

# WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



MARCH 24, 2011 Vol. 53, No. 11 50¢

# Escalate mass action to Kill Wisconsin anti-union bill!

By Fred Goldstein

The passage of right-wing Gov. Scott Walker's union-busting bill should not be the end of the story in Wisconsin. It should be the beginning of a new phase of escalated struggle by the unions, the community and students to overturn this illegal denial of workers' rights.

Walker and the right-wing Republican state legislative group are outright tools of the banks, the bondholders and corporations that are rolling in money and still putting their profits before union rights and people's needs.

There are many grounds on which to base a mass fightback to overturn this bill: It is illegal under international law; it was passed illegally; it denies fundamental rights of unions and all workers, and it attacks communities and students.

There are many ways to fight back and time to prepare. But the most important and decisive ways to fight back involve the collective united action of the unions in alliance with communities and students and youth. It will take direct action to stop "business as usual" until the law is repealed — whether by some kind of general strike, mass direct action or another form of struggle. The politicians and their corporate backers must be made to pay a high enough price that they will withdraw this reactionary, anti-worker, anti-people law.

Collective bargaining is a civil right and a workers' right. Without collective bargaining rights, a union is defenseless and will soon perish. The states in the South, where collective bargaining rights are denied, have the lowest union density in the country

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Tens of thousands of workers from the public and private sectors, students, farmers and progressive activists from many parts of Wisconsin converged at the state Capitol in Madison on March 12 to protest the anti-union bill signed by Gov. Scott Walker. Read more on page 7.

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Protest of 10,000 women, March 8, Manila, Philippines.

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# Rape, racism & the media

By Shelley Ettinger

This article is based on a Read Red blog at <http://tinyurl.com/4dvz7ap>.

The New York Times ran an appalling March 9 story about a gang rape in east Texas that left me sickened and shaken. The victim was an 11-year-old girl. There were, reportedly, 18 rapists. Eighteen! They included some star high-school athletes as well as some sons of locally prominent families. At least one of them videotaped the assault with his cell phone. The video was shown around by the bragging rapists, and that's how the crime eventually came to light and they were brought to justice.

These facts weren't the only appalling thing about the Times piece. The story itself descended into the worst despicably sexist terms in its characterization of the child who was so terribly brutalized and defiled. The newspaper found it necessary to comment that she was known in the neighborhood for wearing inappropriately mature clothes and makeup and for hanging out in the wrong places. Yes, that's right — the report implies that this 11-year-old child was a slut; she was asking for it; she deserved to be destroyed.

This aspect of the report was picked up quickly by a number of commentators, who have denounced the Times for its disgusting blame-the-victim insinuations.

But there's another aspect. After my first read and my first reaction, which was rage and horror, I cooled down a little and started to think, started wondering. I referred above to "facts" — but I know better than to rely on the bourgeois press for the truth. I used the phrase "brought to justice" — but I know there is no justice under capitalism, and especially not in rape cases, not for the victims of sex assault, nor for the young men who might be arrested and charged whether they did it or not. Yes, I'm talking about race: What I started wondering most of all was just who these 18 alleged rapists were. So I did a quick search and found some other, earlier, local articles about this case.

Almost immediately, a series of mug shots appeared on my screen of young African-American men. The victim's picture of course isn't available, but I guessed that she too is Black because if she were white we'd have heard much more about this case much sooner; quite possibly we'd have heard about a lynching. Later reports say that the victim is Latina. As it is, knowing that all the alleged rapists are Black makes this a story not only about what we Marxists call the woman question, but also about the national question.

Now reread this from the Times piece: "The video led the police to an abandoned trailer, more evidence, and, eventually, to a roundup over the last month of 18 young men and teenage boys." A roundup of African-American youths.

The rape of this child was a heinous crime. It's almost impossible for me to believe that this roundup by the Cleveland, Texas, police, a force made up overwhelmingly of white men, is not another crime — a racist crime. That is, that some of those arrested are innocent, picked up for the crime of being young Black men. And that they'll be

railroaded into prison where they'll join so many other young Black men locked up for the crime of being poor and oppressed. So now there will be two crimes: that against the child and that against those who had nothing to do with it, but were rounded up.

This is not the Glen Ridge rape. That case was beautifully analyzed in the 1997 book "Our Guys" by Bernard Lefkowitz. In 1989 in Glen Ridge, an affluent white New Jersey suburb, a bunch of star athletes gang-raped a mentally challenged girl — and almost the whole community united to defend and protect them. The victim and her family were made pariahs. The rapists were treated as heroes or, at worst, good guys who made a minor mistake. Not one of them ever served serious time.

Here, in contrast, we have cops rounding up Black youths. If there have been confessions, we have the likelihood that they were coerced. That some of them might be false confessions. That some of those rounded up didn't do it. This is the United States. There is no way that justice will be done. (Nor do I think that any trials, convictions and imprisonments of those who actually did commit the rape will constitute justice, for none of that will address or redress any of what's wrong with this society, any of the real causes of these crimes.)

Don't get me wrong. I remain enraged and shaken about the unspeakable crime that was committed. I can't stop thinking about the 11-year-old girl and how she'll manage to survive on into adulthood — if she'll manage to survive. Both the brutal misogyny of the crime and the sexist reporting of it make me want to scream and shout. But I won't join the rush to judgment against those accused. Because when Black men are accused of rape, especially in a case like this when so many are accused at once, and in small-town Texas [with a sordid history including the KKK and police brutality — WW] no less, you can be assured that racism too is involved. There is a long history of Black men being made into poster images for rape, whether the victim is Black or white, and of rape charges being used to justify racist violence and scapegoating. This goes back to slavery times and then the Klan and Jim Crow in the terrible lynch-law era. Then there was the Scottsboro case back in the 1930s. And more recently, the case of the Central Park jogger, for which the New York Police Department rounded up a bunch of Black youths who were demonized and caricatured as, basically, animals who had carried out what the media called a "wilding" — and who, despite their protestations of innocence were tried, convicted and imprisoned only to be exonerated years later after losing most of their youth to prison.

I recently read Jeffrey B. Perry's excellent book on Hubert Harrison, the first of a projected two-part biography of this great Black radical of early 20th-century Harlem. In the book Perry repeatedly returns to the lodestar of Harrison's political life: the principle (and practical necessity) that fighting racism must be paramount; that as long as white supremacy reigns, there can be no class unity. A socialist revolutionary must always remember this. The Cleveland, Texas, rape case is the latest reminder. □



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

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Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

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Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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**National Office**  
 55 W. 17 St.  
 New York, NY 10011  
 212-627-2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
 P.O. Box 5565  
 Atlanta, GA 30307  
 404-627-0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
 c/o Solidarity Center  
 2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.  
 Baltimore, MD 21218  
 443-909-8964  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Boston**  
 284 Amory St.  
 Boston, MA 02130  
 617-522-6626  
 Fax 617-983-3836  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
 367 Delaware Ave.  
 Buffalo, NY 14202  
 716-883-2534  
[buffalo@workers.org](mailto:buffalo@workers.org)

**Chicago**  
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
 Chicago, IL 60606  
 773-381-5839  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
 P.O. Box 5963  
 Cleveland, OH 44101  
 216-531-4004  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
 5920 Second Ave.  
 Detroit, MI 48202  
 313-459-0777  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Durham, N.C.**  
 331 W. Main St., Ste. 408  
 Durham, NC 27701  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)

**Houston**  
 P.O. Box 3454  
 Houston, TX 77253-3454  
 713-503-2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
 5274 W Pico Blvd.  
 Suite # 207  
 Los Angeles, CA 90019  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)  
 323-515-5870

**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
 P.O. Box 34249  
 Philadelphia, PA 19101  
 610-931-2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Pittsburgh**  
[pittsburgh@workers.org](mailto:pittsburgh@workers.org)

**Rochester, N.Y.**  
 585-436-6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**San Diego, Calif.**  
 P.O. Box 33447  
 San Diego, CA 92163  
 619-692-0355  
[sandiego@workers.org](mailto:sandiego@workers.org)

**San Francisco**  
 2940 16th St., #207  
 San Francisco  
 CA 94103  
 415-738-4739  
[sf@workers.org](mailto:sf@workers.org)

**Tucson, Ariz.**  
[tucson@workers.org](mailto:tucson@workers.org)

**Washington, D.C.**  
 P.O. Box 57300  
 Washington, DC 20037  
[dc@workers.org](mailto:dc@workers.org)

# Activists push back anti-immigrant car grabs

By John Parker  
Los Angeles

The Southern California Immigration Coalition stepped up its campaign in Los Angeles last year to stop the growing number of car impounds against non-driving-under-the-influence unlicensed drivers at police checkpoints. The coalition says this policy targeted undocumented immigrants, who, through no fault of their own, were unable to obtain licenses.

In addition, SCIC stressed that these impound policies disproportionately target and more severely penalize residents in Black and Latino/a neighborhoods, where the vehicles are needed to get to work. Moreover, the impounded cars' owners are forced to wait 30 days before they can pay at least \$1,000 to get their vehicles back.

The SCIC's campaign strategy targeted city-affiliated neighborhood councils and conducted protests during live

checkpoints. SCIC members aimed to warn motorists and build awareness of the impound policy's unfair nature. They succeeded in gaining abundant media coverage of their protests at impounded car sites. Two Los Angeles neighborhood councils voted to stop impounding.

SCIC's efforts paid off sooner than expected. On March 11, just one week after a very successful protest at a Los Angeles Police Department checkpoint, Police Chief Charlie Beck said the city had revised its towing policy. The March 13 Los Angeles Times said, "Police would be required to try to contact the registered owner of a vehicle, which is stopped at a checkpoint. If the owner is licensed and can arrive in a reasonable amount of time, the car would not be impounded. If the owner is unlicensed, but a licensed driver is in the car, that person may be permitted to take it."

Ron Gochez, a SCIC steering committee member, said, "People in our communities can sleep a little easier now with

less fear about losing their vehicles. Because of the work the coalition has been doing on the streets putting pressure on the mayor and LAPD, this is a concrete victory for our communities."

According to a Los Angeles Times' study of checkpoint information from the California Office of Traffic Safety, during a three-month period in 2009, nearly 4,000 vehicles, or 55 percent, were impounded due to unlicensed drivers. Only 14 percent were impounded for driving under the influence or other reasons.

In Coachella in Riverside County, drivers are given 30 minutes to find a legal driver to avoid an impound. Mayor Eduardo Garcia told the Los Angeles Times the city's impound policy was changed because "we saw an escalation of vehicles being towed and the hardship that it was creating for families." He added that those affected were "not individuals who were DUI, or who had suspended licenses" or were being sought by the law, but the policy mostly targeted migrant

workers in his community.

This is a real revenue booster for the state, as tens of thousands of cars were seized from 2007 to 2009. In one year alone, the state of California made \$40 million in impound fees.

Many residents see the severely punitive impound policies as yet another way to make working and poor people pay for the economic crisis. By refusing to go after the rich or the oil companies to balance city budgets, which are broken by government war spending and bailouts, revenue-increasing schemes using law enforcement as a cover — whether from increasing fines for parking tickets or impounds — are instituted.

*John Parker is a member of the Southern California Immigration Coalition and the chair of the Central Area Neighborhood Council, which was one of two city-affiliated councils to pass resolutions to stop car impounds at police checkpoints.*

## 'Rally for Bradley' March 20

# Accused Pentagon whistleblower faces death penalty

By Dee Knight

A national rally to support Pfc. Bradley Manning, accused Army whistle blower, will take place on March 20 at the U.S. Marine Corps base in Quantico, Va. It was called by the Bradley Manning Support Network, Veterans for Peace, Courage to Resist, CodePink and others.

Manning has been held in torturous conditions at Quantico for seven months. He is in "maximum security confinement" in a single, bare cell 23 hours a day. The other hour is for solitary exercise under a guard's supervision.

In early March, Manning was forced to remain naked for hours, supposedly for "suicide prevention." (New York Times, March 2) "This type of degrading treatment is inexcusable and without justification," wrote his lawyer, David Coombs. "It is an embarrassment to [the U.S.] military justice system and should not be tolerated."

