

WORKERS WORLD

Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!



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50¢

Grand theft of workers' taxes Budget talks target Social Security, Medicare Wall Street, the rich get what they want

By Fred Goldstein

Even the most rabid budget cutters on Wall Street are now pushing for an increase in the debt ceiling. The bankers and bosses were happy to see the Republican extreme right wing play chicken with default in order to get cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. They have already gotten President Barack Obama to agree to put cutting Social Security and other entitlements on the bargaining table.

But as the Aug. 2 deadline for default comes closer, the bankers and financiers want the game of chicken to come to an end. They want the borrowing power of the capitalist government to be expanded beyond the \$14.3 trillion it is now.

Why? Because, in the first place, the Treasury has to borrow \$500 billion on Aug. 2 to refinance debts to bondholders. Two days later, \$87 billion in Treasury bills have to be paid off. (Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner, CNBC Squawk Box, July 18) That is the bread and butter of the billionaire Wall Street super loan sharks.

They thrive and grow even richer from collecting interest on the government debt.

Default would threaten payments to the merchants of death in the military-industrial complex who get hundreds of billions of dollars to supply wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Libya, as well as the occupation in Iraq. They also equip reactionary regimes all over the world, from the death squad government in Colombia and the feudal monarchy in Saudi Arabia to the south Korean puppet government.

Second, a default would trigger payments by banks, insurance companies and behind-the-scenes financiers, who would be obligated to pay out huge sums because they insured the government bonds that would not be paid off. This could precipitate a major financial crisis. No one knows what would happen in the global financial markets.

Third, the bankers fear a social revolt of the population if millions of government checks for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, disability, unemployment insurance, food stamps, Temporary Assistance for Needy

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Philadelphia: July 18 rally at City Hall.



Los Angeles: July 13 gathering in front of the Ronald Reagan State Building in downtown Los Angeles. Actions are being held throughout the weekend.

New York City: Emergency demonstration held July 18 at the California State Franchise Office. See editorial on page 10.

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U.S. conducts 'war of terror'

National meeting targets government repression

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

An important national meeting on stopping repression, human rights abuses and the curtailing of civil freedoms in the U.S. took place July 16 at the Shrine of the Black Madonna Cultural Center and Bookstore in Detroit. The well-attended event featured an overview of specific cases along with panels on how the federal government is carrying out "preemptive prosecution and prosecutorial persecution."

Sponsored by the National Coalition to Protect Civil Freedoms, with a wide array of cosponsoring organizations, the three-hour meeting was moderated by Debbie Johnson of the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice based in Detroit.

Speakers from cities around the U.S. described some of the many repressive actions the federal government has taken against individuals and organizations and the effects on the civil liberties and human rights of Arab, Muslim, African-American, South Asian, Latino/a and all immigrant communities, as well as on the broader social justice movement in the U.S.

Many speakers remarked about how the curtailing of civil liberties has increased dramatically during President Barack Obama's tenure. Instead of easing the repressive measures associated with the Patriot Act, which was signed by George W. Bush in the aftermath of 9/11, the Obama administration and the repressive state apparatus have stepped up their wiretapping, harassment, arrests and illegal detentions in U.S. federal prisons.

Speakers talked about the "war on terror" political climate in the U.S. and the use of preemptive prosecution and other measures by the state. Preemptive prosecution is the investigation, prosecution and imprisonment of a person by U.S. law enforcement agencies based on a person's religion, country of origin, political beliefs and alleged intent to act — and not on material actions.

Tom Burke spoke from the National Committee to Stop FBI Repression. A member of the Freedom Road Socialist Organization and a Colombia and Palestine solidarity organizer, Burke is one of 23 progressive activists who last fall received subpoenas to appear before a federal grand jury in Chicago. The FBI also raided many homes and confiscated belongings.

"The government is trying to recreate that period of intimidation like in the 1950s during McCarthyism, going after Muslims, solidarity activists and people who believe in socialism," said Burke. He talked about the support movement that arose immediately following the initial raids and subpoenas and reiterated his and the other defendants' resolve not to cooperate with the government's witch hunt and grand jury. "We will not back down," he asserted.

'War of terror' against the people

Speakers gave heart-wrenching accounts of the 'war of terror' being waged by U.S. government agencies at home and abroad against their family and community members.

Dr. Tamer Mehanna spoke about the FBI's harassment and frame-up of his brother, Dr. Tarek Mahenna, his false arrest and upcoming trial in Boston in October. "He hasn't done anything, yet he's charged with conspiracy to provide material support to a terrorist organization. He has suffered in solitary confinement since October 2009." Dr. Tamer Mehanna said his brother was targeted for be-



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

At podium, Efa Nwangaza of U.S. Human Rights Network, with Abayomi Azikiwe (left) and Dawud Walid.

ing a young, devout Muslim and community leader in the Worcester, Mass., area.

Sharmin Sadequee spoke about her brother's case. Shifa Sadequee, born in the U.S. in 1986, was kidnapped at gunpoint in 2006 "under the direction of the U.S. government" while he was in Bangladesh for his wedding, which had taken place just weeks before. Shifa Sadequee was returned to the U.S. to face trial in Atlanta for alleged "terrorism" and was sentenced to 17 years after his conviction on unproven charges. Sharmin Sadequee poignantly described the ordeal her family has undergone because of her brother's kidnapping and imprisonment. "Shifa was tortured in solitary confinement for over three years before his trial," she said.

Speakers discussed the U.S. government's refusal to sign international conventions that prohibit torture by solitary confinement for more than 30 consecutive days and how it uses "Communications Management Units" to socially isolate and torture federal prisoners. Currently two CMUs — one in Terre Haute, Ind., and the other in Marion, Ill. — house about 70 federal prisoners, "over two-thirds [of whom] are Muslim, even though Muslims represent only 6 percent of the general federal prison population," according to literature from the Center for Constitutional Rights, one of the cosponsoring organizations.

Mel Underbakke of Tampa, Fla., presented a video highlighting some of the approximately 400 known cases of Muslims and others unjustly targeted. On the front and back walls of the meeting hall was a graphic display with the names of about 150 repression victims, including Dr. Aafia Siddiqui, people's attorney Lynne Stewart, the Fort Dix 5, the Newburgh 4 and others from all over the United States.

Abayomi Azikiwe, a Workers World contributing editor and MECAWI leader, spoke on the history of racist repression inside the U.S. and the "need for a broad-based alliance to fight this domestic policy, which is reflected in U.S. foreign policy and is used to justify imperialist wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and now Libya."

Other speakers included Dawud Walid, head of the Michigan chapter of the Council on American Islamic Relations; Steve Downs of Project SALAM (Support and Legal Advocacy for Muslims); Shahid Buttar from the Bill of Rights Defense Committee; and Efa Nwangaza from the U.S. Human Rights Network.

For more information on specific cases and campaigns against government repression, visit www.stopfbi.net, www.civilfreedoms.org, www.ccrjustice.org and www.projectsalam.org. □

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'We will not stop until Mumia is free'

In November 2010, Suzanne Ross, representing International Concerned Family & Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, addressed the International Liaison Committee, a broad grouping of political and trade union organizations at the Open World Conference Against War and Exploitation in Algiers, Algeria. Following are excerpts from Ross's interview published in the ILC's May 2011 newsletter. Go to <http://tinyurl.com/63quc9j> to read the entire interview. Ross is also co-chair of the Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition in New York City.

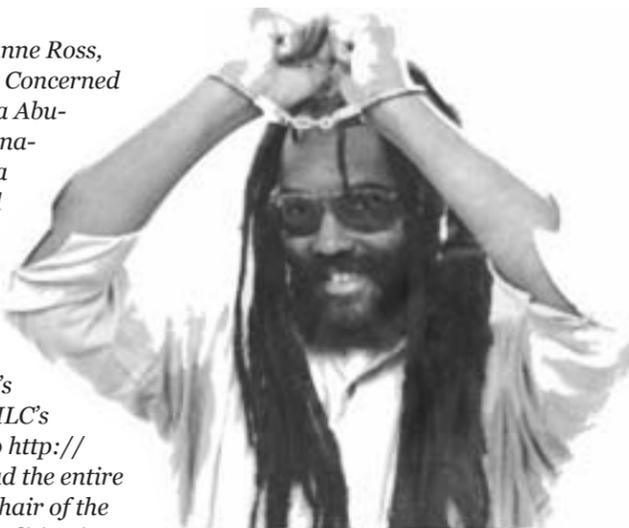


PHOTO: FREEMUMIA.COM

Suzanne Ross, Algiers, Nov. 27.

