

WORKERS WORLD

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NOV. 18, 2010 Vol. 52, No. 45 50¢

WALL STREET PROVOKES TRADE WAR

Fed bailout to kill jobs, spur poverty & inflation

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News

A recent decision by the Federal Reserve to provide the bankers another \$600 billion in bailout funds demonstrates the government's continuing failure, even under Democratic Party leadership, to provide any relief for working people and the oppressed.

This new handout has been condemned by some of the leading African, Asian and Latin American governments. In South Africa, Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan said, "Developing countries, including South Africa, will bear the brunt of the U.S. decision to open its flood gates without due consideration of the consequences for other nations." (French Press Agency, Nov. 5)

Gordhan pointed out, "Most of the \$600 billion that the Federal Reserve will pump into the U.S. economy will find its way into the financial markets of emerging market countries, where these dollar flows will have the effect of strengthening emerging market currencies."

Artificially strengthening currencies in the developing states will decrease their exports and exacerbate their existing crises, already worsened by the world economic downturn.

Brazil, China and other states within the G-20 have complained about the move, which is taking

place just ahead of a meeting of the body in Seoul, south Korea. In Seoul there was to have been a joint agreement on how to address the global financial crisis. The unilateral action by the U.S. financial sector illustrates ruling-class desperation to maintain the facade of an economic recovery amid continuing high unemployment and increasing poverty rates.

Wall Street met the \$600 billion injection into the banking system with jubilation, though the Nov. 6 Financial Times noted in a headline, "Wall Street trades at its highest since Lehman's fall, but can the rally last?"

In addition to the massive supply of liquidity to the U.S. banking system, the Obama administration's treasury secretary announced other proposals to limit current account surpluses and deficits for all states involved in the G-20.

Deputy Foreign Minister Cui Tiankai of China responded: "We believe a discussion about a current account target misses the whole point. If you look at the global economy, there are many issues that merit more attention — for example, the question of quantitative easing." (Financial Times, Nov. 5) "Quantitative easing" translates into a central bank allowing the government to increase the money supply — i.e., print more money — which usually inflates the currency.

Continued on page 9

STOP FBI RAIDS

National campaign launched

4



JUSTICE FOR OSCAR GRANT

Protests, labor support

6

ELECTION RESULTS

Why many stayed away

7

TIME IS RUNNING OUT

On job benefits, tax cuts

Editorial 10



Activists in Philadelphia 'We are all Mumia'

WW PHOTOS: JOE PIETTE



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More than 500 people, mostly African Americans and youth, mobilized for a noontime outdoor rally Nov. 9 in support of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The rally lasted through a hearing of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that argued on whether the death sentence would be reinstated against Mumia, who has main-

tained his innocence since being railroaded to death row in 1982. The court's ruling will be announced at a later date. Supporters for Mumia included a delegation from the Transport Workers Union Local 100; Charles Barron, the New York gubernatorial candidate for the Freedom Party; Free Mumia Coalition (NYC), International

Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal and the International Action Center. Activists traveled from as far away as California, Texas, Arizona, Germany and France to stand with Mumia. A more detailed article on the Nov. 9 protest and hearing will appear in an upcoming WW.

— Monica Moorehead

A serious appeal

Everyone has to make decisions on which bills to pay and which to forego. This is not a bill. But it's a serious appeal for money.

Why is giving to Workers World newspaper important? Perhaps this 1931 poem by Bertolt Brecht says it best:

A Bed for the Night

*I hear that in New York
At the corner of 26th Street and Broadway
A man stands every evening during the winter months
And gets beds for the homeless there
By appealing to passers-by
It won't change the world
It won't improve relations among men
It will not shorten the age of exploitation
But a few men have a bed for the night
For a night the wind is kept from them
The snow meant for them falls on the roadway.
Don't put down the book on reading this, man.
A few people have a bed for the night
For a night the wind is kept from them
The snow meant for them falls on the roadway
But it won't change the world
It won't improve relations among men
It will not shorten the age of exploitation.*

Brecht wrote this in the depths of the Great Depression. In his native Germany, things were even worse. So why did he write about New York?

Because all over the world, progressives realized that what happened in the United States would either advance or hold back their own struggles for social change. This holds true even more so today. From Bolivia to Greece, from France to the Philippines, the people are hoping for a renewal here of class struggle against the world-striding oligarchs on Wall Street and the warlords in Washington.

Brecht was reminding those whose hearts were touched by the misery of the unemployed that much more had to be done than just putting a coin or even a bill in a supplicant's cup.

Capitalism at that time was in crisis from Germany to the U.S. But it recovered, largely through the most destructive war in history, in which 70 million people died and the U.S., unleashing the destructive potential of the atom bomb, became the world's superpower.

Now we are in another great crisis and the same questions remain. Will the suffering caused by capitalism usher in a movement of the masses strong enough to challenge the hedge fund barons and the foreclosing bankers? Or will the rightwing and their corporate sponsors divide the workers with racism, sexism, homophobia, vilification of Muslims and attacks on immigrants?

Workers World is one of the very few remaining newspapers on the left in this country that every week puts out both a print and online edition.

It is the ONLY one that consistently gives a voice to activists in the Black, Latino/a, women's, youth, lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer and immigrant movements while also standing up against imperialist war-mongering from Iraq and Afghanistan to Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and Korea.

It is the ONLY one that fights for socialism at home while recognizing and supporting the gains that countries trying to build socialism have made despite Cold War threats, blockades and sanctions.

We're caught in the economic squeeze, too. We need to raise \$60,000 to keep publishing our paper. It's not for salaries. We have an all-volunteer staff. It's for rent and printers' bills and postage and all the other necessities.

Please, think seriously about what this newspaper means to you and help us make our goal.

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

★ In the U.S.

- Fed bailout to kill jobs, spur poverty & inflation 1
- Activists in Philadelphia 'We are all Mumia' 1
- Michigan restaurant workers still 'hungry for justice' 3
- Imperialism, labor and the revolutionary perspective 3
- Meeting pledges to 'stop grand jury' 4
- Coalition plans April 9 anti-war action 4
- MSU struggle demands end to 'rape culture' 5
- Fracking protest calls for industry ban 5
- Protests erupt as killer cop gets slap on wrist 6
- Suit challenges increased racial profiling 6
- Labor Council praises Justice for Grant actions 6
- Behind the low voter turnout 7
- Barron on 'Like It Is' 7

★ Around the world

- Union leaders from Americas to meet 8
- Pension reform passes, worker anger grows 8
- Capitalism endangers human civilization 8
- Haiti catastrophe avoided, crises continue 9
- China's supercomputer shakes the Pentagon 10
- Condolences over Cuban plane crash 10
- The media and Gaza, part 2 11

★ Editorials

- Time is running out 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Redadas del FBI condenadas 12
- Protesta contra pena del muerte 12

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Sat., Nov. 13 8 am Registration **9 am – 7 pm Conference sessions** @ School Auditorium

Sun., Nov. 14 9 am Registration **10 am – 3 pm Conference sessions** @ School Auditorium

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

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Vol. 52, No. 45 • Nov. 18, 2010

Closing date: Nov. 9, 2010

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at www.workers.org/email.php.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

Michigan restaurant workers

Still 'hungry for justice' after year of protests

By Martha Grevatt and Bryan G. Pfeifer
Detroit

The Restaurant Opportunities Center-United of Michigan celebrated the first anniversary of its campaign against the Andiamo Restaurant chain Nov. 5 with a rousing picket line.

Nearly every single Friday during the past year, in sweltering heat and bitter cold, ROC has tirelessly protested outside the Dearborn, Mich., restaurant. A host of labor, community, student and faith organizations are involved in the campaign. Working on many fronts, from organizing to media work, University of Michigan students have played an important role in this struggle.

Highlights of the last year include a historic report by ROC exposing and detailing the Metro Detroit restaurant industry and the widespread low wages, unsafe working conditions and racist and sexist treatment by bosses against workers of color, immigrants and women; the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO coming on board to support the campaign and encouraging their member unions to do the same; and a recently-announced UAW boycott of all Andiamo restaurants in Michigan.

The UAW sent a strong delegation to the anniversary protest, which numbered

close to 100. The action also drew supporters from the Service Employees, Machinists, Steel Workers, American Federation of Teachers and other unions, as well as Jobs With Justice, Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs, National Lawyers Guild and prominent churches. They carried ROC-Michigan's trademark signs — "Hungry for Justice/Hambre de Justicia" — and chanted, "Cheating workers is a crime, pay your workers overtime!"

ROC-Michigan took on the upscale 10-restaurant chain after workers, mainly immigrant women of color, were fired after complaining of slave wages, unpaid overtime, sexual harassment and other abuses. The National Labor Relations Board recently ruled in favor of Ethiopian-born Naome Debebe-Bogale, forcing Andiamo to pay back wages and clear her file of discipline.

Management was also ordered to post notices stating that "federal law gives the right to form, join or assist a union" and that "we will not do anything to interfere with these rights," and prohibiting interrogation, surveillance, forcing workers to sign papers agreeing to "overly broad rules" or otherwise discouraging organizing.

Participants wrapped up the anniversary picket line by marching into the restaur-



WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

Andiamo workers say: "Cheating workers is a crime, pay your workers overtime!"

rant to present a cardboard birthday cake to Andiamo management. The bosses responded by calling the Dearborn cops, who aggressively shooed workers away from Andiamo's lawn.

"It's been a year on this campaign and we've built a lot of power and we're still hungry for justice," Minsu Longiaru, a ROC-Michigan organizer, told Workers World at an after-picket celebration. "The outpouring of support that's come from the labor movement and from the community has been incredible. It's made all the difference in this struggle. It's why we are where we are today.

"This kind of support from the community is so important," said Longiaru, "because it shows restaurant workers they are not alone. This kind of community support shows that if you do choose to stand the community will have your back."

UAW President Bob King said at the celebration gathering: "We are supporting the restaurant workers and ROC because of the injustices that have occurred against those workers. I think it's really important for people to stand up for one another. We need to build a much broader social justice movement. So wherever there's injustice we need to speak up, stand out and be there for others."

"We will continue to be out there every week and will do what it takes to win justice for these workers," said Longiaru.

For more information see ROC's Facebook page or visit rocunited.org/affiliates/michigan. □

WWP discussion document

Imperialism, the global labor market and the revolutionary perspective

Following are excerpts from Part 2 of the document "Capitalism in Crisis" by Fred Goldstein, written for discussion at the Workers World Party National Conference taking place on Nov. 13-14 in New York. Goldstein is also author of the book "Low-Wage Capitalism."

When Lenin wrote his book ["Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism"], the ruling classes were using a small portion of their super-profits stolen from the colonies to bribe the labor leadership at home and create a broad, privileged upper layer of the working class.

Now, however, with global wage competition under the regime of modern-day imperialism, the capitalist class has orchestrated a "race to the bottom" among the different sections of the global working class. Setting worker against worker and putting workers in the imperialist countries in competition with low-wage workers around the world on a job-for-job basis is destroying the privileges of sectors of the working class, mainly white males, who dominated the labor movement.

