

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



WORLDWIDE PROTESTS DEMAND: Stop U.S. bombing of Libya!

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The bombing of Libya, which began on March 19, has aroused world opposition to this new aggression by the U.S. and European imperialist powers.

The bombing began on the eighth anniversary of the U.S. and British invasion and occupation of Iraq. Pentagon warplanes were bolstered by ships and planes from France, Britain, Italy and Canada. Using U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 as a cover, these imperialist states have initiated an all-out war aimed at overthrowing the Libyan government and occupying that North African country.

The assault, dubbed "Operation Odyssey Dawn," has included strikes by fighter aircraft and missiles launched from warships off the coast of Libya in the Mediterranean Sea. Areas inside Libya that have been bombed include Benghazi, Tripoli, Misurata and Ajdabiya.

On March 19, three Air Force B-2s from Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri dropped 45 bombs weighing a ton each on Misurata. Also, 15 Air Force and Marine fighter jets accompanied by aircraft from France and Britain bombed Benghazi. One U.S. F-15 jet fighter was reported downed on March 21.

The next day bombs dropped on the capital city of Tripoli destroyed a compound used by Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi.

The Libyan government said a three-story building in Tripoli had been destroyed by war planes of the U.S. and European states. Although U.S. and European military officials have stated that the Libyan leader is not a target in these operations, it is clear that these Western governments are out to assassinate Libya's head of state. Nearly 25 years ago the U.S. military under Ronald Reagan bombed the Libyan cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in an earlier attempt on the life of Gadhafi; his young daughter was killed in the attacks.

In regard to the March 20 attacks on the com-
Continued on page 11

LIBYA & imperialist reconquest 9

Anti-war protests across U.S. 9

New York, March 21
WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO



INT'L WORKING WOMEN'S MONTH

- ◆ Mexican women defy murders
- ◆ Clara Zetkin & Scottsboro case 4
- ◆ Gender bias of global crisis
- ◆ Women & the UAW 5
- ◆ Triangle fire EDITORIAL 10

Struggle to save our schools

- Women's right to education 2
- Students occupy Wisconsin building
- L.A. teachers resist mass layoffs
- INTERVIEW — 'Why we'll march on Wall Street'
- Rise and fall of public education
See centerfold

FIGHT BACK GROWS IN WISCONSIN



Wisconsin students join unions and farmers at large March 19 anti-war rally in Madison. See pages 3 and 6.

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Women & the right to education

WORKERS WORLD
this week...

By Leilani Dowell

Taken from a talk at a Workers World Party International Working Women's Month forum in New York City. Dowell is a Fight Imperialism, Stand Together organizer and WW managing editor. Listen to entire talk at www.workers.tv.

At Hunter College women make up 70 percent of the student body — a trend that is being reproduced throughout the country, with more and more women attending college. This makes any struggle for education a women's issue. Almost half of the women attending my school — 48 percent — are women of color.

And yet in the halls of my school today, posters created and posted by students in women and gender studies classes at Hunter are demanding a Women and Gender Studies Department.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo — who campaigned on a promise to bust up the unions — is now trying to cut funding to the City University of New York system, of which Hunter is a part, by \$95 million, as well as the State University of New York by \$100 million and community colleges by \$62 million. The schools will respond by raising tuition and fees for students, making it harder and harder for poor, working-class folks to attend.

Free tuition at CUNY was a reality during some of your lifetimes. I can't imagine going to college for free now.

In North Rhine-Westphalia, the most populous and economically most powerful state in Germany with

more than 25 percent of Germany's student population, the regional parliament just abolished tuition fees. An activist in this struggle stressed that "only huge waves of protests over a long period of time could take us to this kind of rollback."

A series on public education has been running in Workers World newspaper written by retired teacher Gene Clancy. He discusses what public education meant to the capitalists in the beginning of the 20th century: a means to train the next generation of workers. A century later with the onset of imperialist globalization, the capitalists no longer have a need to train skilled workers. Moreover, they've found they can profit from it, rather than giving it away for free. That's what the charter school movement is all about.

School remains a place where students are trained in the ideology of capitalism. It's where we're taught that capitalism is the best system, the only sustainable, logical system. That's a bunch of lies, essentially. Therefore, it's so very important that we engage with students, that we provide an alternative to the propaganda they're force-fed in the classrooms.

Students interacting with and showing solidarity with workers is a momentous step forward. The fact that an alliance of students, community and labor has been formed can be decisive in turning back austerity budgets, but also in fighting, in general, against sexism, against war, against racism and anti-lesbian/gay/bi/trans/

Continued on page 7

★ **In the U.S.**

- Women & the right to education..... 2
- Judge sends young mother to jail..... 2
- Wisconsin people's rebellion..... 3
- Don't forget Milwaukee 3
- D.C. unionists support Wisconsin workers..... 3
- Latin American unionists begin 12-city tour..... 4
- Women hit hardest..... 5
- NYC women's forum..... 5
- Women & the UAW..... 5
- Boston celebrates women rising up..... 5
- Students occupy Arts building to protest budget cuts..... 6
- L.A. teachers resist multipronged attack 6
- What makes this education action special?..... 7
- The rise & fall of public education in the U.S., part 3 7
- Fracking wastes threaten drinking water..... 8
- Attack on Libya draws protests in U.S..... 9
- FLOC & UAW target Chase 10

★ **Around the world**

- Stop U.S. bombing of Libya! 1
- Women of Mexico in the crossfire..... 4
- Clara Zetkin, militant socialist & anti-racist 4
- How capitalism made a natural disaster worse 8
- Libya and the era of imperialist reconquest 9
- Protests against U.S.-backed dictators defy crackdowns 10
- Thousands greet Aristide's return to Haiti 11

★ **Editorials**

- Triangle fire – 100 years ago & today..... 10

★ **Noticias En Español**

- No guerra contra Libia..... 12
- Resistencia en Honduras 12

Judge sends young mother to jail

By Sharon Danann Cleveland



Rebecca Whitby with her new baby daughter A'Marhi.

PHOTO: METROHEALTH MEDICAL CENTER

On March 8, the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day, Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Daniel Gaul told police to take a young African-American woman from his courtroom in handcuffs to start serving a six-month sentence. Rebecca Whitby, who has a 4-month-old daughter, was denied bail even though her attorney was preparing an appeal. She had been charged with assault after being beaten by several police who descended on her home in response to a call about a family dispute.

Setting aside the fact-finding role of the jury in her case, Gaul read a police report into the record and stated that "it would have been appropriate to have used deadly force to apprehend this defendant." The jury had found Whitby not guilty on seven out of nine counts, showing they were skeptical of the statements of the cops and other prosecution witnesses.

Mitchell Sheehan, one of the officers allegedly injured by Whitby, read a statement, complete with tears, calling for Whitby to serve jail time supposedly so she would not hurt other officers in the future. Witnesses, however, said Sheehan had punched Whitby repeatedly in the face and other parts of her body, kicked her and Tased her.

The courtroom was packed with family members and supporters. But they had been told ahead of time not to react or the judge would increase the punishment against

Whitby and her co-defendant, her mother — who is also named Rebecca Whitby. So a painful degree of restraint was exercised, and some actually left the courtroom, as Gaul proclaimed, "I am bringing my sense of social justice to this case. To suggest that she was abused by the police besmirches the memory of [civil rights leaders] Medgar Evers, John Lewis, Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King."

Gaul declared that Whitby needed "punishment." Her supporters say it was punishment for reporting that the police had used excessive force on her and for the nearly two years of rallies, websites and YouTube postings that Gaul mentioned several times.

Marva Patterson, the younger Whitby's aunt, explained, "The harsh sentence is to make it harder for the family to sue the city of Cleveland. This is about the almighty dollar."

Rebecca Whitby, the mother, was sentenced to two months' probation and a six-month suspended sentence. She will fight to get a felony charge of obstruction of justice overturned on appeal.

Special chairs had been added to the courtroom so that it could also be packed with 20 police officers, all white. Whitby's brother, Adam, commented, "It's not justice when they're working together."

On March 17, a rally was held at Cleveland City Hall. Supporters signed a letter about the case to Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson, demanding Whitby's release and the removal of Judge Gaul from the bench. They then marched to the jail where Whitby is held and rallied on three sides of the building. Prisoners waved from the windows and raised their fists in solidarity. □

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Wisconsin people's rebellion

Statewide resistance to union busting

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Madison and Milwaukee, Wis.

Across the state of Wisconsin the sweeping people's rebellion continues every day. From all areas of the state poor and working people are in motion to defeat the union-busting bill Gov. Scott Walker signed March 11. The fightback now encompasses broader demands, as people are directly challenging the billions of dollars in budget cuts politicians like Walker have proposed at the behest of banks, corporations and the Pentagon.

The people's mass resistance on numerous fronts won a temporary victory on March 18. Dane County Circuit Court Judge Maryann Sumi ordered a temporary injunction against the bill that was illegally rammed through the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate on March 9 and 10, respectively, and then signed by Walker.

Sumi evaluated a complaint filed by the Dane County District Attorney's office arguing that Republicans in the Wisconsin Legislature violated state open meetings requirements when they approved the law. The next court hearing on the complaint is scheduled for March 29. On March 21 the Wisconsin Attorney General appealed Sumi's ruling to the Wisconsin Court of Appeals, asking it to strike down the temporary injunction by March 25, the day the bill is to be published.

People are planning on packing the courts on all dates. Labor unions and other organizations are moving on both legal fronts and through direct action to overturn the illegal bill and to fight Walker's 2011-13 budget, which cut billions of dollars from programs that service millions of poor and working people.

'A class war'

Ed Childs, chief steward of UNITE HERE Local 26 in Boston and a member of the Bail Out the People Movement, was in Wisconsin March 15-20. He spoke in Milwaukee and Madison at labor, community and student meetings and often visited the student occupation at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He was usually accompanied by American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82 President Gilbert Johnson, members of Students for a Democratic Society, and members of BOPM from Detroit and North Carolina, who also came to Wisconsin to support the struggle.

"I spent three days in Milwaukee and a couple of days in Madison," said Childs. "It's amazing. The first thing that gets you is the mass atmosphere — similar to when you're on strike — the statewide progressive consciousness. I've also seen such a mass-consciousness struggle in Belfast — a class war — and it's spelled out very specifically here. It's in the speeches at rallies but also in daily conversations."

Added Childs: "Workers and students have to keep moving because it is a war, and we have an opponent that has trillions of dollars, and [that opponent is] going to do everything [it] possibly can to defeat us. Workers and students are learning every day what needs to be done and what can be done, and we are doing it. Workers and students want to move; they want to move drastically. They want to win.

"It's great that the consciousness has risen, that the people are open to doing things. Now we have to get into more of the nitty-gritty tactics like the occupation of the Capitol and the art school at UW-Milwaukee. It's the understanding within the labor movement, the community groups, students and workers in general that we have to learn strategies on how to win. Wisconsin is the ground zero for this



Farmers join with anti-war protesters in Madison on March 19.

WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

struggle in the United States right now."

On March 19, the eighth anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, joint labor and anti-war actions took place in both Milwaukee and Madison, and individuals and organizations opposed the new U.S. war on Libya as well. In Milwaukee, Tom Burke of the Committee to Stop FBI Repression also spoke out against the government harassment of anti-war, solidarity and union activists.

Later that day in Madison, students of color marched to the Capitol, then spoke out against the government's war on people of color. That war includes attacks on immigrants and ethnic studies. The students also proudly demonstrated their artwork and spirited cultural performances.

On March 21 a group of seniors marched on the Capitol to demand no cuts to SeniorCare and other programs they need.

A new day of resistance

The struggle against union busting and other major attacks against the people has become a daily part of life throughout Wisconsin. Pro-union buttons can be seen everywhere. Spirited discussions about the possibility of occupations, general strikes and other forms of direct action take place whenever people get together.

Students and workers are assembling placards and banners for the next protest action. Recall petitions are being printed and signed in the tens of thousands. Alliances and coalitions are being formed, new tactics and strategies of resistance are in operation, and communication systems such as Facebook are abuzz to organize resistance. Relationships of all kinds are building unity and solidarity by the minute. It's a new day in Wisconsin: The people have stood up and are fighting back.

Lilia Banrevy is a student in art education who is beginning the fourth week of occupying the Art School at UW-Milwaukee. Says Banrevy, a member of UWM Occupied, "I strongly believe in people's right to be heard and to form unions, and I believe that Scott Walker's budget bill is union busting. As a future teacher, especially one in the arts, which are going to suffer the most cuts from this bill, I feel it's my duty to be here for my future and the future of the kids who are going to suffer because of it.