A Marine spokesperson claimed the step was "not punitive." President Barack Obama said that he had been assured that measures such as forcing Pfc. Manning to sleep without clothing were "justified and for his safety," the Times said. (March 11)

Geoff Morrell, Pentagon press secretary told MSNBC that the conditions of Manning's confinement are attributed to "the seriousness of the charges he's facing, the potential length of sentence, the national security implications and to protect him from potential harm." (March 3)

On March 2, the Pentagon announced the addition of 22 new charges, including "aiding the enemy," which carries the death penalty.

The New York Times said, "The charge sheet did not explain who 'the enemy' was, leading some to speculate that it was a reference to WikiLeaks. On Thursday, however, the military said that it instead

referred to any hostile forces that could benefit from learning about classified military tactics and procedures."

The military charges that Manning "copied a database of more than 250,000 diplomatic cables between March 28 and May 4, 2010." He is accused of giving them to WikiLeaks, which published them on the Internet and in three newspapers in Europe and the U.S. The release was a major embarrassment to the U.S. military and diplomatic machine and touched off accusations against WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange from the Pentagon, congressional militarists and right-wing talk show hosts.

The Pentagon is making an example of Manning to warn anyone who would dare follow in his footsteps. It is also a warning to any major media outlet that might dare to publish WikiLeaks' material.

Demonizing WikiLeaks and Manning is a gigantic smokescreen meant to discredit and taint any coverage of the potentially damaging news items from WikiLeaks, which might see the light of day in the mainstream media. The brutal overreaction suggests the released items are merely the tip of an iceberg of incriminating evidence, which the Pentagon and all of official Washington are desperate to keep hidden.

A live, raw video of a helicopter attack on Iraqi civilians, released by WikiLeaks in April 2010, caused a major scandal for the White House and the Pentagon. The counterattack to criminalize the source and publisher of this footage was revealing.

"It's beyond ironic that leaked U.S. State Department cables have contributed to revolution and revolt in dictatorships across the Middle East and North Africa, yet an American may be executed, or at best face life in prison, for being the primary whistleblower," said Jeff Paterson

of Courage to Resist. "Millions [here and abroad] ... understand the contribution of Pfc. Manning towards not only freedom of information, but literally freedom itself."

Anti-war hero Daniel Ellsberg, who released the Pentagon Papers in 1971, exposing plans and strategy for the U.S. war against Vietnam, calls Bradley Manning

courageous and a hero. Ellsberg spent about two years in prison for his acts.

For more information on the demonstration on March 20, go to [CourageToResist.org](http://CourageToResist.org). Buses will go to Quantico from Washington, D.C.'s Union Station on March 20, following a national anti-war protest in the capital city on March 19. □

## Labor Tour to unite people in all the Americas

Wisconsin private and public sector workers in the tens of thousands thrust their fight against a union-busting law onto front-page news. More than two years ago, the members of Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (Mexican Electrical Workers Union) were robbed of their collective bargaining rights. Their union was declared illegal.

The pro-big-business Mexican government forced 44,000 workers out of their jobs at the country's second largest electrical power distributor, Luz y Fuerza (Central Light and Power). This jeopardized not only the workers' income, but also that of pensioners.

Find out how their struggle is like the one in the U.S. Hear from the workers on the front lines in Mexico and from a Cuban representative of the World Federation of Trade Unions who will present some of the alternatives already in process in the Americas.

An injury to one is an injury to all. There are no borders in the workers' struggle against capitalism. Come out to learn about our common interests and struggles and the need for mutual solidarity.

**Gilda Chacon Bravo**, Federacion Sindical Mundial-Americas, Cuba

**Humberto Montes de Oca**, Interior Secretary, Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (Mexican Electrical Workers Union)

**Pipino Cuevas**, Secretary of Health and Social Welfare, Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (Mexican Electrical Workers Union)

**Jorge Cazares**, Representing Section VIII of the National Steering Committee of Education Workers (CNTE — Mexico) (visa denied by the United States)

Thursday, **MARCH 17** ▶6:30 p.m.  
Westminster Presbyterian Church  
400 I St. SW Washington, D.C. 20024

Friday, **MARCH 18**  
▶Reception: 5:00- 6:15 p.m.  
Presentation: 6:15- 8:15 p.m.  
UAW Local 1005  
5615 Chevrolet Blvd., Parma, OH 44130

SATURDAY, **MARCH 19** ▶6:00 P.M.  
Farm Labor Organizing Committee  
1221 Broadway, Toledo, OH 43609

Sunday, **MARCH 20** ▶1:00 p.m.  
UAW Local 600  
10550 Dix Ave., Dearborn, MI 48120

Monday, **MARCH 21** ▶6:30 p.m.  
Workers United Hall  
333 S. Ashland, Chicago, IL 60607

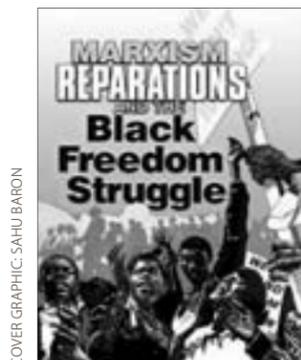
Friday, **MARCH 25** ▶6:00-9:00 p.m.  
World Beat Center  
2100 Park Blvd., San Diego, CA 92101

Saturday, **MARCH 26** ▶Noon - 4:00 p.m.  
Southern California Immigration  
Coalition Conference  
Santee Educational Complex  
1921 Maple Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90011

Sunday, **MARCH 27** ▶6:00 p.m.  
Workers United  
920 S. Alvarado, Los Angeles, CA 90006

Tuesday, **MARCH 29** ▶6:30 p.m.  
SEIU/Local 1199  
330 West 43rd. St., 7th Floor, New York City

For downloadable leaflets for public events, see <http://uniondelbarrio.org/laverdad/>. To schedule interviews or additional meetings contact [laborexchange@aol.com](mailto:laborexchange@aol.com) or 313 575-4933 or 313 355-8566; [info@uniondelbarrio.org](mailto:info@uniondelbarrio.org) or 619-398-6648. □



### MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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## The rise & fall of public education in the U.S.

# Big business backed public education – in 1910

By Gene Clancy

The city of Gary, Ind., was named after Elbert H. Gary (1846-1927), chairperson of the board of the United States Steel Corp. During the spring of 1906, U.S. Steel began to design its new lake-front mill and adjoining city on 9,000 acres of Lake Michigan coastline. In September the town board named a three-man school board, composed of C. Oliver Holmes, Edward Jewell, and Thomas H. Cutler. Holmes was the town clerk and secretary to A.F. Knotts, agent of the Gary Land Company (a subsidiary of U.S. Steel); Cutler, in his twenties, was a contractor and later a civil engineer for the steel company; and Jewell worked for the mill as well.

These luminaries chose William Wirt to be the superintendent in 1907, a position he would keep for 30 years. Wirt and local educators dramatically expanded the curriculum, vocational programs and after-school activities, and the model schools within the system. They allocated equal time to work, play and study.

Of utmost importance to Wirt was hiring experienced, qualified teachers at a competitive salary with a modicum of job security, and the construction of state-of-the-art buildings and facilities. (Ronald D. Cohen, "Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary Indiana 1906-1960")

But there was an underside to the Gary Plan. The overriding theme of public education in the United States is and has always been to serve the interests of the ruling classes. It does this by promoting the interests and profits of business while ameliorating capitalism's negative effects on society as a whole.

Some of the early sponsors of public education in the U.S. argued for it not as an altruistic gesture to help poor and working people, but as a means of social control. These early reformers assumed — without believing proof was needed — that poverty was the result of moral defects among poor and work-

ing people. There was increasing fear among the middle and wealthy classes of the increasing numbers of what were called "paupers" and idle youth. Of special concern were the millions of immigrants, large numbers of whom were arriving daily.

Horace Mann, the first commissioner of education in Massachusetts, argued that people who lacked the education and "moral character" to lift themselves out of poverty would merely perpetuate the problem unless there was intervention in the form of state funded, public schools. These schools would emphasize obedience and "moral development." Basic literacy and rudimentary academic skills were side benefits. A New Haven newspaper summed up the merits of the early "common schools" this way:

"The child, brought up, or rather left in idleness, will not form good habits, except under very rare circumstances.

### PART 2

It is a duty which the community owes to itself, to guard against the vices of its members.

... It is easier to train than correct the mind. It is easier to inculcate virtue than to eradicate vice." (David Nasaw, "Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States")

Not all children were deemed to be "rehabilitable." African Americans in the South and Native Americans in the West were described as irredeemable. Indeed, for the first half of the 19th century, the education of both enslaved and free African Americans was expressly forbidden in the South by law, and by "custom and popular prejudice" elsewhere. (Nasaw)

By the beginning of the 20th century, however, the situation was changing. During the 19th century, local commercial interests had been in the forefront of school reform. The political and financial backers of reformers such as Horace Mann read like a "who's who" of manufacturers and politicians in New England.

In the 20th century, the corporate

leaders of industry and finance, whose business interests were national and international, interjected themselves into the world of secondary education.

And their sights were set on the youth of the rapidly growing cities.

In 1906, the National Association of Manufacturers helped to found the National Society for Industrial Education. The NAM entered the high school campaign with two enemies in view — German industry, which was perceived as the chief competitor in the export markets, and the unions, now blamed for the problems the U.S. manufacturers were having competing with the Germans. (Nasaw)

In 1905, Frank Vanderlip of the National City Bank presented some startling news to the annual convention of the National Education Association. The miracle of German industry, he had discovered, was no miracle at all, but rather the end result of adjusting their secondary schooling system to the manufacturers' requirements. "I am firmly convinced that the explanation [for Germany's economic success] can be encompassed in a single word — the schoolmaster. He is the great cornerstone of Germany's remarkable commercial and industrial success. From the economic point of view, the school system of Germany stands unparalleled." (As quoted in Nasaw)

The NAM's Committee on Industrial Education reached a similar conclusion: "The German technical trade schools are at once the admiration and fear of all countries. In the world's race for commercial supremacy we must copy and improve upon the German method of education. Germany relies chiefly upon her [high school] trained workers for her commercial success and prosperity. She puts no limit on the money to be expended in trade and technical education." (Ibid.)

Clancy is a retired secondary school teacher in Rochester, N.Y. This is the second of a three-part article, available in full at workers.org.

## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

### D.C. nurses locked out after one-day strike

The Washington Hospital Center showed how little it respects its registered nursing staff when it locked out 1,650 RNs after their one-day strike on March 4. More than 2,000 nurses, unionists and other supporters picketed the WHC that day. What's at stake, says National Nurses United, is getting WHC to sign a contract with adequate staffing levels that ensure safe patient care. The nurses continued to picket the largest hospital in the District of Columbia until they went back to work on March 9. Meanwhile, they showed solidarity by joining the UNITE HERE Local 25 picket line at The Madison Hotel on March 7. Management's claims that it can't meet the nurses' demands for fair wages and benefits were exposed when the March 11 Washington Post reported that WHC spent a total of \$6 million on temporary nurses and extra security between March 4 and 8. Clearly, WHC was more intent on maintaining a hostile work environment for the RNs than in meeting their just demands.

### Immigrant day laborers win lawsuit

Eight immigrant day laborers, whose arrest in 2006 was judged in a federal lawsuit to constitute racial profiling during an illegal police sting operation, will share a \$650,000 settlement from the city of Danbury, Conn., and the federal government. Calling it the largest amount ever obtained by immigrant day laborers, Helen O'Reilly, a law student intern with the Workers and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic at Yale University, told the March 10 New York Times, "The message that this sends is that if a city does what Danbury did, and they harass and target Latino day laborers, there are consequences and substantial costs." The suit charged gross civil rights violations, including arrest without probable cause and violation of the workers' right to show they were available for work.

### U.Wis.-La Crosse faculty vote union

In the midst of the struggle to maintain collective bargaining rights that continues to unfold in Wisconsin, the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse voted 249 to 37 to join the American Federation of Teachers on Feb. 24. The 286 ballots cast represent an 87 percent turnout. Associate professor Darlene Lake told the La Crosse Tribune that the struggle at the state Capitol "galvanized the faculty to push back." Longtime AFT organizer and associate professor of biology Michael Ablor noted that "the state battle 'helped crystallize' the issue on campus." (March 1) Faculty at UW-L is the third UW faculty to unionize, joining AFT locals at UW-Eau Claire and UW-Superior.

