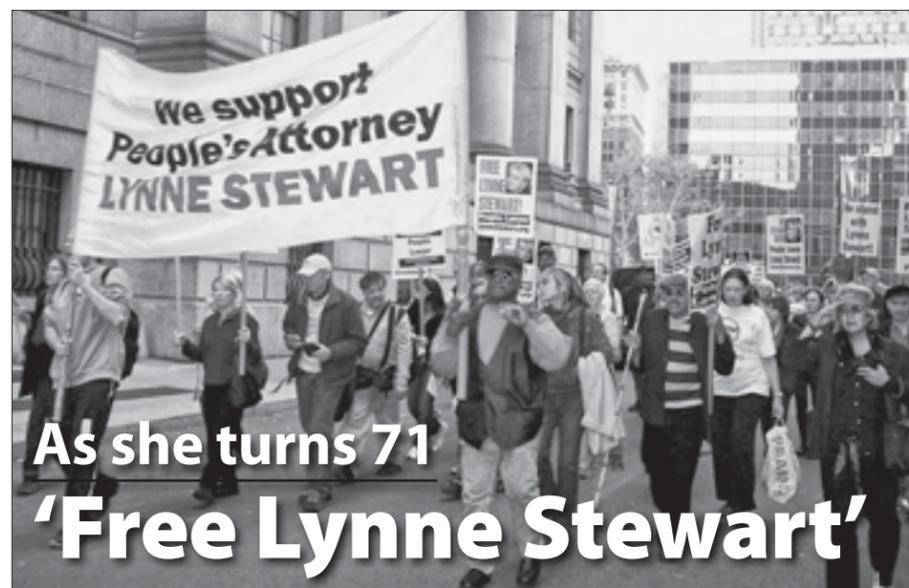
The death penalty in the U.S. has gained attention in recent weeks due to the execution of two mentally disabled inmates: Teresa Lewis of Virginia and Holly Wood of Alabama. At present 35 states in the U.S. still have the death penalty, although four have not carried out any executions since 1976, when the practice was reinstated after it was overturned in 1972.

The Obama administration is not opposed to the death penalty and has not spoken out about the executions in Alabama and Virginia.

The European Union foreign affairs head Catherine Ashton was recently urged to raise the U.S. death penalty, along with the plight of Abu-Jamal. In a European parliamentary debate on Oct. 6, Danish Member of European Parliament Soren Sondergaard stated that he "deplored" the execution of defenseless inmates, including Abu-Jamal.

Sondergaard noted: "The death penalty itself is a crime. But it is often more than that; waiting on death row in miserable

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WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

As she turns 71 'Free Lynne Stewart'

NEW YORK — Family, friends and supporters of imprisoned "people's lawyer" Lynne Stewart marched, sang and drummed on Oct. 8 outside the lower Manhattan prison where she is being held. It was her 71st birthday, and the crowd chanted "Free Lynne Stewart" and "Happy Birthday, Lynne," led by the booming voice of her spouse, Ralph Poynter.

Stewart has had a long career as a human rights champion, defending the poor, the oppressed and the unpopular with zeal. Charged with aiding and abetting terrorism for representing a client, Stewart was convicted and originally sentenced to 28 months. She began serving her sentence in late 2009.

However, in a highly unusual move, federal prosecutors demanded the sentence be increased to 15 to 30 years. In July the judge resented Stewart to 10 years. Her case is widely viewed as a government attempt to intimidate lawyers who defend suspects charged with terrorism.

— Ellen Catalinotto

Student protester acquitted in Cleveland Juvenile Court

By Caleb T. Maupin
Cleveland

DeAsia Bronaugh, a Black high school student, was acquitted on all charges on Oct. 7 in Cuyahoga County Juvenile Court.

The charges, including felonious assault on a police officer, stemmed from an incident on May 13 when she and fellow students walked out of Collinwood High School to protest plans to close more than 40 Cleveland schools and lay off hundreds of teachers.

DeAsia and her sister, Destini, assembled on the sidewalk to demonstrate with classmates and community members who had come to support the student-organized protest.

A school security guard testified that inside the school a crowd of approximately 200 students were trying to join the demonstration outside. Fearing that the student protest could turn into a much larger confrontation with the powers that be, he called the cops.

Three police cars met the small crowd of students rallying outside the school. A video taken at the scene showed that the officers began roughly grabbing students and arresting them for violating Cleveland's daytime curfew law that applies specifically to school-age youth.

DeAsia was arrested, although she was not in violation of the curfew, since she was being escorted by her older sister, who was 19 years old. She was therefore legally outside of school. When DeAsia, who was 16 at the time,

was grabbed by an officer, she embraced her sister as Destini attempted to explain the situation.

Rather than listen, the police roughly pulled them apart. Destini called out, "We were protesting at our school, and they're trying to arrest us!"

They were both slammed against a car. Then they were thrown to the ground. Officers shoved their knees into the necks of both young women. Destini cried out, "I'm having an asthma attack."

The officer responded, "You're about to get tased!"

Both young women sustained serious injuries as a result of the violent arrest.

Two organizers from Cleveland FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) had heard about the walkout and came to support the students. One videotaped the entire confrontation and alerted the media. Soon the images of police brutality were widely circulated by local television and newspapers.

A defense committee was established. The International Action Center set up an online petition that alerted the press, local officials and others that thousands of people around the country were greatly concerned about the events at Collinwood.

Terry Gilbert, a well-known radical attorney who has famously represented Leonard Peltier and other members of the American Indian Movement, took the case of the young women. The Oppressed People's Nation, a local group of young community organizers, came to the aid of the family as well.

At the trial of DeAsia Bronaugh on Oct. 6 and 7, it came out that Officer Robert Taylor, one of those who brutalized DeAsia, had also shot a 16-year-old boy in the back in 2002. The family of Ricardo Mason, the young man Taylor had killed, sued and won a settlement of more than \$1 million.

The video of the confrontation was a key piece of evidence at DeAsia's trial. The prosecution tried to claim that while both her feet were in the air, DeAsia had tried to kick the police officers.

Magistrate Jeffrey Ehrbar wasn't buying it. Right after the prosecution finished presenting its case, he dismissed all the charges on a motion from Gilbert.

Ehrbar told the prosecutor, "I watch professional wrestling." He said he found it extremely unlikely that young DeAsia had carried out a dropkick, a difficult feat of athleticism when confronted by three police officers each weighing more than 200 pounds.

After the charges were dismissed, DeAsia and her mother, Tina Bronaugh, embraced with tears of joy.

On Nov. 15 Destini Bronaugh will face charges of resisting arrest and obstructing an official proceeding in Cleveland Municipal Court.

Organizers in Cleveland are gearing up for another victory, when this young woman is also acquitted and the Cleveland police are once again called out for their brutality.

Maupin, a member of Cleveland FIST, took the video used in DeAsia Bronaugh's trial.

Oct. 7 nat'l day of protest

Activists defend public education

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out to a demonstration that linked the struggles against the cutbacks to education and tuition hikes, the struggle in Wake County to stop resegregation and privatization, and the fight to pass the DREAM Act and win full access to higher education for undocumented students in the state. Many different organizations mobilized for and spoke at the demonstration, including NC HEAT, an organization of high school students in Wake County fighting back against resegregation; the NC DREAM Team, a group of mostly immigrant youth organizing around access to education; students from several area universities including UNC Chapel Hill Students for a Democratic Society; Raleigh FIST; Black Workers for Justice; and many more. A spirited march through downtown filled the streets with chants of "Hey hey, ho ho, resegregation's got to go!" "Education, not deportation!" and "No cuts, no fees, education should be free!"

The march hit three targets: the Civitas Institute, a group funded and controlled by right-wing millionaire Art Pope, who orchestrated a Wake school board takeover and is behind the move toward resegregation and privatization; the State Legislature, to protest the cuts to education and tuition hikes at universities; and the Federal Building, to denounce Sen. Kay Hagan, a national target of the push to pass the DREAM Act, as well as to draw the connections between

funding for education and war. Organizers from the groups involved in the demonstration plan to continue working together to build a statewide education coalition.

In **Buffalo, N.Y.**, a coalition of student organizations — including groups from the University of Buffalo and Buffalo State — community organizations and unions rallied in downtown Buffalo. They denounced the "UB 2020" plan to raise tuition, contract out campus jobs for lower wages and privatize this public SUNY school. When they chanted, "No ifs, no buts, no education cuts!" passing motorists honked non-stop in support.

In **Atlanta**, demonstrations were organized at several campuses around the city. These protests later convened in Woodruff Park. More than 100 students, anti-war activists, DREAM activists, and Sodexo workers turned out for the rally. The Sodexo workers are currently engaged in a fierce battle to win union rights at the cafeterias of five schools in the area.

Speakers at the demonstration drew connections between education cuts and the cost of war, spoke out against the pending decision by the Board of Regents to ban any undocumented student from attending a public college or university, and put together a giant report card that gave the Georgia Legislature failing grades on education. The demonstration marched through the Georgia State campus and on to the State Capitol building to deliver the

failing report card to legislators.

At the **University of California-Berkeley**, a protest attended by more than 1,000 people turned into a sit-in at the library, with more than 600 students participating. Signs saying "DREAM Act Now! Build the Movement to fight the new Jim Crow!" and "Public education for all!" were held as students shouted, "Whose university? Our university!" Students are protesting against the continued privatization of education as well as the recent announcement that 200 more staff positions are to be cut, as well as the imposition of a freeze in faculty hiring and a rise in out-of-state student enrollment.

At the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**, where a March 4 protest for education rights ended in police violence and the arrest of 16 students, more than 250 rallied to make their demands clear to the incoming chancellor. As a result of the education rights campaign, the former chancellor resigned this fall. As protestors marched down the street past an elementary school, children on the playground ran to the fence and gave high-fives to the graduate and undergraduate students, faculty, and workers who were marching for education rights.

Ellie Dorritie, Larry Hales, Dianne Mathiowetz and Bryan Pfeifer contributed to this article. Information on the protests at U.C. Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee were taken from a Fight Back! News article written by Chapin Gray.