"I think education should be the last place that we're cutting from, especially in the arts. When kids are young, it's important to harvest that creativity. The Milwaukee public schools especially can't suffer cuts in any more fields at all. It would be devastating for the future of Wisconsin and the future of our kids.

"I'm planning on staying here until I'm dragged out." □

Don't forget Milwaukee

By Monica Moorehead

Gov. Scott Walker, who spearheaded the recent bill dismantling collective bargaining rights for public sector workers, is not the first Wisconsin governor to push through anti-poor, anti-worker legislation. In 1997, just one year after the Clinton administration dismantled the federally funded Aid to Families with Dependent Children program, then-Gov. Tommy Thompson instituted state anti-welfare legislation called "Wisconsin Works" or "W2."

Wisconsin Works had nothing to do with providing single mothers with decent-paying jobs and childcare. Instead, it had everything to do with driving thousands of single mothers into deeper poverty with either low-wage jobs or a pittance of cash assistance. It had a devastating impact across the state, but especially in Milwaukee, where 68 percent of Wisconsin's African-American population lives. This cruel, reactionary legislation was funded by the right-wing Heritage and Bradley foundations.

Fourteen years later, the effects from W2 are still being felt in the 26th most populous city in the U.S. In 2010, 40 percent of all evictions in Milwaukee were of African-American women, especially single mothers. Milwaukee has an overall unemployment rate of close to 27 percent



— almost triple the official national rate. This figure is second in the U.S. only to Detroit. Milwaukee is suffering from a 53 percent unemployment rate among African-American men. Other genocidal conditions in Milwaukee include growing poverty, homelessness, incarcerations, public school closings and police brutality.

Black workers, especially women, have depended heavily on public sector jobs to help them get out of poverty, own a home, send their children to college, and retire with a livable pension like all workers should. Losing their jobs to anti-union bills and devastating budget cuts is creating a deeper crisis within the Black community in disproportionate numbers.

The ongoing struggle in Wisconsin is an important lesson that shows the need for building grassroots labor/student and community alliances. Class solidarity with the oppressed city of Milwaukee has to be the number-one priority in the mass fight against union busting, budget cuts and racism — all divide-and-conquer tools of the capitalist bosses and their bought-and-paid-for politicians like Walker. □

D.C. unionists support Wisconsin workers

By Sue Davis

When unions in Washington, D.C., found out that the BRG Group, a Republican lobbying firm, was hosting a \$1,000-to-\$5,000-a-head fundraiser on March 16 for Wisconsin legislators, they put union solidarity into action.

They knew the legislators were coming to collect their rich reward from wealthy anti-union benefactors for passing the bill that would strip public sector workers of their collective bargaining rights.

Just as unionists and students took over the Capitol in Madison, Wis., several thousand D.C. union members and their supporters broke through security lines and took over several floors of the atrium in the building housing BRG's fundraiser. Unionists hoisted a banner demanding

"Respect workers' rights" on the second-floor railing, held a sea of signs like "Stop the war on the workers," chanted slogans like "What's disgusting? Union busting!" and held an hour-long rally there.

AFL-CIO Metro President Jos Williams congratulated the protesters for "liberating this building from the forces of greed and tyranny." Joran from Madison said: "This reminds me of being home. It's beautiful to see so much support. [Legislators] think they can ... [tell] us that public workers are the enemy, but we know that we are all together. An injury to one is an injury to all!" Afterwards, the protesters swelled the equally big demonstration outside and marched to the White House with their message of solidarity. (Metro Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO Council's online newsletter, Union City!, March 17) □

Is another Egypt brewing in Mexico?

Women of Mexico in the crossfire

By Teresa Gutierrez

Women — mostly teenaged or very young — have been kidnapped, tortured, raped, mutilated and killed by the hundreds in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, sister city to El Paso, Texas.

According to several Mexican and international press accounts, human rights and women's groups as well as the families and friends of the victims, more than 500 women — factory workers, store clerks and sex workers — have been murdered since 1993 in Ciudad Juárez.

At the end of 2010 and early this year, two women activists, well-known, beloved leaders in the movement in Juárez, were executed in cold blood.

One was Mariésela Escobedo Ortíz, murdered on Dec. 16. Her daughter, Rubi Marisol Escobedo, had been murdered two years ago, her body burned and thrown into a rubbish heap.

The other woman killed was Susana Chávez, an internationally recognized artist and human rights activist. Her body was found in January. She had been strangled, and one of her hands had been cut off.

For the past two years, Mariésela Escobedo Ortíz had worked tirelessly with Justicia para Nuestras Hijas (Justice for Our Daughters).

The month of her murder, she had begun a peaceful protest against the unfair sentence given the killer of her teenage daughter. Escobedo was gunned down in front of the state Capitol building, shot in cold blood as she ran in through the doors seeking help.

Susana Chávez was a member of Qué Regresen Nuestras Hijas a Casa (May Our Daughters Return Home) and author of "Song to a City in the Desert." She had brought to life the slogan, "Not One More Death," which has become a rallying cry throughout Mexico.

These two women are among thousands of examples of the deep, state-sponsored and U.S.-orchestrated repression and brutality sweeping Mexico.

There has been an international outcry against the murders. A movement has been launched in Mexico and abroad. Many documentaries as well as mainstream movies have been made about the crisis, including one by Jennifer López called "Bordertown."

Several mainstream celebrities such as Jane Fonda have traveled to Ciudad Juárez to shed light on the crimes. Women's groups from the U.S. and elsewhere have joined the appeal.

Yet the injustice continues unabated.

The women of Juárez are dark-skinned, mostly from the Indigenous communities of Mexico, overwhelmingly poor and working class. To the ruling classes on both sides of the border, these women are dispensable.

Moreover, the crimes fit into the current U.S./Mexican political context: They instill fear and terror as the capitalist state dismantles the rights of the working class for the benefit of imperialism.

Despite the repressive and brutal climate, mothers and fathers, friends and families — the entire community — have nonetheless protested and organized

nonstop in Juárez to bring world attention to this horror.

Ciudad Juárez industry continues to boom

In December a New York Times article reported that "more than \$42 billion in trade value moved through the ports" of Ciudad Juárez in 2009, "representing 15 percent of the total trade between the United States and Mexico. That number is estimated to be even higher in 2010." It noted, "Since June 2009, more than 24,000 manufacturing jobs have been added in Juárez."

The assembly line workers at these manufacturing sites — known as maquiladoras, most of which are owned by U.S. companies — make on average \$1.60 to \$2 an hour. The companies operate in tax-free zones and assemble products for export using imported materials.

The group Maquila Network Solidarity in Canada points out that "gunmen opened fire on buses carrying nightshift maquiladora workers to communities outside the city. When the mass killings of women [it is estimated that more than one-third of these women were working in maquiladoras] first surfaced over a decade ago, industry did little to protect workers, claiming it was not their responsibility because the attacks did not take place on their property. By the 1980s the maquila sector was booming, and after the passage of NAFTA in 1994 it gained even more momentum. Today some 3,000 maquilas operate throughout Mexico, generating a quarter of the country's GDP."

According to a Juárez-based univer-



Mexican graphic calls for an end to the silence of complicity and impunity by both the Mexican and U.S. governments.

sity and research institution, El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, 10,000 of Juárez's 500,000 children under the age of 14 are now orphans. The institution states, "It is impossible to know the number of youngsters who have witnessed a killing or stood close to a corpse that's still warm."

A massacre is going on in Juárez. For the capitalist class it is business as usual.

The Mexican and U.S. governments must be held accountable for these atrocities. The criminals and those who protect them must be punished for these heinous, misogynist crimes.

In some ways, the silence of complicity and impunity by both the Mexican and U.S. governments is even more shocking and despicable than the crimes themselves.

When it comes to the U.S., the big-business-owned media and government only raise the issue of women's oppression when it fits into their geopolitical designs, such as an excuse to justify intervention or war.

In Mexico, the illegitimate government of Felipe Calderón, who stole the presidential election in 2006, is inciting violence as a way to subdue the rising tide of struggle.

Repression, however, breeds resistance. The Mexican people have shown over and over that they are willing to fight to the end. □

Latin American unionists begin 12-city tour

By Cheryl LaBash

A 12-city tour by Gilda Chacón Bravo and Pipino Cuevas Velázquez was kicked off in Washington, D.C., on March 17 when the two met with U.S. unionists there.

Chacón is the first representative of the progressive World Federation of Trade Unions to tour the United States. Cuevas Velázquez represents the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), which is battling a wave of union busting in Mexico that saw 44,000 SME members evicted from their jobs 17 months ago.

The tour seeks to introduce workers in

the U.S. to the World Federation of Trade Unions, with the objective of promoting dialogue and presenting common areas of interest.

The response here to these class-conscious union leaders shows a growing awareness of the need for international solidarity with workers' movements in other countries. The living standards of U.S. workers, union and non-union, documented and undocumented, has drastically declined over the last decade. The fightback against stark anti-labor attacks in Wisconsin and the conditions endured by workers in the South, where anti-labor

laws are the rule, is also raising class consciousness.

Moving on to Detroit, the Latin American unionists heard from a representative of the musicians in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, who spoke about their six-month-long strike against "flexibility" rules that would make musicians handle clerical and other duties alongside performing and teaching.

The guest speakers addressed the progress being made by the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) that is improving the conditions of life for the workers in member countries and

is promoting cooperation and solidarity among those nations. Leaders of the disability rights battle learned that ALBA is reaching out to many disabled people in Latin America who have had no previous access to health care.

The tour is also promoting the upcoming Trade Union Meeting of Our America, which will take place this year in Nicaragua. Humberto Montes de Oca, the interior secretary for the Mexican Electrical Workers, will join the tour in Los Angeles. Upcoming public events are posted at laborexchange.blogspot.com or www.uniondelbarrio.org. □

The woman behind International Women's Day

Clara Zetkin, militant socialist & anti-racist

By Kathy Durkin

German socialist Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) is known as the 1910 founder of International Women's Day. One of this day's basic tenets is demonstrating worldwide solidarity among working and oppressed women.

Zetkin belonged to the German Social Democratic Party and later co-founded the Communist Party of Germany. An internationalist, she opposed all discrimination and injustice and promoted solidarity with the working and oppressed peoples of the world.

Zetkin was fiercely anti-racist and joined worldwide protests and condemnations of Jim Crow racism in the U.S. South.

On March 25, 1932, nine innocent African-American teenagers, known as the Scottsboro youth, were arrested on

the concocted charge of raping two white women. An all-white jury found the nine guilty; the state of Alabama sought to railroad eight of them to death. A mistrial was declared in the case of the ninth; he was only 12 years old.

It took a major national struggle by African Americans, socialists and other progressive forces to turn this around. Clara Zetkin played a part in this struggle. One of the two women, Ruby Bates, denied having been raped and joined this movement demanding the freedom of the eight.

Angela Davis praised Zetkin for the "important role" she played in "the extension of international solidarity to the struggle for Black equality in the United States" in her introduction to "Clara Zetkin: Selected Writings," edited by Philip Foner. As the leader of International Red Help, Davis explained, Zetkin "appealed to progressive people [worldwide] to de-

fend the Scottsboro youth."

Zetkin's 1932 call to "Save the Scottsboro Black Youth" rallied the international progressive movement to "Raise your voices." "You must act immediately and with all all of your energy," she appealed, "so that eight young lives will be spared. ... Let us get the eight Black youths off the electric chair and out of prison."

Not only were the charges a "conscious" lie, said Zetkin. She blamed wealthy land and factory owners for seeking to "incinerate those Black youth to terrorize the Black masses, which are rising up against their exploitation."

"It must not happen that alongside these luminous pages of history appears an augmentation of the blood-stained chronicles of lynchings and judicial crimes by the murder of eight Black youths," she insisted. "The strong, irresistible shout of the ... innumerable masses must over-

come the verdict of race hatred of the judge. ... It must drown out the scream of the lynching beast. The [masses'] hands ... must be clenched into one gigantic fist which will tear up this judgment and topple the electric chair.

"The battle for the rescue of these eight young lives from the torture and murder of the electric chair is part of the worldwide historical struggle between unbiased humanity and narrow-minded, brutal and bloody race hatred. ... In this struggle, humaneness must emerge victoriously." Zetkin asked that all "work and fight with devotion" and called for international solidarity among all workers from all countries.