### Musicians' strike continues in Detroit

The 23-week strike of musicians in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra continues, though the musicians offered to return to work immediately on March 1 if management would agree to submit all remaining unresolved issues — namely pay rates and work schedule — to binding arbitration. The March 8 Detroit Free Press reported that DSO's management refused to accept that offer because the "arbitration panel might saddle the institution with a contract that included big salary and benefit increases in year three that the board would be unable to afford." While it seems like management's refusal to negotiate with workers — even those on the high end of the pay scale — is spreading like a virulent virus, union solidarity is also spreading. The American Federation of Musicians told the March 11 Free Press that nine orchestras across the country will wear bracelets during performances March 12-13 to show support for DSO musicians. □



WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

## Int'l Women's Day forum in Detroit

International Women's Day was commemorated March 12 at a Workers World Party forum in Detroit. The featured speaker was WWP national leader Monica Moorehead, who addressed the capitalist economic crisis facing poor and working women in the U.S. and

worldwide. Megan Spencer, Vanessa Fluker, Ahlam Mohsen and Martha Grevatt also spoke. The meeting was chaired by WW managing editor Kris Hamel, who presented Moorehead with a "Woman Warrior" award.

— Workers World Detroit bureau

# Meeting builds support for UPR student struggle

By Steve Gillis  
Boston

Students and teachers fighting Boston public school closures and privatization, union leaders combating government and corporate attacks on collective bargaining and cuts to health care and pensions, women's groups battling the defunding of health clinics and social services, anti-war activists, and leaders of the Puerto Rican and Haitian national liberation movements gathered March 5 at Boston's Action Center to kick off a week of activities in New England planned to bolster solidarity with the courageous students' strike at the University of Puerto Rico.

The meeting was part of an international campaign called by The Puerto Rican Diaspora Solidarity Coordinating Committee — and co-sponsored in Boston by Workers World Party and the Women's Fightback Network — that projected a World Day of Solidarity with the University of Puerto Rico in Amsterdam, Barcelona, Madrid, Manchester, New York, Chicago, Hartford, Philadelphia and Boston centered around March 11.

**Victor Toro**

## Chilean activist denied asylum in U.S.

By Teresa Gutierrez

In early March the judge presiding over the case of Victor Toro denied Toro's request for political asylum. Toro faces possible deportation anytime in the next 30 days.

This denial is a blow to the struggle for justice not only for Toro but for all the undocumented and documented immigrants for whom Toro has fought so hard.

Toro is a Chilean revolutionary who organized in his homeland for workers rights. He was a founder of the heroic and revolutionary Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR) and part of the movement against the fascist U.S.-backed Gen. Augusto Pinochet following the 1973 coup against President Salvador Allende.

In 2007 Toro was racially profiled on an Amtrak train in upstate New York and was detained for not having proper immigration documents. His supporters and lawyers have demanded political asylum since deportation back to Chile would uproot him from his family and community in the Bronx. In addition, he faces repression and even the danger of being killed if he is returned to Chile, as the fascist goons from the Pinochet era still loom in the shadows there.

Despite the unfavorable ruling, the struggle for justice and political asylum for Toro continues. The committee to support Toro is meeting to figure out the next steps. For continued information on the case and to find out how to get involved, visit [www.may1.info](http://www.may1.info).

**Communication from Toro's att'y Carlos Moreno**

The following comments are from a communication that Toro's attorney, Carlos Moreno, sent out following the judge's decision:

"Immigration judge Sarah Burr has inexplicably denied Victor Toro's application for political asylum. The evidence presented along with Victor Toro's testimony were of such magnitude that no objective judge could have denied the petition for asylum presented by the Chilean former political prisoner.

Alberto Barreto Cardona, Ph.D., a longtime Puerto Rican independence activist, underlined his talk with vivid, front line photos of recent violent police attacks on students at UPR. "If the Puerto Rican police are not removed immediately, completely and permanently from all UPR campuses," he said, "it will only be a matter of time before another March 11, 1971 — the bloodiest day in the history of the University of Puerto Rico."

On March 4, 1970, during a student demonstration, police bullets executed student Antonia Martínez Lagares. The response was years of struggle by students, the UPR community and a broad section of Puerto Rican society to ban the police and ROTC from campus. This campaign succeeded following the bloody police assault on students the next year, mentioned above, during which a student and two police officers, including the



Boston meeting, March 5.

WW PHOTO

chief of the notorious Tactical Operations Unit, were killed, the ROTC building was burned, and the colonial government was forced to totally withdraw its forces.

Forty years later, Barreto, who had spent the previous month supporting student civil disobedience actions at the UPR's main campus in Río Piedras, reported on the current struggle. Puerto Rico's Tea Party-backed governor has ordered police to once again occupy the public campuses to try to break the resolve and solidarity of the students. The governor's unilateral imposition of new unaffordable fees is forcing 10,000 students out.

Barreto put the struggle in the context of the worldwide neoliberal and capitalist attacks aimed at privatizing public institutions, laying off workers and lowering wages, and taking away social benefits won through struggle decades ago, from Wisconsin to Greece. In the past year, Puerto Rico's U.S.-sponsored colonial government has laid off more than 26,000 public workers. U.S.-owned corporations there laid off thousands more.

Responding to the demands of U.S. banks, Puerto Rico's government has moved quickly to sell off public institutions to private capitalists — from health care to utilities to land — and many see the governor's violent attacks on the UPR students as his opening round to privatize the university.

Barreto lauded the discipline, democratic organization and courage of the UPR students, and in particular the leadership

of women students. The women have taken the majority of arrests, and they have faced brutal and sexual violence from the police, as many of his photos showed in graphic detail. Despite mass arrests, injuries from police rubber bullets and tear gas, and pressure-point, torture tactics applied by police to the peaceful protesters, the students' resolve stays strong.

The students at UPR, Barreto concluded, are like the "fists in action in Egypt, in Wisconsin, in Ohio," which unequivocally disprove the "post-colonial" worldview of bourgeois academics and political misleaders, and prove that the violence of capitalism can be overcome and finally defeated.

Ricardo Ramos, a recent graduate of the UPR now studying in Boston, told of his participation last year in the first phase of the student strike, when students organized new representative bodies, built unity with professors and other university workers, developed their own media, such as Radio Huelga, and occupied and struck the 11 campuses of the UPR. They won a historic agreement from the administration that rescinded the new fees and provided amnesty for student leaders, among other gains. Now the government and new administration have torn up the agreement with brutal police force.

Robert Lamothe, a Boston public school teacher and producer of the new documentary, "Teach" ([www.filmourway-films.com](http://www.filmourway-films.com)), inspired the Boston meeting with an eyewitness video report from the frontlines in Madison, Wis. □



Victor Toro

"Judge Burr concluded that Victor Toro took too long in presenting his application for Political Asylum and that the political conditions in Chile had sufficiently changed so that Victor Toro can return to Chile without problems. This conclusion by Judge Burr completely ignores the testimony presented by Victor Toro.

"Victor Toro's legal team expressed concern since the moment lawyers for the Department of Homeland Security introduced the idea that Victor Toro was linked to 'Terrorism' or a 'Terrorist' himself. The concern was that the accusation of terrorism, though unfounded, would not allow for the case to be judged justly and objectively. The decision by Judge Burr shows us that our concerns were valid.

"How can the denial of his political asylum request be justified? Especially for a man whose political and social work are the very essence of what political asylum should be? How can they ignore the persecution and suffering felt by Victor Toro during the military dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet, a dictatorship which was financed by the United States. How can the risk he faced as a target by Operation Condor be minimized?

"APPEAL! APPEAL! APPEAL! APPEAL!  
"We shall appeal what we consider to be an unjust, irrational and inexplicable decision. We shall lift our voices until the highest circles of power in the United States hear our case.

"Carlos Moreno, Esq." □

## War resister & GI activist: Tom Doran presente!

Tom Doran began his political opposition to U.S. wars and intervention as a student at the University of Virginia in the late 1960s. He was part of an anti-imperialist group of students who put out a radical newspaper, defended the Black Panthers and organized support for area workers. Doran went to Cuba in 1971 and cut sugar cane on the fourth Venceremos Brigade.

A working-class youth, Doran resisted the draft. He spent time in jail after being falsely convicted in connection with an arson attempt at ROTC offices on the UVA campus. Later he joined the military to become a GI organizer at Ft. Bragg, N.C. He represented the growing GI movement opposing the Vietnam War at national and international conferences.

In 1977 Doran moved to Atlanta and joined Workers World Party. While a quiet, mild-mannered man, he had a keen sense of justice and was particularly incensed by racism, sexism and all forms of bigotry. Doran excelled in photography, and his articles and images of demon-

strations were often seen in the pages of Workers World newspaper for more than two decades. He was actively involved in Cuba solidarity work for many years. He contributed many creative ideas for campaigns the Atlanta branch organized against slum landlords and the Ku Klux Klan and in support of workers.

Doran worked for the Georgia Department of Transportation for more than 33 years, mostly in the field of information technology. The last months of his life, he was valiantly battling management attempts to undercut his job.

In addition to his strong political beliefs, Doran's deep love of animals compelled him to train companion dogs for the disabled and to work with a horse rescue organization.

Tom Doran died of a massive heart attack at his home on March 5 at the age of 62. He is survived by his spouse of 18 years, Margaret Strickhouser.

Tom Doran, presente!

— Report by Dianne Mathiowetz

# Global crisis evokes national actions

By Monica Moorehead  
New York

As the capitalist economic crisis continues to ravage the living standards of poor and working people across the globe, important U.S. mass actions are being organized in the coming months to fight back against austerity, war and occupation. Workers World Party supports all of these activities and plans to have a visible presence at them, including distributions of WW newspaper. Of special significance are the ongoing mass actions in Madison, Wis., supporting public workers' right to unions.

On March 19 there will be a **Stop These Wars** rally and civil disobedience in Washington, D.C., initiated by activists of Iraq Veterans Against the War, March Forward!, Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Veterans For Peace. They will be gathering at the White House to demand an end to wars. These veterans will be supported by activist organizations such as the Answer Coalition, CodePink, United for Peace and Justice and others. The United National Antiwar Committee has endorsed this action along with locally coordinated actions.

The next day, March 20, the same groups have called a march and rally at the **Quantico Marine Base** in Virginia to demand the release of PFC Bradley Manning. Manning, who is being held in detention on the Quantico base, has been accused of exposing U.S. war crimes in Iraq and Afghanistan through WikiLeaks. See the article on page 3 for more information.

In New York City on the weekend of

March 18-20, the **Left Forum** will hold plenary sessions along with hundreds of panels on global issues at Pace University near City Hall. Many progressive activists from around the country are expected. WWP members and allies will be participating on a number of panels during the forum. These panels include "Breaking the Siege on Gaza — How Solidarity is Overcoming State Terror" (Sat., 10 a.m., W607); "Jobless Recovery, the Intractability of the Capitalist Crisis and Prospects for Fightback" (Sun. 12 noon, E320); "Sisterhood Across the Globe: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement" (Sat. 3 p.m., W623); and "Building a Left Movement for 21st Century Higher Education" (Sun. 10 a.m., W608). Go to [www.leftforum.org](http://www.leftforum.org).

On March 24, there will be a **Day of Rage** protest in New York City against the budget cuts, starting with a rally at City Hall at 5 p.m. and followed by a 6 p.m. march to Wall Street. This protest is being organized by a student/labor/community coalition which is demanding "Jobs, Not Layoffs! Affordable Housing Now! No Cuts to Social Services! No Union-Busting or Privatization! Stop the School Closings! End Mayoral Control! Fire Cathleen Black! Extend the Millionaire's Tax! Close Corporate Tax Loopholes! Bring Back the Stock Transfer Tax!" Go to [march24ny.wordpress.com](http://march24ny.wordpress.com).