The wholesale destruction of privilege is a new aspect of imperialism in the era of the scientific-technological revolution and the post-Soviet period, and must be understood as a new development since Lenin wrote his brilliant analysis. His work still stands as the foundation for understanding imperialism as the rule of monopoly finance capital. But the development of the productive forces and advances in capitalist globalization have transformed the class structure of the world working class and leveled it downwards. This will ultimately strengthen the revolutionary perspective.

Laws of Marxism are still valid

The way to understand the underlying cause of the present crisis is to under-

stand the role of the development of technology under capitalism and its effect on the working class.

The late Sam Marcy, chairperson and founder of Workers World Party, in a very important book entitled "High Tech, Low Pay: A Marxist Analysis of the Changing Character of the Working Class," published in 1986, analyzed the early stages of the high-tech revolution and its effect on the working class in the United States.

In a section devoted to its impact on the unions, he traced the phases of development of the productive forces under capitalism from the manufacturing phase of simple cooperation to the industrial revolution and large-scale machinery to mass production — primarily assembly line production — in the early 20th century. He then described the high-tech phase:

"This [mass production] stage has now given way to another phase of technological development. The mass production period which began with Ford and continued for a period of time after the Second World War was characterized by expansion. But the current stage, the scientific-technological stage, while con-

tinuing some of the earlier tendencies of development, contracts the workforce.

"Like all previous stages of capitalist development, the current phase is based on the utilization of workers as labor power. But its whole tendency is to diminish the labor force while attempting to increase production. The technological revolution is therefore a quantum jump whose devastating effects require a revolutionary strategy to overcome."

There are two irresistible and contradictory tendencies rooted in the capitalist profit system that exist side by side and derive from the same source: the thirst for surplus value, for profit. One is the tendency of capital to expand production to the absolute limit of capacity, given the available technology, in order to maximize market share and profits. The other is the urge of capital to shed labor and reduce wages, also in order to maximize profits. These two tendencies, which are built into the system, must inevitably end up in a crisis of overproduction — a crisis in which the ever-increasing volume of commodities produced by the workers cannot be purchased by them at a price that will yield a profit for the capitalist.

Declining rate of profit

As technology gets more and more expensive, it tends to bring the rate of profit of the capitalists down. The bosses spend larger and larger sums of money to use more efficient machines and equipment and more raw materials to get more and more production out of fewer workers. Thus they use less labor power relative to the instruments of production. The rate of profit is calculated on the amount of surplus value extracted from the workers relative to the total capitalist investment in means of production and raw materials (constant capital) plus wages (variable capital).

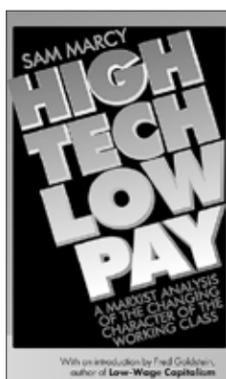
When the rate of profit drops, each capitalist tries to introduce new technology to get an advantage over their rivals. The first to introduce the new technology get an advantage over their rivals who are still using the older, less productive technology. But soon, the new technology spreads. The original advantage of the first capitalist grouping is lost. The new, higher level of productivity becomes the norm. The entire industry or group of industries affected by the new technology is

Continued on page 9

HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

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, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.



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

Low-Wage Capitalism

Fred Goldstein

Meeting pledges to 'stop grand jury'

By John Catalinotto
New York

"Stop the grand jury!" That was the main message of a Nov. 6 meeting here called to form a national defense committee to defend anti-war, anti-racist and international solidarity activists from the Midwest who were hit by FBI raids on their homes on Sept. 24. Some 150 people jammed the back room of the Church of St. Marks on the Bowery on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where they pledged to help build a movement against FBI repression and grand jury intimidation.

Many in the audience were themselves anti-war activists. About half had attended the United National Antiwar Committee's regional meeting at the same location earlier in the day. UNAC spokesperson Joe Lombardo pledged support to those under attack.

Many others were stalwarts of local committees to defend political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal. Many came from political organizations in the city, including a strong delegation from Workers World Party. All were in solidarity with those under attack.

The audience applauded the decision of the 14 subpoenaed activists not to appear before a grand jury. They each signed a letter from their lawyers stating they would refuse to testify. The subpoenas were then withdrawn, but this did not mean that the case was dropped.

At the Nov. 6 meeting, civil liberties attorney Bruce Nestor, who represents those subpoenaed, said the Department of Justice is re-subpoenaing three of the 14 targeted anti-war activists. Nestor explained that they have the choice of testifying against their friends and the movement or potentially serving jail time for



Anti-war activists targeted by FBI establish national defense committee at New York meeting.

WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

contempt of court if they refuse.

Among those speaking were several of the activists whose homes were raided: Steff Yorek, Mick Kelly, Hatem Abudayyeh and Jess Sundin. Tom Burke co-chaired the meeting with Cherrene Horazuk.

Kelly gave an overview of the FBI offensive, which reached as far as California and North Carolina, although most of those subpoenaed were in Minneapolis and Chicago. He also thanked the movement in general for the quick and widespread solidarity expressed in demonstrations in more than 60 cities in the first weeks after the home invasions.

Sundin and Abudayyeh added more political insight, and also gave a feel for the personal side of being ambushed by the FBI and having your home, your life and your children's sense of security disrupted by the brutal state apparatus.

A special report from Noor Elashi, daughter of Holy Land Foundation founder Ghassan Elashi, made it clear that the repressive law making it illegal to give "material aid" of any sort to a group the U.S. State Department decides to call "terrorist" is an ugly, undemocratic weapon. After Ghassan Elashi's first trial

ended in a hung jury, another jury at a retrial found Ghassan guilty of giving aid to the Palestinian liberation group Hamas, which was elected by the people of Gaza and has resisted Israel's blockade of the densely populated area. He was sentenced to 65 years in prison.

Noor Elashi, who has been working on a book about her father's case, has not been allowed to visit him for a year. She pointed out that Attorney General Eric Holder praised the prosecutors and the FBI investigators at an awards ceremony in Washington Oct. 27 for their persecution of the Palestinian philanthropist.

The organizers introduced Sara Flounders of the International Action Center, underlining the contribution that she made to building the meeting. Flounders made an appeal for funds. Both the response to this appeal and many comments showed the breadth of support within the anti-war and progressive movements for those under attack. Ten of the 14 are trade unionists, some are known for organizing the protests at the Republican National Convention and anti-war activities as well as showing solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles in

Colombia and the Middle East.

The audience was clearly heartened that those under attack had refused to cooperate, that this set an example for the movement as a whole; many said it was the only way to stop the grand jury. At least 100 people committed to take to the streets in emergency protests the day after new subpoenas are served.

Some of the activists also made it clear they believed it was completely legitimate to show political solidarity with the liberation movements in Colombia and Palestine.

To anyone knowledgeable of the crimes of U.S. imperialism, it was painful to think that the criminals in the state apparatus, who are responsible for the most horrible murders of the Iraqi and Afghan people, who finance state and paramilitary terror against the people of Colombia, who arm the Israeli terrorist state against the Palestinians, can dare to threaten activists here for taking the side of oppressed peoples fighting for their freedom. Stop the grand jury!

For more information see StopFBI.net. To sign a petition of support, see iacenter.org/stopfbi/□

Regional conference

Coalition plans April 9 anti-war action

By John Catalinotto
New York

The first meeting in New York City of the United National Antiwar Committee put on the map plans for a major regional anti-war action on April 9. More than 300 people packed the main space at the Church of St. Marks on the Bowery on Nov. 6 to hear the coalition's plans and decided to commit to a spring protest.

UNAC co-chairperson Joe Lombardo explained that the meeting was continuing work begun last July when 800 people met at a national conference in Albany, N.Y., and voted to hold major anti-war actions next April in San Francisco and New York.

The Albany conference was notable for opposing any U.S. or Israeli military actions against Iran as well as all U.S. support for Israel. These positions were arrived at after a struggle within the coalition.

UNAC succeeded in attracting support from significant Muslim organizations such as the Muslim Peace Coalition USA. Not only were Muslims and South Asians strong on the podium, they were present throughout the meeting. Hanadi Doleh spoke from Al-Awda, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition and Shoshi Chowdhury spoke from Desis Rising Up & Moving, an organization of South Asians in the New York area. Both speakers are young women active in the struggle. A dramatic moment occurred when Malik Mujahid, founder of the MPC, called on all Muslims present to stand — and it looked like 50 people stood up.



Hanadi Doleh of Al-Awda, The Palestine Right to Return Coalition.

WWW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

WESPAC Executive Director Nada Khader, World Can't Wait, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Raging Grannies, Thomas Merton Center and Connecticut United for Peace were also on the program, plus a delegation of anti-war activists the FBI targeted this fall.

The organizers packed a hefty agenda into four intense hours. At the same time, to demonstrate the growing breadth of support for the relatively new coalition in the New York area, they invited speakers from more than 25 organizations to give short talks or one-minute callouts of solidarity. Unlike the Albany conference, where points were debated and voted on,

this meeting aimed at energizing support for the spring mobilization.

Discussion took place in three panels:

1. Building an anti-war movement that integrates Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran.
2. Defending our movement: Fighting the attacks on Muslim Americans and immigrants, including greetings from targets of FBI raids and government repression.
3. Bringing the war dollars home: Impact of the wars on Black and working-class communities.

The panels illustrated UNAC's aims of including opposition to U.S. intervention in all areas, whatever the character of the resistance movements or the pretexts for U.S. military attacks. They also addressed the war on the workers at home, including defending the Muslim community and extending support to all immigrants.

Ralph Poynter brought before the meeting the struggle around political prisoner and attorney Lynne Stewart. Suzanne Ross urged support for Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is in danger of having the death penalty reimposed.

Shaheena Parveen of DRUM, the mother of an imprisoned South Asian youth, gave a keynote talk on his case and the repression of Muslims in the U.S. In the second panel, Abayomi Azikiwe of the Michigan Emergency Committee against War and Injustice brought up the case of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, an Afri-

can-American Muslim leader killed in an FBI attack a year ago and the struggle it awoke in the Detroit area.

To strong applause, Teresa Gutierrez of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights made an appeal that the "anti-war movement join the demonstration of the immigrants on May 1 and that the immigrant rights movement join the anti-war struggle on April 9."

Marvin Holland, who works as community liaison for the Transport Workers Union, offered to work with UNAC organizers to try to bring more young Black workers to participate in the next activities. Larry Holmes of the Bail Out the People Movement noted the importance of the anti-war movement paying attention to the fight against New York state's budget cuts, which may be coming to a crisis point next spring.

After the panels, a group of high-school youth, who had just come from a protest in Union Square, took turns speaking to the meeting about their concerns.

As the meeting was drawing to a close, Lombardo and Sara Flounders of the International Action Center introduced campaigns building for April 9.

The coalition has already set one campaign to "Bring our war \$\$ home," which addresses the question of federal, state and local budgets, along with campaigns to organize teach-ins, do environmental outreach, fight anti-Muslim bigotry, do solidarity with Iran and end torture. The steps to build for an action next spring are underway. □

Michigan State University

Struggle demands end to 'rape culture'

By Megan Spencer
East Lansing, Mich.