The death sentences were finally dropped, although the Scottsboro defendants were imprisoned for years despite their innocence. The last one was not released until 1950. □

Women hit hardest by Global crisis, attacks on public sector unions

By Monica Moorehead

Based on talks given at Workers World Party forums for International Working Women's Month in Detroit and New York; also at a Left Forum panel, "Sisterhood Across the Globe: The Anti-Imperialist Women's Movement," at Pace University in New York. Moorehead is a WWP Secretariat member and a Women's Fightback Network organizer in New York. Hear her talk to the New York WWP forum in its entirety at www.workers.tv.

It is important to use International Women's Day, a socialist anniversary, to help unite and advance the struggles today.

The capitalist crisis is a declaration of war against the working class, which has deeply impacted women. More than two-thirds of the 1 billion people living on less than \$1 per day are women and children; the majority of them live in rural and agricultural areas.

Almost twice as many women as men worldwide are illiterate — 600 million women to 320 million men. More than 500,000 women die each year during pregnancy or in childbirth, 99 percent of them in developing countries.

Women are primarily responsible for the world's unpaid work, estimated in the trillions of dollars, for raising children and caring for the sick and elderly. Insufficient access to sanitation increases risks to the hygiene of women and their families. On average women spend more than two hours a day simply collecting water.

Women grow half of the world's food. Rural women are responsible for 60 to 80 percent of food production in developing countries. In sub-Saharan Africa, small-scale farmers are predominantly women,

due to the high rates of male migration to cities to find jobs.

Exorbitant costs of food staples, along with other austerity measures, were answered by righteous revolts in Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and elsewhere.

Women from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean make up the vast majority of migrant workers. Remittances from their incomes account for as much as 10 percent of the gross domestic product in some countries. In 2008 remittances were estimated by the World Bank at \$305 billion.

The overall status of women worldwide helps to put the status of working and poor women in the U.S. into perspective.

The economic gap between women in the East and the West is not expanding but contracting.

Conditions for women in the U.S.

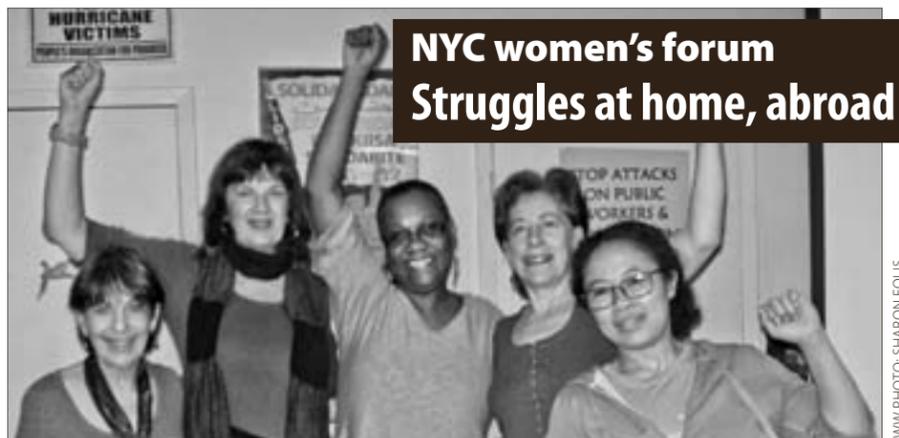
Public sector unions, not the banks, are being demonized for the current budget crisis. These unions are dominated by women and reflect the growth of the low-wage service sector within the capitalist economy. In 2008 women accounted for more than 45 percent of the unionized workforce. Close to 49 percent of union members are in the public sector, and 61 percent of unionized women are in the public sector, compared to 38 percent for men.

The United Federation of Teachers and American Federation of State, City and Municipal Employees are the two largest public sector unions in the U.S. The attacks against public sector unions are not only anti-union and sexist but racist. With an overall Black population of about 13 percent, 14.5 percent of all U.S. public sector workers are Black.

More than one in five Black workers are employed in public administration, as are 23.3 percent of Black women. That compares to fewer than 17 percent of all white workers. Black women in the public sector make significantly less than everyone else. Their median wage is \$15.50 an hour. The sector's median wage is \$18.38, with white men making \$21.24. Black workers have depended heavily on these jobs to help get out of poverty.

Passage of Gov. Scott Walker's bill in Wisconsin dismantling collective bargaining rights signifies a war within a war against women when it comes to wages, pensions, speedups and health care, especially the right to reproductive justice. The struggle in Madison is showing the need for labor, student and community alliances in this class war.

Women have the most to gain in the struggle for social equality, which can only be won by replacing all forms of private-property relations with a socialist system based on meeting the needs of human beings, not profit. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote in the "Communist Manifesto" that the working class will ultimately become the gravediggers of the capitalist system. Without a doubt women will be the most enthusiastic of those gravediggers. □



WWWPHOTO: SHARON EOLIS

The New York City branch of Workers World Party held an International Working Women's Month public forum March 18 focused on "The global economic crisis: Women, growing fightback and socialism." Issues discussed included cuts in education, attacks on public sector unions and FBI repression, as well as imperialist intervention in Libya, the mass upsurge in Egypt and Japan's nuclear crisis. WWP

speakers, pictured left to right, were program moderator Ellen Catalinotto, Joyce Chediak, Monica Moorehead, Gavielle Gemma and LeiLani Dowell. Jess Sundin, a Freedom Road Socialist Organization member, also spoke on the struggle against grand jury subpoenas imposed on progressive activists in the Midwest. All the talks can be heard at www.workers.tv.

— Monica Moorehead

Women & the UAW

Standing up by slowing down

By Martha Grevatt

Beating the bosses is never easy — but it is possible. And there are more ways than one to win. Throughout history the determination and creative energy of women has shown the whole working class new ways to fight back.

The "flying squadron" — a mobile group of strikers that would go from shop to shop to convince workers to walk out — was pioneered more than a century ago by female textile workers in New England.

For autoworkers the first successful in-plant slowdown was in 1937. It was made possible by women at the Ternstedt division of General Motors in Flint, Mich.

Before the United Auto Workers won recognition, life in GM plants was hell. This was truly the case in the Ternstedt division, where a workforce that was 70 percent women made door handles, chrome trim, and other small parts for the world's largest car company. Wages there were notoriously low, even by pre-UAW standards. The hourly rate was supposed to be supplemented by a bonus for making more than a standard number of parts. In reality the standard was raised and manipulated to make the bonus almost unattainable.

Roughly half the women were Polish immigrants; the other half were Southern and Appalachian whites. There were no Black women and only two Black men in the entire division. The two dominant groups were segregated in different areas of the plant.

When the Southern women complained about not getting the bonus, they

were told the Polish women had made much more production than they had.

When the Polish women complained about the same thing, they were told the same lie about the Southern women. Of course, the foremen referred to both in the most derisive terms to further stir up hatred and division.

There were other ways the company made lives miserable. One was the "shape-up," where each day the boss would pick just the number of workers needed and send the rest home without pay. Spurning the foreman's advances might get you sent home or put on the worst jobs. Another gripe was that if you were taken off one job and sent to another, you were off the clock during travel time.

If you can't strike, slow down production

The organizing drive began when a popular Polish UAW leader, Stanley Nowak, began leafleting outside the two main plants in Detroit. Nowak had challenged other male UAW leaders who didn't think women could be organized. The Slovene Hall made space available to assist the union effort.

Soon a group of determined plant women came together and began signing up their coworkers to join the union. They produced their own newsletter, the Ternstedt Flash.

On Feb. 11, 1937 — after the victory of the 44-day Flint sit-down strike — GM agreed to accept the UAW as the bargaining agent at Ternstedt. Yet plant management refused every modest demand made by the negotiating team, which was made up of women from the two dominant ethnic groups.

The UAW had a problem: It had agreed not to strike as a condition for winning its very first contract. The dilemma was solved when the women, without walking out, began to slow down.

Production dropped by at least 40 percent of normal output in every department and even as little as 5 percent in some. The slowdown was not spontaneous. The plan had been discussed among the bargaining committee, who explained it to an army of 200 shop stewards, who then went over the strategy with their trusted constitu-

ents. The slowdown was staggered — first one department, then another, then another, all at prearranged times.

The action was at least 80 percent successful, and joy over the success had hundreds more lining up to join the UAW.

On April 13, less than two weeks into the struggle, the slowdown ended in victory. Plant manager S. E. Skinner agreed to recognize the union, abolish the hated piecework system and raise hourly rates.

Martha Grevatt is a 23-year UAW Chrysler worker.

Boston celebrates women rising up



WWWPHOTO: LIZ GREEN

International Women's Day was celebrated in Boston on March 19 under the banner, "Women Worldwide Are Rising Up!" The forum was sponsored by Workers World Party; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST); the Women's Fightback Network; and Sista Ciphers. Representatives from the Student Immigration Movement and Survivors Inc. attended, along with delegations from Fanmi Lavalas of Haiti and St. Martin De Porres church. The photo shows members of the

church who are actively organizing in the Cape Verdean community.

Women spoke from the heart on a wide scope of topics, such as the fight for in-state tuition for undocumented students, the struggle of young women under capitalism, the fight for equal and quality education, the impact of the economic crisis, Haiti and the return of Aristide, the crisis in Japan, the U.S. bombing of Libya, the uprising in Wisconsin and the history of International Women's Day.

— Phebe Eckfeldt

At UW-Milwaukee

Students occupy Arts building to protest budget cuts

By Elena Everett and Peter Gilbert
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

March 20 — Students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee are entering their fourth week of the occupation of their Arts building, protesting the proposed 90 percent cuts to the theater program, the attacks on public sector workers in Wisconsin, and all the proposed cuts to education and programs for workers.

Students from the theater program and members of the UW-Milwaukee Students for a Democratic Society chapter have completely taken over the Peck School of the Arts. Large signs across both entrances declare the building “OCCUPIED!!!”

The students have held out so long largely because of the key support from American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82, which represents the custodians, clerical workers and other campus workers, and the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association, AFT Local 2169. Gilbert Johnson, the AF-SCME local president, visits the occupation daily and is planning an April 2 forum on the budget cuts and union-busting bill, to be held onsite at the occupation.

Students are demanding:

- The right to continue the occupation for as long as it's needed — until the budget repair bill is overturned and cuts to education are off the table.

- That all UW schools stay public institutions — no privatization of public universities.

- No tuition hikes and no cuts to university faculty and workers' pay or benefits.

Peter Adamczak from UW-Milwaukee SDS said: “We occupied the theater building because the theater and arts program are going to be the first on the chopping block ... and we're looking at up to a 26 percent increase in tuition that would push a lot of working people out of UW-Milwaukee. They are trying to chop from the bottom — they need to be chopping from the top.”

On March 9 Gov. Scott Walker and the state Legislature illegally pushed through a modified “budget repair” bill that attempts to destroy collective bargaining rights for public sector workers, a fundamental human right as recognized by the International Labor Organization. The union-busting bill is currently blocked from taking effect by a court injunction that reflects pressure from the hundreds of thousands of workers and students who have taken to the streets.

Walker is additionally calling for massive cuts to the state budget, which would destroy BadgerCare, the Wisconsin state health insurance program, with \$500 million in cuts to Medicaid. The proposed budget would also cut over a billion dollars from state education, including \$250 million in cuts to the University of Wis-



Students and supporters at occupied Arts building.

WW PHOTO

consin, the possibility of privatizing the UW-Madison, and \$900 million in cuts to K-12 education — completely eliminating K-8 arts education.

Students at the occupation worry that not only is their degree program on the chopping block, but also, once they graduate, no jobs will be available in their field as teachers in the arts.

Jenna Pope, one of the student leaders, came immediately from the occupation of the state Capitol in Madison. To her the struggles are one: “My mother and sister are both educators — if my mother's salary goes down and my tuition goes up, it will make it very hard for me to afford tuition and stay in school. This last month has changed my life 100 percent; we are willing to continue this occupation for as

long as we need to be here.”

Actions like this occupation and the earlier walkouts in Wisconsin; the recent mass walkouts by high school students; and the arrests of youth and students at the state Capitols in Michigan and Georgia, have inspired other students across the U.S. also facing budget cuts and supporting workers against attacks on collective bargaining. Students everywhere are mobilizing for March 31 and April 4 days of action.

To support these courageous Milwaukee students, solidarity is needed from activists, workers and students across the U.S. Solidarity statements to the Milwaukee students can be sent to UWMoccupied@yahoo.com or the UWM Occupied page on Facebook. □

L.A. teachers resist multipronged attack

By J. La Riva
Los Angeles

The very existence of public teachers and support staff across Los Angeles has been threatened over the past several months.