In Harlem, N.Y., the **International Working Women's Day Committee** will be holding a march and rally on March 26 to demand an end to the economic war on women at home and abroad. The gathering and rally will be at the Harriet Tubman Memorial Statue.

The march will include stops at various places in Harlem that have been hard hit by the crisis. A discussion on how to unite women's issues will be held at the Harlem Interagency Council following the march. Go to [iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org) for more information.

On April 9 and 10, the **United National Antiwar Committee** is organizing bicoastal anti-war demonstrations in New York City and San Francisco respectively, demanding that the trillions of dollars being wasted on war and occupation be spent instead to meet human needs. The UNAC statement reads in part: "Who are the war makers? THEY are the government, corporate and financial powers that wage war, ravage the environment and the economy, and trample on our democratic rights and liberties. Who are the peacemakers? WE are the vast majority of humanity who want peace, a healthy planet and a society that prioritizes human needs, democracy and civil liberties for all." Solidarity demonstrations are planned for Canada, Pakistan, and in Kabul, Afghanistan. ([nation-alpeaceconference.org](http://nation-alpeaceconference.org))

A united **May Day 2011** has been called by the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights for Union Square in New York City. May Day is known as International Workers' Day worldwide. The Union Square protest statement demands: "Jobs, education, housing, union rights and living wages for all! Legalize the undocumented! Stop the deportations!" It goes on to say that people are fighting back against injustice around the world, including in Egypt, Wisconsin, Latin America and New York City. Go to [www.may1.info](http://www.may1.info) for more information. □

# Largest pro

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

The struggle of the poor and working people in Wisconsin against union-busting and anti-people attacks has ushered in a new period of fightback and resistance in the United States from coast to coast.

On March 12, in possibly the biggest progressive demonstration in Wisconsin's history, tens of thousands of people from across the Badger state, the country and worldwide joined to protest the illegal passing and signing of a union-busting and anti-people bill at the state Capitol in Madison.

"In the biggest rally in Madison since the protests started [Feb. 14], hundreds of thousands of working families, small business owners, farmers, students, religious groups, women's rights groups, environmentalists, private sector workers and public sector workers gathered to say that worker rights are human rights and they must be protected," says the Wisconsin AFL-CIO on its blog ([wisafleio.typepad.com](http://wisafleio.typepad.com)). The AFL-CIO estimated the crowd at 185,000.

The protest included a "Tractorcade" of thousands of farmers who drove their tractors to Madison and joined a mobile picket line around the Capitol for hours. The farmers carried signs such as "Don't farm out our jobs," "Wisconsin farmers support public employees," and "Plowing forward for democracy."

Students were also out in force as they have been all along. Students for a Democratic Society marched with a lead banner reading, "No cuts to education: No fees, no layoffs; education is a right!" SDS, with campus unions and community organizations, has organized numerous walkouts and other protests at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee over the past month.

TheUptake.org reports that on March 11

# Escalate mass action to kill Wisconsin anti-uni

Continued from page 1

and are also the poorest.

Collective bargaining rights ultimately boil down to the right to food, housing, medical care, education and a decent retirement — that is, the right to live a decent life. No right-wing legislator, acting on behalf of millionaires and billionaires, has the right to deny union rights.

The great outpouring of unions and workers all over the state and coming from other states, as well as strong student support for over four weeks, has electrified union members, communities and students all over the country. This has created very favorable conditions in which to launch a further struggle to overturn the law.

Walker has said he wants his "PATCO moment." When Ronald Reagan crushed the 18,000-member Professional Air Traffic Controllers Association in 1981 by firing all of them and barring them from federal employment for life, that union and its cause were little known to the public. Breaking the union at that time evoked no mass support or resistance.

The opposite is true today. The Wisconsin public employee unions have ignited a firestorm of union support that has spread to every city and town in the state and across the country, from coast to coast. The unions can count on widespread support and solidarity if they decide on a general strike or some other form of fightback.

There are many forms of a general strike. In 1934, in classic, full-scale municipal general strikes, the longshore workers won the right to organize in San Francisco, the Teamsters won the right to organize in Minneapolis, and the Auto-

Lite workers won the right to organize in Toledo, Ohio.

The Wisconsin's South Central Federation of Labor has given out information about a state-wide rolling general strike in Ontario from 1995 to 1998. It provides a recent model that lays out in detail the necessary preparations for and execution of this type of strike. During that period there were 11 "Days of Action," which ultimately pushed back the Ontario government's proposed anti-labor, austerity program.

Whatever actions are decided on going forward, the most important aspect is that the workers and the broader masses supporting them stay mobilized in one way or another. A general strike, even a one-day strike or a series of short strikes, takes the greatest preparation. But as long as the unions, the communities and the students stay engaged and work toward the closest unity and organization, taking the necessary time to plan their campaigns, they can win.

In the meantime, demonstrations around the state and the country can lay the groundwork for a much bigger struggle.

Right now all public service workers are under attack. They have suffered a setback in Ohio, where anti-union legislation has passed the state Senate, but this can be reversed through struggle. There are battles coming up in Indiana and Michigan. Dozens of state governments are waiting to see the outcome in Wisconsin. The bankers are rooting for Walker. Right-wing politicians are sharpening their legislative knives, hoping to cut the throats of the public worker unions.

Wisconsin is where unions and their supporters have made the strongest chal-

lenge. Union rights have been under attack in the U.S. for 30 years. But because Walker has made such a vicious attack, Wisconsin is both the flashpoint of the struggle and the place where the workers are the strongest.

When Walker tried to mobilize popular support for his program, only a few hundred Tea Party types showed up for a day or two. They soon disappeared under the pressure of the tens of thousands of pro-union demonstrators who showed up day after day, week after week.

Walker has a right-wing legislative majority, but he and his cause are overwhelmingly in the minority among the active masses of the population. And in a real struggle, this is what counts.

## Legality and class struggle

As a moment of decision on struggle approaches, there are many who will point out the great legal difficulties that public employees face regarding strikes and mass action. It is important to note, though, that it was once illegal for public employees to form a union at all. Only strikes and struggles overturned the laws barring public employees from organizing in the first place.

The legal right to form a union was once denied to all workers. But the struggle, mass action, sit-down strikes, general strikes and industrial strikes won those rights on the ground. The laws then changed based on what the workers were able to wrest from the bosses or the government.

## Union-busting bill illegal under int'l law

Walker took office under false pretenses. He hid his plans from the people: to

break the unions, take away Wisconsin's low-income health insurance known as BadgerCare and make draconian cuts in services. He hid his connection with the infamous right-wing billionaires — the Koch brothers — and with the banks. He and his corporate backers carried out a sneak attack, a secret conspiracy behind the backs of the people of Wisconsin. Walker's election was a virtual anti-union coup d'état.

Walker's law itself is illegal. Not just because of the way it was railroaded through by a tiny group of right-wing Republicans. Not just because the police denied thousands entrance to the Capitol. Not just because the people were denied the right of assembly and the right to hearings. And not just because the legislature had no right to split the bill on the false grounds that the union-busting part was "non-fiscal."

It is illegal because the right to collective bargaining is regarded all over the world, and under international law, as a fundamental human right. The right to collective bargaining is denied only under the most authoritarian and reactionary regimes — and in the racist, anti-labor states of the U.S. South and Southwest.

In 2005 the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America Local 150 and the North Carolina Public Service Union filed a complaint with the International Labor Organization against their right-to-work state for denying collective bargaining rights to public employees. The suit was joined by the Public Service International, a worldwide federation representing more than 20 million public sector workers in 160 countries. ([Huffington Post](http://Huffington Post), March 15)

In 2007 the ILO issued a ruling calling on the U.S. government to "promote the establishment of a collective bargaining frame-

# test ever in Madison backs public workers



PHOTO: SUE RUGGLES, AFT LOCAL 212

students across the country walked out of classes in response to a call from Madison students for a national strike.

Unionized teaching assistants at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee, along with students from K-12 and higher education from all across the state and beyond participated on March 12.

Members of labor, student and community organizations from larger cities like Milwaukee to small, rural towns came to fight against union-busting and other political, economic and social attacks against poor and working people included in Gov. Scott Walker's 2012-13 budget proposal.

Speakers at the main rally also included Green Bay native Tony Shalhoub, star of 'Monk'; the Rev. Jerry Folk; Phil Neuenfeldt, Wisconsin AFL-CIO president; Tom Buffenburger, IAMAW president; Marty Biel, executive director AFSCME Council 24; Guy Costello, teacher in the South Milwaukee School District; Heather Terrill-Stotts, principal, Arena Elementary School; Christine Neumann Ortiz, Voces de la Frontera, executive director; Anna Zachow, SEIU Healthcare home worker; Mahlon Mitchell, firefighter president; Jeff Myers, AFT; Sheila Cochran, Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; and Mary Bell, president of WEAC.

## An injury to one is an injury to all!

Both within the U.S. and internationally, solidarity with the poor and working people of Wisconsin and across the country is on the rise.

On March 12, members of the German telecommunications union, ver.di, rallied to support bargaining rights for workers in the U.S., and the ver.di chairperson wrote a protest letter to Walker.

Wisconsin state AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, Stephanie Bloomingdale, spoke in To-

ronto on March 14 and shared her experiences with the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO receives letters, donations and more on a daily basis from unions across the U.S. and beyond. Solidarity demonstrations have taken and are taking place across the U.S. and internationally. Egyptian workers, a beacon of hope and inspiration to the poor and working people of Wisconsin, have sent donations for food and other assistance.

Every day protest actions large and small are taking place throughout Wisconsin.

Union federations and locals worldwide are passing support resolutions such as the one entitled, "Support the Initiative for a General Strike in Wisconsin — and Prepare for Nationally-Coordinated Solidarity Job Actions," adopted unanimously March 2 by the National Association of Letter Carriers Branch 214. This resolution adds to one passed by the 46,000 member South Central Federation of Labor in Madison Feb. 21 (<http://scfl.org/>).

Stephen King, the Rev. Jesse Jackson and many others have spoken, marched, and/or raised funds for the workers in Wisconsin and other states under siege by the banks, the corporations and the Pentagon. Michael Moore, who spoke in Madison on March 5, gave a talk entitled, "America is Not Broke" demanding the rich pay up and calling for massive direct action resistance from poor and working

people nationwide.

The National Nurses United, who have led marches in Madison and are participating in the fightback against the union-busting bills in Madison and nationwide, are circulating a leaflet which declares: "Just Say NO — no more concessions nor more cuts: Need Revenue? Make Corporations Pay Their Fair Share." ([nationalnursesunited.org](http://nationalnursesunited.org))

## Background

Walker proposed his "budget repair bill" on Feb. 11, which called for virtually eliminating collective bargaining rights for up to 200,000 public sector workers in Wisconsin. Walker wanted the bill rammed through the Wisconsin Legislature in five days — but an 18-day mass occupation of the Capitol and massive demonstrations, and walkouts, sickouts and other student-worker rebellions statewide stalled the bill for weeks. Fourteen Democratic senators left the state to deny Walker a quorum in the Senate and delay the vote.

On March 9 Republicans claimed that only the budget measures required a quorum. They said they had separated out the anti-union measures from the rest of the bill and could now hold the vote. Using this maneuver, the state Senate rushed to ram it through. Hearing of this, "several thousand people arrived to protest outside the locked-down Capitol building, eventually forcing their way inside. One Democratic senator called the vote illegal, refer-

# ion bill!

work in the public sector in North Carolina" and called specifically for the repeal of North Carolina General Statute #95-98, the law denying collective bargaining rights to public employees.

More generally, under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations, the right to collective bargaining is part of the right to freedom of association and the right to organize trade unions (articles 20 and 23). The U.S. has signed and ratified this declaration.

Thus the state of North Carolina and all the so-called right-to-work states are in violation of international law and of human rights. What Walker and the bankers want is to make Wisconsin as anti-union as North Carolina. If denial of collective bargaining is illegal under international law in North Carolina, then it is illegal in Wisconsin. Workers and unions have every right to insist on their rights under universally recognized international law.