On the Picket Line

by Sue Davis

Kohler workers fight concessions

After rejecting a concessionary contract on Oct. 1, the workers who make Kohler kitchen and bath products in Kohler, Wis., called a picket line on Oct. 6. The contract had included a five-year wage freeze, increased premiums and lower wages for new hires and any laid-off workers who are rehired.

Fed up with what they call "exploitation of the recession," members of United Auto Workers Local 833 expected a turnout of maybe 500 but cheered when the line swelled to 2,000. As one union member told WBAY-TV, if Local 833 doesn't fight back, it "could easily set in motion an area-wide epidemic of concessions, lower pay and benefits for all workers ... further decimating an already troubled economy." (Oct. 6)

Meanwhile, Kohler recites the same old line that it needs concessions to stay "competitive." Yet, with 50 plants employing more than 32,000 workers worldwide, Kohler boasts on its website that over the past 15 years it has provided more than 43,000 kitchen and bath products for Habitat for Humanity homes and more than 8,000 products for the television show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition." It doesn't take a Harvard economist to figure out that if Kohler has been flush enough to give away thousands of dollars worth of products in the past, the least it can do is pay those who make those products a living wage. Go, Local 833!

Labor joins call to end 'crimmigration'

The National Day Laborer Organizing Network reported Sept. 30 that, thanks to labor-community activism, two counties — Santa Clara, Calif., and Arlington, Va. — recently passed unanimous resolutions to opt out of the mass deportation program misnamed "Secure Communities." According to the email report, "More and more places are stating clearly that Arizona policies have no place in our towns. ... Over 20 local campaigns across the country are building local power to turn the tide and demand an end to police/ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] collaboration, criminalization and family separation." (www.ndlon.org) On Sept. 29 more than 500 groups in the immigrant rights, criminal justice and labor movements sent a letter to President Barack Obama demanding an end to police/ICE collaboration and pointing out that the existing racial disparity in the criminal justice system is only heightened by targeting migrant communities.

Anti-war activists support S.F. hotel workers

On Oct. 6 between 150 and 200 people rallied at the downtown San Francisco cable car turnaround at Powell and Market streets to protest the ninth anniversary of the U.S. war against Afghanistan, as well as the U.S. wars against Iraq and Palestine. The group then marched a few blocks to the Hilton Hotel, where the hotel workers in UNITE-HERE Local 2 held a loud, spirited picket line at the lobby doorway, confronting a phalanx of cops.

The anti-war activists' solidarity with the hotel workers highlighted the U.S. dollars misspent on the huge war machine while working people here need decent union contracts with health care benefits. Thousands of unemployed workers are no longer able to collect unemployment benefits because they've been jobless for more than 99 weeks. Many are no longer even counted as unemployed.

Over the last 14 months the hotel workers have been holding rolling strikes (two or three days at a time) against a group of fancy hotels in the San Francisco Bay Area while continuing to work without a contract. It's only a matter of time before a full-blown hotel worker strike takes place in this city, as well as in other big cities like Chicago and Honolulu.

— Joan Marquardt

Bronx activists demand

'Bury racism at Woodlawn Cemetery'

Special to Workers World
Bronx, N.Y.

A spirited group of anti-racist activists confronted the managers of posh Woodlawn Cemetery in the northwest Bronx on Oct. 9. Loud chants of "Bury racism at Woodlawn Cemetery!" rang against the stone walls of the Woodlawn mansion inside the cemetery gates. Managers and security goons looked on nervously amidst the din of honking horns of passing motorists expressing support.

Protesters carried placards signed by the sponsoring groups — Freedom Party, South Bronx Community Congress, Service Employees Local 32BJ and Bail Out the People Movement — condemning the racist management. One placard said, "Fire Rob Scheer, stop the discrimination," naming a racist boss cited for outrageous abuse by the Band of Brothers, a group of Woodlawn workers. One supervisor lost his job over the summer following a protest at the cemetery gates together with a relentless campaign of letters and publicity exposing the long history of racism at the cemetery.

The protest is part of a three-year campaign led by the Band of Brothers, cemetery workers who have appealed for community support against discrimination at Woodlawn. One placard reflected another part of their struggle: "Respect the workers — let them unionize," pointing to the current effort to replace a corrupt, company union. The cemetery workers are scheduled to vote on Oct. 18 to change to Teamsters Local 808, led by Secretary-Treasurer Chris Silvera.

The Rev. Lydia Lebron, pastor of the Church of the Resurrection and a leader of the South Bronx Community Congress, said: "Why is it that such a sacred place, where our ancestors and our beloved ones are memorialized, is also such a hostile and abusive place where African-American and Latino men are dehuman-



Activists show solidarity with Woodlawn workers on Oct. 9.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

ized? How has it come to be that some of those who suffered and fought to end racism and discrimination, and lay here ... need to witness the harassment, the slurs, the epithets, the name calling, insults and intimidation?" She denounced the fact that African Americans and Latinos are systematically excluded from opportunities for advancement at the cemetery.

"A great number of entertainers, celebrities, politicians and business moguls are buried here," the Rev. Lebron said. "Six New York City mayors, Herman Melville [author of "Moby Dick"], Joseph Pulitzer [of the Pulitzer Prize], Sara Walker [believed to be the first Black millionaire in the U.S.], W.C. Handy ["father of the blues"], Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, Celia Cruz, Carmen Mantilla [José Martí's partner]." She added that "the 400 acres of sacred land enclose the remains of hundreds of thousands of men and women, many from humble origins, many who worked hard and lived representing the best of their cultures and ethnic origins."

Ramon Jimenez, another leader of the South Bronx Community Congress and Freedom Party candidate for New York

State attorney general, said cemetery management's racial discrimination is blatantly illegal and was the target of an in-depth investigation earlier this year. He praised the Band of Brothers for persisting in their fight and for finding ways to win the support of the entire cemetery workforce against management as well as against the corrupt company union that makes it possible for the abuses to continue.

Dee Knight, coordinator of the Labor-Community Forum of the South Bronx Community Congress, congratulated those white workers at Woodlawn Cemetery who supported the struggle against the racism of the Woodlawn management, calling it "a strategic breakthrough" that they joined their multinational brothers to vote for Teamsters Local 808. "For the longest time the bosses have tried to make you think you were just like them and you should think like them, and put down workers of color and side with the boss," he said. "Now you're seeing the light and refusing to be divided. Now you'll get serious and honest union leadership, and the boss will have to learn some real respect."

The Band of Brothers "have found the

magic formula for defeating racist abuse on the job," Knight said. "It's really simple: Stand up, speak out and reach out. Don't be afraid and don't back down. Know you have community support and go for it. Look for good, strong, honest union representation. Go back to the other workers and explain again and again."

Other speakers included Ed Figueroa of Service Employees Local 32BJ, who brought an impressive delegation to the rally. Gavrielle Gemma of the Bail Out the People Movement underscored the need for a union contract forbidding racist discrimination on the job. She denounced the fact that management has continuously moved to outsource jobs at the cemetery, reducing the regular full-time workforce from more than 100 employees a year ago to 38 today.

Protesters marched from the cemetery gates at East 233rd Street and Webster Avenue up the hill to the subway station at 233rd Street and White Plains Road, and then returned to the cemetery gates for a concluding rally. Gemma led participants in a pledge to continue the struggle until the racist practices at the cemetery are brought to an end. □

Band of Brothers leader answers management's claims

By a Band of Brothers anti-racist leader
Bronx, N.Y.

The Oct. 9 rally in front of the main gates of the Woodlawn Cemetery followed an earlier one last July, where many organizations, activists and leaders stood in support of the Band of Brothers, workers in the struggle to fight racism on the job. Among the supporters were the Rev. Lydia Lebron of the Resurrection Church; South Bronx Community Congress leader and Freedom Party attorney general candidate Ramon Jimenez; and Freedom Party gubernatorial candidate Charles Barron, who spoke to the media about the horrendous treatment of cemetery workers by Woodlawn's racist management. The action garnered media exposure, resulting in the firing of a racist foreman who had used racial slurs and intimidation.

That foreman had been given more authority and been promoted to gravedigger foreman in only his first four years on the job. His was the fastest promotion at Woodlawn — other experienced foremen have been on the job for 20 or 30 years. Management, which was also compelled to implement racial sensitivity training, claims the firing was due to "poor work performance."

The following fabrications were made by John P. Toale, president and CEO of Woodlawn Cemetery, and provided by the Howard Rubenstein media relations firm in July.

1. Toale said, "We have consistently sought to maintain the highest standards of work environment, one that embraces diversity, respects the employee and encourages promotion and career advancement regardless of race, color, creed or gender."

Fact: Management has consistently maintained a hostile work environment. Diversity has not been fully embraced — out of 38 workers, only four are Black.

Rather than maintaining a climate of respect for field workers, when you speak out you're retaliated against — like one white worker who has been on the job for 32 years and is battling cancer. Management has taken disciplinary action against him for taking time off to get treated by doctors at the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. This began after he made complaints about supervisor Rob Scheer using the "N" word and spoke out against management's discriminatory practices.

No Blacks or Latinos/as are given any advancement opportunities; there are no Blacks or Latinos in a supervisory position. Management has eliminated job classifications when Black or Latino/a workers have enough seniority to bid for them. There are no female field workers. Since the complaints of racism and discrimination, management has been outsourcing jobs.

2. "We will also be implementing a

plan to create far more rigorous documentation on work performance of both supervisors and employees. We are moving to create a clear and unambiguous line of reporting where performance is documented and registered. That kind of structure, with a written review, will ensure our other reforms can be efficiently measured and accounted for."

Fact: This is a clear-cut threat aimed at the cemetery's field workers for standing up to management's discriminatory actions. Rigorous documentation on work performance has already been taking place and used against the workers; the workers are already being closely monitored and scrutinized. It's the old adage of produce more for less. We workers are oppressed as it is; to cover more than 400 acres of land is a lot for 38 workers.