Reminiscent of scenarios throughout the country, teachers are being assaulted by attempts from state, local and school district officials, courts and corporate interests to dismantle public education, destroy good union jobs and disregard community interests. The United Teachers Los Angeles collective bargaining agreement is being undermined by privatization, biased court decisions and layoffs. Teachers in particular are being scapegoated for the current financial crisis.

At a special meeting on Feb. 15, the Los Angeles Unified School District's Board of Education approved, by a vote of 4-to-2, a plan to issue reduction-in-force layoff notices to more than 5,000 employees by a March 15 deadline. The layoffs included 3,109 permanent elementary multisubject teachers; 975 permanent secondary single-subject teachers; and 456 permanent support services personnel. While pretending to care about student achievement and literacy, the LAUSD gave pink slips to all school district librarians on March 15.

The layoffs will result in class crowding. LAUSD plans to increase class sizes by five students for kindergarten through third grades and by two students in grades 4 through 8. The layoffs will also increase student-counselor ratios; sharply reduce the amount and types of services provided by teacher librarians, nurses, school psychologists, and other health and human services professionals; and decimate

programs in art, music, foreign language, physical education and more.

Layoffs attack teacher seniority, weaken union

Over objections by UTLA, a Los Angeles judge approved a settlement between the school district and the American Civil Liberties Union that dramatically alters the way layoffs are handled. The settlement protects some schools from receiving layoff notices and requires that layoffs at all schools not exceed a district-wide average.

However, the settlement tramples on teachers' collective bargaining rights, destroying the seniority rights of experienced, highly qualified teachers. It will grievously harm student learning by creating widespread staff instability and by leaving many low-performing schools with a higher concentration of less-experienced teachers.

The settlement does nothing to solve the systemic problems at hard-to-staff schools or address the inequities suffered by the most at-risk students. Instead, it will create chaos that further undermines the ability of teachers to do their job, while punishing them for their long-term dedication to the profession.

The settlement was the handiwork of LAUSD Superintendent-Elect John Deasy, Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the ACLU and some school board members. Under the guise of defending students' constitutional rights, their real goal was to attack teacher seniority and weaken the union.

United Teachers Los Angeles fought the settlement aggressively and has appealed the decision. Not surprisingly, the California Supreme Court denied UTLA's application for a stay pending an appeal. While

the union is seeking an expedited process of the appeal, the denial of a stay means that the school district will proceed with issuing layoff notices under the terms of the agreement.

Public school 'choice' exposed as sham

In February the LAUSD held advisory community elections on the so-called Public School Choice program, which allows charter schools and other organizations to bid for control of school campuses. Voters overwhelmingly chose school control plans written by teachers and administrators. But that didn't stop the majority of the school board from disparaging the mandate from parents and community members and voting on March 15 to give more schools to outside, private charter operators.

Even Superintendent Ramon Cortines — who is no friend of public education or teachers — chose most of the local school control plans. In the end, that didn't matter to the school board majority, who in some cases tossed aside strong academic plans in favor of those proposed by outside charter operators supported by the mayor.

In addition, the board voted to reconstitute Muir and Mann middle schools, over the objections of board member Marguerite LaMotte, who represents these sites. Reconstitution requires that all teachers and support staff reapply for their jobs. In reality, it means firing the entire staff. The school board majority's real agenda is to do the bidding of the mayor and his billionaire allies, who want to privatize public education.

Emergency union meeting leads to fightback

UTLA members and other unions are not taking the attacks lying down. On March 13 the UTLA held an emergency

chapter chair meeting. More than 500 chapter chairs attended — an unprecedented number — representing thousands of teachers and schools throughout the district. The member-teachers were fired up and planned a series of escalating actions against the rollbacks.

On March 15, the day of layoff notices and public school giveaways, teachers and support staff picketed thousands of Los Angeles schools before classes began, handing out leaflets asking for parent/community solidarity and action. A rally was held that afternoon by hundreds of teachers outside the LAUSD Board of Education, while teachers, parents and community activists packed the boardroom.

The board and the media could not ignore the anger of the community as the board gave away millions of dollars' worth of new schools, built with public funds, to private corporations.

UTLA and other unions are participating in the March 26 Labor Solidarity March and Rally in downtown Los Angeles in order to build a broad movement to resist the attacks on labor. UTLA will build toward a May/June job action with parent and community support, and as much regional and statewide participation as possible, to escalate pressure on the district and the state.

There are plans for a fall campaign for a full contract based on UTLA reform, not corporate-driven anti-reform. If need be, the union is prepared to strike.

The more than 40,000-strong teachers must seize the day from those who want to dismantle public schools. It will be up to the teachers to step up to the plate, stand tall and stand up for public education, the rights of workers and the future of our children.

An injury to one is an injury to all.
Information provided by UTLA.net.

Interview with March 24 spokesperson

What makes this education action special?

Larry Hales is a member of the CUNY Mobilization Network. Hales was a leading organizer of last year's March 4 student-worker action in New York and of the upcoming March 24 demonstration set to march from City Hall to Wall Street as the workday ends. Hales is also a member of *Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST)*, a youth organization.

WW: What are the political goals of the March 24 demonstration?

Larry Hales: The goals for March 24 are to show a peoples' response to the austerity being imposed by both Gov. Andrew Cuomo at the state level and Mayor Michael Bloomberg at the city level. That is a permanent attack against public sector workers and the working class in general. This attack manifests itself in two areas: cuts to vital social services — such as housing, health care and education — and thousands of proposed layoffs of K-12 teachers as Bloomberg tries to destroy seniority.

Also, there is the constant privatization and charterization of the public school system and the imposition of mayoral control over New York City schools through the Panel on Educational Policy. The mayor just picked Cathleen Black to be the school chancellor. Cathleen Black comes from the corporate world and has almost no experience in public education. She will serve a similar role to that of Michelle Rhee in D.C. Whether new charter schools are co-located in a public school space or by taking over formerly public school buildings, this leads to closing down schools in oppressed communities.

We are also seeking to open up a struggle by putting together a new coalition that is an alliance of students, labor and community groups. Such an alliance is needed and crucial to fight against these

attacks. It can steel the movement politically to prepare for an offensive where we fight not only to repel the attacks one by one, but against the system that stands behind these attacks.

WW: What are the social forces involved in this demonstration? What has brought them together?

LH: The demonstration itself is part of the national student movement, which called for a month of action throughout March, culminating in a student strike on March 31. The student organization, CUNY Mobilization Network, called for a meeting with political forces at a forum in the South Bronx called by the Freedom Party and put together by the South Bronx Community Congress.

To avoid a date conflict with some of the New York City unions, the CUNY Mobilization Network moved the date of its action to March 24.

Some of the largest unions in the city — District Council 37 and DC 1707 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Professional Staff Congress, along with the United Auto Workers Region 9A, United University Professors at State University of New York Downstate, the Women's Caucus of the Transport Workers Union, Teamsters Local 808, and the Graduate Student Organizing Committee at New York University (UAW Local 2110), among other unions — joined with the Freedom Party, South Bronx Community Congress, Coalition for Public Education, Bail Out the People Movement, Students for Educational Rights, Bayan USA and Anakbayan, United National Antiwar Committee, FIST, Workers World Party, International Socialist Organization, Freedom Socialist Party and the Green Party. Many other community groups and political organizations have



Larry Hales

WW PHOTO G. DUNKEL

endorsed and are actively mobilizing for what we are calling a Day of Rage.

WW: Why is this demonstration different from the demonstrations held last March 4 and Oct. 7 on education issues?

LH: We are starting at City Hall, because it is the center of New York City politics, but we are marching to Wall Street. That is significant. It is important to show that a massive amount of subsidies have been given to corporations, banks and financial institutions, as well as to the very wealthy. At the same time there has been a drop in revenue at all levels, partly because of the millions of jobs lost.

There is no real lack of money. But the banks are dictating the cuts in order not to interrupt debt servicing. This is what the International Monetary Fund does around the world. So you could call it the IMFization of the U.S. economy. More money ends up in the hands of financial institutions.

There are also hedge fund and bank schemes to get more of the public funds that are now spent on education and other social programs. Hedge funds get tax

breaks for putting up money to finance charter schools, and then they receive money for leasing the spaces the schools are in.

The ruling class is using the systematic defunding of public education to their advantage. Naomi Klein wrote about this in her book, "The Shock Doctrine," and Jonathan Kozol wrote about Wall Street speculators' desire to get their hands on the billions spent on public education.

Other political questions are part of the fight. These involve the indoctrination of young people, racism in public school curricula and transforming education.

Another thing making this demonstration different is the amount of support, which wasn't there for the March 4 or Oct. 7 actions last year. This year there is a broad alliance of students, labor and community forces.

Changed conditions have created this, along with the constant work of many in the political struggle, especially the students. Wisconsin showed the importance of the energy of young people, and they are playing a decisive role. When the governor opened his attack, all sectors of the working class, including the students, saw this as a general attack against the working class.

I expect that on March 24 there will be a massive march on Wall Street — something that has not been seen in some time. There is an energy in the air. It's palpable, and I think it may lead to greater struggles ahead in the city and state. Because New York is a political center and the center of world finance capital, it may reverberate around the country and bounce back to those parts of the world where there are already vital and clamorous struggles.

Hales was interviewed by *Workers World* managing editor John Catalinotto.

The rise and fall of public education in the U.S.

PART 3

School failures stem from capitalism's failures

By Gene Clancy

In our last article, we showed how the building of a strong public school system in the United States in the early 1900s was spurred by big business's need to train its workforce and especially to have U.S. industry better able to compete with Germany. (*Workers World*, March 24) In 1907, just before beginning his duties as superintendent of the Gary, Ind., schools, William Wirt made an extensive trip to Europe, where he "picked up a few ideas from the German system of industrial education and returned by late summer to begin his Gary experiment." (Ronald D. Cohen, "Children of the Mill: Schooling and Society in Gary, Indiana, 1906-1960")

The industrial model for public education in the United States, as exemplified by the plan in Gary, undoubtedly resulted in improved educational opportunities for at least some working-class youth. Ultimately, however, it proved to be just as incapable of resolving its internal contradictions as the capitalist economic system that created it. From the very first, it had deep flaws that were glossed over by the optimistic propaganda surrounding its beginnings.

Workers poured into the new city of Gary literally from all over the world: poor whites from Appalachia, Blacks from the South and immigrants from southeastern Europe. But schools like the experimental and much-lauded Froebel school were not intended for most of these groups.

A National Association of Manufacturers report of 1905 made their aims perfectly clear: "We should not depend on Europe for our skill; we must educate our own boys." Throughout the report, it was asserted directly and unequivocally that it was "our boys," "American youth," "American boys," who were needed in the factories. (David Nasaw, "Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States")

Racism and public education

African Americans were never admitted to the Froebel school in any substantial numbers and the Gary public schools remained segregated. In the 1950s the reputation of the Froebel school was forever tarnished by racist actions on the part of white students and their parents when attempts were made to integrate the schools.

In the end, the public schools across the U.S., along with their teachers and students, fell to the capricious vagaries of the capitalist system. Gary grew to be a relatively prosperous city of nearly 200,000 in the early 1960s but then declined precipitously. The census of 2010 put its population at a little over 80,000.

The per capita income for the city was \$14,383 in 2000; 25 percent of the population was below the poverty line, including 38 percent of those under age 18. Ninety-eight percent of the city's population is people of color. (Gary, Ind., website)

Public schools have failed across the U.S. because the capitalist system itself is failing. A section of the ruling class has concluded that public schools are no longer needed or important. This group wants to abolish the public schools outright and replace them with a privatized, market-based system. The push for charter schools is a part of this movement. They are doing this, not because they believe that "it's all about the kids," as so many of them proclaim, but because they believe that public schools do not contribute sufficiently to their profit margins.

However, there is a second group that is worried about what will happen if public schools are unable to perform their traditional role of social control. These people want to maintain the urban public schools at a minimal level, but remove them from any effective control by the communities in which they are located. Campaigns for

mayoral control of city school districts and abolishing or weakening urban boards of education are typical of this trend.

Meanwhile, teachers, students and parents across the country are continuing to fight to preserve and maintain public education. In 2005, the teachers of Gary carried out a successful nine-day strike to preserve their union and standard of living. In Gary, as throughout the country, it has been unions and their allies who have been in the forefront of defending public education.

Poor and working people need and deserve public schools controlled by ourselves, not by big business, and which reflect our own educational needs and aspirations, not theirs. We need them because education is empowering and is therefore a vital part of the eventual emancipation of oppressed people everywhere.

Clancy is a retired secondary school teacher in Rochester, N.Y.