## Wisconsin unions can enforce their rights

Now the time has come to compel Walker and the millionaires and billionaires behind him to step back from union-busting. The unions and the workers can take advantage of their favorable position of popular support. The unions can become the defenders, not just of their own rights, but of the rights of the communities and the poor who will suffer under Walker's vicious bill, and also of the students and youth who will suffer from cutbacks in education.

The stage is set for a massive fightback. It is time to overturn the bill and turn the situation around for public workers and all workers in this country in their struggle against the capitalist bosses and their governments and politicians. □

# French lesson: 'It's not over'

By Tony Murphy

Once Gov. Scott Walker signed anti-union Act 10 on March 10, the media treated the battle in Wisconsin as over. "Republican tactic ends stalemate in Wisconsin" blared the front page of the New York Times on March 11.

Yet the next day, the largest-yet march in Madison protested the dismantling of collective bargaining.

The dynamic, inspiring movement against Walker's union-busting bill is alive and well — and not going away. Its spreading to Ohio, Indiana and other states is much needed, and will be like oxygen for the labor movement.

Hanging in the balance is the question of whether the struggle in Wisconsin itself is really over.

Of course, the corporate media would have us think it is.

However, Wisconsin Secretary of State Doug La Follette has refused Walker's request to publish the new law before the state's customary ten-day waiting period. "It's been rushed enough," La Follette said. (La Crosse Tribune, March 11)

Can a law be reversed after it's been passed? Yes. This has happened in recent

history — in France in 2006.

## Take a lesson from France in 2006

On March 31 of that year, President Jacques Chirac signed a bill, known as the CPE, which allowed bosses to fire workers under age 26 for no reason or with no explanation.

At that point, protests and one-day general strikes against the CPE had already closed universities, blocked railways and rocked France for weeks.

Students and unions took passage of the law as a sign to ratchet up the street struggle. Another national strike was called for April 4.

Unions estimated the strike's turnout at 3 million. Creative and militant tactics included electricity workers sabotaging the power supply at the Montpellier Town Hall and the Polygone shopping center. Electricity was cut for at least half an hour.

Chirac and Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin kept explaining that they were pushing the CPE against the will of the people for honorable reasons. They kept on saying that right up until April 10 when the demonstrations forced them to reverse course — and announce that they were scrapping the law for good.

encing an open meeting law that requires that the Senate provide 24-hour notice of such action, which the Republicans did not do." ([fightbacknews.org](http://fightbacknews.org))

Later, tens of thousands descended upon the Capitol, reoccupying it and erupting into shouts of "Shame! Shame! Shame!" and "General strike!"

On March 10 the Assembly was unable to convene until afternoon as hundreds of mostly students occupied the lobby leading to the Assembly chambers; some also occupied the Assembly chambers. After a host of police physically dragged out the protesters, the Assembly convened and passed the bill.

Tens of thousands of protesters on the outside of the Capitol were illegally barred from entering the the Capitol by hundreds of police on March 10 — despite a court injunction won against Scott Walker's administration the previous week stating that the public must have access to the inside of the Capitol from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## General strike!

On March 11, Walker signed the union-busting bill into law. Because of the illegal and criminal way the bill was passed through the Assembly and the Senate, some unions have called for injunctions and for other means to overturn it. Other protest actions include recall campaigns and ongoing demonstrations. Calls for and discussion of a general strike are also growing daily. Some educational information for local unions is posted at the South Central Labor Federation's website: ([www.scfl.org/?page=generalstrike](http://www.scfl.org/?page=generalstrike))

After the Assembly illegally passed the illegal bill on March 10, Joe Conway, president of the Madison firefighters' union, said that the political situation has grown so dire in Wisconsin, he'd support a general strike.

"We should start walking out tomorrow, the next day ... See how long they can last," he told reporters with The Uptake. "This is a nationwide movement to attack all working men and women in Wisconsin and the United States."

For how you can help or for more information: [www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org); [wisafclcio.typepad.com](http://wisafclcio.typepad.com); and [www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org)

Like Walker, Villepin was not held back by legality. The Financial Times reported that he "rammed reform through parliament as if he were leading a charge of the Imperial Guard." (April 5, 2006)

The French movement's defeat of the CPE speaks volumes about how to proceed with the struggle in Wisconsin. While the Wisconsin' South Central Labor Federation voted to endorse a general strike, Democrats and many unions are pushing a recall campaign against Walker and other Republicans. This is now widely advanced as the next step in the struggle, along with ballot-box vengeance.

Whatever is done with legal and electoral tactics, the real strength of this movement is in the streets. The protesters themselves have shown again and again that their impulse is to return to the streets in Madison and elsewhere. Some 4,000 people confronted Walker on March 13 when he attended a Republican fundraiser in Howard, Wis.

The movement still has great momentum. And the defeat of the anti-worker CPE in France is an object lesson pointing the way for the struggle: The workers' greatest power is in the streets. □

## Follow the oil money

# Why imperialists hate Libya, love Bahrain

By Deirdre Griswold

March 15 — Events continue to unfold rapidly in North Africa and the Gulf states.

On March 14 Saudi Arabia sent tanks and 2,000 troops into the kingdom of Bahrain to protect the Al Khalifa royal family there from mass protests demanding an end to the monopoly of political power in the hands of the king.

The next day police shot dead two protesters in a crowd of at least 10,000 who had marched to the Saudi Embassy in Bahrain with signs reading “Stop Saudi invasion.”

The tiny island territory of Bahrain was once a British colony and a base in the Persian Gulf for the Royal Navy, but today it is used by the U.S. Fifth Fleet. It has become a major financial center for the oil-rich Gulf states. The majority of people are Shiite but the royal family is Sunni and close to the Saudi rulers. The Shiites are discriminated against and not allowed by law to belong to Bahrain’s army.

### Rebels pushed back in Libya

At the same time, in North Africa, the Libyan military has been able to push back armed rebel forces that in recent weeks had gained control of several cities both east and west of the capital, Tripoli. Now the only city of any size remaining in rebel hands is Benghazi, strategically located astride the roads and pipelines leading to 80 percent of Libya’s oil.

The leaders of the Libyan rebels had counted on support from the U.S. and European imperialists and have been calling for their military intervention. However, the imperialists have responded only with covert military aid to the rebels so far and have not been able to agree on setting up a “no-fly zone” over Libya — which Britain and France have campaigned for in both the U.N. and NATO.

All the imperialists would prefer a loyal Western puppet over Moammar Gadhafi, who came to power in 1969 through a progressive nationalist military coup. He na-

tionalized the country’s oil, which provided the funds for a dramatic improvement of the people’s standard of living. Decades later, however, in the period after the U.S. “shock and awe” invasion of Iraq, Gadhafi agreed to open Libya up again to foreign investment.

### WikiLeaks cable makes things clear

However, a cable from U.S. Ambassador Gene Kretz to the State Department on June 4, 2009, made public by WikiLeaks, shows that more recently Libya was able to force foreign oil firms, especially France’s Total, to agree to take a much smaller percentage of the oil and gas yielded from their wells, under threat of renationalization.

Kretz wrote, referring to Libya’s National Oil Corporation: “The renegotiation of Total’s contract is of a piece with the NOC’s effort to renegotiate existing contracts to increase Libya’s share of crude oil production. ... Each consortium will take 27 percent of oil production, down from the 50 percent take they had under the previous agreement. For gas, the consortium will take a 40 percent share (down from 50 percent), which will be reduced in the future to 30 percent. For the Mabruk field, which is located in the Sirte basin and produces some 20,000 barrels of oil per day, the new production share is 73 percent for the NOC, 20.25 percent for Total and 6.75 percent for StatoilHydro.” (“06.04.2009: French Total-led consortiums accept lower production shares in Libya” — WikiLeaks document published in *Aftenposten*)

As the U.S. ambassador well understood, this effort by the Libyan government to get more control over its most valuable resource would antagonize the imperialist oil companies and their rich capitalist owners. No wonder that France was the first country to recognize the rebel regime in Benghazi!

Thus two very different struggles are taking place simultaneously in the region.

In Bahrain, the masses are coming out

in mass protests against a regime solidly supported by the imperialists and reactionary Arab forces like the Saudis.

In Libya, it is the armed rebel groups that have imperialist support. The heads of state in the U.S., Britain and France have all called for the downfall of the Libyan government, headed by Col. Moammar Gadhafi. And they continue to threaten to intervene unless Gadhafi is overthrown — which appears increasingly unlikely.

### End of an era

Ruling groups like those in Tunisia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that have stayed in power for decades because they tied their fortunes to the interests of U.S. and European imperialist powers can no longer count on stability.

Some have ruled through state structures that are outright political dictatorships headed by kings, emirs or military strongmen. Others have allowed parliaments, prime ministers and presidents to exist as long as the interests of the ruling class and its imperial patrons were served.

It all seemed stable. The imperialists took out enormous wealth — in natural resources and in products created by the super-exploitation of the workers. They allowed the kings, presidents and their political and business cohorts to live the good life while the masses of people sank from poverty to squalor.

The imperialists grew super-super-rich on profits from oil and other investments. In order to keep these regimes in power, they taxed the workers at home in order to send their puppets abroad the latest weapons and train their officers in how to repress the unhappy people. If that wasn’t enough, they sent in their warships and planes in a show of brute strength.

Just a few months ago, it all still seemed to work. The stock exchanges were functioning well, funneling the wealth to those who already had too much, while unemployment, malnutrition and the million daily burdens that come with poverty kept the people down.

But then came a turning point: the mass movements that began demanding better conditions for the people as well as the exit of the foreign-appointed “leaders” who had oppressed them. They swelled from thousands to millions, and they wouldn’t go home at the end of the day. Suddenly the vulnerabilities of these regimes were laid bare. Suddenly it was clear that they relied on imperialism to stay in power.

### Imperialism’s dilemma deepens

What do the imperialists do now? That is what is being discussed every day behind closed doors in Washington and on Wall Street, in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and the other imperialist capitals.

This doesn’t come at a good time for them. They have growing problems at home, too. The costs of empire — and the deepening divide between rich and poor — are arousing the masses at home as well. How can the imperialist states divert even more money into ever bigger military adventures without further enraging the workers at home — who more and more are protesting the painful cuts being made to their wages, their services, public education, health care and everything else people need to have a decent life?

The thin veneer of capitalist democracy meant to cover up dictatorship by the big banks and corporations is wearing thin. With an intractable crisis of mass unemployment, an anti-union offensive and the balancing of government budgets on the backs of the workers, even as profits are again inflating the bank accounts of the very rich, it is hard for capitalist politicians of any stripe to stir up public support for yet another military adventure to protect the oil companies’ buddies in the Middle East.

Whether it’s to protect the rebels in Libya or the regime in Bahrain, imperialist intervention will only deepen the crisis of a system that is becoming more hated with each passing day.

*E-mail: dgriswold@workers.org*

# Rebellions continue across the Arabia,

By Gene Clancy

The ferocious storm of uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East continues to stymie the efforts of the U.S. and other Western powers to suppress or contain them. There are ongoing significant protests in Yemen, Bahrain, Kuwait and Iraq, all places with a substantial U.S. military presence.

Also ominous for the Pentagon planners are protests in Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Jordan, countries which at this time lack the presence of large numbers of U.S. troops, but whose rulers have been long-time clients of U.S. imperialism.

As Rami Khouri, a professor in Beirut, Lebanon put it: “The U.S. doesn’t know how to deal with freedom-loving Arabs.” (CNN, March 13)

Tens of thousands of protesters marched in **Yemen** on March 11, drawing record crowds in Sana’a, the capital, to show President Ali Abdullah Saleh that his reform offers failed to weaken their demand for his immediate departure.

A Wikileaks document recently revealed that Saleh told his people that his

own government had carried out drone attacks that were really U.S. military actions in Yemen in violation of Yemeni sovereignty. (BBC, Dec. 10, 2010)

Yemenis flooded streets and alleys around Sana’a University in the biggest protest to hit the capital since demonstrations began in January. The protests followed by only one day a deadly predawn raid by the security forces on an encampment in a central square in the capital which killed three people and wounded 250.

In the southern port city of Aden, police fired on thousands of marchers, trying to disperse them. They wounded three people. Six were overcome by tear gas.