ILC: Mumia Abu-Jamal was one of the cases at the center of our conference in Algiers. The comrades who came to the conference would like to know about the important recent developments in Mumia's case

SR: We are very concerned about the possible execution of Mumia since the prosecutor and the State of Pennsylvania are aggressively demanding more serious consideration of execution. This has not happened since 2001 when a federal judge ruled that Mumia should be sentenced to life in prison without parole rather than face execution because of faulty instructions to the jury in the original trial.

We were very concerned given the move toward the right in the U.S., especially in the Supreme Court. We took this seriously and spent months fighting this process, both in the courts and in the streets.

We had something like a legal victory in that the Third Circuit court recently admitted there was no new basis for reinstating the death penalty, affirming the 2001 decision for life in prison without parole. However, even if this decision is not overturned on appeal, it's not a decision we wanted — the final decision has to be Mumia's freedom. It's a temporary setback for the state that they could not move ahead with execution, but that doesn't mean they won't try again. We will never stop until Mumia is free.

In another new development Mumia's legal case is now under the leadership of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund. This is the organization that won the landmark decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* that officially desegregated the schools in the 1950s. They specialize in legal struggles on the issue of race and have taken on this case precisely because they feel it is very much defined by race and racial issues. I don't mean personal racial prejudice alone but rather powerful racial institutional forces in the legal system.

In Mumia's case, this included the original judge, known infamously for having said "I'm going to help them fry the n****r"; to the selection of a jury that was extremely biased and purposefully disproportionately white; to a police force known for its racism that has fought tooth and nail for Mumia's execution.

ILC: You spoke about cruel and inhuman treatment in the prisons at the very moment we hear the U.S. government speaking about democracy and human rights all over the world. What are the conditions of Mumia's imprisonment?

SR: Mumia, a respected radio journalist, has been in prison and on death row for 30 years. He was known as a radical critic of the corruption, racism and brutality of government officials. He had been head of communications for the Black Panther Party in Philadelphia.

The prosecution and police portray Mumia as someone who dreamed of killing cops, and that is how they justify denying him all human rights. He's been living in an isolation cell the size of a small bathroom. He is allowed out of his cell for an hour a day to exercise within a small caged area. He can never touch another human being including his wife, children or grandchildren.

Phone calls are limited to two a week and all visits are through a Plexiglas barrier. Until recently, he had to undergo not only a strip search before every visit, but also came with his legs shackled and his hands cuffed. Yet in the face of all that indignity and brutality, Mumia remains concerned about others, whether in the prison he is at or thousands of miles away.

Stolen Lives commemorated



PHOTO: DAHOUD

Parents and relatives of loved ones who have been killed by police stood up at the Stolen Lives induction ceremony, held on July 17 in New York City's Lower East Side. At the microphone is Nicholas Heyward Sr., whose 13-year-old son, Nicholas, was killed on Sept. 27, 1994.

The annual event is organized by the October 22nd Coalition to Stop Police Brutality, Repression and the Criminalization of a Generation. Since last year's

induction ceremony, police in New York and New Jersey have killed at least 32 more people.

Monica Shay — known to many as Kathryn Lee — was remembered at this event. The national coordinator of the Oct. 22nd Coalition, Shay was murdered recently in a massacre of family members. In addition, support was voiced for the hunger strikers at California's Pelican Bay State Prison.

— Stephen Millies

When you visit him, the first thing he asks is "How are you?" He asks about all the conditions people are facing.

This inhumane capitalist society tries to justify invading any country in the world in the name of defending the people's "human rights," but I can't imagine any country that violates human rights more than the U.S.

ICL: In Algiers you explained that Mumia is still alive today because of international solidarity. Could you develop this question?

SR: Millions of people around the world, of course including in the U.S., have cared about who Mumia is, what he represents, and how much is at stake in his survival and liberation from prison. Every arm of government has participated in the conspiracy to kill him: the police hierarchy in Philadelphia, the courts all the way up to the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Department of Justice and president of the U.S. in refusing to review the case.

The media has played a large role in propagating the lies created by the police and prosecution. Yet Mumia is alive today

and they haven't been able to kill him because people around the world have made it clear they will not accept that.

The U.S. government and other powers know they are being watched by the whole world. This last time, when they had the hearing of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, the courtroom was packed with supporters, including representatives from France and Germany. The streets outside the court were full of loud and determined supporters, even in the face of police with their dogs meant to intimidate and discourage people from attending the hearing.

For most of the three decades since this case began there have been demonstrations in many parts of the world saying "Mumia — we stand with you. Free Mumia!" This kind of international solidarity has kept Mumia alive.

Note: On July 13 the Philadelphia District Attorney filed an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court to review the Third Circuit's recent decision supporting Judge William Yohn's 2001 decision for life in prison without parole and seeking reinstatement of the death penalty.

An appeal to WW readers

For more than 50 years, Workers World/Mundo Obrero has contributed a revolutionary Marxist perspective that has shed light on events, both international and domestic, from the point of view of the interests of the working class and the oppressed. It has championed and explained the struggle to end this insatiable capitalist profit system, which is bringing grief to the whole planet.

From the battle lines in Wisconsin, where workers are fighting an anti-union onslaught; to the May Day rallies for immigrant and workers' rights; to besieged Gaza, where the Palestinian people are resisting Israeli aggression, our activist reporters send firsthand accounts and photos that counter the lies and distortions in the monopoly-owned media.

Today, WW/MO is the ONLY socialist/communist newspaper in the U.S. that continues to publish a weekly bilingual printed edition, while also putting up a complete PDF version online that reaches hundreds of thousands of readers around the world each week.

Even in this electronic age and despite the costs, we must have a printed edition. The paper must be at every major event fighting injustice. Militant unionists coast to coast order bundles of WW/MO for their members' study. Strikers and anti-war protesters welcome coverage of their struggles and pass the paper on. Prisoners starving for real news of the world outside the walls are sent subscriptions; they deeply appreciate analysis of the conditions of racism and economic violence that put them behind bars.

You, our readers, can help

We are asking you to help keep this newspaper going by donating to the WW/MO Fund Drive. Our goal is to raise \$60,000. It's a small budget for a fighting newspaper with a big impact, and that reflects our all-volunteer staff. Unfortunately, the landlord, the printer and the utilities don't volunteer their services. So please give us a hand.

Whatever you can contribute will nourish the fighting spirit that infuses every issue of WW/MO.

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The debt crisis and the working class

By David Sole

The most remarkable thing about the debate over the debt ceiling crisis is not what will result if the U.S. government defaults. Commentators from a wide spectrum of political and economic opinion cannot agree on what might take place on Aug. 2 if the debt ceiling isn't raised.

The startling thing is that here, in the heart of world capitalism, with a ruling class of unparalleled wealth and power, the political representatives of this system are stumbling along unable to fashion a solution.

Nothing more clearly shows how out of control the capitalist system is than this fact.

One would think that with capitalism still mired in economic recession, with more than 30 million counted as unemployed or underemployed in the U.S., with the foreclosure crisis dragging on for years, that all sections of the ruling class would unite on an economic plan of action to avoid default. But they can't. It is the class character of the United States that is making a solution so difficult to achieve in this bourgeois democracy.

The Republican Party represents the highest ranks of the Wall Street bankers and corporations. But because this is a "democracy," this billionaire class has had to cultivate a mass base in the middle class and even sections of the working class. For decades they have appealed to racism, anti-union and anti-immigrant prejudices to bring under their wing groups like the Tea Party and religious fundamentalist elements. Thus Congress is filled with a host of new, ignorant and

rabidly right-wing politicians.

Many of these representatives are so unschooled they don't even realize who their real bosses are. So they play with the fire of default on the debt in order to press for massive cuts to all social programs won by the working class over three-quarters of a century. Republicans with more sense and more connection to Wall Street understand this, but they have difficulty resolving this conflict between their masters' economic stability and the need to maintain a mass electoral base.

Mass action needed to counter cuts

The Democratic Party leadership, with President Barack Obama leading the way, is willing to begin dismantling Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. All they are asking of the Republicans is that they agree to some paltry tax loophole closings. The Democrats could then tell their mass electoral base — of poor people, people of color and the unions — that the rich gave up something, too. The objection of a section of the Democratic Congress to any cuts to Social Security and other critical programs only shows their fear of losing their constituency's support.