Women & the right to education

Continued from page 2

queer bigotry, against the system itself. Being involved in the battle against austerity in alliances will sharpen all these forces politically.

We've recently seen the effects of the student movement on a global level. The student movement was the first sector to rise up in response to the attacks on the public sector, both here in the U.S. and in

Ireland, Britain, Italy, Pakistan, France, Greece and Puerto Rico. Students continue to play important roles in the anti-imperialist revolts sweeping the Middle East. And of course there's the role of students in Wisconsin — another beautiful instance of unity among students, labor and the community. At Hunter students recently waged a successful campaign to save childcare there. □

JAPAN How capitalism made a natural disaster worse

By **Gavrielle Gemma**

Based on a talk given to a Workers World Party forum on March 19.

The hearts of workers and the oppressed of the world go out to the Japanese people who have been hit by an earthquake and tsunami and are now threatened with nuclear disaster. We can never forget that more than 200,000 people, almost all civilians, were murdered by U.S. nuclear bombs dropped on Japan in 1945, while millions suffered from radiation poisoning, cancer and birth defects in the following decades.

But the hearts of the Japanese and U.S. capitalist governments, investment bankers and corporate plunderers are stone cold to the suffering of the people.

The quake and tsunami may have killed 30,000 people. Whole villages have been destroyed. Factories, stores, water, food supplies, homes, electricity, heating facilities for the cold north, the fishing industry and animal herds were demolished. Millions are suffering still. Food and water supplies are contaminated in a 100-mile radius.

Vital information about the nuclear threat is being withheld. The Japanese and U.S. capitalist governments, Tokyo Electric Power and General Electric, which built the affected plants, the International Atomic Energy Agency — all are tied to the profit-driven oil, gas, coal and nuclear energy industries and cannot be trusted.

The greatest threat arises from lack of water to cool 1,100 spent fuel rods, which emit deadly cesium and plutonium if ignited. A Tokyo Electric Power executive admitted that the company delayed pumping sea water in, fearing it would ruin a valuable investment.

Since 1972 nuclear power experts have

condemned the GE-designed plants for not venting hydrogen gas — which caused the explosions — and for unsafe storage of spent fuel rods. Tokyo Electric Power has been cited for numerous uncorrected safety violations.

While the imperialists on the United Nations Security Council rushed to get a resolution allowing them to wage war on Libya, the International Atomic Energy Agency, dominated by these same powers, said they'll send some experts in a few days — a week after the crisis.

The Japanese government has told people in the area of the nuclear reactors to move 10 miles away. Yet all the corporate executives have been told to relocate at least 50 miles away. Most have fled to luxury hotels in Tokyo. Massive government-sponsored airlifts have been provided to evacuate corporate bloodsuckers from Japan, while working people freeze and go hungry.

Salute Japanese nuclear workers

The perilous job of racing to stop a nuclear catastrophe is being heroically and selflessly carried out by a small group of workers. The amount of radiation levels they can "safely" absorb is constantly raised by those sitting at a safe distance.

While adults and children were dying, the first "emergency" measure taken by the Japanese government was to dump almost half a trillion dollars into the stock market to prevent a crash.

The G7 countries held an emergency meeting March 19 attended by U.S. Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke. They discussed their fear that the global capitalist crisis was deepened by this tragedy.

They each pledged to put money from their central banks — the working class'

money — into propping up currencies. Did they take up relieving the largest rise in food prices in 36 years? Did they discuss the fate of the Japanese people, or the planet? No, their concern was how to shore up the currency markets.

The central banks are rushing in to buy up government bonds to keep their interest returns high as countries sell them. They stated that the unfolding disaster sent a shudder through world markets as investors sought the safe haven of government debt. That will mean more interest payments as banks loot the treasuries.

How to make a profit from this tragedy was the order of the day. Warren Buffet, the third-richest man in the world, said, "Frequently, something out of the blue ... really creates a buying opportunity [for shares in Japanese companies]. I have seen that happen in the U.S. I have seen that happen around the world, I don't think Japan will be an exception." (Reuters, March 21)

The Chicago Board of Trade soared 46 percent on currency speculation. An investment banker said, "It's a great environment out there."

Other "emergency" actions were taken by companies like Hewlett Packard, which set up a Pentagon-styled, 24-hour "situation room" to monitor where it would get parts due to closed Japan factories, so the process of making profits could go on. Most commodities these days are a product of global labor, but end up in the hands of private capitalist corporations.

U.S. gov't backs nuclear industry

Military corporations, banks and energy industries, especially big oil, are the real powers behind the capitalist state. GE designed the Japanese plants and GE CEO Jeffrey Immelt is a close consultant to President Barack Obama, who

bizarrely named him to be his "jobs czar." In November, Obama went to India with Immelt and 200 other executives. They forced and bribed the Indian government to pass legislation exempting GE from liability for nuclear accidents.

Countries everywhere were forced to turn to nuclear energy because of the U.S. monopolization of the oil industry. While we have an urgent, global need for safe, sustainable energy, saving the people and the planet plays no role in the decisions of Wall Street and the capitalist governments.

Our labor comes together around the globe, but the product of that labor is stolen by the private capitalist owners. We need a global public takeover from private industry of all energy resources and the creation of committees from the masses to oversee and create new sources and dismantle what is dangerous.

Sam Marcy, the late chairperson of Workers World Party, wrote in 1990: "At this critical phase in world history, it is only the deliberate activity of the masses themselves, when they intervene and threaten the system of capitalist exploitation and oppression, that can sweep away the polluters like the hazardous waste they created on this planet." (Workers World, April 26, 1990)

Only a planned, socialist system, based on need, not greed, and global cooperation of the working class and oppressed can save the planet and free human beings from hunger, war, poverty and environmental destruction.

We stand with the working class and oppressed of Japan and demand that GE, Tokyo Electric and the governments that back them be held liable and that immediate and emergency aid be provided to all those suffering in Japan. □

Radioactive fracking wastes threaten drinking water

By **Betsey Piette**
Philadelphia

A three-part New York Times series (Feb. 28-March 4) on the danger of wastewater from natural gas drilling being discharged into rivers upstream from drinking water intake plants cited Pennsylvania's lax control over drilling as a major problem. Rather than ratcheting up oversight, however, Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett claims that regulation of the industry has been too aggressive.

Corporate Corbett's response was to select gas industry executive C. Alan Walker to oversee the state's environmental permitting process. Walker, who is CEO and owner of Bradford Energy Company and Bradford Coal and who owns or has interest in 12 other companies, including a central Pennsylvania oil and gas company, has contributed \$184,000 to Corbett's campaign efforts since 2004.

"Toxic Tom" Corbett's open support for the natural gas industry prompted one contributor to the on-line, anti-drilling Susquehanna County Gas Forum to suggest that politicians should be required to wear patches on their suits showing their corporate sponsors, just like race car drivers. "Just imagine how differently some politicians' speeches would play if they were wearing patches for Chesapeake, Monsanto, etc., while they were talking," the writer noted.

Despite his company's history of running up against the state's environmental regulations, Walker was Corbett's first appointee last December to lead the Department of Economic Development.

Reporting on the appointment, ProPublica noted that "a paragraph tucked into [Corbett's] 1,184-page budget gives Walker unprecedented authority to 'expedite any permit or action pending in any agency where the creation of jobs may be impacted.' That includes, presumably, coal, oil, gas and trucking." (March 9)

In his budget address Corbett also announced the creation of a Marcellus Shale Advisory Commission that would include Walker as well as executives from Exxon-Mobil, Chesapeake Energy, Chevron and members of the pro-drilling Marcellus Shale Coalition.

Corbett's budget proposes not only draconian cuts in funding for education and community economic development but reductions in funding for environmental oversight. It contains no provisions for a severance tax on gas drillers and no increases in drilling permit fees or fines for environmental damages stemming from drilling.

Corbett says he wants to make Pennsylvania "the Texas of the natural gas boom." (Philadelphia Inquirer, March 9) Given Texas' history of lax oversight of gas industries drilling in the Barnett Shale, this does not bode well for Pennsylvanians.

Nationally, more than 10,000 wells have been drilled in urban areas, many near schools and residential centers in Fort Worth, Texas, where 25 percent of children have asthma compared to 7 percent statewide. Texas state environmental inspectors are linked to the gas and oil industries controlling that state.

Danger of radioactivity in drinking water

The New York Times series by Ian Urbana was based on thousands of internal documents from the Environmental Protection Agency, state regulators and drillers. They show that the dangers to the environment and health posed by fracking are greater than previously understood.

Fracking (hydraulic fracturing) involves the high-pressure injection of millions of gallons of salty, chemically laden water deep into underground fissures in the shale area to force natural gas to the surface. The wastewater that returns to the surface from fracking contains radioactive materials such as uranium and radium that occur naturally in deep rock formations.

Natural gas drilling companies are exempt from many of the federal environmental laws written to protect air and drinking water from radioactive and hazardous chemicals.

The documents, according to the Times, revealed that the wastewater from this process is often hauled to sewage plants

not designed to treat it and is then discharged into rivers that supply drinking water. The Times stated that the wastewater "contains radioactivity at levels higher than previously known, and far higher than the level that federal regulators say is safe for these treatment plants to handle."

The Times found "never-reported studies by the EPA and a confidential study by the drilling industry that all concluded that radioactivity in drilling waste cannot be fully diluted in rivers and other waterways."

Wastewater from more than 116 wells had radiation levels 100 times federal drinking-water standards. Wastewater from 15 had more than 1,000 times the amount of acceptable radioactive elements. In 2009 and 2010, public sewage treatment plants upstream from drinking-water intake facilities accepted wastewater with radioactivity levels as high as 2,122 times acceptable standards.

While more oversight is clearly needed, state and federal budget cuts in funding for environmental oversight, along with attempts to further weaken existing regulatory legislation, only add to the problem that grows worse as more and more wells are drilled.

The Times' series, coupled with Corbett's openly promoting industry interests, is fueling renewed calls for a complete moratorium on drilling in Pennsylvania as well as demands for Toxic Tom's recall. □

Libya and the era of imperialist reconquest

By Fred Goldstein

However the rebellion in Libya began, it was both inevitable and entirely predictable that it would quickly become an opening for imperialist intervention and counterrevolution in the oil-rich North African country.

The fact that the “rebellion” received sympathetic, screaming headlines, ferociously hostile to the government of Moammar Gadhafi from the very beginning, should have been sufficient to put the entire anti-imperialist movement on guard. The boiler-plate propaganda about “massacres,” without the slightest evidence, was repeated as if it were the gospel truth. That should have been further evidence of the plans for “great power” intervention (“great” in their oppression, as Vladimir Lenin pointed out long ago).

The condemnations were particularly hypocritical coming from the mouths of the same imperialist powers that have been massacring oppressed people on every continent since the dawn of colonialism — from the slave trade in Africa to the cruelty of conquistadors in South America, the genocide of Indigenous peoples in the U.S., the colonization of India, up to the present-day campaigns against the Palestinians in Gaza, Predator drone massacres of civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to say nothing of the wholesale destruction of Iraqi society and the attendant mass killing of civilians.

There have been numerous rebellions and many documented massacres of unarmed civilians in recent months that have not spurred military action by the imperialist powers. Is it even conceivable that Washington would lobby or arm-twist the Arab League to provide a figleaf for U.S. intervention in support of protesters in Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia or Jordan? No, because these have been genuine rebellions against autocratic regimes backed by the White House and the Pentagon.

There have been no campaigns to get U.N. Security Council resolutions authorizing military action in any of these countries. No aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, missile ships, AWACS planes, spy

satellites, etc., moved into position to support these genuine popular uprisings against moth-eaten reactionary monarchies that guard the interests of the U.S. and Western oil companies, as well as the strategic position of the Pentagon in the Persian Gulf region.

Bush, Obama & ‘regime change’

The fact is that the Obama administration, the British and the French have de facto put Libya on the “axis of evil” list started by George W. Bush in his infamous 2002 State of the Union speech, where he singled out Iraq, Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea as targets for “regime change.” That is what “Gadhafi must go” means.

What these three countries have in common is that they all threw imperialism out of their countries during the rise of the socialist camp and the national liberation movements after World War II. They were part of a global movement that fought to establish economic and political independence from transnational banks, corporations and the Pentagon.

Libya falls directly into that category, having overthrown puppet King Idris and ousted imperialism in 1969 under the leadership of Col. Moammar Gadhafi. The Libyan revolution, like the revolutions in Iraq in 1958 and Iran in 1979, also nationalized Western-owned oil companies and shut down imperialist military bases. The fact that Gadhafi shifted toward the West later, opening up to oil companies and imposing International Monetary Fund-dictated austerity programs, is not enough to satisfy the voracious appetite of the corporations for profit. They want to take the whole country — lock, stock and barrel.