No structure, written documented review or measure of efficiency can account for the harassment and discrimination against the workers. The safety of the workers is always compromised for the sake of getting the job done. Management uses such methods to compare the work of one worker with another, and to record when workers take a water break or bathroom break. The workers feel like they are in a prison labor camp, with security personnel and foremen as the prison guards and Scheer along with management assuming the role of warden. The workers feel incongruous in such an atmosphere.

3. Toale concluded, "Everyday throughout New York companies and institutions are faced with similar human resource challenges but choose to maintain their silence about the problem and their solutions. ... Our Board believes we have an obligation to let our community know that we have responded to the challenge, and we have found ourselves in need of change."

Fact: The Woodlawn cemetery is a serene, beautiful place with an amazing botanical landscape, all maintained by the workers who lay down the soil and keep the tombs ornate. Management has precisely chosen to maintain their silence about the racism and discrimination that exists at the cemetery. The board believes that they have responded to the challenges, yet they still allow racist supervisors who engage in discriminatory practices to preside at the cemetery. Management has not done better — it's done worse.

A group of Woodlawn cemetery workers, organized as "The Band of Brothers," have taken a stand to maintain their dignity, unionize and fight for the rights of all workers. The Band of Brothers struggle is one that has taken many strides in the ongoing efforts to organize while confronting racism and unfair treatment of the cemetery management. It is a struggle for the preservation of our labor rights, civil rights and human rights. □

Palestine supporters, many Jewish, challenge Zionist conference

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

Anti-Zionist Jews and Palestine solidarity activists disrupted the opening plenary of the Jewish National Fund conference held Oct. 10 in the upscale Intercontinental Hotel here.

Determined to confront the false images propagated by the JNF, five women and two men walked to the front of the large meeting room and began passing out a flyer that detailed the truth about the organization. They chanted "Stop the lies" and "Shame on you" and declared that JNF does not represent all Jewish people. Two other activists were filming the intervention.

Founded in 1901, the JNF's purpose was to secure land in Palestine for the exclusive use of Jewish people, a key element in the Zionist agenda to permanently displace the indigenous Arab population. Once under the control of the JNF, the land cannot be leased to, built on, managed by or worked on by Palestinians.

In 1953 Israel passed legislation enabling the private JNF to carry out governmental

functions. Its highly funded tree-planting program serves to erase remnants of destroyed Palestinian villages. For example, Canada Park in the occupied West Bank, which was created and is maintained by the JNF, was built on the grounds of three razed Palestinian communities.

The fact sheet handed out by the activists referred to the racist "Blueprint Negev" campaign, which is forcibly moving Bedouin communities onto seven reservations in order for the JNF to "revitalize the Negev." The JNF is recognized as a charitable organization by the Internal Revenue Service, making donations to it tax-deductible in the U.S.

The 400 or so supporters of the JNF at the conference, including a number of Israelis, began assaulting the women protesters, who were kicked, pushed, hit and cursed at. One Israeli man attempted to arrest two of the women and prevent them from leaving the building. Still another Zionist complained to a Georgia Bureau of Investigation agent that if this had happened in Israel, he "would have had his gun and would have put two in the chest." The lens of a television camera

filming the event was blocked while the attack took place.

The nine activists then joined a picket line in front of the hotel. The action was

initiated by the Atlanta chapter of the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network and supported by the Movement to End Israeli Apartheid-Georgia. □



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Notes from Viva Palestina 5th aid convoy to Gaza

Following are excerpts from a journal of e-mails sent out by International Action Center member Ralph Loeffler, who is on the fifth Viva Palestina aid convoy to beleaguered and blockaded Gaza.

Sept. 22 — The Viva Palestina 5 aid convoy to Gaza left London Sept. 18 with about 35 vehicles and drivers from the Britain, Canada, Malaysia, Australia, the U.S., Ireland and New Zealand. [The movement in] other countries will be adding vehicles and aid as we proceed. France, in fact, added a couple of vehicles after we got to Paris, and Sweden donated two ambulances just after we passed through the English Channel tunnel that connects England to Europe. Convoys from Casablanca and Kuwait are to join us in Syria.

Thanks to George Galloway there have long been elements of strong support for the Palestinian cause in England. Now, support in France, the [West European] country with the largest Muslim population, is on the upswing. In the town of Bagnolet, a suburb of Paris, the deputy mayor addressed the convoy at a well-attended reception. The mayor was on his way back from Lebanon, where he had been visiting the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. The day we arrived was the anniversary of the date in 1982 when Israeli General [Ariel] Sharon [oversaw the massacre of] thousands of Palestinian men, women, and children in Sabra and Shatila. Bagnolet is the twin city of Sabra and Shatila.

The VP convoy made a swing through Paris, circled the Place de la Concorde, and got an enthusiastic welcome from the citizenry. From earlier convoys I learned that our reception showed again how French attitudes are changing. Our reception in Lyon the following day was equally positive, providing further evidence that as the Palestinians grow in worldwide respect, the reputation of the Israelis is on a steep slide downward. Locals brought aid for the people of Gaza just as they had done in Bagnolet, and our vans and trucks are rapidly filling to capacity.

We spent the night in Vaulx-en-Velin, a town on the outskirts of Lyon, which is the only town in France that flies the

Palestinian flag. The regional authorities have demanded that the flag be taken down, but the mayor has refused and the local authorities are preparing for a political fight. A French member of Parliament in the Bagnolet area is in a similar battle. On Oct. 14 this MP goes on trial for supporting the Israeli boycott. Galloway is requesting that any friend of Palestine that can be in France to protest and to attend the trial, please do so.

Oct. 5 — Furcan Dogan. I'm going to say Furcan Dogan so often that it will seem as "American" as Tom Smith or Bill Jones. Furcan Dogan was an American, a young [U.S. citizen] of only 19 years when on May 31 a hail of Israeli bullets ended his life on the Gaza aid ship Mavi Marmara.

Furcan was filming the Israeli assault when an [Israel Defense Forces] commando fired his first shot pointblank, hitting Furcan squarely in the chest. Four more shots were fired into Furcan, leaving him dead and unrecognizable. Furcan, who was born in the Albany-Troy area of New York, had gone back to live in his family's hometown of Kayseri, Turkey.

His family knew the names of the Turks that had been killed on the Mavi Marmara, but one casualty had not been immediately identified. In their normal pattern of lies and misinformation the Israelis had not identified Furcan because he was an American. They waited until the initial impact of their murderous attack on innocent humanitarians subsided a bit before confirming the ninth victim was Furcan.

When Furcan's father went to meet the Mavi Marmara's survivors he had no idea that his son had been murdered. Instead of greeting his son, he was taken to the morgue to identify his remains. Surely such a day defies description; I won't attempt one.

The Viva Palestina 5 convoy arrived in Kayseri late on Sept. 29 and spent the night on a mountain overlooking Kayseri. We had come to Kayseri for the sole purpose of visiting Furcan's gravesite and extending our condolences to his family. The following morning we were told that our convoy would be passing by the high school from which Furcan had graduated

PHILADELPHIA — Dozens of students and anti-racist community activists protested outside the Temple University student center on Oct. 7. Speaking inside were right-wingers Pamela Geller, co-founder of Stop Islamization of America, which sponsored the Sept. 11 anti-Muslim rally in New York, and Robert Spencer, contributor to the anti-Muslim blog Jihad Watch.

Temple University Purpose, the organization that hosted Geller and Spencer, was also the target of student protests when, in October 2009, it hosted the blatantly anti-Muslim Dutch politician Geert Wilders.

and that students from the school would be waiting for us. As we began our slow journey down the twisting mountain road the convoy took on the air of a funeral procession.

Suddenly, there they were. The students lined both sides of the road standing for who knows how long. Each one sadly, silently, proudly held up Furcan's picture as the convoy rolled by.

Beautiful, moving words were spoken at the gravesite, and afterwards we met with Furcan's family at the recently built community center named after Furcan. The grandfather and uncle bore their grief perhaps with the acceptance of mortality that comes with age. But the older brother's grief was palpable. Deep, dark lines were etched under his eyes and he seemed to be disconnected to his surroundings. Never have I seen such pain expressed on a human face.

Any country should be proud to have a promising young man such as Furcan as one of its own. Intelligent and mature beyond his years, Furcan had already dedicated his life to the struggle for Palestinian justice.

Oct. 6 — The Viva Palestina convoy drove into Lattakia, Syria, early Oct. 2 and is now encamped in a Palestinian refugee compound constructed many decades

ago. The Palestinians that first lived here were pushed out of Haifa in 1948; many have now built homes in the surrounding areas. Life in Syria is hard for the Palestinians. Free education and health care are provided but even college graduates rarely find employment commensurate with their level of training. The refugees have few travel privileges and certainly are not permitted to visit Palestine.

By the time we had left France the international character of the convoy was well established. On Sept. 20 the Italians, led by the longtime International Solidarity Movement activist and Viva Palestina convoy veteran, Alfredo Tradardi, joined us in Turin, Italy. After a great meal in Turin's historic town square they added 10 vehicles filled with aid and 14 drivers to the convoy.

The size of the convoy more than doubled after we arrived in Lattakia with the arrival of contingents from the Gulf states and Algeria. Each of these groups added about 50 vehicles, with at least two drivers for each one. The Gulf states convoy brought in brand-new SUVs; the Algerians will buy vehicles in Syria. Viva Palestina 5 is now on track to be the largest land Gaza aid convoy ever assembled. Participants come from 27 countries.

The complete reports can be followed at www.iacenter.org.

— Betsey Piette



MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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

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

Money can't buy friends

Pentagon grip weakens in Afghanistan, Pakistan

By Deirdre Griswold

There is much to be learned from the indisputable fact that the U.S. military, despite all its high-tech weaponry and the billions of dollars at its disposal, has lost control of the situation in Afghanistan and has forced even the corrupt Pakistani government to denounce Pentagon attacks as “intolerable” and close parts of its border with Afghanistan.