About 50 members and supporters of the Coalition Against Sexual Violence demonstrated Oct. 22 outside of the Izzone Campout at Michigan State University. At the annual event, named for MSU Spartans men's basketball coach Tom Izzo, student basketball fans camp out for 24 hours to try to get season tickets in the student section at the Breslin Center.

The feminist coalition of student activists was formed after allegations of rape against two men's basketball players went unacknowledged by MSU's administration. Although a police report was filed immediately after the alleged assault occurred in a dorm at the end of August, and police recommended criminal sexual conduct 1 charges, no charges have been filed against the assailants, who remain in university housing and on the basketball team.

During the protest, demonstrators held signs, chanted and marched around the field where the Izzone Campout was held. Some of the posters read "Don't Cheer Rape," "Expel Rapists," "Consent Not Coercion" and "Every Victim is Someone's Child." Demonstrators chanted, "Hey

hey! Ho ho! Sexual violence has got to go!" among other anti-rape messages.

During the demonstration, coalition members were repeatedly approached by fans who insisted that the Izzone Campout was an inappropriate venue to protest the alleged assault. This attitude seemed to be relatively widespread.

Several days after the demonstration The State News, MSU's student newspaper, published a letter by an Izzone participant in which the writer criticized the protesters for supposedly ignoring facts and disrespecting the judicial system. (Stateneews.com, Oct. 25) The writer described the alleged rape as "sketchy" and then dismissed the allegations. These are precisely the attitudes that the coalition seeks to address.

Activists target MSU's lack of action

In response to this letter, the State News on Nov. 3 published a letter written by the Coalition Against Sexual Violence. It pointed out that even with no action on the part of the prosecutor, MSU's administration and Athletic Department could still choose to take disciplinary action against the players.

"The Coalition does not ... accuse basketball fans of supporting Izzo's inaction

with regard to this case, in part because we suspect that many basketball fans are not even aware of the alleged assault. ... The Coalition criticizes Izzo's failure to remove the alleged players from his team; as long as those players remain on the court, basketball fans will find themselves cheering on alleged assailants whether they support Izzo's response to the incident or not."

The coalition also addressed the "rape culture" prevalent on MSU's campus: "The lack of administrative response to this and other incidences of sexual violence at MSU helps to create and maintain a rape culture in our community. Rape culture is defined as 'a complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women. ... A rape culture condones physical and emotional terrorism against women as the norm.'"

The coalition is fighting key components of rape culture by speaking out against both victim-blaming and silence as the normalized responses to sexual violence, both of which have been common reactions to this particular case.

"Another aspect of rape culture that has been prevalent in this case," the coalition wrote in the letter, "is the insistence that the accusation probably is false. However,

a Portland, Ore., police study found that only 1.6 percent of sexual assault cases were reported falsely, while the 2005 National Crime Victimization Study concludes 61 percent of rapes never even are reported.

"We can take these statistics into context if we consider that from 2007-09, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education lists 42 cases of sexual assault reported on MSU's campus. Based on that data, we can project that there were actually about 105 instances of rape during those two years — 63 of which went unreported. And of the 42 reported cases, barely one of them statistically could be accounted for as false — if the numbers are rounded up."

Despite these statistics, individuals have consistently dismissed these allegations against the basketball players as likely being false, suggesting that the survivor simply regretted having consensual sex with the assailants.

The coalition will continue to organize against rape and other forms of social injustice and violence, in order to pressure MSU's administration to act and speak out against sexual violence on campus, and to send the message to MSU students that sexual violence is inexcusable. □

Fracking protest calls for industry ban

By Betsey Piette
Pittsburgh

Chanting "No fracking way!" while marching behind a giant banner that read "We can't drink money," more than 500 anti-fracking activists rallied in Pittsburgh Nov. 3 as part of the first World Protest Against Shale Gas Fracking. Demonstrations were also scheduled for Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; Little Rock, Ark.; Dallas; and as far away as New Zealand.

Another rally on Nov. 4 targeted the dumping of untreated wastewater from Marcellus Shale drilling into the Monongahela River, the source of drinking water for 350,000 people in the Pittsburgh area.

Activists came from cities and towns across Pennsylvania as well as New York and West Virginia, where rapidly expanding horizontal drilling in the Marcellus Shale is disrupting communities, threatening the environment and harming residents' health. The rally was endorsed by more than four dozen groups and individuals.

Following a march across the Rachel Carson Bridge, protesters gathered outside the David Lawrence Convention Center. Inside, leaders of the gas industry had gathered for the Developing Unconventional Gas conference. It featured Karl Rove speaking on the impact of the mid-term elections.

Rove told delegates that the Republican takeovers in the state and U.S. Congress would put an end to legislative threats against the industry, saying a new Republican House of Representatives "supportive of the energy industry 'sure as heck' would not pass climate-change legislation." Rove went so far as to brag, "Climate is gone." (Philadelphia Inquirer, Nov. 4)

Since September the gas industry has spent more than \$500,000 to back mainly Republican candidates in the Pennsylvania elections. On top of that hundreds of thousands of dollars were shelled out by drilling lobbyists to influence the outcome of state legislation on new taxes and regu-



Pittsburgh march hits energy companies' pollution.

PHOTO: KELLY VALDEZ

lations on the gas industry. Pennsylvania Governor-elect Tom Corbett, who pledged not to levy any tax against the Marcellus Shale drillers, received more than \$1 million in gas industry contributions.

Signs carried by protesters reflected their growing anger against the industry. One read "Careless, greedy drillers — Go frack yourselves."

Students from the Pittsburgh Student Environmental Coalition, with members from the University of Pittsburgh, Chatham University, Carnegie Mellon and Duquesne University, wore T-shirts reading "546 toxic chemicals" and carried tombstone-shaped signs reading "R.I.P." followed by names of rivers and lakes damaged by drilling spills.

No more 'environmental prisoners'

Briget Shields, who co-chaired the rally, opened by saying, "We don't want a mora-

torium. We want a complete ban to stop it altogether." Her spouse, Pittsburgh City Council member Doug Shields, raised the prospect that Pittsburgh could become the first city in the U.S. to pass a ban.

Josh Fox, producer of the documentary "Gasland," described fracking as "an industrial invasion that is pushing people out of their homes in 38 states. Not far from here people are environmental prisoners in their own homes, surrounded by an industry they do not want, their children getting sick, getting sick themselves, but unable to sell their homes.

"The big lie is that natural gas is better for the climate than coal or oil. It's not 'America's energy independence,'" said Fox, borrowing an oft-repeated industry phrase. "It's more dependence on T. Boone Pickens" — the corporate raider.

Fox ended by dialing Corbett's office and holding out his cell phone to let the

newly elected governor know exactly how the crowd felt about drilling in their state.

Singer Mike Stout, who entertained the rally with "Not going to stop these drillers in the ballot box — going to stop them in the streets," drew cheers and raised fists from the crowd.

Speaking for the Shadbrush Collective, a young woman named Radio told the gathering, "The industry parades themselves as 'green,' but the only thing they care about is the green in their trust funds. Here we are again confronting the same robber barons.

"Appalachia suffered under King Coal. Next it was oil drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. The industry's motive is profit. Drilling means more money for the bosses, and they don't care that it means suffering for us.

"It's really a systemic problem," said Radio. "We need to shut this capitalist circus down!" □

'We are all Oscar Grant!'

Protests erupt as killer cop gets slap on wrist

Rallies were held in several cities following the sentencing of Johannes Mehserle, the Oakland Bay Area Rapid Transit cop who killed an unarmed Oscar Grant on Jan. 1, 2009. Grant was shot by Mehserle while lying face down with his arms behind his back.

Although the killing was videotaped and Mehserle fled the state after the shooting, the court last July found him guilty not of murder, but of involuntary manslaughter. On Nov. 5 Mehserle received a two-year sentence with time served. After killing a young Black man for no reason, he could be out of prison within a year.

Oakland, Calif.

'Cops wanted a mass arrest'

Several hundred people rallied on Nov. 5 in downtown Oakland in an outpouring of community anger and protest. Hundreds of heavily armed police converged on the rally in an attempt to intimidate and prevent it from occurring. In the shadow of the police state, the mostly young people rallied, rapped and spoke out against the growing epidemic of police violence, including murder, against Black and Brown youth in Oakland. After the rally organizers canceled their march, hundreds of young people decided to march to the Fruitvale BART station, the scene of Grant's killing.

The police barricaded the street several blocks away from the station and began to close in on the demonstrators. Retired union letter carrier and Bail Out the People Movement activist Dave Welsh, who was one of those arrested, told Workers World: "The police surrounded us — their orders to disperse were a fraud. It seemed like they wanted a mass arrest."

More than 152 people, mostly Black and Brown youth, were arrested. Throughout the arrest process, people chanted, "We are all Oscar Grant." Welsh reported that the police pepper-sprayed and beat several young Black men. The demonstrators, crowded into cells at the city jail, were held into the next day.

The rally was sponsored by the Onyx Organizing Committee, Oakland General Assembly for Justice for Oscar Grant, and the New Year's Movement for Justice. The Community Outreach Committee for Justice for Oscar Grant is planning a mass meeting to continue protesting police brutality in Oakland.

— Judy Greenspan

Los Angeles

'A step back to Plessy'

After a Los Angeles court found Mehserle guilty of only involuntary manslaughter in July, Grant's friends, family and allies understood that justice would ultimately be fought for in the streets. Organized primarily by the Los Angeles Coalition for Justice for Oscar Grant, protests since then have demanded 14 years, the maximum sentence, for the killer cop. On Nov. 5 hundreds of protesters demanded justice at a rally that started at 8 a.m. and continued until the announcement of Mehserle's sentence five hours later.

Said Jubilee Shine of the Justice for Oscar Grant Coalition: "This trial was an attempt to bring us a step backward to Plessy v. Ferguson, which said that a Black man has no rights that a white person is bound to respect. ... We know that if that's the direction they want to put us in, then whatever comes out of that is on their hands."

When Grant's family addressed the media after the verdict, it was not defeat in their eyes. One could see and feel that their anger had steered them with determination to fight on.

Many expressed the sentiment that this was just one form of the struggle and that, instead of demoralizing protesters, these events would inspire more efforts to unite and organize.

— John Parker



Los Angeles

WW PHOTO: JOHN PARKER

San Francisco Labor Council

ILWU Locals 10 and 34 commended

The following resolution was passed unanimously at the Oct. 8 meeting of the San Francisco Labor Council.

The San Francisco Labor Council commends ILWU Locals 10 and 34 for shutting down all Bay Area ports on Oct. 23 to demand justice for Oscar Grant, and in calling and helping organize the powerful Justice for Oscar Grant Rally in Oakland on the same day.

In the spirit of Harry Bridges, this is an example of a union looking beyond only narrow economic self interest to support the broader struggle for social justice and support for communities of color.

This kind of stand can strengthen the labor movement as a whole by building ties with broader communities outside the organized labor movement. Thank you for this progressive move. □

Houston

'No justice, no peace, no racist police'

Dozens of angry Houstonians demonstrated outside a police substation on Nov. 6 to show their disgust at the light sentence. Chanting "Todos somos Oscar Grant" and "No justice, no peace, no racist police," the young protesters attracted support from passersby.