What is missing in all this drama is a real mass reaction in the streets. The union leadership, despite decades of losses, still clings to the Democratic Party as their only salvation. With all the attacks at local, state and national levels, they are still mobilizing more for Obama's reelection than for real mass struggle.

For example, the Service Employees union has spent millions of dollars and put hundreds of paid staff into the streets to organize "Good Jobs Now" rallies in

Detroit and other cities over the past few months. But their own speakers have expressed worry that workers won't come out to vote for Obama in 2012. They hope that by getting people into motion through rallies and picket lines for jobs they can then direct them into the polling booth next year.

The Democratic Party dares not unleash a real mass movement for fear it could not be controlled. Polls show that the majority in the U.S. want big tax increases on the rich. But this is totally unacceptable to the capitalist ruling class, which wants to unload the entire crisis onto the backs of poor and working people.

While the majority of the people oppose the wars abroad, no serious proposal has been put forward to end the wars and redirect the trillion-dollar military budget to solve the problem. Neither the politicians nor the capitalist-controlled mass media allow these logical solutions to get a hearing.

The working class doesn't have the organization or the influence as yet to intervene decisively in this debate over the debt ceiling. It lacks consciousness to put forward a real class program that puts the blame and the solution entirely onto the backs of the banking and corporate bosses. Without these the working class remains a spectator to the show being put on in Washington.

'Democracy' fragile

The inability of the capitalist "democracy" to resolve this issue, so important to the stability of finance capital, points to a hidden danger that every worker should be made aware of — the fragility of our "democracy" itself. Capitalism is

an economic system that can exist under many different governing forms. It has existed under monarchies, military dictatorships, fascist regimes and representative governments. Capitalists often prefer operating under representative government (bourgeois democracy) as the best way to hide their real dictatorship and keep the masses deluded. But in times of crisis when the "democratic" system isn't able to protect them or serve them, the capitalist class wastes no time in shifting its support to a naked dictatorship.

This can be seen in microcosm in the recent move in Michigan to strengthen the law permitting the governor to appoint an Emergency Financial Manager over any town or city that might be in deep financial difficulty. This has been done in Benton Harbor and Highland Park, as well as with the entire Detroit Public School system. All elected officials are pushed to the side. All union contracts are liable to be cancelled. A dictatorship is imposed.

At the federal level we can see the decline of the power of Congress in the refusal of the president, the head of the executive branch, to follow the War Powers Act when the U.S. launched its assault on Libya. Even though this act and Article 1 of the Constitution itself give war-making powers only to Congress, that body caved in to the executive branch with barely a peep.

It isn't impossible to imagine that a severe financial disaster could propel this country further away from democratic forms of rule. Only the intervention of the vast working class and its allies can reverse the declining standard of living and end the hidden or open dictatorship of the capitalist ruling class. □

Grand theft of workers' taxes

Budget talks target Social Security, Medicare

Continued from page 1

Families, the Women, Infants and Children nutrition program and other programs don't go out on time.

So they have sent messages to Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell and to Republican House Speaker John Boehner, as well as to President Obama and the Democratic Party leadership, to find a way out of the deadlock. McConnell has offered a complicated way out that would ultimately allow Obama to borrow \$2.5 trillion more. McConnell is negotiating the terms with Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid.

What the outcome will be remains to be seen. But workers should remember the power exerted by Wall Street when right-wing Republicans voted against the \$700 billion bank bailout in 2008. The legislators were forced to humiliate themselves and change their vote the next day. Wall Street usually gets its way.

Capitalism cannot rid itself of this crisis

Whatever happens in the struggle over the debt ceiling, however, nothing can erase the underlying fact that both the U.S. and Europe, the principal centers of world capitalism along with Japan, cannot rid themselves of growing and unsustainable debt. Unsustainable debt is the precursor to financial crisis, bankruptcy and default.

The debt-ceiling crisis and the European debt crisis grow out of the general crisis of world capitalism. European leaders will be meeting on July 21 to once again take up the Greek crisis. The European

bankers forced the Greek government to pass austerity measures attacking the Greek working class by promising a bailout of \$150 billion. Yet the bankers cannot agree on the bailout. They have been struggling with this problem since February of 2010.

They were supposed to meet about bailing out Greece. But now the economies of Spain and Italy are descending deeper into economic and financial crisis. Italy and Spain are the third- and fourth-largest economies in the euro zone. Together they represent 28 percent of the zone's economy. Add in Portugal and Greece and one-third of the European economy is now in a state of financial crisis.

What does this show? During the financial and economic crisis of 2007 to 2009, the U.S. government, through its Treasury and Federal Reserve, plus the European banks handed over more than \$14 trillion to the banks and corporations. That was before the Greek bailout and before Ben Bernanke, head of the U.S. Federal Reserve, bought \$600 billion worth of Treasury bills to shore up the U.S. economy.

Still, the system cannot rid itself of crisis.

Overproduction and the debt

Underneath the debt crises is the crisis of capitalist overproduction. The capitalist governments are broke because their revenues have crashed during the crisis. And the crisis is caused by the fact that capitalist production has grown so much that it has far outstripped the ability of the masses of people to buy what is produced. So factories, malls, stores and offices are shut down. Workers are laid off or lose

their jobs altogether. This capitalist "solution" only increases the crisis.

The capitalist governments have spent trillions of the people's money to keep the capitalist class afloat. And the bosses have taken every nickel and dime from the government that they could lay their hands on. In addition they have slashed wages, speeded up the workers, put in new technology to eliminate jobs and outsourced the work to low-wage countries.

But the bosses have not created jobs with all the money they have gotten from the government. And they will not create jobs.

They have not invested to create jobs because they know that the workers are either just getting by or are flat broke and cannot buy the commodities that would be created by increased production. The capitalists are destroying their own market.

In fact, according to economics journalist David Leonhardt, the auto industry in the U.S. is on pace to sell 28 percent fewer cars than it did 10 years ago — when there was a recession. Furthermore, although the population has increased since then, sales of ovens and stoves are also declining and home sales have plunged to their lowest point since the crisis began. (New York Times, July 16)

Services, including restaurant meals, entertainment, education and even insurance have declined by 7 percent, more than double any previous decline. Retail sales are down. Bourgeois economists are lowering their projections for economic growth once again.

In all this the non-financial capitalists in the U.S. are sitting on \$2 trillion in cash

— a record amount. The top 1,000 non-financial companies in the world are sitting on \$3.4 trillion.

What are they doing with this cash?

According to federal Flow of Funds reports, they are mostly using it to speculate in foreign currency. (Josh Dwyer, Common Dreams web site, July 18) Yet the bosses claim they need tax breaks to create jobs. The truth is that they will not create jobs. This is the profit system. Jobs will only be created by private enterprise if goods or services can be sold at a profit. Not only are the bosses not creating jobs, but they are stuffing their bank accounts.

Another use of their profits is to give themselves higher pay. In 2010 the S&P 500 company CEOs paid themselves an average of \$11.4 million each — a 23 percent increase over the prior year. Meanwhile, workers' wages are declining. Unemployment is rising. Hunger and homelessness are increasing.

The capitalist classes in Europe and the U.S. are all at an impasse. The system cannot move forward. The crisis of the capitalists becomes the crisis of the workers. It is our crisis because the bosses' system no longer works. It is beginning to drag all of society backwards into an abyss.

They want the workers to pay their debts. If there is no default, it is our tax money that will be used to pay that \$500 billion to the bondholders on Aug. 2 and that \$87 billion on Aug. 4.

That is money that could and should be used to create a massive jobs program to put the millions of unemployed back to work.

Half a million government workers

Exposing union busting

Wisconsin 'Truth Tour' kicks off

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO's "Truth Tour," which kicked off July 16 at the Teamster's Hall in Green Bay, is traveling throughout the state until at least Aug. 2. The tour will make stops in Baraboo, Hudson, Kenosha, La Crosse, Milwaukee, Oshkosh and Rhinelander. The tour's goal is to be a forum for poor and working people to meet and work together, give testimony on how Wall Street's attacks are affecting them, and discuss fightback strategies, including mobilizing for recall campaigns.

"What we have seen in Madison is disastrous," said Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Wisconsin State Professional Fire Fighters. "We have seen child labor laws weakened, voter suppression bills enacted, earned income tax credits increased on the poor, cuts to BadgerCare and Medicare. This is no longer Wisconsin. This is the United Corporations of America."

On July 12 the six Democratic candidates endorsed by the Wisconsin AFL-CIO won recall primaries; they will now run in the



general election Aug. 9. Those engaging in the recall campaigns are enraged by the union-busting bill that went into effect June 29 as well as the draconian 2011-2013 state budget.