The Pentagon had argued that a “surge” of tens of thousands of additional U.S. troops to Afghanistan would turn the war around and win over the population. Clearly, the opposite has happened.

The more the U.S. kills and destroys Afghans, their homes, their livestock and their crops, the more the people hate the invaders. The only “social base” the occupation forces can count on are those they pay for their loyalty — and now it seems that even some of them are secretly for the resistance and may be on the U.S. payroll for tactical reasons.

It turns out that many of the people who work for the U.S.-NATO occupation forces, guarding their military bases, are adherents of the resistance — usually identified in the Western media as “the Taliban,” although other political groupings are also actively opposing the U.S. occupation and war.

The Senate Armed Services Committee just released a report on an investigation it conducted into the security of U.S. bases in Afghanistan. It seems that the Pentagon contracts out the job of security to private U.S. companies, which then pocket a healthy profit as they subcontract the work to local Afghans.

The Senate committee found that the Pentagon allows “local security deals among American military commanders, Western contracting companies and Afghan warlords who are closely connected to the violent insurgency.” (New York Times, Oct. 7)

The Times article adds: “The latest disclosures follow a series of reports, including articles in The New York Times and testimony before a House committee, describing bribes paid by contractors to the Taliban and other warlords to make sure supply convoys for the American military were provided safe passage.”

The U.S. government has nearly 100,000 troops in Afghanistan right now. At Washington’s prodding, 20,000 additional soldiers have been sent there by other countries.

The top political leadership in Afghanistan was imposed by the United States. It was U.S. agents who found Hamid Karzai — when he was pulling down a fat salary with Unocal, a U.S. energy corporation — and groomed him to “lead the nation” after the U.S. invaded Afghanistan in 2001. After cooked elections, Karzai became president of Afghanistan and continues to retain that title, although he is cynically referred to by many Afghans and foreigners as the “mayor of Kabul,” since his authority doesn’t extend far beyond the capital.

Karzai’s government consists of hirelings paid largely with U.S. funds and narco-dollars. His “re-election” was so crooked it was challenged even by Western observers.

No amount of dollars and firepower can win over people’s “hearts and minds.”

Only justice can do that, and there is no justice at all in imperialist conquest. It is motivated by the crassest hunger for superprofits. In the case of strategically located Afghanistan, the goal is control over Southwest Asia, the world’s richest region in oil and gas. The billions of dollars the U.S. government spends securing these profits benefits only the super-rich owners of the energy corporations, not the workers in the U.S., Afghanistan or anywhere else.

Convoys stuck in Pakistan

Pakistan, Afghanistan’s neighbor to the southeast, has also become embroiled in this war. The Pentagon uses it as a resupply route for the great quantities of ammunition and provisions its troops need to keep the war going. Large convoys of trucks move cargo offloaded at Pakistani ports north to the border and then through the Khyber Pass to U.S.-NATO bases in Afghanistan.

These convoys were sitting ducks in the first week of October. The Pakistani government closed several border crossings into Afghanistan and the trucks were lined up for miles. They were attacked by insurgents and by bandits. Fuel trucks blew up in spectacular explosions as their drivers scattered for cover.

Why did the Pakistani government defy the U.S. by closing the border? It has gone along with most of the Pentagon’s demands. Pilotless U.S. drones have sent missiles crashing into Pakistani villages where the Pentagon suspected there was sympathy for Islamic resistance groups. This has been going on for a long time.

But the last straw came when U.S.-

NATO helicopters actually attacked two Pakistani border posts, killing several border guards. Pakistan said the attacks were “intolerable” and retaliated on Sept. 30, closing the border crossing points.

Longest war in U.S. history

When the Bush administration invaded Afghanistan in 2001, it said it was going after a relatively small insurgent group led by Osama bin Laden, which it claimed was behind the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The people of the United States were assured that this was going to be a surgical operation and would soon be over.

After eight years of Bush, the electorate voted for Barack Obama in 2008, believing that the new Democratic administration would quickly start the process of withdrawal from both Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead, there has been a “surge” in troops sent to Afghanistan.

The Afghan conflict is now the longest war the U.S. has fought in its entire history. Government and military officials say that any drawdown of troop strength will depend on “security conditions” in the different areas of Afghanistan.

This is a prescription for endless war, as the grip of both the Karzai regime and the invasion forces continues to weaken and the popularity of the resistance gains.

The only thing that can break this deadlock and bring the troops home is when the people in the U.S., who are suffering from a severe economic crisis and have shown in many polls that they are against these costly wars, take their demands to the streets instead of relying on the ballot box to bring peace. □

Groups rally around anti-war activists under FBI attack

By John Catalinotto

Support throughout the progressive movement in the U.S. and worldwide continues to grow for the anti-war and international solidarity activists whose homes were invaded by the FBI on Sept. 24. The StopFbi.net website had 88 messages of solidarity from organizations as of Oct. 11.

Supporters have called for a national call-in day to back the activists on Oct. 12, the next day that people are scheduled to appear before a federal grand jury in Chicago. A message went out the morning of Oct. 10 for people to call U.S. Attorney Patrick J. Fitzgerald, who is in charge of the Northern District of Illinois and responsible for the FBI raids and grand jury investigation.

The calls are to raise the demands that

are central to this struggle. They are: End the repression of anti-war and international solidarity activists! Return all materials seized in the raid! Stop the grand jury subpoenas of activists!

On Sept. 24, the FBI raided seven Chicago and Minneapolis homes of well-known anti-war and international solidarity activists. The raid targeted activists involved with many groups, including the Palestine Solidarity Group, Students for a Democratic Society, the Twin Cities Anti-War Committee, the Colombia Action Network and the Freedom Road Socialist Organization.

Their ranks included a number of trade unionists; some trade unions have sent solidarity statements, including one from the San Francisco Labor Council.

The FBI took computer hard drives, cell phones, documents, newspapers and children’s artwork. According to the FBI, the goal of the raids was to show material support for terrorism charges. Those targeted are well-known leaders in the anti-war movement and many of them helped to organize the huge protest against the Republican National Convention in St. Paul, Minn., in September 2008.

Fourteen people were handed subpoenas to appear before the grand jury on one of four successive Tuesdays in Chicago. On Oct. 5, the 14 declared in a statement to 100 supporters in Chicago that

none of them would cooperate with the grand jury — that is, none would bear witness against other activists.

In the first week after the FBI invasion, supporters held demonstrations in 43 cities around the U.S. Protests continued on Oct. 5-7, with demonstrations in Chicago, New York, Boston, Milwaukee, Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Durham, N.C., among others.

In Durham, Elena Everett, who spoke at a news conference, was the target of Homeland Security and Joint Terrorism Task Force harassment for anti-war activities in 2004. “We’re calling for an immediate end to harassment of anti-war activists,” Everett said. “The peace and justice community will not be silent, and we will not allow this to have a chilling effect on our work for justice and against war.”

Kosta Harlan of Students for a Democratic Society and the Colombia Action Network, an activist the FBI tried to visit on Sept. 24, said, “The FBI has been using these repressive tactics against the Muslim community for nine years, with disastrous results for Muslims and for our democratic rights. Now they want to broaden the repression to other sections of the people.”

Despite a united movement supporting the activists under attack, the FBI nevertheless continued to harass anti-war fighters in Minneapolis. Without delivering any new subpoenas, the FBI tried

to visit other members of the Anti-War Committee. One, Jennie Eisert, said, “FBI agents came to my work and wanted to talk to me about activists in the anti-war movement. I was called away from my desk and when I refused to talk to them, they tried to turn me against my friends and fellow activists.”

“They said that Jess Sundin, Meredith Aby and Mick Kelly had manipulated me and others in the anti-war movement. The only ones trying to manipulate me are these FBI agents,” Eisert said. (Fight Back! News)

Kelly urges everyone in the progressive community to exercise their legal right to not answer questions put to them by FBI agents. “This is a witch-hunt against anyone who is standing up against war and injustice. Tell FBI agents you have nothing to say. Period.” said Kelly. (Fight Back! News)

The Committee to Stop FBI Repression is focusing the Oct. 12 protest on mobilizing people to send messages to U.S. Attorney Fitzgerald and to call him at 312-353-5300. Already, organizations supporting those under attack have sent the message out to their lists. For example, the International Action Center has sent it out to its national list, urging people to pass it along and asking for more signatures on a petition, located on the IAC website, protesting the FBI raids. (See iacenter.org) □

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

Saladin Muhammad

Alabama’s Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping and Segregation

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

Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions

Larry Hales Pat Chin

Available at Leftbooks.com

Letter from Ukrainian miners

The counterrevolution in the USSR has allowed a few people the "freedom" to exploit workers in order to become millionaires, but has diminished workers' rights, as we can see from the following appeal from Ukrainian workers for solidarity from abroad.

After the presidential elections other persons and names have come to rule Ukraine, but the "new" power continues the attack against fighting workers' trade unions in the same way the "old" power did. Thus the management of the Krasnodonugol — that is, the association of some of the mines in the Lugansk region belonging to billionaire Rinat Akhmetov (whose protégé recently became president) — has decided to get rid of "those who disturb the peace." This is the fighting and originally independent workers' organization called the Independent Trade Union of Miners (NPG) at the Imeni Barakova mine. The last straw for the director was that NPG has opposed

the deterioration of miners' working conditions.

At the beginning of 2010 a so-called "integrated system of compensation" was developed along with even worse working conditions, especially for Akhmetov's enterprises, Krasnodonugol and Pavlogradugol. In addition, payment became nominal, and now it in many respects depends on individual agreements of the management with workers. The NPG union took sharp actions against these changes, describing them as transforming workers into serfs. The new system corresponds to neither national nor international standards nor norms of work organization.

The independent trade union has demanded that management pay workers according to the industry agreement and laws of Ukraine. The union also was able to obtain from the state agency that inspects work in the Lugansk region a demand that the management of Krasnodonugol eliminate its infringements of the legislation concerning payment of miners. The

owners of the company, however, not only haven't executed court requirements, but also have dismissed a number of active workers who are NPG members.