The demonstration was organized by All Communities Against Brutality. Its slogan, "We are ALL Oscar Grant," expressed solidarity with police victims like 16-year-old Derrick White. This past September, White was beaten and had his jaw broken at a high school by Houston cop Christopher Harris.

— Gloria Rubac



Houston

WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Suit challenges increased racial profiling

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

Civil rights attorneys filed a federal lawsuit Nov. 4 charging that police in Philadelphia are illegally stopping pedestrians based on race with little or no justification. This comes amid a rising tide of police brutality and the arrest on criminal charges of 15 members of the Philadelphia Police Department since March 2009.

Attorney David Rudovsky and the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania filed the lawsuit, accusing police of going overboard with their aggressive stop-and-frisk policy. They noted that in 2009 police stopped 253,333 pedestrians, compared with 102,319 in 2005. More than 70 percent of those stopped were Black.

According to the suit, only 8 percent of the stops resulted in an arrest, usually for "criminal conduct that was entirely independent from the supposed reason for the stop."

Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter instituted the stop-and-frisk policy in 2008 after making it a key platform of his election campaign. He claimed the practice would cut down on the number of illegal guns carried on the street.

In 1968 the U.S. Supreme Court in Terry v. Ohio ruled that police may legally stop and frisk a pedestrian if there is "reasonable suspicion" of illegal activity. Mark McDonald, a spokesperson for Nutter, claimed the city was "following the Supreme Court requirements." (Philadelphia Inquirer, Nov. 5)

In 2008 more than 600 police supervisors were given a two-hour training course on how to carry out the policy. They were supposed to instruct district officers that the policy did not allow police to stop people for no reason, throw them up against a wall, pat them down and frisk them. But the lawsuit contends this is exactly what is happening and that the training was ignored.

"Implicitly, the message is, make as many stops as possible and hopefully you'll find something," said Rudovsky. Filed on behalf of eight individual Black and Latino plaintiffs, the suit asks "for remedies to prevent race-based pedestrian stops and other constitutional violations."

Plaintiffs to the suit include Fernando Montero, a University of Pennsylvania ethnographer, stopped four times in 2010; State Rep. Jewell Williams (D), arrested in 2009 when he overtly questioned aggressive police tactics; and Mahari Bailey, a Georgetown Law School graduate and attorney in Philadelphia, stopped four times over the last 18 months.

The plaintiffs want the court to prevent police from conducting stops based on race or national origin, and are seeking class-action status. Their suit raises the "history of racially biased policing in Philadelphia" and asks the court to order more training, supervision and monitoring of police.

The Center for Constitutional Rights in New York has also filed a lawsuit challenging the use of stop and frisk by the New York Police Department. CCR staff attorney Darius Charney noted that 85 percent of the 575,000 pedestrians stopped over the past six years have been Black or Latino/a. Officers "target communities of color. They really behave as if they are occupying forces in a community," Charney said. (Washington Post, Nov. 4) □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS and the Black Freedom Struggle

An anthology of writings from Workers World newspaper. Edited by Gloria Rubac. Includes:

- Racism, National Oppression & Self-Determination
- Chattel Slavery to Wage Slavery
- Black Youth: A New Generation
- The Struggle for Socialism Is Key
- Unity: A Pillar of Struggle for Human Rights & Global Justice
- Alabama's Black Belt: Legacy of Slavery, Sharecropping
- Harriet Tubman, Woman Warrior
- 40th Anniversary of the 1965 Watts Rebellion
- Racism and Poverty in the Delta
- Haiti Needs Reparations, Not Sanctions

Behind the low voter turnout

By Gene Clancy

"I voted for Obama because I felt his message and wanted to be a part of a change in America. This year it's different. All the confusion with the Tea Party, all the negativity against the president and the Republicans who want to take back their country, all my hope is gone," said Brian Henderson, a 22-year-old Washington, D.C., resident. "But I'm still going to vote and encourage others to do so also. It's hard to get excited when you don't feel like the options are any better than the devil and Satan in some places." (finalcall.com, Nov. 1)

This was the opinion expressed by many young Black people shortly before the recent elections, which saw the defeat of many Democratic politicians across the country. Black youth, responding to a national survey of 15- to 25-year-olds, revealed that they were realistic about the meaning of the new age of hope President Barack Obama had promised in 2008.

"This group of young people, although exuberant over the first African-American president, realize that they cannot count on him or any other politician to singly change their condition," said Cathy Cohen, University of Chicago professor of political science and lead researcher of

the Black Youth Project study.

In their conversations, Black youth repeatedly pointed to the need for community action — also part of Obama's campaign message — as the vehicle for change.

Although there has been no detailed analysis of the 2010 midterm elections yet, exit polls conducted by various news organizations point to a low turnout by youth, as well as Black and Latino/a voters. A CBS News poll conducted the day of the election reported that African Americans were only 10 percent of the voters, down from 13 percent in 2010. Youth 18 to 29 years old made up only 9 percent of voters in 2010, down from 19 percent in 2008.

Most of these polls are vague at best and may very well be misleading. For example, they do not specify whether the percentages cited are registered voters, people qualified to vote (excluding prisoners, immigrants and many others), or just totals of people within certain age groups.

Nevertheless, it is almost certain that the apparent victories of Republican and other right-wing candidates were due to low voter turnout and demoralization on the part of progressives and working-class voters rather than to their endorsement of conservative policies and candidates.

Perhaps the most telling statistic is that only 41.1 percent of all the eligible people in the U.S. voted. This would be astonishing, were it not for the fact that it is ordinary: Voter turnout in the past six midterm elections has ranged between 38 percent and 42 percent. Considering that almost no candidate won by more than 55 percent in the recent elections, the so-called "repudiation" of Obama being trumpeted by the mainstream media represents a "mandate" of only 24 percent of the U.S. electorate.

Why don't people vote?

Dissatisfaction with elected officials is at an all-time high in the United States. Polls have found that only 11 percent of people in the U.S. have faith in Congress; 45 percent favor replacing them by picking names out of the phone book! (Rasmussen Reports, January 2010) The Tea Party and other groups on the extreme right have tried to channel these feelings into a rightward, even fascist direction. But the truth about nonvoting lies elsewhere.

It has become popular in the mainstream media to associate low voter turnout with "voter apathy." This implies that people who don't vote really don't care about politics or about who is elected to

office. This patronizing view is behind the exhortation made by bourgeois pundits before every election: "If you don't vote, you can't complain!"

In a recent article in *Psychology Today*, Guy Winch attributes poor voter turnout and other examples of so-called political apathy to a phenomenon called learned helplessness. "Learned helplessness," according to Winch, "is a psychological state that describes what happens when people believe they have no control over their environment. When we become convinced our actions will not have the impact we desire, we cease our efforts and become passive and helpless." People complain, but they don't do anything about it because they are convinced it won't do any good. (Oct. 26)

The masses of people are not stupid or ignorant, as many would like to make them out to be. Beaten down by exploitation and oppression, they have learned through bitter experience that it seldom makes any difference to their daily lives who is in office. Third party candidates who might offer a real choice are systematically prevented from gaining ballot status, or from publicizing their issues.

As the fightback develops against capitalist misery, people will be voting with their feet, their lungs and their solidarity. □

Barron on 'Like It Is'

Supports Mumia, discusses plans of Freedom Party

By Dee Knight
New York

Charles Barron, the Freedom Party's 2010 candidate for New York governor, appeared on Gil Nobel's "Like It Is" television program on Nov. 7. The show was devoted to the fight to save Mumia Abu-Jamal from reimposition of the death penalty. "We are going to fight for Mumia's freedom and stop the execution," Barron said.

Barron appeared with Pulitzer-Prize-winning *Newsday* reporter Les Payne and Milton Allimadi, publisher of the *Black Star News* and author of "The Hearts of Darkness, How White Writers Created the Racist Image of Africa."

Payne, an ex-president of the Association of Black Journalists, said he is "convinced [Mumia] did not get a fair trial." He compared Abu-Jamal's conviction to that of Black Panther Party Chairman Huey Newton, whose conviction was overturned on appeal. Allimadi pointed out the Fraternal Order of Police's opposition to a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

'A new, established party!'

On the Nov. 2 election, in which the Freedom Party won 20,717 votes, Barron said: "Now we have a new, established par-

ty. We're a self-determining people and we're not waiting for our oppressors to decide when we can be established." (New York State requires 50,000 votes for a party's official ballot status.) The party's official launching convention will be in February.

Many Freedom Party poll watchers say they were kicked out of polling places while votes were counted. Many voters couldn't find the Freedom Party on the ballot, which was made to share a line with another party. The party's candidates were hidden at the bottom of the ballot, in smaller type than other candidates' names.

Disabled voters complained that poll workers "taking dictation" from voters and filling out the ballot failed to confirm with the voter. Voters said that poll workers told people to vote one single line. Others were disenfranchised for incarceration or a criminal record, or the Board of Elections' failure to have updated residents' address changes or notice of loss of homes. Some voted Democratic due to loyalty to President Barack Obama or fear of a GOP victory.

Overall voter turnout was low. Early reports placed it at 40 percent of voters. Many were turned off by Democratic Party gubernatorial candidate Andrew Cuomo's attacks on unions and pledges to cut millions of dollars from the public services budget and lay off thousands of workers.

In Barron's borough of Brooklyn, the official Freedom Party vote count raises questions. Of Brooklyn's 2.5 million people, at least 54 percent are African-



Charles Barron speaking about the injustice of Mumia Abu-Jamal's case at a rally on 125 St. in Harlem, May 2009.

American or Latino/a. His home base of East New York, which he represents on the New York City Council, has 90,000 residents. His support there has been solid. Brooklyn has the largest African-American population in the U.S., of about 1 million. Latinos/as make up another 350,000 people.

African Americans and Latinos/as constitute more than half of Queens' 2.3 million residents. Barron had strong support in Jamaica, Queens. In Manhattan, Barron had strong support in Harlem, where 120,000 people live. Forty-five percent of Manhattan's 1.6 million residents are Black or Latino/a.

While Manhattan is one of the richest counties in the U.S., Harlem ranks with the Bronx, Brooklyn and Queens for very high unemployment rates.

Two Bronx areas had substantial voter turnout: Co-op City and Highbridge. Co-op City's population is 55,000, of whom 55 percent are Black and 25 per-

cent Latino/a. Barron and the Freedom Party took a successful walking tour through Co-op City's shopping areas two weeks before Election Day, and found that support was high. A recount there would be interesting.

Highbridge, whose population is 35,000, is one of the poorest communities in the United States; half the people live below the poverty line. Most residents are African-American or Latino/a. Barron's visit to a

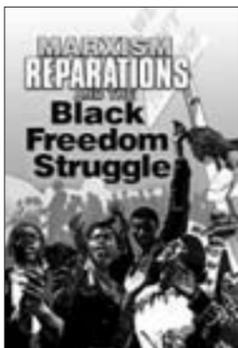
Highbridge Houses' community center on election night caused a stir. The Residents' Association president was the host and Freedom Party supporters attended from the community. They had gathered thousands of signatures for the party before the election. Leaders won't allow their community's votes to be nullified by miscount or fraud, after many instances of disenfranchisement.