Aden is a strategic port near the Straits of Hormuz which control the entrance to the Persian Gulf and is an important port of call for the U.S. Navy. The USS Cole was attacked there in October 2000.

Unidentified armed men killed four soldiers on patrol east of Mukalla city in Hadhramaut province in southeast Yemen. About 30 people have been killed in Yemen since January.

**Bahrain**, home to the U.S. Navy’s Fifth Fleet, has been gripped by the worst

unrest since the 1990s when protesters took to the streets last month, inspired by uprisings that unseated entrenched autocratic rulers in Egypt and Tunisia.

Thousands of opposition activists stormed toward Bahrain’s royal court. Carrying Bahraini flags and flowers, the protesters began walking from the Aly area to Riffa, a district of Manama, the capital, where many of the wealthy and members of the royal family live.

More than 200 riot police armed with batons blocked off the road with barbed wire. Medical sources said one person was seriously injured. Seven people have been killed in clashes with security forces, and thousands of the February 14 Youth Movement still occupy the Pearl roundabout, a busy intersection in the capital.

In **Kuwait**, the launching point for two major invasions of Iraq by U.S. forces, elite anti-riot police used tear gas to disperse hundreds of stateless Arab protesters who were demanding citizenship and other rights.

Demonstrators took to the streets in Jahra, west of Kuwait City, the capital, following Friday prayers on March 11,

despite a stern warning against protests from the new interior minister. “Stateless since 50 years, we demand citizenship” read a huge banner in English as protesters chanted, “We will not leave without a solution.” (Reuters)

There were other protests in Sulaihiya, southwest of Kuwait City, and in the oil-rich city of Al-Ahmadi, south of the capital.

Stateless Arabs, known locally as *bi-idoons*, protested last month for three consecutive days until officials gave them assurances that their grievances would be addressed. As in many of the smaller Gulf states, in Kuwait a large proportion of the population (often a majority) are foreign-born workers with practically no political or economic rights.

But on March 8 parliament refused to debate a draft bill that would give the *bi-idoons* civil rights.

In the latest challenge to the government in **Iraq**, thousands of protesters are demanding jobs and better basic services. Protesters turned up in Baghdad’s Tahrir Square on March 11, with similar demonstrations in the cities of Fallujah west

# Libyan military routs Western-backed rebels

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

March 13 — Libyan government forces have taken several towns both east and west of Tripoli, the capital, driving out rebel groups that have been calling for military intervention by the imperialist states. Morale among the opposition is reportedly declining in Benghazi, which has been the de facto headquarters of the rebels.

The United States and the European powers in NATO have been supporting and trying to coordinate the actions of these groups, but their weakness prompted NATO to hold a strategy meeting on March 10.

Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi has maintained that the rebels are backed by the Western imperialist countries and that they are attempting to divide the country along regional and tribal lines. Since the beginning of the unrest, the corporate media outlets in the U.S. and around the world have given unconditional support to the rebel groups.

All the major imperialist states are lined up against the Libyan government in their demand that Gadhafi and his supporters be overthrown. Nonetheless, these Western countries are divided over the best way to remove the current government and gain control over the oil and natural gas resources inside this North African state.

## U.S. forces bogged down

U.S. military forces have already suffered tremendous defeats and setbacks in Iraq and Afghanistan. Inside Afghanistan the Pentagon has ordered more than a thousand bombing missions per month and deployed more than 100,000 U.S. and NATO troops. Nevertheless, the resistance forces are growing significantly.

The U.S. has no strategy for the decisive defeat of the resistance in Afghanistan or Pakistan, where the war has spread even wider under the Obama administration. Obama dispatched an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan in late 2009, but

these new units have failed to bring the country under the control of the U.S. military forces. In Pakistan, U.S. and NATO policy has only succeeded in creating more adversaries.

Despite the official U.S. position on Iraq that the “surge” worked and that the combat mission is over, Pentagon forces are still being killed in the country. Invaded in 2003 and occupied by U.S. forces ever since, Iraq today is by no means stable or self-sufficient.

Just recently, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis protested against the horrendous conditions prevalent inside the country, which include poor drinking water, lack of utility services, high unemployment, and soaring food and fuel prices. Dozens of demonstrators were killed by the U.S.-trained security forces in February and March. These demonstrations, and the brutality with which they were treated, garnered virtually no press coverage inside the U.S.

The U.S. and other Western imperialist states claim their concerns in Libya are only related to the burgeoning humanitarian crisis caused by the fighting launched by the rebels. The U.S. has dispatched warships to the region under the guise of evacuating foreigners from the North African state.

The U.S. Africa Command (Africom) has been engaged in “its first operational assignment, helping to evacuate foreigners from Libya and delivering humanitarian supplies to refugees in Tunisia,” said Voice of America on March 9. It added, “The command has also had a key role in preparing what officials call a ‘full range of options’ in case President Barack Obama orders military intervention in Libya.”

However, U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates warned Congress and the Obama administration of the dangers associated with possible aerial bombardments of Libya and the deployment of troops in this North African state. He indicated that the imposition of a so-called “no-fly zone” over Libya would require air strikes against the government’s defensive positions and moving a large-scale naval expedition into the region.

## Egypt’s military secretly helps rebels

Egypt receives an estimated \$1.5 billion annually from the U.S. to subsidize its military forces. A United Press Inter-

national dispatch published on March 9 reported: “Egypt, still grappling with a revolution that toppled President Hosni Mubarak in February, is reported to be quietly aiding rebel forces seeking to oust Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. ... While the United States and the international community debate whether to intervene in the civil war raging in Libya to support the ragtag rebel forces holding the east of the country, Egypt apparently has sent around 100 Special Forces troops to help the insurgents.”

Unnamed sources referred to in the UPI report indicate that the “Egyptian commandoes are most likely from Unit 777 of the Egyptian army’s Special Operations Command set up in the late 1970s. Unit 777’s 250-300 personnel trains with Germany’s elite GSC-9 counter-terrorism force, the U.S. Army’s Delta Force and France’s GIGN, special operations arm of the National Gendarmerie.” The conservative government of Nicolas Sarkozy of France was the first of the imperialist states to formally recognize the rebel forces.

NATO’s meeting on March 10 brought together defense ministers, foreign ministers, prime ministers or presidents for a two-day meeting about what to do with regard to Libya. Just prior to the March 10 gathering, NATO said it was engaging in the 24-hour-a-day surveillance of Libyan air space. NATO also admitted that an airborne warning-and-control aircraft has already gone on patrol with a Boeing E3 Sentry maintaining a position over the Mediterranean.

However, although Britain and France pushed for setting up a no-fly zone over Libya, there was no agreement among the imperialists, who referred the matter to the U.N. Security Council.

Turkey, also a member of NATO, opposed intervention. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, “Military intervention by NATO in Libya or any other country would be totally counter-productive.” (AFP, March 14)

## African Union opposes intervention

The African Union Peace and Security Council, headed by Zimbabwe, after a two-day meeting issued a communiqué on March 11 opposing any foreign military intervention in Libya. The AU meeting, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, went on record as recognizing Libya’s unity and

territorial sovereignty. The AU represents 53 member states.

The continental organization concluded: “The current situation in Libya calls for an urgent African action for the immediate cessation of all hostilities, the cooperation of the competent Libyan authorities to facilitate the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations, the protection of foreign nationals, including the African migrants living in Libya, and the adoption and implementation of the political reforms necessary for the elimination of the causes of the current crisis.”

Libyan state television on March 13 reported, “The Libyan authorities will take all steps to welcome [AU] members and offer all facilities for the accomplishment of the mission.”

On the same day, Gadhafi met with ambassadors from China, Russia and India and encouraged these states to increase their economic cooperation with Libya. (Jana, March 14)

## U.S. hands off Africa!

The U.S. is already heavily involved militarily on the African continent with the growing presence of Africom, as well as joint operations with various states throughout the region. The U.S. military base in Djibouti serves as its forward operational center in the Horn of Africa.

These foreign policy and military maneuvers can lead to a protracted ground conflict involving U.S. and NATO forces in North Africa.

Other states in Africa — namely Sudan, Zimbabwe and Somalia — are now under even more of a threat of direct military intervention from the U.S. and other imperialist countries. In Somalia, the U.S. is already engaged in a proxy war to prevent the seizure of power by an Islamic resistance movement that is hostile to Washington’s objectives in the Horn of Africa.

The people of Libya and North Africa are not the enemies of the working people and the oppressed in the United States. The people in the United States must vigorously oppose the intervention by the Pentagon and NATO in the plot to topple the Libyan government. The resources utilized for war and occupation throughout the world should be rechanneled to provide jobs, housing, healthcare, quality education and public services to the majority of working people and the poor. □

## Africa

of the capital, Sulaymaniyah in the north and Basra in the South. Iraq’s government has been shaken by a string of rallies across the country since the beginning of February.

The Arab revolt spilled over into **Burkina Faso** in Central Africa, which has been wracked by student protests and strikes ever since Justin Zongo, a student in Koudougou, a city in the west of the country, died while in police custody in February.

As of March 10, according to the Bourkinabé internet news service Senego, at least six people died in the protests, including three university students, a high school student and a cop. Many people have been seriously hurt. Four police stations have burned, allowing prisoners to escape. Protests have taken place throughout the whole country. (LeFaso.net)

At a March 11 mass protest in Ougadougou, the capital, which went to National Police headquarters, signs called for “Truth and Justice,” “No to injustice,” “Cops and untenable unemployment, both kill!” and “Cops = armed bandits.”

G. Dunkel contributed to this article.

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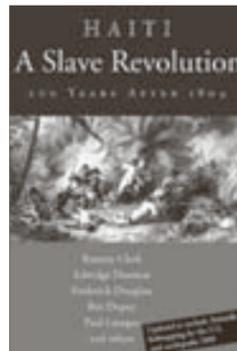
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**WORKERS WORLD**  
editorial

# Japan tsunami

March 15 — Workers World Party would like to offer its sincerest condolences and concern for the people of Japan, who have lost many lives and continue to struggle in the aftermath of the worst earthquake, and ensuing tsunami, on record in the area.

We join with the people of Japan in condemning the Japanese government for its lack of transparency in its response to the earthquake and tsunami — for not telling people what is happening and for not preparing people for evacuation if needed. At the same time, we solidarize ourselves with Japan's heroic public service and nuclear energy workers, who have been working round the clock and, in many cases, risking their lives in order to protect the lives of others. The country's nuclear workers are especially being made to bear the brunt of the dangers of the situation without any relief and without enough care for their safety.

In Japan, the devastation of the earthquake and tsunami was limited by the valiant efforts of these workers, along with the country's highly developed economy. The number of deaths to date is fewer than the number of civilians killed by the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, not to mention the huge toll of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti — a country that was already impoverished by neoliberal International Monetary Fund policies.

Bourgeois media reports are now raising the alarm for a nuclear catastrophe in Japan, as workers scramble to fix cooling systems for five nuclear reactors at two power plants. This situation should be approached in context. Japan, which has no oil resources of its own, has extensively developed nuclear power in a bid to be free of dependence on U.S.-controlled oil. The Associated Press reports that 30 percent of Japan's electricity is received through nuclear power. (March 11).

Our readers should be cautioned that some of the anti-nuclear noise coming from the U.S. can be seen as speaking for the interests of Big Oil — the wealthy oil industries primarily from the U.S., Britain and France. The potential radiation exposure in Japan, even in the worst-case scenario, is not even minutely close to what was done by just one of the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Japan in 1945.

Nuclear power is being sought by Cuba, Iran, North Korea and other countries. For now, it is the only viable alternative to reliance on Big Oil for power and development of the economy. China has been able to develop mainly because it did not have to rely on oil/gas for power, but has big reserves of coal that it used instead. For now, Japan will have to switch to gas-based power plants to temporarily replace the nuclear plants lost to the earthquake.

At the same time, the Japan nuclear plant crisis shows the necessity for a people's takeover of the energy industry, both the nuclear industry and the oil/gas industry. Such a takeover would ensure that the safety and lives of workers — and the environment — would always come first with regards to the preparation and consumption of energy for human use. □

## Low-Wage Capitalism

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

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India



Thailand

# International Women's Day

By Kathy Durkin

Struggle has been at the heart of International Women's Day since 1 million women demanding equal rights first marked it in Europe in 1911.