This is not the first attempt to punish union members. The NPG called the administration's actions "not only a crime which was expressed in a crude infringement of laws on work," but also "punishment of the trade union and of all workers' movements, and an attempt to transform workers into voiceless slaves." The NPG has also protested dismissals in a judicial order.

As a result, the majority of active workers have been restored to their jobs. However, NPG leader Dmitry Kalitventsev remains dismissed. The workers continue their struggle against the administration and owners of Krasnodonugol.

It is necessary to help the fighting trade union leader be restored to his job! Solidarity support is necessary from groups in the working-class movement of other countries!

The Coordination Council of the Workers' Movement of Ukraine (KSRD) asks that protest letters be sent to following addresses in Ukraine:

President: Bankovaja str. 11, Kiev, 01220, Ukraine; e-mail: press@apu.gov.ua

Cabinet of Ministers: Grushevsky's str. 12/2, Kiev, 01008, Ukraine; e-mail: portal@kmu.gov.ua

State Office of Public Prosecutor: Reznitskaya str. 13/15, Kiev, 01601, Ukraine

Supreme Court, 4 P. Orlyka str., Kiev, 01024, Ukraine; e-mail: web_editor@scourt.gov.ua

Lugansk regional state administration: Heroes of the Second World War square 3, Lugansk, 91016, Ukraine; e-mail: gubernator@loga.gov.ua

And also to the Ukrainian Embassy in your country. Send a copy of your letter to the Coordination Council of the Workers' Movement of Ukraine (KSRD): ksrd@pisem.net

<http://proletar.org.ua> □

Interview with Krsljanin:

'Serbia is an occupied country'

On Oct. 5, 2000, a coup engineered by U.S. imperialist agencies and supported by Western European imperialist governments overthrew the Socialist Party government in Yugoslavia led by Slobodan Milosevic. At the time — only 16 months after a vicious 79-day U.S.-led NATO air war against the people of Yugoslavia — there was much confusion even among progressive and anti-war forces in the imperialist countries due to the overwhelming anti-Milosevic propaganda in the corporate media. The following interview by Cathrin Schütz with former Milosevic aide Vladimir Krsljanin throws light on those events and the developments in Serbia in the last 10 years.

Ten years ago, on Oct. 5, Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was overthrown. What is hidden behind this "democratic revolution for freedom" celebrated by the Western media and politicians?

For 10 years Serbia had successfully resisted the war against Yugoslavia, which began in the early 1990s. After NATO's war of aggression against our country ended in 1999 without a clear victory, London and Washington carried out a vast special operation to overthrow Milosevic; it was the mother of all subsequent "color revolutions."

Through a presidential decree, Bill Clinton gave the CIA carte blanche to carry out a coup in Yugoslavia. Enormous sums were invested in political parties, NGOs [non-governmental organizations] and media. The fragmented opposition [to Milosevic and the Socialist Party of Serbia] was unified under foreign guidance. A coalition of 18 parties under the umbrella called the "Democratic opposition," or DOS, formed with one goal: overthrow Milosevic.

William Montgomery, the person later named as U.S. ambassador to Belgrade, set up a specially equipped office in Budapest [in neighboring Hungary]. Opposition activists attended courses that were run by CIA agents. The so-called student group known as "Otpor" (Resistance) used the slogan "Gotov je" (He is finished) to conduct the election — this was all a project of Western intelligence agencies.

How did the overthrow take place?

In the Yugoslav presidential election

on Sept. 24 the incumbent Milosevic obtained 15 percent fewer votes than Western-backed candidate Vojislav Kostunica. However, since neither of these two leading candidates won an absolute majority, it should have come to a run-off ballot. The DOS parties claimed that Milosevic had falsified the elections and Kostunica was victorious in the first round of voting. Otpor led violent street protests.

DOS wanted to prevent the runoff, although they would have won for sure. Milosevic refused to accept a resignation without a second round of voting.

At the height of the dispute, the Supreme Court issued a strange decision: Because of rumors of irregularities in the first ballot, all votes from the southern Serbian province of Kosovo were simply canceled. Of course, the vote in those districts would have to be repeated.

With Kosovo's votes cancelled, Kostunica's vote share increased to more than 50 percent. Milosevic acknowledged the decision and on Oct. 5 congratulated Kostunica's victory. This step, which had barely been reported, was buried in what was a media-constructed "popular uprising." As Otpor set the Parliament on fire, the Kostunica forces immediately and completely seized the government apparatus. With this coup they avoided a controlled handover of power.

It was thus not simply an electoral victory for the opposition?

The years-long image of Milosevic as a "dictator" in the Western media would have appeared absurd if he were simply removed by a Democratic vote. The West didn't want to risk this loss of credibility. Mainly though, the "revolution" needed to be carried out violently to shorten the time until the new regime could allow far-reaching Western interventions in the state and economy, thus making the transformation irreversible.

After Oct. 5, government offices and businesses were occupied by so-called crisis units, and those previously in charge were dismissed. After a few months 40,000 officials had been illegally removed from office. Today's economy minister, Mladjan Dinkic, began his illustrious career by using machine guns to take over the National Bank.

Dinkic's party, G17 Plus, was originally set up as an NGO by the West. Despite its marginal election results, for the last 10 years it has controlled public finances under successive governments. Dinkic's first act as a national bank director was to dissolve the four largest Serbian banks at the behest of the International Monetary Fund — with the result that the Serbian banking system is now in foreign hands,

and every year 6 billion euros flow out of the country. I remember Milosevic's words before the election: "They are not targeting Serbia to grab Milosevic, but Milosevic to grab Serbia."

But beyond the Western propaganda, there was in reality a great discontent among the population [in 2000]. ... Under the guidance of and in close collaboration with their foreign sponsors, the opposition understood how to blame on Milosevic the suffering caused by Western sanctions and NATO's war and how to make big promises should they win the elections.

The bombs had destroyed the economy and infrastructure, which aggravated the social discontent. When the government used up the remaining government funds for repairing the main road and rail links, the voters felt even more pain and were susceptible to opposition propaganda that claimed voting out Milosevic would stop the foreign pressure and increase the standard of living. It is in this sense that one should understand White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer's comments that the war was part of the "regime change" strategy of NATO and the United States, because it weakened Milosevic and led to his fall.

Continued on page 10

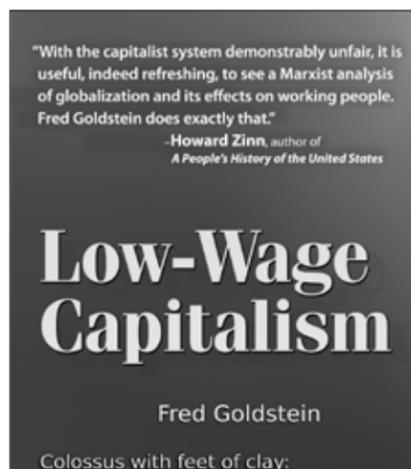
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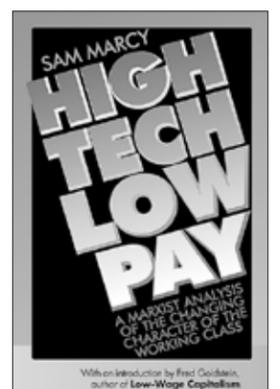
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A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

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.

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.



Hungary's red sludge: a product of capitalist restructuring

By Heather Cottin

Hungary has arrested Zoltan Bakonyi, managing director of MAL Aluminium, the privately owned company responsible for the country's worst environmental disaster. Bakonyi is son of the company's owner, Arlep Bakonyi, "a businessman who played a central role in the privatization of the country's aluminum industry and is the largest shareholder of the company." (New York Times, Oct. 11)

As of Oct. 11, 4,000 people were desperately working to reinforce the reservoir dam owned by MAL that had partially burst a week earlier.

Some 200 million gallons of toxic red sludge created by MAL's aluminum processing plant in Ajka, Hungary, had flooded out of the reservoir, devastating the villages of Devecser, Somlovasarhely and Kolontar. Eight people died in the flood's wake and hundreds were hospitalized with alkali burns.

The toxic flood killed all plant and animal life along the beautiful Marcal River. As the sludge flooded the water systems that feed into Europe's second-longest river, the Danube, the aluminum company denied responsibility. It said the incident was a "natural catastrophe" and insisted on its website that, according to European Union safety standards, the sludge is not considered toxic. (BBC, Oct. 8)

The plant's owners are Hungarian and own plants in Slovenia and Bosnia, as well — perks for them after a U.S. war destroyed the socialist republic of Yugoslavia and broke it up into competing mini-states.

According to the BBC report, when Hungary put its state assets on the sales block in 1995, three of the country's richest

men bought the aluminum plant in Ajka.

Capitalist structural adjustment

Even before the toxic sludge inundated Central Hungary, Hungarians were suffering.

The World Bank called Hungary's privatization process the most comprehensive of any East-Central European country. The World Bank was deeply involved in restructuring the Hungarian economy.

Prices for Hungarian products fell 65 percent, killing family farms. The World Bank's structural adjustment loans were conditioned on the elimination of low-cost housing loans. Residential subsidies also fell 80 percent, causing a housing crisis of huge proportions for the poor. Family subsidies, which included educational, social and medical support, fell 50 percent. Education, public health and government support for families became victims of repeated cuts.

The Hungarian government's embrace of neoliberal economic reforms meant that the new owners could offer low wages, no limits on overtime, six- or seven-day workweeks, three-month contracts and low safety standards. An Employment Code instituted in 1992 weakened the rights of labor unions and safety standards. Most privatized firms have been unwilling to adhere to safety regulations or to adequately invest in plant improvements.

Meanwhile, automation and the loss of the Soviet market led to a 30-percent reduction in the country's workforce. This forced wages down by 15 percent in the decade after 1990.