Freedom Party support was high throughout the South Bronx, home to about one-third of the 1.4 million Bronx residents. While the Freedom Party had few funds compared to the \$25 million for Cuomo's campaign, its canvassers and residents won serious support from residents in all neighborhoods.

The Freedom Party can anticipate an outpouring of concern and outrage from its supporters in all of these neighborhoods, which have a proud history of defending their rights and fighting against a longtime pattern of marginalization, disenfranchisement and abuse. □

Struggle

edited by Monica Moorehead.
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Justice! Saladin Muhammad
& Segregation Consuela Lee
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Dec. 3-5 Tijuana Conference

Uniting working class in the Americas

By Cheryl LaBash

From Dec. 3 to 5 in Tijuana, Mexico — just minutes from the San Diego, Calif., airport — a cross-section of workers from Latin America who are confronting the global crisis will meet with U.S. workers grappling with devastating challenges. Building on six previous conferences, the meeting's aim is to grow the unity of the working class in the Americas and increase its influence — from the tip of Chile to Alaska — by sharing problems but also examining strategies to fight and win.

Of special interest will be a representative from Ecuador, where a U.S.-backed coup was defeated Sept. 30. Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers in the U.S., will appear by video.

Special guest Aili Labañino will represent the families of the Cuban Five — men unjustly jailed for more than 12 years in the U.S. — at the conference opening on the evening of Dec. 3. She is the eldest daughter of Ramón Labañino, currently in the Jessup, Ga., federal prison. Throughout the conference, the first public show-

ing of cartoons drawn by another of the Cuban Five, Gerardo Hernández, will be displayed. Hernández is imprisoned in Victorville, Calif. His double-life plus 15 years sentence is still under appeal.

The U.S. government blockade of Cuba has prevented Cuban union leaders from coming to the U.S. So the Dec. 3-5 weekend is a rare opportunity to discuss the changing world situation with these workers, who have won universal free health care, universal free education and social security for the working class, even under the most difficult conditions of a colonial past, almost half a century of an imperialist blockade with overt and covert aggression, and now a global economic crisis caused by capitalist overproduction.

The Venezuelan delegation from the Workers' Socialist Center (CST) is bringing Oliver Stone's new film "South of the Border" for viewing and discussion after the Dec. 4 dinner.

The agenda will include looking at problems and steps forward, and will also focus on the current situation in Mexico. Representatives of the Mexican Electric

Workers (SME) and Mexicana airline workers who were thrown out of their jobs will discuss their organizing. Miners and maquiladora workers are expected, too.

Migration and immigration, compelled by imperialist "free trade" agreements like the North American Free Trade Agreement, their effects and responses to them, including May Day 2011, will round out the conference on Dec. 5.

Already autoworkers, steelworkers, health care workers, teachers, trades people and low-wage workers are registering to come from the U.S. To increase time for discussion, simultaneous translation is being organized.

The conference is not underwritten by any large labor organizations or foundations. It depends on attendee registrations and individual donations to cover the considerable costs.

Confirmed participants include Ermela García Santiago, National Secretariat, Cuban Workers Federation (CTC); Magaly Batista Enríquez, International Relations, CTC; Silvia García Tabío, Cuban National Assembly of Peoples' Power; Gilda Chacón

Bravo, Americas' office, WFTU/FSM; Jacobo Torres de León, Venezuelan Socialist Force of Bolivarian Workers, CST; a representative of Venezuela's UNETE; Fredy José Franco, Nicaraguan Federation of Teachers of Higher Education; José Humberto Montes de Oca Luna, SME; Oliverio Esquivel Reyes, WFTU/FSM Mexican Coordinator; Professor Jorge Cazares Torres, Mexican National Union of Educators, Sec. VIII; a representative from the Mexico Miners' Union; João Batista Lemos, Brazil Workers' Center; Adolfo Cardona, Colombia's SINALTRAINAL union, USW organizer; Edgar Luis Sarango Correa, Vice-President, Ecuadoran Workers' Center; and speakers from the U.S. Invited but not yet confirmed are representatives from Haiti and Puerto Rico.

To register or donate, go to laborexchange.blogspot.com. To make a special inclusive-rate hotel registration, call the Hotel Palacio Azteca toll-free from the U.S. at 1-888-901-3720 and ask for "Cuba Labor Conference." Hotel includes breakfasts and Saturday dinner. Registration is \$80 U.S., including dinner on Friday. □

FRANCE

Pension reform passes, worker anger grows

By G. Dunkel

On Oct. 28, the day after the French parliament passed a final version of pension "reform," the unions brought 2 million people out into the streets in 268 marches throughout the country, according to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT).

That made seven different days of major protests against the government's pension cutbacks since September. While the turnout was generally higher at the beginning, anger among the protesters has grown, and so has the support of the people generally, despite enduring some inconvenience from the protests and strikes.

Eric Aubin, a leader on the retirement issue inside the CGT, was quoted in L'Humanité on Oct. 28 that there was "a desire to continue the struggle."

One of the most popular stickers is "I fight the class struggle" ("Je lutte des classes").

Then on Nov. 6, about 1.2 million people came out in 265 demonstrations throughout France, according to the CGT. Now that the law, which is an attack on pension benefits, has passed the parliament, it must be examined by the courts before it can go into effect.

All the major French labor union confederations have maintained unity in the face of President Nicolas Sarkozy's intransigence in both capping the amount of taxes the wealthiest French pay and sticking the costs of the financial bailout on the workers.

Also quoted in the same article in L'Humanité, Jean-Claude Maily, leader of Force Ouvrière, feels "a spirit of re-

sistance has been installed." For Annick Coupé, the spokesperson for Solidaires, the government has "not put an end to the people's anger."

Bernard Thibault, CGT leader, stressed, "We are going to act on all levels. This isn't a law which is going to put an end to our demands." Bernadette Groison, head of the Unitary Union Federation (FSU), asserted that the unions had "every right to continue the fight over retirement" in order to "correct the law."

François Chérèque, the head of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), pointed out, "Just because a law has been passed doesn't make it just." Wage earners "in their vast majority are against it and it is our duty to continue to say that."

The general view expressed by the lead-

ership of the unions and from the signs and banners on the marches was that what parliament had done could be undone.

Xinhua News Agency and International Business Times News published dispatches on the strikes' costs, which France's Minister of Economic Affairs Christine Lagarde estimated at "between 200 [million] and 400 million Euros each day" (\$280 million to \$560 million). (Xinhua, Oct. 25)

Giving the line of France's capitalists, she said, "We shouldn't be weighing down this recovery with campaigns that are painful for the French economy and very painful for a certain number of small- and medium-sized businesses." (IBTN, Oct. 25)

The union movements have called a meeting where debate over their next moves will be on the agenda. The struggle continues. □

Delegates from 15 countries say:

Capitalism endangers human civilization

By John Catalinotto
Serpa, Portugal

Now a laid-back town of 5,000 in Portugal's Alentejo agricultural region, Serpa was established by the Roman Empire. Later it was ruled by the Moors as part of the Islamic civilization before it became part of the Portuguese nation. In Portugal's fascist period Serpa, as well as the entire Alentejo, was a center of resistance led by the underground Portuguese Communist Party and a stronghold of the agricultural working class. Since Portugal's 1974 democratic revolution, Serpa and the surrounding municipality have been administered by a PCP-led coalition.

This history made Serpa an excellent location for an international conference of communist militants and Marxist thinkers. They met the last weekend of October to discuss the dangers that imperialism holds for human civilization — and the possible means to counteract this threat.

It was the third in a series of international meetings in Serpa entitled "Civilization or Barbarism: Challenges of To-

day's World." Others were held in 2004 and 2007. It was the first since much of the world's capitalist economy went into a downward spiral in 2008. Its organizers were Vertice magazine and the website odiario.info, whose editors include Filipe Diniz, José Paulo Gascão, Miguel Urbano Rodrigues and Rui Namorado Rosa.

One vital invitee was forced to cancel, but her letter underlining the sometimes tragic choices one must make moved the audience to an ovation. Heroic Colombian Senator Piedad Córdoba, currently under attack by the repressive regime there, was attending the funeral of former Argentine President Nestor Kirchner in Buenos Aires.

Many participants believed the real choice humanity faces is between increased misery and wars on one side and the struggle for a socialist future on the other. The capitalist collapse and persistent decline for the working class make this choice ever more urgent.

Contributing to the conference were dozens of Marxists, journalists and militants from 15 countries, mostly from Europe and Latin America, with some

representatives from North America and the Middle East. The largest group of contributors was from Portugal itself. The participants included those more oriented toward an academic examination of historical data and contemporary society, along with communist activists on the front lines of the class struggle.

Despite the breadth of opinion, participants agreed in a final declaration that this is not just a cyclical capitalist crisis, but it is "social, financial, economic, military, energy, cultural and environmental;" that "capitalism, with its precipitous increase in aggression, has become an absolutely regressive factor for human civilization;" and that "Marxism-Leninism remains the most precious intellectual weapon in the hands of the workers and peoples who resist and advance the struggle."

The declaration also expressed solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela and with "the progressive governments of Evo Morales in Bolivia and Rafael Correa in Ecuador;" saluted the resistance struggles in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as that of the Palestinians; and warned of the threats against

Iran as well as from the U.S. Fourth Fleet in Latin America. It also hailed the workers' struggles in Europe and the anti-war activities of people in the U.S.

Impact of current class struggle

Though the conference didn't aim to evaluate the most current events, these had an impact. In Portugal an upcoming NATO summit on Nov. 19-21 brought home the increased militarization of the imperialist world — and will be the target of a demonstration set for Nov. 20. Then on Nov. 24 the Portuguese workers will hold yet another general strike, in an attempt to stop the onslaught of the European capitalists to slash every gain workers have made since the 1974 revolution overthrew fascism.

The splendid struggle of the French workers to defend their retirement rights, the election in Brazil, the imminent electoral setback for the Democratic Party in the U.S., the recent attempted coup in Ecuador, the ongoing wars in the Middle East and Central Asia, along with the

Continued on page 9

HAITI

Catastrophe avoided, crises continue

By G. Dunkel

On the rainy night of Nov. 5, hundreds of thousands of Haitians huddled under their tarps and tents while Hurricane Tomas passed. The government, which told them to flee, put only 15,000 people on trucks to go to higher ground.

The 15,000 are only 1 percent of the 1.5 million people made homeless by the January earthquake. Many “internally displaced” Haitians were afraid that if they left, they wouldn’t be allowed to return to their camps. With no electricity, no radios and only tarps for shelter, many people feared for their safety as the rain came down in sheets.

In camps where people have tents and shovels, they organized, dug channels for the water and filled sandbags to serve as barriers against the mudslides so common in deforested Haiti.

Port-au-Prince was spared. The rain wasn’t hard enough to cause mudslides, and not many tarps were destroyed.