"It is clear that [Gov.] Scott Walker and GOP legislators are putting big corporations and wealthy campaign donors above what is best for me, my family and the people of Wisconsin," said Jason Albertz at the Truth Tour kick-off. Albertz, a paraprofessional educator from Green Bay, works with special education

students at Webster Elementary School.

Besides the recall campaigns, the people of Wisconsin are engaging in numerous acts of resistance, including confronting Gov. Walker and his allies wherever they go in the state.

Quotes are from the Wisconsin AFL-CIO blog: <http://wisafclcio.typepad.com>. For more information and to get involved in the struggle, visit www.defend-wisconsin.org, www.wisafclcio.org, www.vdlf.org, and www.wibailoutpeople.org.

NORTH CAROLINA



WWP hosts meeting on workers' struggles

The Durham, N.C., branch of Workers World Party hosted a forum June 29 titled "Rebel Against Capitalism." The meeting drew connections between the major struggles of workers, students and oppressed peoples going on in Greece and Spain and those occurring across the U.S.

Gilbert Johnson, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union local representing trade workers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, spoke to the fo-

rum via Skype. He gave a powerful update on the day-to-day struggles of workers and the community in Wisconsin to combat Gov. Scott Walker's recently passed bill to take away collective bargaining rights for public workers.

Speaking for the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers Local 150, Ashaki Binta talked about how the struggle in Wisconsin is the same as the historic struggle in North Carolina, where public workers are denied the right to col-

lectively bargain because of a Jim Crow-type law passed in 1959 that is still on the books today.

Workers World Party member Ben Carroll updated the crowd about the struggles against austerity by workers in Greece and Spain. The meeting occurred the day after a major two-day national general strike in Greece organized by the PAME labor confederation and only a day before the call for a major general strike by workers in Britain.

— Report & photo by Dante Strobino

have been laid off in the last two years. And as government aid to the states dries up, more public workers will face layoffs or cutbacks or both. Extended unemployment insurance is scheduled to run out this year. More and more workers have hit their 99-week limit and have no further means of staying afloat.

In the face of all these working-class hardships, the White House, Congress and all the economic pundits are debating about how many trillions of dollars should be cut from social services and

entitlements over the next decade — cuts that will only lead to less spending and fewer jobs.

But our class, the working class, should not be responsible for debts payable to millionaires and billionaires who benefit from government bailouts and live by profiting off the workers through capitalist exploitation. The money was borrowed in the first place to pay for their wars, for tax breaks for the oil companies and other corporate giants, and to pay interest to the bankers for previous loans.

The workers' tax money was

squandered on the rich instead of being used for socially useful needs like providing free quality health care and education for all, decent jobs with full retirement benefits, affordable housing, parks, playgrounds, libraries, community centers, clinics, etc.

The working class must separate itself from the ruling-class debate over how much to cut from our lives. We need to figure out how to stop this crisis from falling on our shoulders and how to put it back onto the capitalists, who caused it in the first place. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

Lockout ends with contract for BCBS workers

The major conflict that led to a 12-week lockout of BlueCross/BlueShield workers in the Buffalo, N.Y., area was whether any of the 400 employees would lose their jobs if the company subcontracted or outsourced work. The workers, represented by the Office and Professional Employees union Local 212, won that demand on July 8, though there is a downside: It only applies to current employees. After a marathon 35-hour negotiating session, the company agreed to a 5-percent raise over the three-year contract, with a \$2,500 lump-sum signing bonus, and no changes in the benefits package or working conditions. The workers will report for work on Aug. 1 after a two-week paid vacation.

Teamster reformers win ballot status

Though the recent delegated Teamster convention was heavily weighted in favor of incumbent President James P. Hoffa, reform candidates, backed by Teamsters for a Democratic Union, received enough votes on June 30 to proceed to a three-way race leading to a fall referendum. Heading the TDU ticket is Sandy Pope, president of Local 805 in New York City, who signed up 50,000 rank-and-file supporters last November. Pope has 33 years of Teamster work to draw upon during the four-month campaign. "An experienced local officer with a track record of accomplishment, she ended up winning the votes of convention delegates who didn't dare support her publicly," reported a July 3 article posted on www.mrzine.monthlyreview.org.

Celebration of Justice for Janitors Day

Members and supporters of Service Employees Local 32BJ rallied in Washington, D.C., on June 15 to celebrate Justice for Janitors Day and continue the fight for a fair contract for area janitors. Rally organizers called the demonstration to honor the effective, ongoing efforts by janitors and cleaners, many of who are immigrants, who knew the only way they could gain respect and a better life for themselves and their families was by organizing.

"For two decades, SEIU's Justice for Janitors movement has helped low-wage workers who clean buildings achieve social and economic justice and earn broad-based support from the public as well as religious, political and community leaders," reports SEIU.

"With 'One Industry, One Union, One Contract' serving as both campaign slogan and organizing strategy, the Justice for Janitors campaign has coordinated efforts nationally and internationally to raise wages and increase basic benefits and job security for janitors," reported the June 15 edition of Union City, the online newsletter of the Metro Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO.

Walmart workers take demands to HQ

Nearly 100 Walmart workers from around the country traveled to company headquarters in Bentonville, Ark., to present a workplace declaration of rights to C-level execs on June 16. The workers want the company, which is the world's biggest billion-dollar retailer, to respect their right to raise problems on the job, improve wages and working conditions, and treat all employees with respect. A new worker-led group, the Organization United for Respect at Walmart, organized the protest, according to Walmart Watch, which has dogged the anti-union, anti-worker corporation since 2005. To sign a petition supporting the OUR Walmart initiative, organized by the Food and Commercial Workers union, visit www.uncw.org/makingchange.

Study shows jobless recovery is also 'wageless'

Economists at Northeastern University issued a study in late June showing that workers' wages have not improved since the so-called recovery started in June 2009. In fact, reports "The 'Jobless and Wageless' Recovery from the Great Recession of 2007-2009," the workers actually lost money. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, average real hourly earnings of all employees declined by 1.1 percent from June 2009 to May 2011. While the total national income rose to \$528 billion, corporate profits accounted for \$464 billion, or 88 percent, of that growth, while aggregate wages and salaries only accounted for \$7 billion, or slightly more than 1 percent, when accounting for inflation.

Noting that the share of income growth going to employees was far lower than in the four other recoveries over the last three decades, the study called the \$27 billion loss in workers' income during the seven quarters since the recovery began "the first ever such decline in any post-World War II recovery." Not only is slow growth in weekly hours a factor, but researchers pointed out that growth of worker productivity of just under 6 percent has contributed to keep employment down while hiking corporate profits. Workers have felt in their bones and their pocketbooks that they were being gouged by the capitalist ruling class, and now there are statistics to prove it. (New York Times, June 30) □

NATO escalates bombing operations on Libya

U.S. & other imperialist states recognize rebels amid mounting defeats on the ground

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

NATO planes bombed Libya's capital city of Tripoli on July 17 for more than two hours. From 60 to 75 ordinances hit targets in the Tajura and Seraj suburbs.

One explosion created a mushroom cloud, raising speculation that a "bunker-busting bomb" was utilized. Libyan television confirmed that "NATO crusader forces" had struck civilian and military sites in the eastern suburb of Tajura.

Eyewitness reports from Tripoli published by the Center for Research on Globalization in Toronto said, "In the vicinity of the bombing, it was like an earthquake. Large buildings as far away as Al-Fatah Street on the Mediterranean coast were shaking. Dogs began howling in alarm and panic all over the city. ... Other animals, including birds and cats, also began to make noises in panic as the bombings took place. Usually after the bombings dead insects and birds litter some of the streets." (July 17)

Raising further suspicions about the weapons used against the Libyan people in these attacks, the report said, "The smell of burning and a strange smoldering filled the air. The smell lingered in the air. It even remained on the skin in the wake of the bombings."

These bombings appeared to further escalate the imperialist war against this oil-producing North African state, which has been under siege by Western-backed rebels since Feb. 17 and U.S./NATO fighter jets and warships since March 19.

The CRG report said, "The sounds were different. The smoke plumes were different. In previous bombings, the smoke would usually go up vertically like a fire,

but tonight the smoke plumes were horizontal and hovering above Tripoli with a white cloud in the horizon. People who were not directly affected by the bombs, within a radius of 15 kilometers, experienced burning eyes, lower back pain, and headaches."