This year's commemorations, held on March 8, carry out that tradition. From the Philippines to Bahrain, and Kenya to Mexico, women celebrated and marched.

Women worldwide have been electrified by the struggles of their sisters in Tunisia, Egypt, Bahrain and Yemen in recent weeks demanding the ouster of U.S.-supported dictatorial regimes. In many Middle Eastern and North African countries, women have continued to struggle and rallied on March 8 demanding political and economic rights.

Their Palestinian sisters protested the U.S.-backed Israeli occupation and blockade of Gaza in cities and towns on the Occupied West Bank and in Gaza City. In Beit Ummar on the West Bank, they set up a roadblock. Activists decried the violation of women's and human rights as their homes are demolished for Israeli settlements.

Pakistani women rallied against the U.S. imprisonment of political prisoner Aafia Siddiqui.

The capitalist economic crisis and IMF/World Bank-imposed austerity programs have created more joblessness for women, more migrant workers, lower wages and vital program cutbacks. Women are hit even harder in poor countries oppressed by imperialism. Moreover, corporations and governments deny many unionization rights.

Yet women workers are saying "No!" Whether through unions or community organizing, they're leading the global fightback for decent jobs and social programs, and to end all discrimination and exploitation.

On March 8, women workers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, rallied for benefits, while their sisters marched in Seoul, south Korea, and Bangkok, Thailand. Indian women rallied for basic goods' subsidies and more.

More than 10,000 women marched in Manila, the Philippines, to demand that President Benigno Aquino enact price controls on basic goods, a national wage hike, and the repatriation of and protections for migrant women. Organized by Gabriela, a Filipino women's alliance, they also demanded full reproductive health services, education and legalized divorce.

The Indonesian trade union confederation, KSBSI, called for a global fightback against economic assaults on women, to demand their rights and for unions to support all women's struggles.

In Nairobi, Kenya, women rallied for access to jobs and education. Women in Kenya's Central Organization of Trade Unions rejoiced on IWD. Their union recognizes women's leadership and works to empower its membership. It has helped to win legal recognition of women's and union rights and benefits for working mothers.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions



Kenya



Philippines



Pakistan



Bahrain



Mexico



issued a statement on women workers' unemployment and underpayment worldwide. The statement recognized their roles in international working-class struggles. Gertrude Mtsweni, COSATU gender coordinator, urged women workers to develop a global solidarity campaign for social justice and women and children's economic emancipation.

Women demonstrated throughout Latin America, including in Mexico, Guatemala, Peru and El Salvador, for an end to anti-woman violence and to express outrage at "femicides." In Tegucigalpa, outside Honduras' Public Ministry, women condemned the murders of 63 women this year; they called for an end to impunity in these killings.

Gilda Rivera, of Honduras' Center for Women's Rights, stressed that since the coup [against President Manuel Zelaya], there has been "a very dramatic decline in the recognition of women's rights ... with high rates of femicide, of violent deaths of women of all ages, including girls." The authorities are indifferent about stopping this, she stated.

In pre-IWD actions, women protested in six Brazilian states against capitalist globalization and environmental damage. Thousands of women farmers, members of Via Campesina and other women's and rural populations' organizations denounced toxic weed killer and pesticide use on crops, a practice harmful to farmworkers but pushed by large landowners and transnationals.

In Caracas, Venezuelans marched to hail women's gains. Minister of Women's Affairs Nancy Pérez said that women "have much to celebrate," and that "a genuine recognition of women's liberation was achieved [by] the birth of the Bolivarian Revolution 12 years ago." Women have gained legal rights, and governmental ministry and agency positions during President Hugo Chávez's term.

Joining the march were hundreds of delegates from 46 countries who came to Venezuela to attend the Global Grassroots Women's Conference at Bolivarian University for IWD's centennial. They honored IWD founder, German socialist Clara Zetkin. Their consensus, as voiced by Gloria Jilambe of Women Together in South Africa, was, "Our families face so many ills because of capitalism and imperialism."

In socialist Cuba, the Federation of Cuban Women (FMC) has helped to insure legally mandated gains for women since the revolution. The Cuban Communist Party's Central Committee recognized the FMC's outstanding achievements. Surina Acosta, of the Council of State and general secretary of the organization, received the award. Moreover, around the country Cubans honored the late Vilma Espín, FMC founder and Cuban hero.

Held in U.S. prisons, the Cuban Five political prisoners congratulated women internationally and thanked them for organizing support for their struggle. □



Gaza

# Honduran Resistance battles poverty, repression

By Heather Cottin

The Resistance movement marched daily all over Honduras to protest the coup against President Manuel Zelaya, from June 28, 2009, the day of the coup, until Jan. 27, 2010. On that last day, 300,000 people accompanied their beloved president to Toncontín Airport, from where he flew into forced exile in the Dominican Republic.

With U.S. government complicity, the “golpistas” (coup plotters) had finessed the phony election of Porfirio Pepe Lobo Sosa, or “Golpepe,” as the Resistance calls the new president, who took power last year on Jan. 27.

Today the streets seem calm. Children are going to school in their well-ironed uniforms. Street vendors are selling fruits and homemade goods. Burger King, Pizza Hut and other franchises sell junk food beyond the means of most Hondurans. However, things are not really calm. It is all superficial. The rich are in power, and the poor are organizing.

Those who organize to fight the power face repression. Bodies turn up: a lawyer here, a teacher there, a young girl, a dozen Baja Aguan campesinos fighting for land reform. There are hundreds of martyrs. The government blathers about crime, but does nothing. Police suppress popular protests. Gangs operate with impunity.

While police attack protesters in Tegucigalpa's streets, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton praises Honduras' “democratic and constitutional government.”

President Lobo promotes the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement, which has allowed U.S., European, Asian and local factory owners to exploit more than 100,000 workers in the country's maquiladoras.

Young women enter the factories at 14 to 17 years of age. They are paid \$25 for working nine-hour days, seven days a week. Women must iron 1,200 shirts a day, standing up. The hot iron makes



WWW PHOTO: HEATHER COTTIN

Scenes from National Assembly of the Resistance Front in Tegucigalpa.

their hands swell. There are no unions, but the workers organize anyhow.

## Confronting the enemy

One of the richest men in the country is Miguel Facussé, a Honduran businessman who owns vast Afrocam palm plantations in the Aguan Valley. His mercenaries are killing the peasants struggling for land rights in the Baja Aguan region. His family and all the oligarchs are close to the government.

The peasants' enemies are not just the oligarch landowners, but also U.S. agribusinesses. Farmers whose corn and beans formerly fed Honduras have been financially ruined. Honduras now is a net importer of staple goods.

The low corn and bean prices set by corporate giants Monsanto and Cargill bankrupted the peasants. Then the agribusinesses raised the price of food. Robert B. Zoellick, president of the World Bank Group, reported that within the past year, prices for corn increased 73 percent. (The World Bank, Feb. 15)

People are hungry. About 30 percent of Hondurans live on less than \$2 per day. Honduras has the seventh poorest population on earth, with 65 percent of the people living below the poverty line. Unemployment runs to 44 percent.

Poverty has forced hundreds of thousands to migrate, primarily to the United States. As immigrants in the U.S., Hondurans face racism and insecurity. The remittances they send home account for 20 percent of Honduras' gross domestic product. Lobo needs this money to keep a lid on the anger generated by ravaging poverty.

The Lobo government's neoliberal policies are expanding as rapidly as the imperialist powers can manage it. The Legislature just rubber-stamped Lobo's “Model Cities” plan, which will cede sovereign land in Honduras to national or international businesses. This will allow businesses to build new towns with a corporate infrastructure. The Wall Street Journal says that they will develop “different laws ... different norms about right and wrong ... a way to counterbalance the populism that causes ... so much harm.” (Feb 14.)

Meanwhile, former U.S. President Bill Clinton will host a conference in San Pedro Sula in May, called “Honduras is Open for Business.” This is another of Lobo's schemes to sell Honduras as “the most attractive investment destination in Latin America.” Former Colombian President, Álvaro Uribe Vélez; Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim; and Luis Alberto Moreno, the president of the Inter-American Development Bank, will be there, too.

## The Resistance organizes

The National Front for Popular Resistance (FNRP) held a national assembly in

Tegucigalpa Feb. 26-27. Juan Barahona, president of the United Federation of Honduran Workers (FUTH), and Carlos H. Reyes, president of STIBYS, the major labor union in Tegucigalpa, listened to delegates' powerful speeches calling for the refounding of Honduras under a peoples' constitution. Xiomara Castro de Zelaya represented President Zelaya, her spouse.

The assembly agreed that the only response to the policies of impoverishment and repression is unity and organized resistance. The delegates condemned the Lobo government and held it responsible for crimes against the people and massive corruption.

The FNRP has radio stations, leaflets, newspapers, poets, musicians and artists. The leadership includes youth, the elderly, women, professionals, members of the lesbian, gay, bi, transgender and queer community, Indigenous people, members of the Afro-Honduran Garifuna communities, workers and peasants. They are organizing so that 8 million Hondurans can live in dignity.

On the day following the national assembly, teachers and students in Tegucigalpa went on strike to defend public schools. They sang in the street, “Nos tienen miedo porque no tenemos miedo.” (“They fear us because we have no fear.”)

The Frente has no fear. The last words spoken at the national assembly were, “¡Hasta la victoria siempre!” It is the Cuban slogan — the call for struggle until victory.

On one wall in Tegucigalpa is the slogan, “La Resistencia vive.” The Resistance lives. They have no choice. They must win. □

## EYEWITNESS Pentagon sees Honduras as a FOB

By Michael Kramer

“FOB” is military jargon for Forward Operating Base. It is a secure, forward military position that supports tactical operations and reduces the reaction time of the military forces that use it.

The Pentagon has them throughout Afghanistan and until recently had them all over Iraq. In the Pentagon's scheme of things Honduras is a giant FOB right in the middle of Central America, with a Caribbean seacoast. This FOB carries a low profile, and most people in the U.S. do not know that it exists. For the people of Honduras it is a part of their lives 24/7.

The heart of the FOB is the José Enrique Soto Cano Air Base, located about 60 miles from the nation's capital, Tegucigalpa. The U.S. military presence is officially known as Joint Task Force-Bravo and includes permanently assigned Army and Air Force units, including the 1st Battalion, the 228th Aviation Regiment and the 612th Air Base Squadron.

While technically considered a Honduran military base, the U.S. controls base security and all airfield functions at Soto Cano, such as air traffic control, weather forecasting and logistics. The base is ready

at any time to handle the deployment of thousands of U.S. troops. That it is the main Honduran Air Force base and the location for the Honduras Air Force Academy highlights the Honduras-U.S. relationship.

This writer traveled to Honduras last month as an international observer with a delegation sponsored by the International Action Center's Latin America-Caribbean Solidarity Committee, which attended a historic meeting of the National Front for Popular Resistance (FNRP).

I arrived at Toncontín International Airport in Tegucigalpa. Toncontín is considered one of the most dangerous commercial airports in the world with respect to landings and takeoffs because of the short length of the runway and its being situated in a valley with updrafts and downdrafts.

On my way to customs — before I even saw any “Welcome to Honduras” signs — I saw a big “Welcome Joint Task Force-Bravo” sign. The arrival area was full of U.S. military personnel in civilian clothing in a very relaxed atmosphere.

The next day — in what could only be considered an act of imperialist arrogance — a U.S. Air Force C-17 transport plane landed at Toncontín Airport for all in Tegucigalpa to see and especially hear. It was

headline news in all the local newspapers — especially since aircraft the size of the C-17 are supposedly banned from using Toncontín Airport. The landing took place 10 days after a passenger plane crashed while landing, killing all on board!

The Honduran oligarchy — the so-called “10 families” — rules the country by force and intimidation. There is no democracy. Instead there are the local police, the national police, the military and the death squads.

The oligarchy could not stay in power for more than a few weeks without the military, political and financial support of the Obama administration. As part of this support the Pentagon has morale boosting delegations and training missions to Honduras on a virtual nonstop basis. Selected military personnel get specialized, all-expenses-paid training at the notorious Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (formerly known as the School of the Americas), located at Fort Benning, Ga.