However, Léogâne, a small city about 35 miles southwest of Port-au-Prince, was covered with 10 feet of water; four people drowned. (Radio Canada International, Nov. 6)

The danger isn’t over. Water standing in Port-au-Prince’s streets and gutters increases the risk of the spread of cholera, a water-borne disease. (BBC, Nov. 7)

What has the U.S. government done? The U.S. made a big show of preparing to help Haiti as the hurricane approached and announced it was sending a helicopter-equipped Marine aircraft carrier with medical personnel and supplies. After the January earthquake, Washington sent 22,000 troops — and little concrete aid.

Not noticed in all the hoopla was what the U.S. actually did. As the Washington Post reported, seven months have gone by “since Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton promised \$1.15 billion in [post-earthquake] reconstruction money for Haiti meant to build homes, create jobs and improve lives.” (Nov. 4)

The truth is that the stringent, bureaucratic procedures and conditions required by the U.S. government before it will release any of these funds have prevented even one dime from being disbursed, while 1.5 million people are living under tarps, tents and rags in mortal danger if a hurricane really hits.

Unlike U.S., Cuba offers real aid

Contrast this to what socialist Cuba — having a small fraction of the resources of the U.S. and a blockade to deal with — has done to help the Haitian people for 12 years.

A letter written by Emiliano Mariscal, an Argentine doctor and graduate of Cuba’s Latin American School of Medicine, explains the role of the Cuban Medical Brigade that has been working in Haiti and his pride in being part of it. Fifty-one of the medical school’s graduates are now in Haiti working with Cuban doctors and other personnel. (ALBA-TCP, Nov. 4)

He explains that the brigade, in coordi-

nation with two of Haiti’s health institutions, provided critical, early treatment in mid-October to nearly 1,200 people after detecting cholera. That intervention delayed its spread to Port-au-Prince.

“[S]ince the earthquake, the commitment is to rebuild and strengthen the health care system ... [and] Cuba will be here during the cholera epidemic and in the wake of the hurricane,” Mariscal stresses.

That’s what a socialist country does in a humanitarian crisis — acts out of internationalism, solidarity and affection for the people. An imperialist country seeks only to broaden its economic, military and political reach to protect its self-interests and profits, with little concern for human life.

The U.S. government can ship bags of cash to Afghanistan to be handed out to any warlord who promises to side with Washington. But it won’t spend a dime in Haiti, even though former President Bill Clinton is currently in charge of the spending. □

New Fed bailout riles rich & poor countries

Continued from page 1

Imperialist rivals of the U.S. also objected to this new round of U.S. financial policies coming ahead of the G-20 summit. German finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble said: “With all due respect, U.S. policy is clueless. It’s not that the Americans haven’t pumped enough liquidity into the market. Now to say let’s pump more into the market is not going to solve their problems.” (Financial Times, Nov. 5)

Jobless recovery spells disaster for workers

Although the stock market has made significant gains in recent weeks and profits are up among the leading capitalist corporations and banks, this alleged economic recovery has led to few jobs. The October monthly jobless report claimed that more than 150,000 new positions were created, but there are still officially 15 million people out of work in the United States.

The 9.6 percent unemployment rate omits the 15 million to 20 million other workers who are “discouraged” or are working part-time because there is no full-time work available.

The New York Times wrote: “The jobless rate has not fallen substantially this year, largely because employers have barely added enough workers to absorb the people just entering the labor force. And even if the economy suddenly expands and starts adding 208,000 jobs a month — as it did in its best year this decade — it would still take 12 years to close the gap between the growing number of American workers and the total available jobs, according to the Brookings Institution’s Hamilton Project.” (Nov. 5)

The injection of \$600 billion will lead to no significant job creation. Since 2007, central banks throughout the capitalist world have given more than \$10 trillion to the banks and multinational corporations. This has only resulted in the loss of

tens of millions of jobs in the U.S. and Europe and the further impoverishment of workers and oppressed all over the globe.

This failed policy of bailing out the banks has been most evident in the housing sector, where millions of people have been foreclosed and evicted despite the trillions handed to the financial institutions as workers’ wages decline.

In the U.S. tens of thousands of educators and public workers have been thrown out of work over the last three years as schools, academic programs and sports programs have closed.

The capitalist media in collaboration with the two ruling class parties rigged the midterm vote by avoiding the critical issues facing workers and the oppressed: jobs, income, health care, housing and quality education. The outcome of the elections does not indicate that workers in the U.S. are satisfied with the wars of occupation, high unemployment, underemployment, growing poverty, the loss

of pensions and health care, and the increase in state repression.

The election results represent the lack of an effective political organization that genuinely represents the interests of the workers and the oppressed.

A political program that advocates the creation of a WPA-style jobs program becomes even more significant in the coming period because the failure of the ruling-class parties to create employment exposes their incapacity to represent the millions of people who need immediate relief. There can be no real recovery without creating tens of millions of jobs with good wages and benefits.

In addition, there is the pressing need to stabilize the housing sector by imposing an immediate moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

The Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs, based in the economically depressed state of Michigan, pointed out in a recent leaflet, “This bailout [of the banks] continues even in the face of massive foreclosure fraud by the largest banks, which forced JPMorgan Chase and GMAC to temporarily suspend foreclosures during October 2010.”

This leaflet continues, “Instead of the government bailing out the banks by paying off overvalued fraudulent loans, the government should allow people to stay in their homes with affordable payments based on the real value of property.” □

Imperialism, the global labor market and the revolutionary perspective

Continued from page 3

now more productive, churning out more and more commodities with fewer and fewer workers. Thus the cycle in the race for new technology begins over again.

When workers produce more commodities in a given time due to new technology or just plain speed-up, they spend less time on each commodity, or on each operation that goes into creating a commodity. The labor time of the workers is spread out over more and more commodities. The total labor time remains the same but there is less labor time embodied in each particular commodity. Since there is less labor time incorporated in each individual commodity produced using the new, more expensive technology, there is less surplus value in each, as surplus value comes only from human labor.

So the capitalist has to sell more commodities in order to reap the same surplus value and make a profit. It gets harder and harder for the bosses to get their money back to cover the cost of the equipment and maintain a hefty profit from the unpaid labor of the workers. The capital-

ists must therefore constantly expand sales to get an increased mass of profit to compensate for the decline in the rate of profit. This is the only way to sustain their profitability and to survive the war-to-the-death capitalist competition.

This drives the capitalist class inevitably to create conditions leading to overproduction and crisis.

Read the full text at workersworld.net.

New second edition:

HAITI: A Slave Revolution 200 Years after 1804

Updates book with new material covering 2004-2010. First published in 2004 as a joint project of the International Action Center and the Haiti Support Network. This is not a traditional history book or textbook, but a people’s history. In the preface the editors state: “This book is going to combat 200 years of racist indoctrination and propaganda about the Haitian Revolution.”

New edition: 272 pp., photos.

Available at www.leftbooks.com

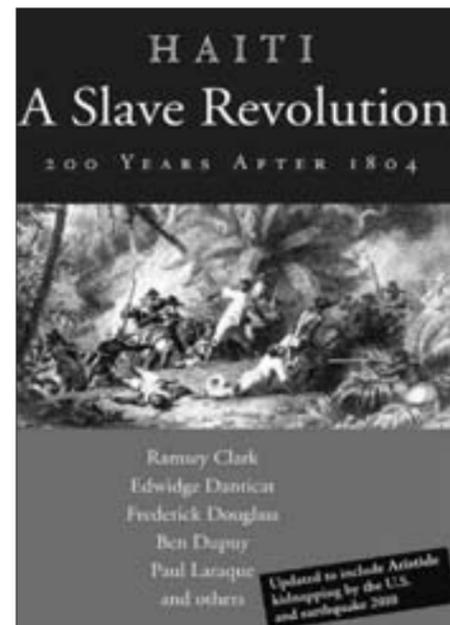
rampant unemployment in Europe and the U.S., were part of many private discussions as well as those at the podium.

Cape-Verde-born historian Carlos Lopes Pereira raised once more an appreciation of African Marxist Amilcar Cabral and the oppressive role of Portuguese colonialism in Africa.

Leila Ghanem, a key organizer of the January 2009 Beirut conference, made the important point that the role of the mass organizations Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in Palestine is not necessarily determined by their religious ideology, but develops under the influence of the mass social struggle in those regions as they resist the Israeli settler-state and imperialism.

This is a small sample of the many contributions available in Portuguese and in their original language at odiario.info. The final declaration is available in English.

Catalinotto, a managing editor of Workers World newspaper, presented a paper entitled “Amid capitalist collapse and imperialist war: The challenge of reviving Marxism in the center of the empire.”



Time is running out

With the midterm elections now over, two important issues are hanging over the “lame duck” Democratic Congress that, after Jan. 1, will be replaced by a new one with a Republican majority in the House.

First, if Congress does not move quickly to renew it, an emergency extension of federal unemployment insurance will expire on Nov. 30. If this is allowed to happen, reports the National Employment Law Project, 2 million workers will lose their federal benefits in December alone.

Of those, NELP explains in a media release, “387,000 are workers who were recently laid off and are now receiving the six months (26 weeks) of regular state benefits. After exhausting state benefits, these workers would be left to fend for themselves in a job market with just one job opening for every five unemployed workers and an unemployment rate that has exceeded 9 percent for 17 months in a row — with no federal unemployment assistance whatsoever.” (Oct. 22) It’s not clear at this point if an extension beyond 26 weeks will even be brought to a vote before the deadline.

Even more stressed are the “99ers,” those who have exhausted all benefits after being unemployed for more than 99 weeks. A bill to extend their checks for an extra 20 weeks, called Tier V, is even less likely to get passed.

Second, the Bush tax cuts, which apply to the wealthiest 2 percent of people in the U.S., are scheduled to expire on Dec. 31. The Congressional Research Service estimates that permanently extending these tax cuts would mean a loss of \$5 trillion in revenue in just the next 10 years. (Oct. 27) \$5 trillion come to five times a million multiplied by another million! And that’s just a small percentage of the wealth going into the pockets of the rich. That money — which the richest 2 percent can surely do without — could provide some of the funding to extend the desperately needed unemployment benefits.

If the Democrats want to show they’re really for the working people, as they

claim in each election season, they will fight like hell to extend the federal unemployment insurance and also restore taxes on the rich while they still have a majority in both houses of Congress.

Instead, they’re looking for ways to compromise with the Republicans, who are unrelenting in their desire to roll back any political and economic gains the working class has made. President Barack Obama has suggested a one- or two-year extension on the tax cuts. Meanwhile, pundits are suggesting that the Democrats will in fact allow the tax cuts to dominate this lame duck session of Congress until the unemployment benefits run out in the next few weeks. The emboldened Republicans have attempted to put the ball in the Democrats’ court, suggesting that they might be willing to extend unemployment benefits if Congress also cuts \$5 billion to \$6 billion from the budget. This would essentially mean more cuts in social services — the Republicans aren’t talking about cutting the military budget! And cuts in government services mean more workers laid off while those needing help suffer.

Workers shouldn’t hold their breath waiting for the Democratic Party to step up to the plate to defend them. The Democrats talk like they’re for the workers, but they’ll never fight for us. The ruling Democrats may be interested in getting the workers’ votes, but when it comes down to it, they’re most concerned with their own class interests — interests that are in direct conflict with ours. In the end, they’ll throw their hands in the air, suggesting that they couldn’t prevent the inevitable and that therefore, incredibly, workers should vote for them next time around.