Just three days prior to these bombings in Tripoli, NATO Secretary General Anders Gogh Rasmussen called upon member states to supply additional warplanes to attack targets inside Libya. In a meeting with Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte on July 14, Rasmussen requested that NATO countries reevaluate their contributions to the war in Libya.

Rasmussen stressed the need for more air-to-ground strikes. At The Hague, he said, "I encourage all allies that have aircraft at their disposal to take part in that operation as well. I hope the Dutch government, like all other governments, will continuously consider adaptations of the strategy." (Reuters, July 14)

Although the Netherlands has recently renewed its support for this war, its air force stated that it would no longer take part in bombing operations. This withdrawal from direct involvement in the bombing represents the differences within the imperialist military alliance on the Libyan war.

Norway is also winding down its participation. As of Aug. 1, its air force will no longer be involved. This growing reluctance by several NATO member states prompted British Defense Secretary Liam Fox on July 13 to accuse these governments of not providing enough air power in the overall campaign.

The escalation in the bombing of Libya came after a meeting of the so-called "Contact Group" in Istanbul, Turkey, on

July 14. There the United States and 30 other imperialist countries and their allies recognized the Western-backed rebel Transitional National Council as Libya's supposed legitimate government. The Libyan government dismissed this move as having little impact on the concrete conditions prevailing on the ground inside the country.

Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi addressed a demonstration supporting the government in Zawiyah on July 16: "They are asking me to leave. That's a laugh. I will never leave the land of my ancestors or the people who have sacrificed themselves for me. ... After we gave our children as martyrs, we can't backtrack, or surrender or give up or move an inch." (presstv.ir, July 17)

Critics condemn U.S.-led recognition of 'rebels'

There has been international condemnation of the TNC's recognition by imperialist states and their allies. Many view this latest U.S./NATO maneuver as proof of their desperation in a more-than-four-month air campaign, which has failed to dislodge the government in Tripoli.

The London Morning Star said, "The decision of the U.S.-led Contact Group to recognize the National Transitional Council as Libya's legitimate authority is a provocative self-serving development. It short-circuits the necessary process of bringing political forces in the country together to negotiate a lasting solution in favor of imposing its own nominees." (July 17)

The article observed, "U.S. banks alone have \$30 billion in Libyan assets, which will be made available to pay for arms and other supplies for the Benghazi-based TNC opposition. Those assets belong to the Libyan people as a whole, not a body that is not so much self-appointed as anointed by Washington."

Russian Foreign Secretary Sergei Lavrov said that Moscow would not recognize the TNC as the legitimate force in Libya. Lavrov told Interfax, "If it comes to recognition of the TNC and other opposition groups as a side in the talks, then unconditionally the TNC is such a side. However, if it refers to recognition of the TNC as the sole legitimate representative of the Libyan people, as the so-called Contact Group stated in Istanbul, we don't share that position." (xinhuanet.com, July 18)

Lavrov stated that the Contact Group's latest declaration is designed to isolate the Libyan government. He repudiated this approach and stressed, "Russia traditionally rejects isolation as a way to resolve any problem in any conflict."

Scott Taylor questioned Ottawa's involvement in NATO's war in a July 18 article in the Canada-based Chronicle Herald. That government sent fighter jets, tanker aircraft and more weaponry, and Canadian pilots are bombing Libya. Their Lt. Gen. Charles Bouchard, NATO war commander, has attempted to justify this genocidal military campaign.

Taylor pointed out that the Canadian and other Western media are using disinformation as a key war strategy. He noted the July 1 and 8 rallies were held where millions of Libyans turned out to defend their government and Gadhafi's leadership.

"Almost no media coverage was given to these events in Canada," he said. "It seems we are quite content with our air force bombing a hated dictator in the name of a humanitarian intervention. [I]

international media outlets that [covered] the pro-Gaddafi rallies suggested that this was a propaganda stunt by the president, an attempt to demonstrate his continued popularity."

However, Taylor said this is absurd. "This suggestion, of course, flies in the face of all known logic. If the vast majority of Libyans in Tripoli were simmering with hatred for Gaddafi, the last thing security forces would do is herd them en masse into a central square. One of the first rights removed when martial law is imposed is that of public assembly for the obvious reason that mob mentality can quickly degenerate into senseless violence."

Capitalist crisis breeds war

The imperialist states' intensified efforts reflect the growing crisis within the world capitalist system. European governments are facing panic with the possible default of Greece and other governments for failing to meet financial obligations to the International Monetary Fund and other economic institutions.

The U.S. government is split over the severity of the attacks it will impose on the workers and oppressed. Debates within Congress and between the White House and conservative Republicans are designed to mask the differences over how much more austerity they can dump on the masses without a political response erupting from broad sectors of the population.

The imperialists' wars of aggression and occupation in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Palestine and Libya only further aggravate the existing contradictions within capitalism. Workers are forced to take pay cuts and layoffs, and health care and pension plans are dissolved, while the financial gap widens between the ruling class and the working class.

The imperialists' increasing failures in these wars will only bring greater misery to the majority of people in the U.S. and worldwide. This is why there needs to be a global effort to end imperialist militarism in order to seriously address the worsening conditions of working people and the oppressed throughout the planet. □

NORTHAMPTON, MASS.

Cynthia McKinney gives eyewitness Libya report

By **Catherine Donaghy**
Northampton, Mass.

Former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney spoke to an overflow crowd at the historic Friends Meeting House in Northampton, Mass., on July 14. She delivered an impassioned plea for an end to the U.S./NATO war against Libya. Her speaking engagement there is part of a multi-city national tour entitled "Eyewitness Libya." The International Action Center is assisting in the organizing of the tour.

Nicholas Camerota, an organizer with the Western Mass. IAC, began the program by introducing Paki Wieland, a Northampton resident and Palestine solidarity activist who reported on this month's Gaza Freedom Flotilla II, in which he participated.

Kalifa Eldurbak is a Libyan graduate student who has attended a local university for the past three-and-a-half years. He has remained in close contact with his family and friends in his war-torn homeland, and provided a detailed analysis of the current conflict there.

IAC Co-Director Sara Flounders dispelled much of the government and media propaganda, which is designed to justify the U.S./NATO military assault

on Libya and further the geostrategic interests of the U.S. and former European colonial powers on the African continent.

All of these speakers noted Libya's relative prosperity, free education and health-care systems, the absence of homelessness and the improved status of women.

McKinney noted the mainstream media's grossly distorted picture on a wide variety of issues on the military intervention against Libya. She said that in spite of this, the majority of people in the U.S. do not support this war.

McKinney urged activists to educate, organize and mobilize people to call for an end to the U.S./NATO slaughter of Libyan civilians under the flimsy pretext of so-called humanitarian intervention, and their attempt to prevent African nations from exercising their right to self-determination. Her remarks were warmly received, and meeting participants gave her a standing ovation after she spoke.

The local NBC TV affiliate interviewed McKinney before the event. The Western Mass. IAC and the Northampton Committee to Stop the Wars sponsored the meeting. It was co-sponsored by the Alliance for Peace and Justice, Pioneer Valley Code Pink and the Pioneer Valley Green/Rainbow Local Party. □

More than 100 days of bombing of LIBYA

1 cruise missile could pay 10 teachers for a year. We need jobs, health care and education, not budget cuts, prisons and war.



Hear former U.S. Congressperson CYNTHIA MCKINNEY,

who recently returned from leading a delegation to Libya in opposition to the U.S. criminal destruction of Libya, and former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, Akbar Muhammad & other leading opponents of the U.S. war on Libya.

New VIDEO footage of U.S. war on Libya.

The national 11-city educational & fundraising Report from LIBYA tour with Cynthia McKinney is organized by International Action Center, www.IACenter.org in coordination with many antiwar and community organizations from July 7 to August 9, 2011.

For more information and a complete list of cities or to help donate for the tour expenses see: www.IACenter.org or call: 212-633-6646

STOP U.S./

Demonization and self-determination

By Sara Flounders
Co-Director, International Action Center

If you went to a shopping center, a street corner or a graduate school of a top university in the U.S. and conducted a pop quiz asking who are the kings or crown princes of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain; the emir of Kuwait, Qatar or Dubai; and the sultan of Oman, most people would not be able to name any of them.

These dictators and feudal monarchs hold absolute control in corrupt and brutal regimes. Their rule is kept in place by U.S. arms, troops and mercenaries, but they are anonymous to the U.S. population and to most of the world's people.