Libya & the era of reconquest

The invasion of Libya is part of a long-term trend on the part of the imperialist countries that began with the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe from 1989 to 1991. That trend is to reconquer territories and riches lost during the 20th-century rise of the socialist camp and the national liberation movements.

involved in a war, a war against economic slavery. Taking from people what they have struggled and died for years to get, and it’s all at risk. We need something like the Bonus Army of 1932, where vets will get out in the forefront, and people will follow and go camp out in Washington, D.C., until they change the way they do business with our tax dollars.”

In **Detroit** on March 11, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice had held a demonstration at the Federal Building calling for an end to the war buildup. Another demonstration was held March 21 in downtown Detroit on the eighth anniversary of the Iraq war that denounced the beginning of the bombing of Libya.

In **Atlanta** on March 18 nearly 200 people marched through Piedmont Park, led by the Atlanta Sedition Orchestra. Students and youth carried a giant octopus labeled “U.S. war machine,” its tentacles gripping funds for education, health care, housing and jobs. Initiated by the Georgia Peace and Justice Coalition/Atlanta, several dozen local peace and justice, community and student groups endorsed.

A banner from the International Action

That is what the intervention in Libya is about. That is what the two wars in Iraq were about. And that is what the permanent threats to Iran and North Korea are about, not to mention the permanent blockade of Cuba, the military encirclement of China and the attempt to destroy the government of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe.

In other words, the right to national sovereignty, self-determination and self-defense of formerly oppressed countries is obsolete, according to the doctrine of the New World Order.

The mad adventure in Libya, led by Washington and supported by Britain and France, shows once again that war and militarism are an integral feature of imperialism and of the monopoly-capitalist system upon which it rests.

During the first half of the 20th century, imperialist war was driven by inter-imperialist rivalry and struggles over which country would be able to loot the colonial peoples. During the latter part of the 20th century, war and the threat of war were driven by the struggle of imperialism against the socialist camp and the national liberation movements — the Cold War.

Now the permanent tendency of imperialism toward war and militarism is driven by the drive for reconquest of the territories lost in that period.

Imperialism & permanent war

U.S. imperialism now has two wars and a major post-war occupation going on simultaneously — in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq. It has made northeastern Pakistan a free-fire zone for predator drones. Since the collapse of the USSR and Eastern Europe in 1989-1991, it has launched five wars of conquest — in Iraq twice, in Yugoslavia in 1999, in Afghanistan in 2001, and now in Libya.

It has threatened two other wars — one against Iran and the other against People’s Korea. U.S. troops have been at war continuously for the last decade.

Washington has five aircraft carriers, each accompanied by a flotilla of 10 destroyers, frigates and other warships in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea sur-

rounding Libya. The French and the Italian imperialists each have a carrier in the area as well.

The entire imperialist world, with a combined gross domestic product of more than \$20 trillion, a combined population of close to a billion people, and a combined military machine worth at least \$2 trillion is bearing down on Libya — an underdeveloped, formerly colonized country of 6 million people with an economy of some \$40 billion that is without the capability to defend itself militarily against the juggernaut facing it.

The French and the British capitalist governments were clamoring for a no-fly zone as a pretext for intervention and to guard their oil interests. But it was not until Washington got behind the effort, forcing the Arab League and the U.N. Security Council to go along and moving its military flotilla and air force into position, that the attack could begin.

Working class enters anti-war movement

These wars have cost trillions of dollars. They are eroding the economic foundation of U.S. capitalist society and imposing a huge cost upon the workers, the poor and the oppressed who pay for the wars, both with their tax money and with the loss of vital social services.

This plunge into a new war comes in the midst of a profound economic crisis, a jobless recovery, growing mass unemployment and a budding rebellion of the working class, which has shown itself in the Wisconsin struggle against union busting and austerity budgets.

On March 19 a mass anti-war march took place in Madison, Wis., that was attended by thousands of unionists and their supporters in a joint effort with the anti-war movement. This is a step forward in the U.S. in the direction of giving the anti-war movement a working-class character.

As the wars multiply and the attacks on the workers grow more severe, a genuine working-class rebellion against imperialist war will come onto the agenda. The working class is the only class that can put an end to imperialist war. □

Attack on Libya draws protests in U.S.

By Betsey Piette

Even before the first U.S. bombs rained down on Libya, protesters across the U.S. stood up to voice their opposition to yet another U.S. war for oil. These protests continue.

The most significant was in **Madison, Wis.**, where an anti-war march and rally were co-sponsored by the Iraq Veterans Against the War, the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO and other labor organizations. IVAW members led the march, with thousands of students and workers following behind.

Firefighters Local 311 from Madison joined the ranks for a march around the Capitol. Current Wisconsin AFL-CIO president, Phil Neuenfeldt, and former president, David Newby, spoke, as did the president of the Machinists Union, Mahlon Mitchell of the Wisconsin Firefighters Association, the Madison mayor, SEIU nurses and others.

Vietnam veteran Will Williams, a member of Veterans for Peace and the Madison Area Peace Coalition, spoke out against the U.S. wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya from the main stage at the Capitol. Afterwards, he told a reporter, “We’re in-

Center read, “Not another war for OIL! U.S. hands off Libya.” Other banners supported Pvt. Bradley Manning and called to “Foreclose the war, not people’s homes.”

Around 1,500 people rallied at Lafayette Park in **Washington**, across from the White House, on March 19 to demand an end to U.S. wars on Iraq, Afghanistan and Libya. The eighth anniversary of the Iraq War ended with civil disobedience at the White House.

Led by Veterans for Peace, the angry protesters chanted, “From Wisconsin to Iraq, Stand up, fight back!” and “Free Bradley Manning!” Daniel Ellsberg, who exposed the Pentagon Papers, was one of 113 people arrested for chaining themselves to the fence of the White House.

Ana Maria Reichenbach, an activist with Chapel Hill Students for a Democratic Society, said, “When veterans stand up and put their bodies on the line to stop the war, it is really inspiring. It’s time for young people to follow their example and rebuild the anti-war movement.”

March Forward!; Answer Coalition; Iraq Veterans Against the War; Code Pink; Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST); Black is Back Coalition; and many

more organizations took part in the demonstration.

Protests on March 19 in **San Francisco** not only marked the eighth anniversary of the U.S. war against Iraq but also the first day of the new U.S./NATO air attack on the sovereign nation of Libya. Mike Casey, president of UNITE HERE Local 2, the hotel workers’ union currently on strike against major San Francisco hotels, called for labor-community support against the wars and the current attacks against working people.

Demonstrators later marched from Union Square to the West St. Francis Hotel to show support for the striking hotel workers. The demonstration was organized by the March 19th Coalition and endorsed by a broad array of organizations, including the Answer Coalition, the San Francisco Labor Council, the National Council of Arab Americans and the West County Toxics Coalition.

On March 20, thousands demonstrated in **Los Angeles** to say no to war and occupation in Iraq and Afghanistan. The demonstration was called by the Answer Coalition. Libya was clearly on the minds

Continued on page 11

Triangle fire – 100 years ago & today

March 25 is the 100th anniversary of the horrific Triangle Shirt-waist Factory fire, which took the lives of 146 workers, mostly young immigrant women and girls in New York City. This disaster was caused by capitalist greed. The drive to ever increase profits overrode health and safety precautions that could have protected these garment workers.

Massive protests, especially by labor unions, took place after the fire and gained some workplace safety legislation and protections. Yet today, needless deaths in privately owned factories are far from eradicated in the U.S. or in global sweatshops.

Capitalist owners still strive to garner maximum profits by squeezing workers' wages, enforcing long hours, ignoring unsafe working conditions and refusing to pay for improvements, like sprinkler systems, wherever they can get away with it.

Last December, 29 Bangladeshi gar-

ment workers were killed in a terrible factory fire in Ashulia near Dhaka. Conditions there were very similar to those at the Triangle factory: The work areas were on high floors; exits and stairs were blocked; fire escapes were nonexistent or inaccessible. The Ha-Meem Group's factory supplies clothing to superrich Western conglomerates such as Gap Inc., JC Penney and Wal-Mart.

One hundred years after the Triangle fire, it remains true that capitalism is bad for workers' health. And the reach of imperialist corporations around the globe has only spread workplace dangers to new areas where companies search for cheap labor with no regard for workers' health or their very lives.

As we join workers around the globe in building support for their struggles against the avaricious corporate owners, let's remember that they often face the same bosses who exploit workers here at home. It's high time to hold the capitalists responsible for their crimes. □

FLOC & UAW target Chase

Since the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and the United Auto Workers co-alesced at the 2010 U.S. Social Forum, they've spearheaded a campaign against JPMorgan Chase to demand justice for North Carolina farmworkers and a national moratorium on foreclosures. On March 18 they coordinated protests at 200 Chase banks all over the U.S.

At Chase's Park Avenue headquarters in New York City, several hundred protesters chanted, "Predatory lenders, lock up the offenders!" between talks by representatives of the UAW, the Communication Workers, Service Employees union Local 32BJ and community allies. Vanessa Fluker, a lawyer leading the fight against foreclosures in the Detroit courts, described how the banks are making

huge sums by forcing people out of their homes.

A flyer announced an emergency fundraiser for Fluker, who was recently sanctioned and fined \$12,200 by Judge Robert Colombo, who said the attorney's argument for allowing her client to remain in her home in a foreclosure case was "frivolous." Fluker is a well-known and respected advocate for homeowners and renters in their struggles against the predatory banks. She is appealing the sanctions award but needs funds for an appeal bond of approximately \$18,000 in order to stay proceedings pending the appeal. Send donations to Vanessa G. Fluker, Esq., PLLC/Appeal Fund, 2920 E. Jefferson, Suite 101, Detroit, MI 48207.

— Sue Davis

HAITI

A Slave Revolution

200 Years after 1804 Updated 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide and the January 2010 earthquake. Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laraque, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morriseau-Leroy, Johnnie Stevens, Abayomi Azikiwe, Larry Hales, Monica Moorehead, Saeed Shabazz.

Available at

Leftbooks.com

Attack on Libya draws protests

Continued from page 9

of everyone there and news of the criminal attack electrified the demonstration. The announcement of yet another imperialist war was booed and jeered as the words crawled across an electronic sign on CNN's L.A. office.

The International Action Center distributed a statement denouncing the attack on Libya. The next day the IAC held an emergency demonstration at the Westwood Federal Building to demand an end to U.S., French and British bombing of Libya. Members of BAYAN-USA, the All African Peoples Revolutionary Party — GC, Unión del Barrio and Anti-Racist Action also participated. The action was covered by ABC, Fox, Telemundo and Univisión.

In **Philadelphia** on March 21 protesters gathered outside City Hall to de-

nounce the U.S./NATO air attacks on Libya and to demand money for jobs, not wars. Signs that read, "Not another U.S. war for oil" and "Stop U.S. attacks on Arab and African people," caused many passersby to stop, talk and ask for fliers. Organized by the Philadelphia Against War coalition, the protest was endorsed by the Brandywine Peace Community and the International Action Center.

In **St. Paul, Minn.**, hundreds marched and rallied on March 19 chanting, "Bring the troops home! Out of Iraq and Afghanistan!" and "Do not expand wars against Libya!" Signs read, "Opposing war is not a crime," referring to FBI raids on homes of anti-war and solidarity activists in the fall of 2010.

In nearby **Minneapolis**, demonstrators gathered on March 21 for an emergency protest to say no to U.S. war in

Protests against U.S.-backed dictators defy crackdowns

By Gene Clancy

Even as the U.S., France and Britain rain down bombs and missiles on Libya, resistance is growing against torture and repression by U.S. clients in other parts of the Middle East and Southwest Asia.

YEMEN

People fight back after gov't kills 46

A government crackdown killed 46 people in Yemen on March 18, but failed to stop massive demonstrations against the U.S.-backed president. Crowds of thousands clashed the next day with security forces that were smashing their protest camps. The people even seized control of one southern city.

In the capital, the government had to bring out tank units and other military forces to protect key buildings as crowds swelled. Protesters also stood their ground in the southern port of Mukalla, surging out of their destroyed encampment and encircling a police station.