Anyone can see that the days of the bosses giving up a few crumbs are over, but the Democrats don’t do anything but retreat and retreat before the bosses’ offensive. It is up to the organizations of the workers and their communities to organize and fight for an unemployment extension and taxes on the rich, not on the workers and poor. □

Condolences over Cuban plane crash

To the Communist Party of Cuba, the labor unions (CTC) and the people of Cuba:

Workers World Party sends condolences to the families and loved ones of the 68 people who died Nov. 4 in a plane crash in Sancti Spiritus province. We salute the Cuban community workers, military and party members who with machetes and bulldozers hacked their way to the blazing wreckage, hoping in vain to save the lives of the passengers and crew in the worst tragedy in the history of that province.

Cubans who saw the plane fall called pilot Angel Villa Martínez a hero for

managing to avoid the nearby town. At the same time in Santiago de Cuba, the flight’s origin, Cuban civil defense workers saved lives by implementing protective measures as Hurricane Tomas threatened both eastern Cuba and Haiti. No one in Cuba died from the storm.

We have confidence that the Communist Party of Cuba and the leadership, whose commitment to socialist construction has so improved the lives of the people despite the cruel U.S. blockade, will conduct a thorough investigation of this tragedy and do what is needed to make air travel safer.

**National Committee
Workers World Party**

China’s supercomputer shakes the Pentagon

By Stephen Millies

Sixty-one years after the Chinese Revolution’s triumph, the People’s Republic of China has created the world’s fastest supercomputer.

According to University of Tennessee Professor Jack Dongarra, China’s Tianhe-1A supercomputer is 47 percent faster than the speediest U.S. supercomputer. Tianhe, which means “Milky Way” in Chinese, is faster than 175,000 laptops. (www.metro.co.uk)

Supercomputers can solve complex scientific problems, including medical research and weather forecasting, to help people.

The U.S. military-industrial complex uses them to simulate detonations of nuclear weapons.

The fastest U.S. supercomputer, the XT5 Jaguar, is located at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. This facility was part of the Manhattan Project, which made atom bombs that killed hundreds of thousands of Japanese, Korean and Chinese people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Western European rulers took hold of Chinese inventions like gunpowder and the compass and used them to conduct the African Holocaust — the trans-Atlantic slave trade — and to exterminate Native peoples in the Americas. Karl Marx showed how the capitalist world market was born in “blood and dirt” through these great crimes.

Britain invaded China in 1841 because the Chinese stopped importing opium from British capitalists. Over a century of misery and humiliation followed, with millions of Chinese people killed. Just as there were signs forbidding Black people from many places in apartheid-era United States and South Africa, a “No dogs or Chinese allowed” sign was erected in a Shanghai park.

A triumph of socialist planning

The Chinese Revolution changed all that. Mao Zedong declared “China has stood up” on Oct. 1, 1949.

In the last 30 years, however, China has enmeshed itself with the capitalist world market. The Taiwanese corporation Foxconn, the world’s largest manufacturer of electronic components, employs 420,000 workers in Shenzhen alone.

But Foxconn and other bosses had nothing to do with the world’s fastest supercomputer. It was the Chinese socialist state that built Tianhe-1A.

Despite capitalist inroads and the restructuring of state-owned industry, billions of dollars were allocated by the socialist state to build this computer. Socialist economic planning was responsible for this technological marvel.

Capitalist India has hundreds of thousands of talented computer scientists. Bangalore, India, is headquarters for Wipro, which has 112,000 workers. Yet Wipro and other capitalist outfits in India haven’t built the fastest supercomputer.

The Soviet Union astonished the world by launching Sputnik, the first satellite, in 1957 on the 40th anniversary of the Russian Revolution. This vivid example of the power of centralized socialist planning also alarmed the war makers in the Pentagon, whose early rockets were exploding on their launch pads.

China still developing, advancing

While it produced more than 500 million tons of steel in 2009 and made more cars than the U.S. did, China is still a developing country. In many areas it still has to catch up with developed capitalist countries — one of the great problems facing socialist revolutions that triumph in countries impoverished by centuries of colonialism and imperialism. The response of China’s leaders to the need for modern technology has been to invite in foreign capital, but many inside China are deeply concerned about the growing inequality.

However, in the last few years China has forged ahead in science and technology, meaning it has to rely less on hostile capitalist forces as it builds up its economy. At the same time, mass protests for better wages and working conditions have intensified.

A series of pro-working-class measures have been passed. Pensions were given to 140 million migrant workers in 2007. The same year a health care act was passed that will extend medical insurance to virtually everybody.

Chinese trade unions forced McDonald’s and Wal-Mart to sign contracts. What an example this is to 1.8 million workers in the U.S. who are exploited by these two corporate monsters. China-bashing won’t bring these workers union benefits.

Building the world’s fastest supercomputer shows that China has the wherewithal to strengthen its development toward a socialist economy. Like Sputnik, the Tianhe-1A supercomputer is a victory against Wall Street and its Pentagon. □

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

WW PHOTO: LIZ GREEN

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The media and Gaza, part 2

Media monopoly and Big Oil

WW presents here the second installment of "The media and Gaza," a chapter from an upcoming book on the heroic struggle of the Palestinian people of Gaza who are fighting for self-determination.

"We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective."

When Michael Eisner wrote these candid words (in what he thought would remain an internal memo), he was CEO of the Walt Disney Co. The quote appears in the documentary "Mickey Mouse Monopoly — Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power." The Disney Co. is the second-largest media giant but brings in the largest revenue of any media conglomerate in the world.

The corporate media say they are committed to "report the truth" and that they "strive to be fair" or at the very least "tell both sides." This is as much spin as the New York Times and Washington Post re-writing the Gaza war. The media are corporations. Like every other corporation, they are in business to make money.

The big five who control it all

At the end of World War II, 80 percent of the daily newspapers in the U.S. were independently owned. Today, only five giant companies — Time Warner (CNN, AOL), Disney (ABC), Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation (FOX), Bertelsmann of Germany (the world's biggest publisher of English-language books), and Viacom (formerly CBS) — control most of the television, radio, magazines, newspapers, books, movies, videos, music, photo agencies and wire services people in this country rely on. General Electric's NBC is a close sixth. ("The Media Monopoly" by Ben Bagdikian, 2004 edition)

These media monopolies are truly huge. Time Warner, the biggest, has 292 separate companies and subsidiaries. The Walt Disney Co. owns eight book publishing imprints; the ABC-TV network has 10 owned and operated stations, 30 radio stations, 11 cable channels, 13 Internet broadcasting channels that operate

around the world, 17 Internet sites and more. The other media giants have similarly large holdings.

The extent of this monopolization is well hidden. But the truth is that "a shrinking number of large media corporations now regard monopoly, oligopoly and historic levels of profit as not only normal, but as their earned right," says Bagdikian.

Sumner Redstone, head of Viacom and owner of CBS, MTV, BET and Paramount Pictures, explains how conglomerate media profit-taking works: "When you make a movie for an average cost of \$10 million and then cross promote and sell it off of magazines, books, products, television shows out of your own company, the profit potential is enormous." ("Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times" by Robert W. McChesney)

The giant corporate media are not a "free press." They are a press happily married to the pursuit of profits. The "freedom" they pursue is the freedom to make a buck. These profits are only partially earned via big media's hundreds of subsidiaries. Even more important is the money to be made through the mainstream media's interlocking relationship with even larger monopolies.

Major media in bed with biggest corporations

About 118 — that's the number of people who sit on the boards of directors of the 10 biggest media giants. These 118 individuals in turn are on the corporate boards of 288 national and international corporations. And eight out of 10 big media giants share common memberships on each other's boards of directors. ("Big Media Interlocks with Corporate America" by Peter Phillips, CommonDreams.org, June 24, 2005)

This integration occurs at the very pinnacle of corporate power. For instance, board members of ABC/Disney, NBC/GE, CBS/Viacom, CNN/TimeWarner, Fox/News Corp., New York Times Co., Washington Post/Newsweek, Wall Street Journal/Dow Jones, Tribune Co., Gannett and Knight-Ridder also sit on the boards of 13 of the Fortune 500's 25 most profit-

able companies and probably have indirect connections to the other 12. This linkage forms a huge matrix of interlocking corporations and monopolies, usually with banks at the center, that control the U.S. and to a large extent the world economy.

'Enhancing values preferred by corporate world'

"The dominant media firms, now among the largest in the world, have the power and use it to enhance the values preferred by the corporate world of which they are a part," says Bagdikian. This includes self-censorship, based upon class and financial interests, or "omission of the news that might interfere with the media's maximizing their own profits. The same tendency makes the news media sympathetic to similar profit maximization by whatever means among corporations in general."

This is what is passed off as "objective reporting" to 310 million people in the U.S.

At the same time, with each new round of consolidations, the media as a whole have moved more openly to the right. For example, the right-wing-and-proud-of-it Fox News, with 23 wholly owned or affiliated network stations in the U.S., is the fourth-largest television network, right behind ABC, CBS and NBC.

Corporations benefit from vilifying Palestinians

Which corporations benefit the most from vilifying the Palestinian people and their leaders?

Far above all others, it's the oil and energy companies, which pull in the greatest profit.

ExxonMobil and Chevron, the first- and second-largest U.S. oil companies, top the Fortune 500 list. ExxonMobil reported the highest annual profit in corporate history in 2006. The next year it broke its own profit record, clearing \$40.61 billion or nearly \$1,300 a second. (CNNMoney, Feb. 1, 2008) As of this July 1, ExxonMobil occupied eight out of the 10 slots for the largest quarterly corporate earnings of all time and five out of the 10 largest annual corporate earnings slots.

Chevron and Conoco, the second- and third-largest of the U.S. oil giants, are not far behind.

While these oil companies drill, pump and refine all over the world, their profit empires rely most of all on control of the cheap, easily extracted, high-grade oil in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and, once again, in Iraq. They were also in Iran until the revolution of 1979 kicked them out and nationalized the oil. They vowed to never let this happen again.

ExxonMobil sees Palestinian rights as a threat to "their" profits of \$1,300 a second. With these warped values prevailing, the Palestinian people don't stand a chance of fair coverage in the corporate media. □



Edited by Joyce Chediak

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GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

WW compilations, edited by Joyce Chediak.

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza's courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people's media is breaking the mainstream media's information blockade on this event.

This book will be published in December. Every aspect of production — writing, editing, proofreading, cover and book design — were done by voluntary labor.

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MUNDO OBRERO

Los activistas laborales condenan las redadas del FBI

Continúa de página 12

imientos anti-guerra y de derechos civiles.

Por todo el país hay organizaciones e individuos que están levantándose juntos/as para protestar el intento del gobierno estadounidense a silenciar y criminalizar el activismo. Enfrentarse a poder y al privilegio nunca han sido actividades populares en los Estados Unidos. Cualquiera persona que haya vivido una huelga amarga sabe demasiado cómo las cortes, los medios de difusión y el gobierno se organizan contra los/as trabajadores/as en huelga. Es por eso que el movimiento sindicalista deba estar en la vanguardia de defender los derechos de disensión, como ha sido históricamente.