The CIA World Factbook admits that

capitalist Hungary currently has an official unemployment rate of 10.8 percent, up 40 percent from 2009. In addition to the social and economic destabilization resulting from the destruction of socialist planning, wages have plummeted for the majority of workers.

A Law on Economic Partnership rewarded the directors of publicly owned companies with the productive assets of those companies, so the privatization process "managed to transfer public assets into the hands of a few, influential individuals." (www.saprin.org) MAL Aluminium's owners got very rich.

Red mud, environmental anarchy

A European Commission spokesman said the red sludge was regulated under European Union law but was not necessarily considered a hazardous waste. The factory received a permit from the Hungarian government for handling the sludge in 2006.

International and national environmental laws are written to assist the companies that run the world's mines, farms, factories and processing plants. The owners of MAL Aluminium claim to have been dealing with the waste according to law. But the neoliberal adjustments the World Bank forced upon Hungary, among other countries, were written to make profits, not to protect people or the environment.

The volume of muck that escaped from the red mud reservoir in Hungary was almost as large as the oil spewed into the Gulf of Mexico after the recent BP well rupture. (Associated Press, Oct. 8)

Like the oil spill, there were warnings before the disaster.

"The wall [of the reservoir] did not dis-

integrate in a minute. This should have been detected," Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban told the BBC. (Oct. 8) A blogger noted that on Google Earth, a website offering satellite views, the wall of the containment reservoir was visibly cracked in a photo taken two weeks before the toxic flood. (Observer, Oct. 8)

Disaster management officials expect another huge wave of contaminants to break free of the damaged reservoir containment wall. Hungary's environmental secretary, Zoltan Illes, said, "We don't know whether it will last another day or another week." (Xinhua, Oct. 10)

Illes confirmed that the sludge had a "high content of heavy metals," including carcinogens. If the sludge dries out, he said, these toxins can be blown by the wind and wind up in the human respiratory system. (BBC, Oct. 8)

Greenpeace found levels of arsenic, mercury and chrome. The arsenic level was "double what is usually contained in such red sludge." (BBC, Oct. 8) These heavy metals can cause birth defects. They affect the brain, liver, kidneys and, if they enter the soil, the entire food chain.

The Hungarian government has dumped tons of plaster into the rivers feeding into the Danube to neutralize the alkaline levels of the water, but the heavy metals from the toxic sludge threaten the fish and health of all who live along the rivers. Hungarians consider the company's offer of 110,000 euros for compensation to the villagers an insult to the dead, the injured and those who had to evacuate their homes. (Observer [Britain], Oct. 8)

Capitalist transformation has brought nothing to Hungarian workers and farmers but hardship and devastation. □

35-mile fluid leak: another fracking accident

By Betsey Piette

In what is but the latest in an all-too-long and frequent string of environmental accidents involving natural gas drilling, a section of highway near the town of Hughesville, Pa., located in the upper Susquehanna River Valley was closed Oct. 9 after a low-boy trailer leaked an undetermined amount of frack fluid.

According to police the spill extended as far as 35 to 40 miles. Fluid was leaking from one of a dozen 100-gallon containers on the trailer as it traveled on the highway from Dimock, Pa.

The Williamsport, Pa., Sun-Gazette, which appears to be the only other newspaper covering the spill, quoted Hughesville Police Chief Jason Gill saying, "It's not hazardous at all until it mixes with water, then it becomes as slippery as ice." (Oct. 9)

The paper noted that Gill "said it was unknown how much liquid leaked because all of the containers on the trailer contained various amounts of different substances."

However, Gill, who is not a scientist, doesn't raise questions about how many other cars or trucks may have driven through the chemical fluid, or how much fluid might have run off into area creeks, storm drains or ground water sources.

Nor does Gill ask the most critical question: What toxic or carcinogenic chemicals may have been contained in this undiluted fluid? Since the drilling industry is not required to disclose the chemical composition of fracking fluid, no one knows for sure.

In fact, the gas drilling industry frequently dismisses growing public concerns about the danger of the chemicals used in their drilling process, claiming that the chemicals are only 1 percent of the mix of million of gallons of water and sand used in hydraulic fracking. In the case of the Hughesville spill, the chemicals were 100 percent.

Workers who are assigned to clean up this mess could face exposure to toxic or cancer-causing chemicals. Other drivers whose vehicles came into contact with this spill could unknowingly have carried chemicals to their homes. Are the police and state agencies issuing adequate warnings?

Damage to protected wetlands

The Hughesville spill occurred on the same day that the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection fined a Marcellus Shale driller \$40,000. The driller, Seneca Resources Corp., had illegally built a nearly one-acre impoundment for used drilling fluid on "exceptional value" wetlands in the Tioga State Forest near Wellsboro, Pa. The company was also cited for causing "sediment runoff by failing to institute erosion control best management practices." (Sun-Gazette, Oct. 9)

In June an explosion at a well owned by EOG Resource Inc. in Clearfield County, 90 miles northeast of Pittsburgh, resulted in a 16-hour natural gas and drilling fluid leak into nearby Moshannon State Forest, forcing the evacuation of campers.

In September 2009 a series of spills at a well site run by Cabot Oil and Gas near Dimock, Pa., leaked up to 8,000 gallons of drilling fluid into a nearby creek, causing a major fish kill. Dimock residents, who filed a lawsuit against Cabot for contaminating their water wells in 2008, are still fighting to have the company pick up the tab for a replacement municipal water system.

Challenging industry safety claims

Writer Sharon Kahkonen challenges the impartiality of the gas industry when it comes to the safety of hydraulic fracking. (Ithaca Journal, Sept. 25)

Kahkonen writes: "Representatives of the gas industry have too much vested interest in this issue, and frankly, it is not their job to evaluate the safety of hydrofracking. Their job is to maximize profits for their shareholders. ..."

"Representatives from the gas industry claim hydrofracking is a 60-year-old technology with a proven safety record, and 'there has never been a documented case of ground water contamination from hydrofracking.'"

Kahkonen refers to studies done by Dr. Anthony Ingraffea, an engineer at Cornell University who has been researching fracturing mechanics for 33 years. Ingraffea contends that the more recent practice of horizontal hydrofracking used in New York and Pennsylvania is very different from vertical hydrofracking done in the past.

When industry representatives claim there have been no documented cases of ground water contamination due to

hydrofracking, Kahkonen notes that Ingraffea suggests "they are referring to the actual event of pumping water under high pressure into shale deep underground in order to crack it. This singular event may not be the major threat to our water resources. The real threat may be from fracking fluids near ground level."

Once out of the ground, fracking fluids, laced with toxic chemicals as well as radioactive elements, are held in temporary lagoons at the pad site. "Even with the most leak-proof liners, these lagoons are apt to overflow in areas of heavy rainfall, like in the Northeast," Kahkonen states.

She concludes: "Any honest, thoughtful person would have to agree that horizontal hydrofracking does pose a real threat to our water resources and should not be allowed to proceed until the industry can come up with real solutions. The stakes are too high." □

Left Hook is the quarterly newspaper of the revolutionary socialist organization for young activists, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST). Each edition of *Left Hook* will provide analyses of political events, social movements and revolutionary struggles that impact our world. Commentary, theory, culture and news reporting intersect in the pages of *Left Hook* to provide readers with radical analysis from a Marxist perspective.

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Bullying, bigotry and the struggle solution

The recent spate of suicides by young people who are lesbian, gay, bi or trans or perceived as such by their peers is heartbreaking. It is also a call to action.

We stand with all those stepping forward in solidarity with LGBT youth against the bashers, the bullies. We add our voices to the chorus telling our beautiful, precious children and teens: "Hang in there. It will get better." But we say something else, too. Our message to the youth, LGBT and straight allies alike, is: Join us in the struggle.

It is the struggle that will overturn LGBT oppression. It is the struggle that will do away with ignorance and homophobia. It is the struggle, the mass movement for LGBT liberation over the last 50-plus years, that has already raised consciousness tremendously — that's why there is such an outcry, such an outpouring of support in response to the recent attacks and the suicides. Most people now support full rights for the LGBT community. With more struggle, more will be won over.

Furthermore — and here we want to step out of our editorial box and speak directly to any individual youth whom this message may reach, any young person whose daily school or home life is made miserable by taunting, teasing, physical assault, isolation — if you join the struggle, your own life will improve.

For the struggle is liberating. It strengthens you. It shows you that you're not alone. It provides you with friends and comrades. Through the struggle you find your skills, your power, your righteous rage, and, most important, your voice. You are no longer silenced.

What do we mean by the struggle? We mean uniting with others fighting for the same goals — taking action, militant action, demanding what is right. It's what the Civil Rights Movement did in the 1950s and 60s, when courageous people marched, sat in, did everything they could to overturn the racist Jim Crow laws. It's what unions do when workers strike to defend their wages and benefits.

It's what the LGBT movement has done for many years. For example, Oct. 11 was National Coming Out Day. This day commemorates the great March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights and Action on AIDS that took place on Oct. 11, 1987. Half a million people demonstrated demanding equal rights.

Thanks to actions like that, much has been won. In some states, same-sex couples can marry. In some states, anti-LGBT discrimination is illegal. The federal government, however, does not recognize same-sex marriage. There is no federal bar to discrimination based on sexual identity or gender expression. So there's still much to do. It will take a great resurgence of national struggle, united with the movements against racism, for women's rights, for union power, because unity is key to winning concrete victories for all — but it can be done.

For every bully, for every homophobe who calls you names and tries to make you feel hopeless and small, there are millions who support you, wish you well, are fighting back against the bashers and bigots. There's a place for you here with us, striding side by side with sisters and brothers who've got your back. This is the power of the struggle. It'll save your life. □

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Interview with Krsljanin:

'Serbia is an occupied country'

Continued from page 8

Why did the leading Western countries carry out such an aggressive intervention policy in Yugoslavia and Serbia?