In the same province, witnesses said protesters chased security authorities out of the city of Dar Saad and were now in control. Dar Saad, with a population of around 150,000, has witnessed some of the deadliest clashes in the past few days — seven people have been killed. It is considered the gateway to the key port of Aden. If their hold lasts, it would be the first city where protesters have gained control from security forces. (Huffington Post, March 19)

BAHRAIN

Protests resume despite Saudi invasion

Days after the government in Bahrain had declared martial law and banned demonstrations by opponents, about 2,000 residents in the village of Sitra turned a funeral March 20 into the first protest since the ban, showing a deepening resistance to the regime.

Sitra had already seen heavy clashes amid raids by security forces on March 15. This working-class community was under a lockdown, its roads blocked by tanks and armored vehicles driven by ski-masked soldiers.

Libya. The event was endorsed by Women Against Military Madness, the Anti-War Committee and others.

Even before the U.S. fired a single rocket at Libya, people gathered in downtown **Phoenix** on March 19 to say that the U.S. and the world do not need another war.

In **New York City** the International Action Center held a picket line March 21 in the Times Square area to protest the U.S.-French-British bombing of Libya. An earlier protest was held March 18 right after a U.N. Security Council resolution pushed by the U.S., France and Britain authorized military action against Libya. Near New York's Federal Plaza, it was called by the United Antiwar Coalition.

Contributing writers: *John Catalinotto, Judy Greenspan, Dianne Mathiowetz, John Parker, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Scott Scheffer and Scott Williams.*

The protests in Bahrain have been carried out despite the presence of more than 2,000 U.S.-armed Saudi and United Arab Emirate troops, which invaded the country last week.

The government has arrested more dissidents and human rights workers, destroying their homes and also beating relatives, witnesses said. The regime also demolished the towering national monument at Pearl Square traffic circle where demonstrators had gathered for weeks before being routed on March 16. Many activists have now gone into hiding in this tiny country, their family members said.

EGYPT

Military grabs, tortures protesters

The heroic Egyptian revolution remains vulnerable to oppression and harassment from the armed forces, which have close ties to the U.S.

A group of newly released detainees on March 16 accused the Egyptian armed forces of torturing them with electric shocks, making them undergo "virginity tests" and forcing them to pose with weapons so they could be portrayed as criminals.

After their press conference, some 150 people demonstrated in front of the Press Syndicate, chanting "Tantawi is Mubarak."

Protesters say that Field Marshal Muhammad Tantawi, head of the Higher Council of the Egyptian Armed Forces and a long-time Mubarak confidant, is carrying out the same oppressive tactics that spurred the revolution against the president. (Deutsche Presse-Agentur, March 16)

PAKISTAN

U.S. drone kills 36 tribal leaders

Just one day after a CIA contractor was absolved by a Pakistani court of a double murder charge after agreeing to pay compensation to the victims' families, Pakistan and U.S. relations were plunged into a new crisis over a CIA-directed drone missile strike that Pakistan said killed at least 36 civilians. Pakistan is a key ally of the U.S. in its bloody invasion and occupation of Afghanistan.

Even Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, chief of staff of the Pakistan Army, condemned the attack, saying it was directed at a meeting of tribal leaders, many elders, and was "carelessly and callously targeted with complete disregard to human life." (McClatchy Newspapers, March 17)

SAUDI ARABIA

Stirrings of revolt

Even in the oil-rich puppet of the U.S. with an absolute medieval monarchy, there are the stirrings of revolt. Anti-government protests have recently flared up, particularly in the eastern parts of the country, despite a state ban on demonstrations.

On March 17 more than 4,000 protesters thronged the streets in the eastern city of Qatif and clamored for political reforms and the release of political prisoners. According to eyewitness accounts, police fired live rounds and tear gas to disperse the crowd, leaving several people injured. Other rallies in the city were held in solidarity with the people of Bahrain. (Press TV, March 18) □

Thousands greet Aristide's return to Haiti

By G. Dunkel

Jean-Bertrand Aristide's return to Haiti released a tidal wave of celebration. Though most of Haiti's radio stations misreported that his plane would arrive days later, hundreds of his most fervent supporters still went to the airport on March 18, and thousands accompanied his motorcade a few miles to his Tabarre home.

President Barack Obama had called President Jacob Zuma of South Africa earlier to urge him to keep Aristide from leaving until a few days after the March 20 Haitian runoff elections. Obama claimed that Aristide's return before the election would be "destabilizing." Zuma rejected Obama's request and let Aristide return, while South Africa gave Aristide quite a warm sendoff.

Aristide's lawyer said the former president wanted to return before Haitian President René Prével, who had made the arrangements allowing his return, left office. One of the candidates running in the March 20 election, Michel Martelly, has crudely threatened to kill Aristide; the other, Mirlande Manigat, said she had no problems with his return, but preferred that he would delay his arrival.

For seven years the people of Haiti in

the thousands and tens of thousands have marched to demand Aristide's return. Cops and the U.N.'s occupation force, called the Minustah, attacked many of these protests, killing scores and injuring hundreds. Both Haitian and imperialist politicians maneuvered and connived over his return, but the Haitian people's firm, unwavering support was the real force that won Aristide's right to come home.

Aristide's political enemies were able to split his party, Fanmi Lavalas. The part oriented toward small business, with a relatively well-off constituency under Prével, broke away to form Inite (Unity), which is probably going to maintain control of the Haitian Parliament after the election. The more community oriented part of FL, with strongholds in the poor and working-class communities in Port-au-Prince, is less cohesive at this time.

FL has been unable to force the Haitian electoral commission to allow it to run in elections, after it was clear that if allowed to run, FL would win. Since FL is a party oriented to elections, its exclusion from participating produces internal strains.

In his homecoming speech, Aristide called for "a social policy of inclusion, not exclusion." (Al Jazeera, March 19).

Michel Martelly is not just an electoral

candidate. In some of the poorest neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince, where whatever jobs people get pay at most \$1 a day, he is recruiting young men to join his youth group for a fairly hefty fee, holding out the promise of a job or at least access to officials. If elected president, this can give him the option of using his "youth group" as an extralegal counterweight to Inite's control of Parliament, much like the Tonton Macoutes that François Duvalier put together a half-century ago, said Kim Ives of *Haiti Liberté* on March 19.

Martelly's organization disrupted a campaign rally that Manigat tried to hold in Mirebalais. Carrying posters saying she was not welcome in Mirebalais, Martelly's supporters shouted her down for half an hour. When her security tried to remove them, Martelly's forces started throwing rocks, Manigat's supporters responded, and the cops broke the rally up by firing in the air. (Haiti-Libre, March 16)

The first results of the election held March 20 are scheduled to be published at the end of March and certified by mid-April.

Since FL and other progressive candidates were excluded from the ballot, some progressive political and community groups have called an election "boycott."

Aristide's return and how he raised the issue of "exclusion" in his homecoming speech may give this boycott campaign impetus.

The official results of the first round of voting in November put voter participation at only 23 percent. Disorganization and the lingering effects of the January earthquake — lost identification, polling places destroyed — were obvious factors in the low turnout, but it was also significant that no candidates represented the interests of the mass of the Haitians.

The Institute for Justice and Democracy, in a March 16 press release, documents a number of glaring irregularities in this vote, from widespread disenfranchisement of voters to international — that is, imperialist — pressure to adjust the results of the first round to allow Martelly to run in the second.

Some early reports by Let Haiti Live, a project of TransAfrica, established numerous instances of disorganization in the March 20 vote — polling places opening late, lacking ballots and voter lists — and that many areas of Port-au-Prince had low voter turnout. The March 21 New York Times admitted that "the turnout was unclear." □

Worldwide protests demand: Stop U.S. bombing of Libya!

Continued from page 1

pound where Gadhafi is often present, Libyan spokesperson Mussa Ibrahim told journalists, "This was a barbaric bombing which could have hit hundreds of civilians gathered at the residence of Moammar Gadhafi about 400 meters away from the building which was hit." (Herald Sun (Australia), March 21)

Ibrahim went on to point out the contradictory and deceptive language being utilized by the Western countries now bombing Libya. He noted that "Western countries say they want to protect civilians while they bomb the residence knowing there are civilians inside." In the aftermath of the bombing in Tripoli, British Defense Secretary Liam Fox said on March 20 that Gadhafi was a "legitimate target." (The Australian, March 21)

Nevertheless, U.S. Navy Vice Adm. William E. Gortney of the Joint Chiefs of Staff claimed that no civilians had been harmed in the bombings, which have included the use of stealth B-2 bombers, jet fighters, and more than 120 "Tomahawk" cruise missiles as well as other deadly U.S. weapons.

NATO, the Arab League, African Union and U.N. Security Council

Since the bombing began on March 19, the United States has claimed to have limited objectives related to protecting civilians and imposing a "no-fly zone" over the North African state. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, contradicting his British counterpart, said Gadhafi was not a target. Gortney also claimed that "The no-fly zone is now effectively in place. We are not going after Gadhafi. At this particular point, I can guarantee he is not on the target list."

Yet since late February, the Obama administration has called for the removal of the Libyan leader. These calls have been repeated not only by the president but by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice.

Moreover, the so-called rebellion in Libya that began in Benghazi on Feb. 17 has been supported by the U.S. and other

Western imperialist states. Several of the groups trying to overthrow the Libyan government have long been financed, armed, trained and coordinated by the CIA.

France, prior to the bombing operations, gave recognition to the rebels as the legitimate government of Libya. At least two major peace proposals, put forward by Latin American states as well as the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, were rejected outright by the imperialist states now bombing the country as well as by the rebels.

Evidence of the real objectives in the bombing of Libya is the cover being provided by the imperialist states for the rebels. After the rebels' defeat in the western and eastern section of Libya, the U.S. and European powers began bombing to support attacks by the rebels on key cities under government control.

Another important political aspect of the bombing of Libya has been the assertion that the Arab League supported the attacks. Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the Arab League, said several weeks prior to the bombings that he would support a no-fly zone over the country. However, the Arab League vote on support for U.N. Resolution 1973 was in a closed-door session with only half the member states present. Of those, Syria and Algeria reportedly objected to it.

Moussa has now expressed reservations about the military operations by the imperialist states against Libya. The Arab League leader said, "What happened differs from the no-fly zone objectives. What we want is the protection of civilians. Protection, not shelling more civilians." (abc.net.au, March 21)

The African Union, a 53-member state organization for the continent, issued a communiqué on March 11 expressing solidarity with Libya and opposing foreign military intervention. The AU Peace and Security Council, which issued the communiqué, called for a negotiated resolution to the war in Libya and appointed a fact-finding mission to visit Libya to work on ending the fighting.

Nonetheless, the AU communiqué was totally ignored by the U.S., Canada, France, Italy and Britain. A delegation from South Africa that was scheduled to travel to Libya on March 21 was cancelled due to the imposition of the no-fly zone by the Western states.

Egyptian protesters attack U.N. chief

Outrage has been expressed throughout the world over the launching of a new war by Western imperialist governments. Inside Libya itself, thousands of citizens have resisted the rebel forces backed by the U.S. and other former colonial powers such as France, Britain and Italy, which had colonized Libya for many decades.

Thousands of Libyans have flocked to government buildings to act as human shields against the bombs being dropped by the Western military forces. Gadhafi on March 21 called for a civilian march on the city of Benghazi, where the rebels remain under the protection of bombs being dropped by the U.S., France and Britain.

Perhaps the most dramatic protest against the attacks on Libya took place in Cairo, Egypt, on March 21, when U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon arrived in the country to hold talks with Moussa of the Arab League. Several hundred anti-war demonstrators attacked his vehicle.

Ban had tried to visit Tahrir Square, the center of protest for the pro-democracy movement in Egypt, but was prevented from doing so by the demonstrators. His vehicle was pelted with rocks as he was driven away.

Demonstrations were held in Manila, Philippines, where U.S. flags were burned amid denunciations of the bombing. Criticism has also come from China, Russia, India and Brazil, all of which had abstained on the U.N. resolution.

In the Republic of South Africa, the African National Congress Youth League condemned the ruling party's vote in the U.N. in support of the resolution. The ANCYL said that "It is evident that certain powers, particularly the U.S., U.K. and France, want to impose a puppet government in

Libya so that they can have access to its oil reserves." (timeslive.co.za, March 21)

The ANCYL stressed that it was a mistake for the South African government to vote in favor of the U.N. resolution, noting that its allies had abstained "because they noticed the inconsistencies being applied to Libya."

This response by the ANCYL and the impact of the bombing missions over Libya prompted South African President Jacob Zuma to express concern over how the no-fly zone was being implemented. "We call for an immediate ceasefire in Libya and an end to attacks on civilians," Zuma said. (timeslive.co.za)

Organizations throughout the world that have denounced the U.S./European bombing campaign against Libya include: Workers World Party, Free Arab Voice, the South African Communist Party, World Federation of Trade Unions, the Nation of Islam, Communist Party of Greece, Communist Party of Canada, All-African People's Revolutionary Party (GC), Philippine Communist Party and Communist Party of Australia, among others.