Escribimos para pedir que tú te juntes con nosotros/as para unirse en apoyo de nuestras/os hermanas y hermanos que se enfrentan ahora con esta caza de brujos/as. Sindicatos por todo el país están pasando resoluciones que denuncian las redadas

de la FBI, y que están llamando para poner un fin a la investigación del gran jurado. Una resolución de muestra está en <http://stopfbi.net/resources/trade-unionists>, y también hay una carta para firmar por miembros/as individuos/as de sindicatos. Favor de presentar la carta en sus reuniones venideras de sindicato.

Para firmar la carta, envíe su nombre, títulos y si es por propósitos de solamente de identificación, a: labor.stop.fbi@gmail.com. Si quiere que alguien hable sobre las redadas en su reunión, comuníquese con Cherrene, número de teléfono 612-940-0660 o cherrene@afscme3800.org. Para más información, ve a <http://www.stopfbi.net>.

También estamos pidiendo donaciones para ayudar con los costos de la defensa legal. Se puede mandar cheques al Comité to Stop FBI Repression, P.O. Box 14183, Minneapolis, MN 55414.

¡Una lesión en uno es un daño a todos los! □

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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Protesta contra la pena de muerte recibe un impulso—otra persona exonerada

Por Gloria Rubac
Austin, Texas

Con la liberación de un condenado a muerte el exonerado Antonio Graves a sólo tres días antes de la onceava Marcha Anual por la Abolición de la Pena de Muerte, la multitud que se reunió en el Capitolio de Texas en Austin el 30 de octubre estuvo en gran espíritu. Graves, un hombre afro-americano de Brenham, Texas, fue encarcelado injustamente durante 18 años. Fue declarado inocente y liberado a su amorosa madre, la familia y amigos el 27 de octubre.

Seis hombres que casi llevaron sus últimos pasos para camilla con orgullo lideraron la marcha anual de Texas con los cánticos “Texas dice Condena a Muerte, nosotros decimos ¡No!”

La multitud emocionada de alrededor de 500 personas a veces era alegre y feliz pero también furiosa y militante. Se ha sabido en los últimos meses que el gobernador de Texas, Rick Perry, fue el responsable de la ejecución de un hombre inocente, Cameron Todd Willingham, en el año 2004.

Su madre, Eugenia, dio un mensaje mostrado en una pantalla grande, dando gracias a la multitud de protestar ese día en apoyo a Todd. “Todos estamos trabajando juntos para abolir la pena de muerte y para hacer realidad el sueño de Todd”.

Shujaa Graham fue condenado a muerte tres años antes que la Corte Su-

prema de California anulara su condena. Es un luchador apasionado por la abolición de la pena de muerte y sus lágrimas rodaban en sus mejillas cuando dijo a la multitud, “Ningún estado en los Estados Unidos ejecuta a más personas que Texas. Estoy aquí, herido por los golpes de la pena capital, pero no muerto, y yo te digo a ti, Texas, levántate y lucha contra esto ahora!”

Los otros cinco exonerados condenados a la muerte que lideraron la marcha con Graham fueron Curtis McCarty, quien pasó 22 años en Oklahoma; Ron Keine, dos años en Nuevo México; Greg Wilhoit, cinco años en Oklahoma; Gary Drinkard, casi seis años en Alabama, y Albert Burrell, quien vivió 13 años con la condena de muerte en Louisiana.

Decenas de familiares y amigos de los condenados a muerte trajeron pancartas y banderas de sus seres queridos, incluyendo a Robert Garza, Juan Ramírez, Rob Will, Rodney Reed, Randy Halprin, Luis Pérez, Jeff Wood, Cleve “Sarge” Foster, Howard Guidry, Paul David Storey y Humberto Garza. El hermano de Reed también trajo un recipiente grande de barbacoa al estilo de Texas para compartir con la multitud.

Lawrence Foster, el abuelo del ex condenado a muerte Kenneth Foster, asistió a pesar de que su nieto ha tenido su pena conmutada de por vida. Foster, quien tiene 83 años, dijo a la multitud a nunca darse por vencido, a luchar siempre por la

justicia, porque eso es lo que salvó la vida de su nieto de apenas unas horas antes de su ejecución en el 2007.

El único candidato a la gobernación de Texas que se opone a la pena de muerte, Deb Shaftho con el Partido Verde, participó en la caravana de coches de Houston a Austin, llenando su auto con los activistas y poniendo pancartas contra la pena de muerte en su coche.

Seis coches salieron del Centro Comunitario S.H.A.P.E. de Houston temprano el 30 de octubre con los carteles pintados con colores de neón en todos los lados de sus vehículo y hicieron gran bulla en cada gasolinera y lugares de descanso a lo largo de la carretera. Shaftho ha participado en muchas protestas de oposición a la pena de muerte y es una parte importante de su plataforma política.

Ministro Robert Muhammad, un representante regional de la Nación del Islam, con sede en Houston, produjo un revuelo emocional a la multitud con aplausos cuando proclamó, “América dice que está luchando por la libertad en todo el mundo, pero no tenemos libertad aquí para la gente pobre y de la clase trabajadora. El gobierno puede rescatar a los bancos, pero no puede rescatar a nuestra gente. Ellos quieren ejecutar a Mumia Abu-Jamal, pero nosotros, el pueblo, debemos seguir luchando para salvar su vida”, Muhammad fue un amigo y consejero espiritual de dos hombres inocentes, Shaka Sankofa y Barnes Odell, y fue testigo de

las ejecuciones en el año 2000.

“¡Como siempre digo, es mejor ser culpable y rico en Texas que ser pobre e inocente. Vamos a mantener la lucha y abolir la pena de muerte!” concluyó Muhammad.

Elizabeth Gilbert dijo a la multitud que los activistas pueden poner un fin a las ejecuciones. Ella comenzó a luchar para demostrar la inocencia de Todd Willingham en 1998 después de que ella le dio su nombre a un amigo por correspondencia en un autobús lleno de activistas de Houston que iban a Filadelfia para unirse al rally de los Millones por Mumia en 1998. Gilbert fue presentada recientemente en el programa de PBS Frontline y en la revista The New Yorker, por su trabajo por Todd Willingham.

Njeri Shakur, un líder del Movimiento Texano para la Abolición de la Pena de Muerte, fue “excitado” por la marcha y manifestación. “Estar entre los hombres exonerados, los hombres que muy bien podrían estar muerto ahora, me dio el sentido de ser aún más legítimo y sano. Ver todas las familias que luchan por sus seres queridos fue tan conmovedor. La liberación de Antonio Graves fue una victoria maravillosa, pero todavía tenemos mucho trabajo por hacer. Vamos a ganar si seguimos protestando y educando y organizando al pueblo en contra de esta injusticia que aterroriza a los pobres. ¡Y debemos actuar ahora para liberar a Mumia Abu-Jamal!” □

Los activistas laborales condenan las redadas del FBI

El Comité para Poner un Alto a la Represión del FBI convocó a una reunión nacional en la ciudad de Nueva York el 6 de noviembre. Todo el mundo que esté interesado en forjar el movimiento en contra de las redadas del FBI y el intento de un gran jurado para criminalizar a los activistas en contra de la guerra y activistas de solidaridad internacional fue invitado a asistir. Para más información, consulte www.StopFBI.net.

La siguiente carta ha sido escrita y publicada en stopFBI.net. Firmantes iniciales incluían Richard Berg, ex presidente, los Teamsters Local 743, Phyllis Walker, presidenta de AFSCME Local 3800; Cherrene Horazuk, líder del AFSCME Local 3800, Peter Rachleff, historiador del movimiento laboral, Macalester College, Gladys McKenzie, representante de área, AFSCME Consejo 5; Joe Burns, abogado laboral / negociador, y Dave Riehle, ex presidente del local, de United Transportation Union Local 650.

Hermanas y hermanos:

El 24 de septiembre, el FBI llevó a cabo redadas coordinadas en los domicilios y oficinas de 14 activistas contra la guerra en Minnesota, Illinois y Michigan. Durante los allanamientos el FBI confiscó todo, desde computadoras y listas de correo hasta dibujos de niños y fotos de Martin Luther King.

Diez de las 14 víctimas del ataque son miembros de sindicatos, entre ellos tres miembros de la Federación Americana de Empleados de Estado, Condado y Municipalidad (AFSCME) Local 3800, la Universidad de Minnesota, un miembro de Teamsters Local 320 (U. de Minnesota); un miembro del grupo Educación de Minnesota, y un líder principal de la Unión de Empleados de Servicio 73, de la Universidad de Illinois-Chicago.

Todos son activistas conocidos y respetados que, según voceros del FBI, fueron atacados por su papel en la búsqueda de justicia para los trabajadores y otros pueblos oprimidos a través de todo el mundo.

Además de haber tenido invadido sus hogares, ellos fueron citados a comparecer ante un gran jurado. No han sido arrestados o acusados de ningún delito.

Cómo es intrínsecamente, el gran jurado de acusación es una expedición de pesca disfrazada. Ellos/as que están llamados/as para testificar no están permitidos/as a tener representación de abogados/as durante sus testimonios. Si ellos/as se niegan de cooperar, están amenazados/as con encarcelamiento, poniendo en riesgo sus empleos, casas y familias. Si están de acuerdo de dar testimonio, ellos/as dan crédito a una expedición de pesca ilegítima.

Cada persona estadounidense tiene el derecho constitucional de abogar y organizar por cambio a la política extranjera de los Estados Unidos. Estos/as activistas tienen derecho a la presunción de inocencia bajo la Constitución Estadounidense. Ninguna justificación aceptable o evidencia ha sido presentada por estas redadas y citaciones, y no hay razón a creer que se vayan a anunciar alguna razón.

Cuatro días antes de las redadas del 24 de septiembre, la Oficina del Inspector General de los Estados Unidos divulgó que la Agencia Federal de Investigación (la FBI por las siglas en inglés) había sistemática e ilegalmente espionado en activistas políticas, que el Director Robert Mueller había mentido al Congreso sobre los detalles de vigilancia; y que los agentes frecuentemente se confundieron la desobediencia civil con “el terrorismo nacional”.

Desde la lucha por la libertad de expresión de los Obreros Industriales del Mundo (IWW) en los años 1910 a las decisiones mayores de la corte de los años 30, inspiradas por el movimiento sindicalista de esos años, el movimiento sindicalista ha sido frecuentemente en la vanguardia de ellos/as que han defendido el derecho de hablar y protestar. Los/as sindicalistas comprendieron que sin poder de hablar, los esfuerzos sindicalistas hubieron sido aplastados.

Por necesidad la lucha por libertades civiles anduvo mano a mano con la lucha por los derechos de trabajadores/as. Lo que vemos ahora en estas redadas y las citaciones del gran jurado es recordativo de las Redadas de Palmer en los años 20, y el COINTELPRO de J. Edgar Hoover en los años 60. La FBI y el Departamento de Justicia tienen historias largas de explotar los miedos del público para romper los esfuerzos a organizar de sindicatos, mov-

Continúa a página 11

LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez & Fernando González Llort.