But if you went anywhere in the U.S. today and asked who lives in Libya, there is only one name that a large part of the population could tell you: Gadhafi. Many people, even if they do not know that Libya is in Africa, might tell you that Gadhafi is an evil man who "must go."

The corporate media can demonize the leader of a country targeted by the Pentagon to the point that the consequences of using the most deadly weapons against a totally defenseless population are hidden and dismissed.

No other country in history has the capacity to wreak such havoc, using cruise missiles, bunker busters, drones, depleted uranium and dense inert metal explosive bombs, anti-personnel razor shredding bomblets, and anti-personal mines.

What should be the response to this terror?

Unfortunately, a minority of groups or individuals who present themselves as opponents of war spend more time cataloguing Gadhafi's past real or alleged shortcomings than rallying people to respond to this criminal, all-out U.S. attack. Their influence would be small, except that it coincides with the opinions of the U.S. ruling class. Thus it is important to thoroughly answer their arguments.

Whatever mistakes made by the leaders of a small, underdeveloped country facing U.S. sanctions, sabotage and assassination attempts, they are not the reason the U.S. is hell-bent on destroying Libya today.

What is at stake?

U.S., French, British and Italian imperialists are determined to lay hold of

Libya's now well-developed infrastructure of oil refineries, pumping stations, gas lines, ports and pipelines directly into Europe, as well as billions of dollars in gold reserves, oil reserves — the largest in Africa — and Libya's other rich assets. All of this has been built up over the four decades since U.S. and British imperialism were kicked out of the country.

The imperialists are especially determined to stop Libya's assistance in the development of other African countries. The plans for a United Federation of Africa, which were put forth by Libya and backed with \$90 billion in investment funds, deeply threaten the continued multinational corporate looting of the continent.

The people of Libya have resisted more than four months of nonstop aerial assault. The bombing has united the population. Their cohesion has grown. More than 1 million people hold giant rallies in Tripoli.

A government in fear of its population would never hand guns to the public, but Libya's government has distributed more than 3 million weapons in a country of 6.5 million people to enable them to resist occupation.

Incredibly, it looks like the imperialists are facing still another failed war. A falling out among thieves seems to be taking place as NATO's frustration mounts.

The response to this colonial war of aggression should be the same as the response to a racist mobilization, a racist lynch mob or a police attack on an oppressed community: Mobilize all possible forces to stand up to the crime and say "no!" Refuse to take part in the orchestrated campaign of vilification.

This may not be an easy position to take. But it is essential to reject the racist political onslaught that accompanies the military onslaught.

Demonization is meant to disorient and put the massive, criminal destruction planned by U.S. imperialism beyond debate. Enormous pressure is placed on every level of the U.S. population to accept the premise that the targeted country and its leadership are to blame. The attacks are presented as if only one person lives in Libya, and not 6.5 million people.

In preparation for a war of conquest, the role of the corporate media is to endlessly repeat every charge and statement made by the institutions of U.S. power. An almost frenzied level of lies, wild fabrications, racist stereotyping and ugly caricatures saturates all political discussion.

The corporate media spread the demands that the Pentagon death machine must act in the name of "humanity" in order to "save lives." The war itself is cloaked in neutral terms. In the case of Libya, more than 16,000 bombing sorties against people are described as implementing a "no-fly zone." The White House has assured

the population that this bombing is not an act of war. The administration won't even discuss it with Congress.

The response to media demonization in the midst of a war mobilization must be to focus on the outrageous crime being committed and refuse to accept or give weight to any justification for it.

Despite an ocean of propaganda, poll after poll has confirmed that from 60 percent to 65 percent of the U.S. population is against the U.S. war on Libya. This should give all opponents of this imperialist war great hope and confidence.

But the demonization and racist war propaganda have seeped down into a layer of the progressive and anti-war movement.

In every imperialist war for decades, a whole series of writers, commentators and political organizations considered to be progressive have buckled under enormous social pressure. While claiming to be against U.S. wars, they allocate their greatest energies to focusing on and discussing every shortcoming, mistake and inconsistency of the targeted country — in the very same condemnatory tone as the corporate media.

They have said "neither NATO nor Milosevic," "neither Bush nor Saddam," "neither Israel nor Hizbollah," thus helping to weaken the anti-war forces.

The responsibility of progressive intellectuals and groups in the United States is to utilize their considerable research skills to extract every piece of information that could explain the corporate stakes — the anticipated profits behind the imperialist war. And never to echo in left terminology the charges made in the imperialist media.

Working people need to know the real reason behind the attack. Thus every effort must be made to avoid reinforcing government propaganda. Progressives should look to build the broadest possible unity in order to speak with one voice against the war.

Of course, such misguided groups are a small minority in the progressive movement. But there are those political organizations, which six months ago had not bothered to mention Libya, that now suddenly seek out respectable venues to add their own reasons that the dictator Gadhafi "must go" — an echo of the imperialist demand. Some even insist that in order to be part of the political discourse, every anti-war voice must first join in condemnation of Gadhafi.

In a few places this chorus on the sidelines has even disrupted anti-war meetings, calling on the anti-war movement to fall in line and echo the racist ruling class.

The Cynthia McKinney tour

In their determination to join with all the "respectable voices" condemning Libya, some groups have even sounded just like the imperialist media by seeking to silence the courageous voice of former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney. This is how arrogant and offensive those who demand collusion in U.S. wars have become.

McKinney risked her life to visit Libya with a U.S. delegation in the midst of the U.S./NATO bombing. She deserves respect.

McKinney was first a target of national media condemnation as a young, first-term state representative in the Georgia Assembly, when she dared to speak out against the U.S. war on Iraq. The entire chamber of representatives stood up, turned their backs on her and walked out.

When elected to the U.S. Congress, her outspoken opposition to and questioning of the orchestrated national frenzy surrounding the Sept. 11, 2001, attack; her clear opposition to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and passage of the North

American Free Trade Agreement; her defense of political prisoners; and her support of the Palestinian people generated national campaigns to pour funds into opposing candidates in her small Georgia congressional district. Again and again the district lines were redrawn in an attempt to disqualify McKinney from the U.S. Congress. She has earned international acclaim for her candidacy for president on the Green Party ticket, for her participation in humanitarian convoys to Gaza and for being jailed by Israel.

McKinney's tour to six cities organized by the Answer Coalition, and now to 11 cities organized by the International Action Center — all of which have successfully mobilized forces against the U.S./NATO invasion of Africa — have also come under criticism and cowardly attack. Some of these elements are even writing and speaking against McKinney's right to speak against the war in Libya.

Even more arrogant and insensitive are their attacks on the Nation of Islam and Pan-African voices opposing the war.

For more than three decades many Pan-African activists, African people and Muslims have followed developments in Libya with great interest and enthusiasm. Many people traveled to Libya and favorably compared the social accomplishments in Libya — which, according to the U.N., scored highest in Africa on the Human Development Index in education, housing, length of life, nutrition and infant mortality — to the enormous poverty and glaring underdevelopment of most of the continent. They have spoken out forcefully against the looting of Africa and defended Libya as a country that, although sanctioned, sabotaged and under continuing attack, managed to maintain a level of independence from imperialism.

It is criminal to dismiss those actually mobilizing, writing and speaking against war as just pro-Gadhafi.

Pentagon lynch mob

What should be the attitude toward a family or a town seized by a lynch mob?

How does one respond if a racist gang of thugs, with torches and gasoline, is ready to set fire to a home with children inside, or is determined to capture someone who they felt had not shown proper "respect?" Is that a time to wander off into analysis of the targeted victims' credit card payments, driving record or other possible past mistakes or personal shortcomings?

Bombs are falling on Tripoli. Isn't that a Pentagon lynching?

In the face of a criminal terror campaign against a whole country, it's imperative not to do anything to support the attack. It's essential to do everything in your power to mobilize people to resist.

To use every possible argument of defense, and not give a shred of legitimacy to the racists who are attempting to burn the whole country down, along with all of its proud accomplishments.

Don't allow yourself to be on the same side as the imperialist war makers.

Leave it to the Libyan people to decide their own future without U.S./NATO bombs. Leave it to African, Arab and especially Libyan people to discuss and debate, without outside interference.

But here in the center of the U.S. empire, it is important to refuse to join in the demonization and attacks used to justify atrocities committed by corporate power. Most important: Don't echo imperialist propaganda in the midst of a war of aggression. Don't join in a lynch mob being organized by the Pentagon!