Since the early 1990s there have been not many different wars in Yugoslavia — in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo — it was all one war: that of the West against Yugoslavia. In this statement I fully agree with Milosevic. Former U.S. President George Bush Sr., while speaking during the celebration of German reunification, discussed the elimination of the consequences of the Versailles Treaty in Europe. A key point regarding Versailles at the beginning of the 20th century was to weaken Germany in favor of the Eastern European countries, which Germany had considered as satellites within the "Central Europe" doctrine.

Thus, those in Versailles for the first time recognized Yugoslavia as a state. Until Yugoslavia's breakup, Catholic and Muslim groups in Yugoslavia were used by Western powers to counteract Russian influence, which was based on historical closeness with Serbs. In the 1990s, however, a resurgent Germany's role was to serve as a NATO member to weaken Russia and Eastern Europe, which was to be transformed into a "Euro-Atlantic region" — but of course only as a colony. In line with the long-cherished desire of the British, Serbia especially should be weakened as a potential ally of Russia.

With Milosevic it could never happen. Kosovo is now home to Camp Bondsteel, the largest U.S. military base in Europe, in the area of the proposed major oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea.

Did Milosevic's fall pay off for Serbia's population?

Immediately after Oct. 5, 2000, the

Milosevic-SPS dominated Serbian Parliament was rendered powerless through the formation of a transitional government. Early parliamentary elections were held. DOS won a two-thirds majority and named Zoran Djindjic, the number one favorite of the West, as prime minister, the most powerful office of Yugoslav politics. Thus, the coup was completed.

Serbia is now an occupied country. Foreign "advisers" are sitting in government, army, police and secret service. The economy is flattened; the banking system in foreign hands. Privatization and sale of large companies bring poverty and hunger to Serbia. The army consists of only four brigades; the media have been silenced, the politicians corrupted. Montenegro has separated and Kosovo has declared its independence.

And while before Oct. 5, 2000, the Belgrade District Court tried in absentia and convicted the NATO leaders of war crimes, sentencing them to 20 years in prison, the sentence was repealed shortly after the coup. The head of the government TV station was found responsible for the death of his staff — those who died from NATO bombs. Afterwards Milosevic and several high-ranking state officials and generals were delivered to the NATO Inquisition in The Hague, in violation of the Constitution.

Thus nothing has improved. On the contrary, our remote-controlled president and the choir of the bought politicians and "experts" talk about great victories on the road to joining the European Union. But it seems obvious that this way is not the right way.

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Workers' Party of Korea elects leaders

By Deirdre Griswold

Since 1948, the year of the founding of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, there have been only three national conferences of the Workers' Party of Korea. These events, under the party's charter, can take place between national party congresses in order to debate and decide the party's direction, policy and personnel changes.

Each of the three conferences has dealt with important junctures facing this embattled country, which has survived more than six decades of unrelenting aggression and hostility from 11 different U.S. administrations, headed by both Democrats and Republicans. The Koreans call their party "the general staff of the Korean Revolution," underscoring their constant need to defend the social gains won through their epic struggles against first Japanese and then U.S. imperialism.

The first two party conferences were held in March 1958 and October 1966. The third conference of the party was held this September 28-29. Delegates from all over the north of Korea met in Pyongyang, the capital, to chart the course for the future development of the Korean Revolution and elect the leaders of the WPK.

As usual, U.S. imperialism, together with the rightwing, pro-imperialist party ruling in the southern half of the Korean Peninsula, had been trying to put the DPRK on the defensive by blaming it for the sinking of a south Korean ship in March. However, outside of Washington's

closest imperialist allies, the world refused to accept that the DPRK was to blame and the frantic U.S. efforts to line up condemnation fell flat.

Even as the conference was taking place, however, the U.S. and south Korea were carrying out huge joint military exercises and an anti-submarine drill in the waters around the Korean Peninsula, some of which involved a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

The Pyongyang meeting exuded confidence in the Workers' Party and its ability to continue to modernize the economy of the DPRK while keeping the country's defenses strong and flexible.

The delegates elected 125 members and 105 alternates to the party's Central Committee. That body then met and elected a Political Bureau of 17 members and 15 alternate members, as well as a Presidium of five members. This structure ensures that the experience and dedication of the entire party is reflected in the choice of leaders.

The conference reelected Kim Jong Il as party general secretary and head of the Central Military Commission of the WPK. Kim has been in charge of the party and the nation since 1997. In that time, the DPRK has weathered many crises and military threats from the U.S. without giving in to pressure.



The newly elected Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea. Seated at center is General Secretary Kim Jong Il. PHOTO: KCNA

It also elected Kim Jong Un to the Central Committee and made him vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission of the WPK. The commander of the Korean People's Army had awarded him the rank of general before the conference met.

Despite comprehensive economic sanctions imposed by Washington in an effort to weaken the DPRK's centrally planned economy, it continues to develop according to socialist principles that put the needs of the people first. As a result, literacy is 99 percent for both males and females and everyone is guaranteed jobs, housing and health care.

In a letter to the National Committee of Workers World Party in the United States, the Central Committee of the WPK wrote that their party "is now engaged in an energetic struggle to effect great innovation and a big leap forward in building a great, powerful and prosperous nation, relying on the revolutionary zeal of all the party members, the KPA servicepersons and the Korean people that has soared

after the party conference."

In an answering letter to Comrade Kim Jong Il, congratulating him on the success of the party conference, WWP wrote that "The working class here in the United States is suffering massive unemployment and a loss of housing, education and health care due to the worldwide capitalist crisis. More than ever, we need to forge anti-capitalist unity between U.S. workers and the struggling peoples of the world.

"Solidarity with the DPRK and all the Korean people resisting U.S. domination and war threats will continue to be a crucial part of Workers World Party's program as we combat racism and great power chauvinism and build an independent, working class movement for socialism in the United States."

The conference was followed by a celebration of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Workers' Party, in which hundreds of thousands of people participated in mass artistic displays, dancing and calisthenics. □

EU asked to address political prisoner's plight

International struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

Continued from page 3

conditions for years is torture. Capital punishment is also a form of terror, used to frighten people from resisting oppression and dictatorship.

"African-American journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal — the voice of the voiceless — is a key symbol of struggle against the death penalty. For nearly 30 years he has sat on death row, convicted in a trial notable for its errors and racism. High representative Ashton should raise the case with U.S. authorities — in the fight against the death penalty there is no room for double standards. In the fight against the death penalty there applies only one standard: unconditional rejection." (The Parliament, Oct. 7)

The European Parliament passed a resolution Oct. 2 opposing the executions of both Mumia Abu-Jamal and Troy Davis

of Georgia. Davis, who has also won international support, remains on death row for a crime he did not commit.

German Left Party delegate Sabine Loesing was pleased that the resolution passed with broad support. She said she would make sure that adequate pressure was placed on Ashton's office to raise this issue during meetings with the Obama administration. (www.sabine-loesing.de, Oct. 9) □

Mumia Abu-Jamal's book, **'JAILHOUSE LAWYERS:**

Prisoners defending prisoners v. the U.S.A.' is available at Leftbooks.com



Abayomi Azikiwe distributes WWs at Oct. 2 jobs rally, Washington, D.C.

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WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

New Bolivian law guarantees equality

By Donna Lazarus

On Oct. 8 Evo Morales, president of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, signed into law a new bill that prohibits racism and all forms of discrimination. This is a significant step forward for Bolivia's majority Indigenous population and for the Afro-Bolivian community as well, both of which have suffered 500 years of oppression.

As Vice President Álvaro García Linera explained, "The bill protects and guarantees equal treatment for all people." The law provides penalties for any form of racism and discrimination based on sex, color, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, origin, culture, nationality, citizenship, language, religion, ideology, political affiliation or philosophy, civil status, social or economic class, occupation, education, disability, pregnancy or other condition.

The law provides for the creation of a new government institution called the National Council Against Racism and All Forms of Discrimination, the head of which will be chosen by the Senate for a five-year term. This council will replace the present government office, which has been systematically recording and investigating racist incidents for several years.

The law prohibits racism and discrimination by any government agency, in any public sphere, or by any private group or individual.

In a country with 34 separate Indigenous groups, a provision calling for interpreters for any judicial or administrative proceeding is a gain in the struggle for those groups' rights. Other guarantees

are access to public or private education, equal job opportunities and work conditions, access to professional or traditional medical care and the participation of the patient in all medical decisions, among many other basic human rights that are now protected by this law.

Right-wing opponents immediately objected to the law, saying it infringes on the rights of newspapers to free expression. García Linera noted, "This bill simply states that the media cannot disseminate or allow dissemination of messages with racist and discriminatory content." He went on to say that "we have to combat a culture of racism. ... Do not forget that until four years ago the indigenous were discriminated against and abused, handicapped in their social and economic presence with racist epithets and attacks."

Racism permeated Bolivian society beginning in the 1500s, when Spanish conquistadores enslaved Indigenous men, forcing them to work in silver mines, where most of them died. Later wealthy landowners instituted the system of "pongueaje," in which Indigenous people were forced to labor as serfs, their lands stolen and their rights destroyed. Even the urban working class had to fight for the right to ride public transportation in the 1940s. This struggle was won by the Federación Obrera Femenina (Women Workers Federation), which was founded by organized women market vendors who were all Indigenous.

This new anti-racism law is another triumph for the working class and oppressed of Bolivia. □

Protestas masivas detienen golpe de estado policial en Ecuador

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

El pueblo ecuatoriano salió masivamente a las calles para enfrentarse a la Policía Nacional y evitar un golpe de estado y el posible asesinato del Presidente Rafael Correa el 30 de septiembre. Un grupo de 800 de estos policías mantuvo al presidente cautivo por 14 horas en el Hospital de la Policía en Quito, hasta que unidades militares lo trajeron de regreso al palacio presidencial.

Como ocurrió en el golpe de estado de la derecha que secuestró y derrocó al presidente legítimo de Honduras Manuel Zelaya en junio de 2009, este último intento de golpe de estado fue dirigido hacia un país que eligió unirse a la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA). Fue un golpe dirigido contra los eventos políticos progresistas que acontecen en América Latina y que desafían los intereses imperialistas de los EEUU.