Numerous African states including Zimbabwe, South Africa and Uganda have denounced the bombing and efforts on the part of the imperialists to effect a regime change in Libya.

On April 9 there will be national anti-war demonstrations in New York and San Francisco whose demands include a halt to U.S. and European aggression towards Libya.

See article on page 9 about other U.S. protests.

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Alto a la guerra de EE.UU. contra Libia

Por el Centro de Acción Internacional (www.iacenter.org)

El 17 de marzo del 2011, Washington mostró sus verdaderas intenciones, forzando una resolución en el Consejo de Seguridad de las Naciones Unidas que equivale a una declaración de guerra al gobierno y al pueblo de Libia.

Un ataque de EE.UU. es lo peor que le puede pasar al pueblo de Libia. También pone las revoluciones árabes en desarrollo que han inspirado a los pueblos del norte de África y Asia Occidental, en un grave peligro.

La resolución va más allá de una zona de exclusión aérea. Incluye lenguaje diciendo que los estados miembros de la ONU podrían “tomar todas las medidas necesarias” ... “Para poner fin a los ataques por aire, tierra y mar bajo el control del régimen de Gadafi.” (CNN.com, 17 de marzo)

La nueva resolución no sólo pide ataques contra aviones y contra la defensa antiaérea libias, sino que también autoriza el ametrallamiento y bombardeo de las fuerzas terrestres. Los gobiernos de EE.UU. y de Francia anunciaron de inmediato que ya estaban dispuestos. Gran Bretaña e Italia están ayudando. En esencia, las antiguas potencias coloniales han comenzado un ataque armado contra el gobierno de Libia y su pueblo, respaldando un lado de una guerra civil.

No importa cómo se sienta sobre Libia y el papel del gobierno de Gadafi hoy e independientemente de cómo se evalúe la oposición de Libia, una guerra liderada por Estados Unidos o una intervención en Libia, es un desastre para el pueblo libio y para la paz y el progreso de todo el mundo.

Los EE.UU. y sus aliados están repitiendo una y otra vez la mentira de que están tratando de “prevenir los ataques contra civiles” y que están actuando por motivos humanitarios. Pero que nadie se deje engañar. Piensen cómo estos “humanitarios” reaccionan a los acontecimientos en Bahréin.

La Quinta Flota estadounidense tiene su base en Bahréin, que es una monarquía absoluta. Sus habitantes valientemente han estado tratando de cambiar su gobierno desde hace semanas. Tuvieron algo de éxito inicialmente. El rey respondió con una represión mortal y más tarde sugirió que se harían reformas.

El 14 de marzo, sin embargo, al día siguiente de que el secretario de Defensa Gates visitara Bahréin, supuestamente para instar “moderación”, el gobierno de Bahréin inició una brutal represión, respaldada por tropas de Arabia Saudita. Helicópteros, gases lacrimógenos, balas de goma y munición real se utilizaron, matando e hiriendo a muchas personas.

Casi todas las fuerzas de seguridad de Bahréin son mercenarios extranjeros.

A diferencia de los rebeldes de Libia, el pueblo de Bahréin está absolutamente desarmado. Pero no se ha hablado de una zona de exclusión aérea sobre Bahréin — mucho menos sobre ataques contra los asesinos ejércitos de Bahréin y Arabia Saudita.

Esto es porque la motivación real para EE.UU. y sus aliados, tanto en Bahréin como en Libia, y de hecho en toda la región, es controlar el PETRÓLEO! Es el principal interés estratégico de Washington y el interés financiero más importante de las grandes corporaciones de EE.UU.

Esto es cierto, a pesar de que EE.UU. no depende directamente de las importaciones de petróleo de Libia. El petróleo es una mercancía mundial, y cualquier país que importa petróleo debe lidiar con un mercado mundial, no importa de qué país o países importen el crudo.

De más importancia aún para los EE.UU. y los europeos es quién controla el flujo del petróleo. Una presencia militar o un títere confiable en Libia daría a Washington — y en menor medida a los imperialistas europeos — el control del flujo del petróleo hacia Europa y también establecería una presencia militar en el norte de África desde donde pueden influir o prevenir el desarrollo de la revolución, sobre todo en Egipto y Túnez.

No sólo una campaña de demonización contra el líder libio, sino toda forma de fraude y propaganda se están utilizando para presionar por esta intervención, incluyendo un supuesto “voto” por la Liga Árabe apoyando la reciente resolución de las Naciones Unidas. No se ha dicho que sólo 11 de los 22 miembros de la Liga asistieron a la reunión que se celebró a puertas cerradas. Dos de los 11 miembros presentes, Siria y Argelia, dejaron claro que se oponían por completo a la intervención militar en Libia.

Mientras tanto, los medios corporativos han ignorado una resolución de la Unión Africana que representa 53 países, rechazando categóricamente una zona de exclusión aérea y cualquier intervención.

Estados Unidos bloqueó todas las acciones de la ONU, incluso una resolución débil durante el masivo bombardeo de Gaza por Israel en 2008-09 y también durante los bombardeos israelíes y el intento de invasión del Líbano en 2006.

Es importante que las personas progresistas y amantes de la paz y en todo el mundo desarrollen un enfoque coherente de lucha contra TODAS las intervenciones de los EE.UU. Esta es la única manera de evitar ser sólo un eco del Departamento de Estado de EE.UU. y el Pentágono.

¡Manos de EE.UU., Francia, Gran Bretaña, e Italia fuera de Libia! □

Resistencia en Honduras combate pobreza y represión

Por Heather Cottin

El movimiento de Resistencia marchó diariamente por toda Honduras para protestar contra el golpe de estado contra el presidente Manuel Zelaya, del 28 de junio de 2009, el día del golpe, hasta el 27 de enero de 2010. En ese último día, 300.000 personas acompañaron a su querido presidente al aeropuerto Toncontin, desde donde voló al exilio forzado en la República Dominicana.

Con la complicidad del gobierno de EE.UU., los golpistas confeccionaron la falsa elección de Porfirio Pepe Lobo Sosa, o “Golpepe”, como se refiere la Resistencia al nuevo presidente, quien asumió el poder el 27 de enero del año pasado.

Hoy en día las calles parecen tranquilas. Los/as niños/as van a la escuela con sus uniformes bien planchados. Vendedores/as ambulantes venden frutas y golosinas confeccionadas en casa. Burger King, Pizza Hut y otras franquicias venden comida chatarra fuera del alcance de la mayoría de los/as hondureños/as. Sin embargo, las cosas no están muy tranquilas. Es todo superficial. Los/as ricos/as están en el poder y los/as pobres se están organizando.

Aquellos/as que se organizan para luchar contra el poder existente enfrentan represión. Aparecen cuerpos sin vida: un abogado aquí, un profesor allá, una joven, una docena de campesinos que luchan por la reforma agraria en el Bajo Aguán. Hay cientos de mártires. El gobierno habla sobre el crimen, pero no hace nada. La policía reprime las protestas populares. Las pandillas operan con impunidad.

Mientras la policía ataca manifestantes en las calles de Tegucigalpa, la secretaria de Estado estadounidense Hillary Rodham Clinton elogia Honduras como un “gobierno democrático y constitucional”.

El Presidente Lobo promueve el Tratado de Libre Comercio República Dominicana-América Central, que ha permitido a dueños de fábricas locales, de EE.UU., de Europa, y de Asia explotar más de 100.000 trabajadores/as en las maquiladoras del país.

Las mujeres jóvenes entran a las fábricas a los 14 a 17 años de edad. Se les paga \$25 por trabajar días de nueve horas, siete días a la semana. Las mujeres deben planchar de pie 1200 camisas por día. La plancha caliente hace que las manos se les hinchen. No hay sindicatos pero los/as trabajadores/as se organizan de todos modos.

Enfrentando al enemigo

Uno de los hombres más ricos del país es Miguel Facussé, un hombre de negocios hondureño que posee vastas plantaciones de palma africana en el Valle del Aguán. Sus mercenarios están matando a los campesinos que luchan por los derechos de la tierra en la región del Bajo Aguán. Su familia y todos los oligarcas son cercanos al gobierno.

Los enemigos de los/as campesinos/as no son solamente los terratenientes oligarcas, sino también la industria agrícola estadounidense. Los/as campesinos/as cuyo maíz y frijoles antes nutrían a Honduras han quedado arruinados/as. Honduras ahora importa los productos básicos.

Los precios bajos del maíz y el frijol que fueron impuestos por las enormes corporaciones Monsanto y Cargill arruinaron a los/as campesinos/as. Luego la industria agrícola subió los precios de los alimentos. Robert B. Zoellick, presidente del Grupo Banco Mundial, reportó que el año pasado el precio del maíz ha aumentado un 73 por ciento. (El Banco Mundial, 15 de febrero)

El pueblo tiene hambre. Cerca del 30 por ciento de los/as hondureños/as sobreviven con menos de \$2 al día. Honduras tiene la

séptima población más pobre en el mundo, con el 65 por ciento de la gente viviendo debajo de la línea de pobreza. La tasa de desempleo está en un 44 por ciento.

La pobreza ha forzado a cientos de miles a migrar, mayormente a los Estados Unidos. Como inmigrantes en los Estados Unidos, los/as hondureños/as se enfrentan al racismo y a la inseguridad. Las remesas que mandan a sus familias representan el 20 por ciento del producto nacional bruto de Honduras. Lobo necesita de ese dinero para contener la rabia generada por la devastadora pobreza.

La política neoliberal del gobierno de Lobo está extendiéndose tan rápidamente como los poderes imperialistas puedan lograr su objetivo. La Legislatura acaba de aprobar el plan de “Ciudades Modelos” de Lobo, el cual cederá terrenos soberanos de Honduras a negocios nacionales o internacionales. Esto permitirá que las empresas construyan pueblos nuevos con una infraestructura corporativa. El periódico The Wall Street Journal dice que desarrollarán “leyes diferentes . . . normas diferentes sobre lo justo y lo injusto . . . una manera para contrabalancear el populismo que resulta . . . en tanto daño”. (14 de febrero)

Mientras tanto, el ex presidente estadounidense Bill Clinton será el anfitrión de una conferencia en San Pedro Sula el próximo mayo llamada “Honduras está abierta para los negocios”. Este es otro de los esquemas de Lobo para vender Honduras como “el destino de inversiones más atractivo en Latinoamérica”. El ex presidente de Colombia Álvaro Uribe Vélez; el billonario mexicano Carlos Slim; y Luis Alberto Moreno, el presidente del Banco de Desarrollo Inter-Americano, también estarán allí.

Se organiza la Resistencia

El Frente Nacional de Resistencia Pop-

ular (FNRP) tuvo una asamblea nacional en Tegucigalpa del 26 al 27 de febrero. Juan Barahona, presidente de la Federación Unida de Trabajadores/as Hondureños/as (FUTH), y Carlos H. Reyes, presidente del STIBYS, el sindicato más grande en Tegucigalpa, escucharon los poderosos discursos pronunciados por los/as delegados/as que clamaban por la refundación de Honduras bajo una constitución popular. Xiomara Castro de Zelaya representó a su marido, el Presidente Zelaya.

La asamblea acordó que la única respuesta a la política de empobrecimiento y represión es la unidad y la resistencia organizada. Los/as delegados/as condenaron al gobierno de Lobo y lo hicieron responsable de los crímenes contra el pueblo y de la corrupción masiva.

El FNRP tiene estaciones de radio, folletos, periódicos, poetas, músicos y artistas. El liderazgo incluye a jóvenes, personas de la tercera edad, mujeres, profesionales, miembros/as de la comunidad homosexual, lesbiana, bisexual y transgénera, indígenas, miembros/as de la comunidad garífuna, trabajadores/as y campesinos/as. Ellos/as están organizando para que 8 millones de hondureños/as puedan vivir con dignidad.

Al día siguiente de la asamblea nacional, maestros/as y estudiantes en Tegucigalpa salieron en huelga para defender las escuelas públicas. Cantaban en la calle, “Nos tienen miedo porque no tenemos miedo”.

El Frente no tiene miedo. Las últimas palabras habladas en la asamblea nacional fueron ¡“Hasta la victoria siempre”! Es la consigna cubana — el llamado a luchar hasta vencer.

En un muro de Tegucigalpa está la consigna “La Resistencia vive”. Ellos/as no tienen otro camino. Deben vencer. □