Unite behind one clear slogan: Stop the U.S./NATO war on Libya. □

of U.S./NATO

A 16,000 bombing sorties

Report from Libya:

of U.S. war in Africa

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JULY 30 Saturday
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AUG. 6 Sat • BOSTON 4:00 pm
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SEIU L. 721 Auditorium, 500 S. Virgil Ave.

NATO WAR ON LIBYA!

Despite threats

Progressive Egyptians press revolution forward

By Gene Clancy

Thousands of Egyptians, intent on defending the gains of their revolution and vowing to achieve still more, rallied on July 15 in the nation's two largest cities — Cairo and Alexandria. They encircled a security building, chanting "Oh police, you are criminals." They demanded trials for the police officers suspected of killing hundreds of activists during the winter uprising that brought down U.S.-backed President Hosni Mubarak.

The protests in the capital of Cairo and the port city of Alexandria were billed as the "Friday of Last Warning" to the military council that took over from Mubarak and is supposed to lead Egypt to democracy. (Associated Press, July 15)

Hundreds of militant activists camped out at Tahrir Square, following the largest demonstrations since the 18-day popular uprising began on Jan. 25. This location was the birthplace of the Egyptian uprising.

"We want to cleanse the country's institutions," said a demonstrator who was

standing on a stage in the square. He told a nearby group, "Until we see the government officials [talking to protesters] in Tahrir, we will not leave this place." He led a chant of "Bread, freedom and social justice." (AP, July 15)

The protesters' frustration was reflected in new graffiti on the wall of Cairo's biggest government building, which faces the square. "The revolution has protectors," read one slogan, referring to the protesters' determination to keep mobilizing until their demands are met.

In Alexandria, thousands rallied outside the local security headquarters. Some jumped over a high fence, which surrounds the building housing the Interior Ministry's local branch. They tore down the police flag and replaced it with the Egyptian national banner. They sprayed anti-police graffiti on the walls and covered the ministry's golden emblem with the words "The Ministry of Torture."

Meanwhile, the Egyptian "transitional government," run by the military — which has strong ties to the U.S. — issued threats and warnings to the demonstra-

tors against "harming public interests." Maj. Gen. Mohsen el-Fangari read the military's statement on state television. "It was the strongest public warning to protesters issued by the ruling generals since they took over from Mubarak when he stepped down on Feb. 11," reported the AP. (July 12)

El-Fangari spoke in a threatening tone that suggested the generals are closely watching the flurry of protests, sit-ins and strikes that have engulfed the nation since the uprising. Ominously, they called on Egyptians to "confront" any actions that prevent the "return to normalcy," although he claimed that the military's response to offenders "would be within the boundaries of 'legitimacy.'" No further explanation was given.

The generals' statement was a thinly veiled warning to the protesters who know that a "return to normalcy" would mean a return to the old regime's repression. Human rights advocates and organizers in Egypt and abroad maintain that military tribunals have tried "at least 10,000 people for alleged security offenses since the

army took over the streets from the police" at the end of January. (AP, July 12) They also assert that many activists have been tortured and even killed since their struggle began.

However, the Egyptian protesters are determined to keep up their fight. In many locations, activists have begun hunger strikes. Al-Ahram, Egypt's largest English language news organization, reports, "There are not less than 25 protesters currently on hunger strike in Suez, who say they will not break their fast unless [their] demands are met.

"The April 6 Youth Movement in Alexandria announced that a number of its members, including its coordinator in the city Islam El-Hadry, started a hunger strike on July 8, objecting to how the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and the government have ignored the demands of the protesters." Al-Ahram reported that two protesters were taken to an Alexandria hospital because of fatigue. (July 12)

The determined struggle of the Egyptian people goes on. □

Solidarity bridges generations

Rosenbergs' son backs Bradley Manning

By Edward Yudelovich

Robert Meeropol is one of the two sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were executed in 1953 as alleged "atomic bomb" spies during the period of the 1950s U.S. McCarthyite anti-Communist witch hunt. Meeropol now directs the Rosenberg Fund for Children, which supports the children of imprisoned U.S. political activists.

On June 30, Meeropol posted a statement on the Rosenberg Fund website that read:

"Last week, I joined the Advisory Board of the Bradley Manning Support Network. I sought them out not only because it is an honor to join a Board that includes Medea Benjamin of Code Pink, as well as Daniel Ellsberg of Pentagon Papers fame and filmmaker Michael Moore, among others, but also because I believe it is imperative for as many people as possible to raise their voices in support of Manning.

"Private First Class Manning is accused of being the source of the huge number of secret diplomatic cables, field intelligence reports, and at least one military video published by WikiLeaks. He was held without charge for nine months in the brig at Quantico Marine Corps Base in Virginia, isolated for 23 hours a day in 'Maximum Custody and under Prevention of Injury Watch.'

"I believe that the conditions of his imprisonment, including the Abu Ghraib-style humiliation of being forced to strip and surrender his clothing nightly,

amounted to torture. Manning's rights were violated further when President Obama, the military's commander in chief, declared Manning guilty. Since Manning faces a possible court martial by military officers, all of whom are under Obama's command, this makes it impossible for him to receive a fair trial."

Explaining his reasons for supporting Manning, Meeropol further stated: "Since 2001, the burgeoning 'national security state' has made it almost impossible for voters to make informed choices. The people's right to know what their government is doing has been at the core of my activism for almost four decades. It was no accident that my brother and I chose to sue under the newly toughened Freedom of Information Act when we commenced our campaign to reopen our parents' case in 1974. ...

"My brother and I spent 10 years of our lives fighting that case in the name of the public's right to know. The attack on Manning is an assault upon this right and must be resisted. Also, I am virtually certain that the cruel and inhumane conditions Manning was subjected to in the Marine Base brig were designed to coerce him into testifying against Julian Assange and the WikiLeaks community. In other words, the government wanted Manning to become the David Greenglass of the WikiLeaks case.

"In my parent's case, the government offered Greenglass a deal in return for falsely testifying that my parents engi-

neered Greenglass's theft of what the government called 'the secret of the Atomic bomb,' even though my parents did not participate in that theft and there was no such secret. Similarly, the government sought to use Manning as a pawn to spark a conspiracy trial against Assange and his associates in order to expand the security state and inflame public fear that hackers threaten our national security.

"Finally, it is reported that Manning may be charged with violating the Espionage Act of 1917 and face the death penalty if he is convicted. That's the same penalty my parents received for violating that act. "Under such circumstances, how could I stay away."

Exposing government repression

In 2010, Wired.com published portions of instant-message chats in which Bradley Manning allegedly confessed to a former hacker named Adrian Lamo that he had leaked secret information to WikiLeaks. Wired.com has now published the entire chat logs, which contain important context that should have been disclosed at the first publication.

Among them is Lamo's promise to Manning: "I'm a journalist and a minister. You can pick either, and treat this as a confession or an interview (never to be published) and enjoy a modicum of legal protection." Lamo again promised Manning: "I told you, none of this is for print." Lamo betrayed his promise of confidentiality by turning Manning over to law enforcement and handed the full logs to Wired.com. ?

On July 25, 2010, WikiLeaks published online a collection of 77,000 classified documents it calls "Afghan War Diary, 2004-2010." Like the publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971 during the Vietnam War, this was a massive leak of information the government wanted kept secret.

Back then, the "leaker" was Daniel Ellsberg, who smuggled out and gave to the media copies of a 7,000-page secret Pentagon report that showed the public had been lied to about the war and concluded that it couldn't be won. In retaliation, he was charged with treason.

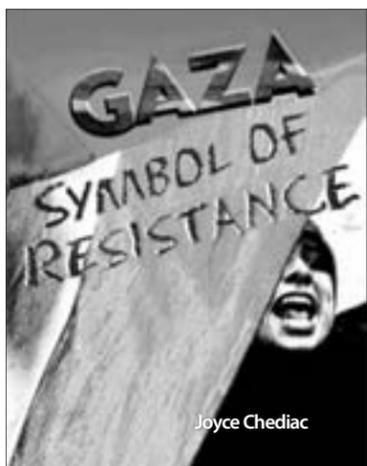
The Pentagon sent a covert squad it called "the Plumbers" to burgle Ellsberg's psychiatrist's office in the hope of getting dirt on him. But the robbery was discovered and the ploy boomeranged. On Aug. 3, 2010, Rep. Mike Rogers, a member of the House Select Intelligence Committee and a former FBI special agent, told MSNBC that the U.S. should have executed Ellsberg for treason. His remarks were in the context of calling for capital punishment in the case of Pvt. Manning and Wikileaks founder Julian Assange.