La Embajadora de EEUU en Ecuador, Heather Hodges, es una conocida diplomática anti-cubana de derecha, quien estuvo estrechamente relacionada con la genocida dictadura de Ríos Montt en Guatemala. En 2008 defendió el papel de EEUU cuando el ministro de Defensa de Ecuador Javier Ponce, reveló que diplomáticos estadounidenses participaron en la corrupción de la policía y oficiales de las fuerzas armadas.

La mayoría de los analistas progresistas atribuyó la derrota del golpe de estado del 30 de septiembre a tres factores: en primer lugar, la respuesta de las masas en Ecuador, en segundo lugar, el inmediato apoyo internacional al orden constitucional de los gobiernos progresistas de Venezuela, Bolivia y Cuba, seguidos por todos los demás en América Latina, junto con movilizaciones masivas en toda América del Sur, y en tercer lugar, a la valiente actitud de Correa al rehusarse a ceder ante las amenazas de la policía.

Dado que los detalles de este acto atroz han sido ampliamente divulgados, este artículo tratará de presentar los hechos más importantes que ayudarán a poner el intento de golpe en el contexto de los acontecimientos políticos en Ecuador y América Latina. El Vicepresidente de la Confederación de Trabajadores del Ecuador (CTE), Edgar Sarango, dio a Workers World/Mundo Obrero un poco de ese contexto, en una entrevista el 4 de octubre.

“La CTE ha sido firme sobre los últimos acontecimientos”, dijo Sarango. “La CTE sigue la posición política del Partido Comunista, y como vieron, estábamos en las calles respondiendo contra esos sectores oportunistas que querían tomar el poder mediante un golpe de Estado.

“Estamos muy claros sobre la posición,

el carácter de la Revolución Ciudadana y el Presidente Correa, entendemos que no es un gobierno verdaderamente de izquierda, sino un gobierno reformista, con claras intenciones de avanzar hacia la izquierda. Depende de nosotros, los movimientos sociales, los partidos de izquierda, apoyar y, sobre todo, organizar de manera que las condiciones verdaderas se den para que el gobierno no gire a la derecha, porque es un gobierno que, aunque no es de izquierda, no ha cerrado las puertas a los sectores de la izquierda.

“En ese sentido, nosotros, la izquierda, debemos hacer el trabajo político-organizativo. Estamos muy claros al respecto”.

Fue un intento de asesinato

Ahora a los acontecimientos del 30 de septiembre.

Usando la excusa de que una nueva ley cambió algunos de sus salarios y beneficios, un sector de la policía nacional se rebeló contra el gobierno de Correa el 30 de septiembre. Correa fue al edificio del Regimiento de la Policía en un intento de negociar con estos policías descontentos. Después, los policías se amotinaron, gritando insultos contra Correa. Ellos pidieron su renuncia y elogiaron al ex presidente Lucio Gutiérrez.

Muchos ecuatorianos consideran a Gutiérrez como un traidor, porque su campaña presidencial estuvo basada en una plataforma progresista que se oponía a las políticas neoliberales, pero casi inmediatamente se retractó y abrazó un tratado de libre comercio con George Bush. Un masivo levantamiento popular hizo renunciar a Gutiérrez en 2005.

Una turba de furiosos policías rodeó a Correa y su pequeño equipo de escolta cuando salían del edificio, lanzando bombas de gas lacrimógeno hacia su cabeza e intentaron sofocarlo tratando de quitarle su máscara de gas. Mientras el presidente caminaba con un bastón debido a una reciente cirugía de rodilla, también trataron de golpearle las rodillas. Los escoltas de Correa pudieron llevarlo hospital, donde fue rodeado por la policía amotinada que amenazaba con matarlo.

Cuando la gente se enteró de lo sucedido, miles comenzaron a reunirse frente al Palacio Presidencial de Carondelet, con la esperanza de liberarlo. Muchos/as de ellos/as también desafiaron el gas pimienta y gases lacrimógenos para rodear a la policía amotinada en el hospital.

El ejército fue más lento en responder. Correa había dicho que quería que el ejército esperase para evitar un baño de sangre, pero el hecho de que los generales se mantuvieran en silencio durante tanto tiempo mientras que su Presidente estaba en un peligro real indica ambiva-

lencia. La escolta personal de Correa y el personal del hospital impidieron cualquier ataque contra él.

Sólo al caer la noche fue que alrededor de 600 tropas de élite irrumpieron en el hospital mientras la policía les disparaba. La policía continuó disparando a una camioneta blindada que llevaba a Correa, dando en el blanco con cinco balas y matando a uno de sus escoltas cuando un poderoso proyectil perforó su chaleco antibalas. Hasta el 4 de octubre CNNE reportaba 10 muertes, incluyendo un joven seguidor de Correa.

Fuerzas desestabilizadoras

Mientras la policía estaba amotinada en Quito, grupos políticos y sociales derechistas en todo el país pedían una revuelta contra el gobierno. Cerraron el aeropuerto internacional de Quito y las principales carreteras hacia la capital. Los medios de comunicación privados reportaron los acontecimientos en forma distorsionada. Uno de los abogados de Lucio Gutiérrez intentó silenciar a la televisión nacional del gobierno, irrumpiendo en las oficinas de TV Ecuador y rompiendo las puertas de vidrio.

Gutiérrez, quien se ha opuesto a Correa desde que éste ganó las elecciones presidenciales de 2006, pidió la disolución de la Asamblea Nacional y la celebración inmediata de elecciones presidenciales. Correa había sido reelegido en 2009.

Pero a pesar de esta caótica situación, la gente en todo el país se manifestó en apoyo de su presidente, defendiendo apasionadamente la Constitución y su Revolución Ciudadana.

Respuesta popular e internacional

Los gobiernos de América Latina rápidamente condenaron el intento de golpe de Estado. La UNASUR convocó a una reunión de emergencia para el 1º de octubre. La Organización de Estados Americanos se reunió con urgencia en Washington. Ya no sólo Cuba, Venezuela y Bolivia condenaban el golpe de Estado, sino hasta los regímenes de derecha en Perú y Colombia se vieron obligados a criticar la revuelta de la policía. Washington, aunque tíbidamente, también se vio obligado a condenar las acciones en contra de Correa.

A lo largo de América Latina la gente se manifestó de inmediato en muchos países, incluyendo una masiva protesta en Venezuela. Organizaciones en muchos países enviaron mensajes de apoyo a Correa, entre ellos el Centro de Acción Internacional.

En una conferencia de prensa en la Misión de Ecuador a las Naciones Unidas un día más tarde, el 1º de octubre, a la que asistieron miembros/as de los medios de comunicación en español, unos/as 85 miembros/as de las comunidades ecuatorianas y latinoamericanas del área metropolitana de Nueva York y cuatro cónsules ecuatorianos de Nueva York, Connecticut y Nueva Jersey, condenaron la actuación de la policía, llamándola un intento de golpe de Estado. Miembros del Comité de Solidaridad con América Latina y el Caribe del Centro de Acción Internacional participaron en este acto.

Los/as ecuatorianos/as distribuyeron

copias de su Constitución, que garantiza el derecho de los/as ecuatorianos/as a controlar su propia tierra, así como también los derechos de los Pueblos Indígenas. La Constitución Ecuatoriana es un pequeño folleto impreso con la frase, “de la Revolución Ciudadana con infinito amor”.

Después de la conferencia de prensa, 100 personas marcharon hacia las Naciones Unidas, donde se plantaron frente al edificio de la Asamblea General agitando banderas de Ecuador y cantando, “¡El pueblo unido jamás será vencido!” y “¡Correa, amigo, el pueblo está contigo!”

De regreso en la Misión del Ecuador ante las Naciones Unidas, el Embajador Francisco Carrión dijo a algunos/as de los/as invitados/as, “se hizo historia hoy en el Ecuador. El pueblo no tuvo miedo. Ellos/as demostraron su amor por su presidente y su nación. Un golpe de estado no puede volver a ocurrir en el Ecuador”, dijo.

“La democracia y el derecho constitucional han prevalecido, y el pueblo ecuatoriano estuvo vigilante ante esta amenaza a su soberanía. Los responsables serán castigados”.

¿Por qué el intento de golpe de estado?

El actual gobierno del Ecuador está en la lista negra del imperialismo. Al igual que los miembros del ALBA, Bolivia en 2008, Venezuela en 2003 y Honduras en 2009, la oligarquía pro EEUU en el Ecuador no quiere formar parte de una democracia participativa donde el gobierno ayuda a los sectores más desposeídos de la sociedad. Quieren un régimen que trabaje directamente para la oligarquía o los intereses de las corporaciones transnacionales.

Desde que Correa asumió el poder, se han producido cambios importantes y progresistas en el Ecuador. El gobierno canceló el contrato con el Pentágono para el uso de una base militar en Manta. Se promulgó una nueva constitución muy progresista a favor del pueblo. Y Correa se ha negado a aceptar un tratado de “libre comercio” con EEUU. El Ecuador incluso se unió al ALBA.

El imperialismo estadounidense todavía tiene mucho poder en el Ecuador como principal socio comercial y financiador del país, así como entrenador de la fuerza policial de Ecuador. Organizaciones de Washington vinculadas a la CIA como la USAID han dado millones de dólares a las llamadas organizaciones “pro-democracia” en el Ecuador que buscan el derrocamiento de Correa. La Voz de América tiene muchas estaciones afiliadas en todo el Ecuador que alimentan con desinformación sobre el gobierno a los pobres y las masas indígenas, tratando de ponerles en contra del presidente Correa.

Haya estado o no Washington “activamente” implicado en este intento, su apoyo al golpe de Estado en Honduras y al actual gobierno ilegítimo de Porfirio Lobo ha animado a la oligarquía y a las fuerzas de derecha en el Ecuador y en el resto de la región.

La corresponsal de WW/MO de la Ciudad de Nueva York Heather Cottin contribuyó a este artículo.

Siguiente: La dolarización y el papel de EEUU en el Ecuador

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