In September 2010 the U.S. Department of Defense Center For Hemispheric Defense Studies held a workshop that even de facto Honduran President Pepe Lobo Sosa and his top military and se-

curity advisors were required to attend. (hondurasculturepolitics.blogspot.com)

In December 2010 the Joint Task Force-Bravo assisted in training at the Honduras National Police Academy in self-defense and riot control. The national police are notorious in Honduras for acting as out-of-control thugs against non-violent demonstrations.

This month the Southern Partnership Station 2011 — an annual deployment of U.S. Navy ships to the Caribbean and Latin America — started off in San Lorenzo, Honduras. Among the programs in SPS 2011 is the training of Honduran military and police by the Navy Criminal Investigative Service “designed to advance interoperability between the militaries and build an enduring partnership with the Honduran government.” (southcom.mil) Topics include tactical building searches and suspect apprehension.

International solidarity means calling for the complete closing down of FOB Honduras and the payment of reparations to the Honduran people for an environmentally sound cleanup of the Soto Cano Air Base and its transformation into a civilian international airport. U.S. troops out of Honduras! □

## Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular de Honduras celebra asamblea de delegados/as

Por Heather Cottin  
Tegucigalpa, Honduras

El Frente Nacional de Resistencia Popular (FNRP) en Honduras celebró una asamblea nacional en Tegucigalpa, la ciudad capital, el 26 y 27 de febrero. Mil quinientos delegados/as representaron a los 18 departamentos municipales de Honduras y al “departamento número 19”, miembros de la diáspora de Honduras alrededor del mundo. Tres miembros del Comité de Solidaridad con América Latina y el Caribe del Centro de Acción Internacional (IAC/CAI) estuvieron presente: dos como observadores y una delegada electa de la diáspora hondureña.

En una reunión dos días antes de la asamblea, a la que el Comité del IAC/CAI fue invitado, el subcoordinador del FNRP, Juan Barahona, nos dijo que la Asamblea Nacional de Resistencia Popular debe centrarse en tres cosas: “unidad, unidad y unidad”. Durante la asamblea el 26 de febrero, él dijo que los objetivos del grupo eran “la celebración de una asamblea nacional constituyente, el retorno de [presidente exiliado Manuel] Zelaya al país y tomar el poder político para transformar la sociedad hondureña”. (Washington Post, 26 de febrero)

Esta fue una asamblea democrática, llena de debate y pasión. La cuestión clave fue si el FNRP participaría en las elecciones del 2013. La mayoría votó por no participar. El FNRP no dijo que nunca participaría en elecciones, pero que tienen la

intención de organizar a su manera.

Un delegado describió el “océano” de personas allí: “Esta gran multitud tiene inicio en los arroyos de las montañas, que alimentan las grandes corrientes en las colinas y se vacían en los ríos de los valles vertiéndose en el mar de la resistencia popular en Honduras”.

El llamado a la unidad abarca diversas comunidades en Honduras, incluyendo comunidades de lesbianas, gays, bi, trans y las mujeres, la comunidad afro-hondureña Garífuna, los pueblos indígenas, campesinos, líderes sindicales, trabajadores/as, incluyendo maestros/as y abogados/as, los/as jóvenes y estudiantes, los/as dueños de negocios pequeños, intelectuales y muchos/as más. Agitando las tarjetas de identificación amarilla, los/as delegados/as votaron a favor de resoluciones para promover una justa inclusión y representación. Analizaron las condiciones objetivas y planificaron desarrollar, en asambleas regionales por todo el país, la estrategia y las tácticas necesarias para hacer frente a la oligarquía y sus defensores. Y votaron a favor de Zelaya para servir como coordinador del FNRP.

### El presente es histórico

Casi dos años atrás, el 28 de junio de 2009, el ejército hondureño secuestró a Zelaya por orden de la oligarquía del país. Lo sacaron del país a través de la base aérea militar estadounidense en Palmerola en Honduras.

Aunque Zelaya pertenecía a la clase

rica, como presidente fue convencido por los/as dirigentes sindicales y campesinos/as a trabajar para mejorar las condiciones en Honduras, el país más pobre de Centroamérica. Estos/as líderes le mostraron cómo las políticas neoliberales privatizadoras estaban empobreciendo a Honduras.

Zelaya escuchó y promovió la reforma agraria y el ambientalismo y el aumento del salario mínimo. Zelaya quería convertir la base aérea de Palmerola, desde la cual el ejército de EEUU domina Centroamérica, en un aeropuerto civil. Comenzó a hablar de sacar a Honduras del Tratado de Libre Comercio de América Central, que estaba económicamente devastando a los/as agricultores y trabajadores/as de la región. Unió a Honduras a la Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América (ALBA), que promueve la integración social, política y económica entre los países de América Latina y el Caribe.

Como la Constitución hondureña del 1982 favorecía a los inversores extranjeros y a la oligarquía, el gobierno de Zelaya proyectaba una votación que se celebraría el 28 de junio de 2009, que de aprobarse, daría los pasos hacia la creación de una nueva asamblea constitucional. En vez de elecciones, esa mañana los militares actuaron en su contra. Documentos revelados por Wikileaks muestran la participación del gobierno de EEUU.

Nace la Resistencia. Por 214 días, miles de valientes miembros de la resistencia salieron a las calles de todas las ciudades



FOTO: VOSELSOBERANO.COM

y en cada departamento en señal de protesta. El ejército y la policía enfrentaron al pueblo con armas de fuego, gases lacrimógenos, cañones de agua y camiones cargados de tropas. Zelaya mismo regresó clandestinamente, refugiándose en la embajada de Brasil.

El gobierno estadounidense organizó una elección espuria administrada por los golpistas el 27 de enero de 2010. Pepe Lobo Sosa llegó a la presidencia y la oligarquía se quedó en el poder. Con la ayuda de su rico Tío Sam, una docena de familias ricas siguen dirigiendo el país. Todas las reformas de Zelaya han sido canceladas.

El gobierno de EEUU considera a Honduras una “democracia” y hace caso omiso de la creciente pobreza, los asesinatos y la tortura de cientos de campesinos/as, personas LGBT, mujeres, sindicalistas, indígenas, maestros/as, periodistas, el pueblo garífuna y jóvenes activistas. Estos son los/as mártires de la resistencia.

En la Asamblea Nacional de Resistencia Popular, los/as oradores/as denunciaron la impunidad que el gobierno de Lobo otorga tácitamente a los autores de estos crímenes. El FNRP dedicó la asamblea a los/as mártires y se comprometió a construir una verdadera democracia en Honduras. □

## ¿Está México volviéndose otro Egipto?

Por Teresa Gutiérrez

El presidente Barack Obama y el presidente ilegítimo de México, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa se reunieron el 3 de marzo en la Casa Blanca y anunciaron planes para seguir trabajando juntos.

En concreto, los dos presidentes, según el New York Times, anunció un “gran avance en una enconada disputa comercial” acerca de camiones mexicanos que operan en territorio de EEUU. Después de una larga disputa, una donde el sindicato de los choferes de camiones (Teamsters) lucharon contra el uso de camiones mexicanos en las carreteras de EEUU, Obama dijo que comenzaría un plan de transporte transfronterizo.

Más importantemente, Obama elogió los esfuerzos de Calderón en la lucha contra la droga que hace noticia en EEUU casi diariamente.

Desde que Calderón se robó la elección presidencial en 2006, la narcoguerra en México ha cobrado más de 35.000 vidas mexicanas. Se ha convertido en una guerra contra el pueblo, no una guerra para detener las drogas.

México se ha vuelto ominosamente cada vez más militarizado y las protestas se han penalizado cada vez más. Vidas inocentes se han perdido. El gobierno mexicano ha utilizado la industria del narcotráfico para aterrorizar al pueblo, atacar a activistas políticos y tratar de infundir miedo y terror entre las masas.

Sin embargo, el presidente Obama no dijo ni una sola palabra acerca de la situación real que atraviesa México. En cam-

bio, autorizó la entrega de más dinero — robado al pueblo de este país — al gobierno de México bajo la Iniciativa Mérida, un acuerdo que forma parte del Tratado de Libre Comercio, conocido como TLC.

Por ejemplo, Obama anunció que EEUU acelerará la entrega de equipos militares, así como el entrenamiento que Washington había prometido a México bajo la Iniciativa Mérida.

### Guerra contra las drogas es parte de un intenso plan imperialista

La cobertura en los medios de comunicación de EEUU de la reunión del 3 de marzo se refiere a las tensiones entre los dos países. Esta caracterización es engañosa y distorsiona la realidad: Calderón está totalmente en manos del imperialismo estadounidense.

Cualquier publicidad sobre una desavenencia entre los dos gobiernos tiene la intención de disfrazar el creciente intento por el imperialismo estadounidense de dominar a México. También tiene el propósito de aparentar respetar la resistencia que el pueblo mexicano ha mostrado frente al control estadounidense desde hace siglos.

El plan EEUU-Calderón para usar la llamada guerra contra las drogas para facilitar el control estadounidense de México se está haciendo más ominoso. James Cockcroft, autor de varios libros sobre México y Latinoamérica, lleva esta complicidad entre imperialismo y la burguesía mexicana aún más allá. Cockcroft escribe:

“Algunos describen a Calderón como ‘la figura más visible de la mafia’ que está

tratando de crear un estado policíaco militar. Esto incluye la participación de los capos [líderes de las organizaciones dedicadas a las drogas] en la administración de la sociedad, no como un estado paralelo ni como un estado dentro del estado sino como parte integral del estado. Como Calderón mismo ha reconocido, en algunas partes de México líderes del narco cobran impuestos, imponen leyes y toques de queda, y ganan el apoyo del público con sus proyectos locales de servicio social”.

Esto claramente ilustra la militarización de México. Ya sea por medidas legales o extralegales, el imperialismo estadounidense y sus títeres mexicanos que hacen lo que EEUU quiera, están militarizando al país en preparación de más dominación y de un asalto total contra el pueblo mexicano.

Cockcroft dice: “Calderón está desechando la soberanía nacional al integrar México con los Estados Unidos”.

Según el investigador de ciencias políticas y activista Gilberto López y Rivas que escribe en Contralinea.mx, una publicación investigadora, “Calderón está en camino de vender completamente la autonomía de México”.

López, un miembro de Paz con Democracia, revela el peligro de “Plan México 2030: proyecto de gran visión”, el cual según López, viola totalmente la Constitución Mexicana de 1917 y garantiza “la futura ocupación integral” de México por los Estados Unidos, lo que terminaría el estado mexicano.

El plan traza un programa para la “privatización del sector de energía, reser-

vas de biosferas, educación, seguridad social de empleados/as estatales, y otros sectores públicos” y pide la represión de movimientos políticos.

Es obvio que el plan ya está en camino. El acoso y encarcelamiento de activistas continúan. Claramente este plan estaba detrás de los acontecimientos del 2009 para privatizar la compañía pública eléctrica de México y eliminar 40.000 empleos, despidiendo a trabajadores/as electricistas que son miembros/as del sindicato SME.

En ese momento, Calderón usó tropas del ejército mexicano para desalojar a los/as trabajadores/as electricistas de las centrales de energía, abriendo paso a una justa ola de lucha contra este ataque fomentado contra los sindicatos. Esa lucha continuó hasta el día de hoy.

A pesar de los planes estadounidenses-mexicanos de vender la soberanía de México, asumir control de los recursos naturales de México y reprimir al pueblo mexicano, una gran lucha se está esparciendo por el país en la frontera sureña de Estados Unidos.

Después de décadas de explotación imperialista, las condiciones allí están abriendo paso a tremendos acontecimientos como lo que ocurrió en Egipto. Después de décadas de una cruel dictadura, la lucha masiva del pueblo egipcio derrumbó al General Mubarak, un títere de los Estados Unidos.

Desde Egipto a México, desde la Plaza Tahrir al Zócalo, a la capital de Wisconsin en Madison, estos movimientos demuestran que son las masas quienes son los agentes de cambio. □

PARTE 3