After his parents were executed, Robert Meeropol and his brother were adopted by Abel and Anne Meeropol. It was Abel Meeropol who many years earlier had written the words and the music for the song "Strange Fruit," made famous by the singer Billie Holiday, which protested the lynching and terror committed against African Americans.

In the 1960s and 1970s, after the Black Panther Party declared their constitutional right to bear arms to defend themselves against attacks from racist cops, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover called the Panthers the greatest threat to the internal security of the United States. Hoover launched a reign of terror against the Panthers that included murders of Panther leaders and trumped-up conspiracy charges, many of which carried the death penalty.

What is the appropriate response to the U.S. government's attacks and threats against those who struggle for the rights of the workers and the oppressed, including the right to know the truth about the government's crimes against the people? As August Spies, one of the Haymarket martyrs who inspired the international workers holiday of May Day, said to the judge who sentenced him to death in 1886:

"If you think by hanging us you can stamp out the labor movement ... the movement from which the down-trodden millions, the millions who toil in want and misery, expect salvation — if this is your opinion then hang us! Here you will tread upon a spark, but there and there, behind you and in front of you and everywhere, flames blaze up. It is a subterranean fire. You cannot put it out." □



GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak

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

Order at Amazon.com or bookstores around the country <http://gaza-resistance-book.com/>

'Mobilize the people to resist exploitation and oppression'

International League of Peoples' Struggle meets in Philippines

By Bill Cecil

We live in a global economy dominated today by U.S. and West European banks and corporations. Decisions made on Wall Street devastate the lives not only of workers in the United States but of hundreds of millions of people around the globe. It will take a worldwide movement to break their power.

That is why more than 60 people from the United States were among 430 activists from 43 countries who went to the Fourth International Assembly of the International League of Peoples' Struggle, held July 7-9 in Manila, capital of the Philippines.

Activists came from Senegal and South Korea, from Egypt and Indonesia, from Greece and Guatemala, from Venezuela and Malaysia. They were trade unionists and migrant workers, peasants and farmworkers, Indigenous people, youth and students, health workers, teachers, lawyers, human rights defenders, researchers, scientists and technologists, artists and journalists, environmentalists and fighters for the rights of women, lesbian-gay-bi-trans people, children and the elderly.

They came together from six continents around the theme of "Build a bright future! Mobilize the people to resist exploitation and oppression amidst the protracted global depression, state terrorism and wars of aggression!"

They faced many obstacles. Some were denied entry by the U.S.-backed government of Benigno Aquino III. A Palestinian delegate, Dr. Yusuf Habash, was denied an exit permit from Palestine by the

The International League of Peoples' Struggle convened its Fourth International Assembly from July 7-9. The People's Chorale sings the ILPS Hymn.

Zionist occupation regime.

The Philippines was a fitting place for the gathering. The Filipino people have long been on the front lines of the fight against U.S. monopoly capitalism.

U.S. imperialism made its advent on the world stage in 1898, when U.S. troops invaded the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba. That invasion came on the heels of the betrayal of Reconstruction in the U.S. South, the massacre of Native people at Wounded Knee, and the hanging of leaders of the eight-hour-day movement of workers in Chicago.

More than 1 million Filipinos were massacred by the U.S. Army in that brutal war of conquest. U.S. corporate interests have dominated the Philippines since that time, reaping super-profits from the low wages of Filipino workers.

As a result, tens of million of Filipinos live below the poverty line. The assembly participants saw the desperate conditions of many Filipinos in visits to farm villages, Indigenous communities in the mountains and poor urban neighborhoods.



Mass struggle is the only solution

But we also witnessed that the Philippines is home to a powerful mass movement of workers, farmers, the urban poor, Indigenous people and students fighting for social change and against U.S. corporate power. This movement, united in the New Patriotic Alliance, or BAYAN, played host to the Fourth International Assembly.

A militant fighting tone pervaded the FIA. It was set even before the first session, when protesters battled police outside the U.S. Embassy on July 4.

After Filipino revolutionary leader and league chair Jose Maria Sison addressed the FIA by Skype from exile in the Netherlands, participants broke down into commissions on national liberation, socioeconomic development, human rights, health care, education, opposing imperi-

alist war, environmental destruction, arts and culture, and the rights of workers, farmers and farmworkers, women, youth, children, Indigenous people, prisoners, homeless and displaced people, elders and LGBT people.

All the resolutions, action plans and the general declaration of the assembly agreed that mass struggle is the only answer to the global capitalist crisis of overproduction, which is ravaging people's lives in both exploited and exploiting countries and is driving imperialist wars, like the one against Libya.

The assembly documents may be found at www.ilps.info.

Bill Cecil attended the Fourth International Assembly of the ILPS as a delegate from the International Action Center in the United States.

Honduran-U.S. delegate praises Filipino anti-imperialist conferences

By Heather Cottin

Lucy Pagoada, a Honduran who lives in New York and who has been elected to the Popular National Resistance Front in her homeland, was a delegate to conferences called by the International Migrant Alliance and the International League of Peoples' Struggle held in the Philippines this July. Later she traveled around the Philippines. In an interview with Workers World, she shared her experiences and perceptions.

"When I arrived in the Philippines," said Pagoada, "I was astonished at the huge number of families greeting visiting relatives. I realized immediately that forced migration keeps Filipino families apart. In Honduras there is forced migration too, but people cannot return home for most of the migrants from my country are undocumented."

The Philippine government actually sets up programs with the International Monetary Fund to effectively "export" millions of Filipinos all over the world as labor, with a heavy concentration in the health professions. These people may come back for a visit, but must return to a distant land to make money so they can send remittances to their families, who depend on them to stay alive.

"When I drove through Manila, I saw so many children naked, with protruding bellies, indicating hunger and sickness. Manila has the biggest shopping mall in

all Asia, where wealthy people can shop without seeing the poverty that dominates the capital city. This was my introduction to the International Migrants Alliance held at the University of the Philippines.

"At the university I was greeted by some of the most advanced students I have ever met. We share a history of colonialism. Spain invaded the Philippines and Latin America in the 16th century, grabbed the land, and murdered and exploited our people.

"I met people from around the world at the IMA. I learned about organizing against widespread human trafficking, especially from Asia, which includes the selling of brides from developing countries to men in the advanced imperialist countries."

'Militancy, courage of Filipino workers, peasants is inspiring'

Pagoada continued, "So many Filipinos are forced to migrate — 3 million out of a population of 99 million. So while the emotional cost to the families in the 7,107 islands of the Philippines is great, the economic crisis and the viciousness of all the U.S.-supported governments — including the present government of NoyNoy Aquino, Cory Aquino's son — have produced the greatest militancy. Filipinos organize everywhere in the world.

"Jose Maria Sison was present via Skype throughout the conferences I attended. He is the leader of the Philippine struggle,

though he is in forced exile in The Netherlands and prohibited from returning to his homeland. I became increasingly interested in this philosopher-intellectual-revolutionary who was so beloved by the people at the conference. His comments were amazing! With his leadership and faith in the organizers, there were three international conferences this July in Manila — IMA, ILPS and the International Women's Alliance.

"Filipinos defy the neoliberal regulations their government enforces, which restrict the organizing of labor unions. The courage of Filipino workers and peasants who organize strikes and resistance is really inspiring."

The U.S. supports this repression as part of its "war on terrorism." Human rights organizations charge that the Armed Forces of the Philippines have been responsible for more than 1,000 murders and abductions of activists. The military received \$15 million in U.S. aid in 2010, but an additional \$434 million of "nonmilitary" U.S. support came from the Millennium Challenge Corp., which was set up by the George W. Bush administration and is closely tied to "counterinsurgency" programs. Washington is now also promising even more military aid and an increasing U.S. troop presence.

"This year at the IMA and ILPS conferences," continued Pagoada, "there were many representatives from Latin



Interview with Lucy Pagoada

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO
Lucy Pagoada speaking in Union Square on International Women's Day.

America. When we received word of Comandante Hugo Chávez's cancer, we were saddened, but we wrote a resolution for the conferences in solidarity with Chávez and the Venezuelan people.

"At the end of the ILPS conference, the ambassador to the Philippines from Venezuela gave a powerful anti-imperialist speech and invited us to an ILPS meeting next year in Caracas. Jose Maria Sison got on Skype to offer his revolutionary solidarity with Venezuela. This was a tremendous moment in the conference. Sadly, we also had to pass a resolution to condemn the assassination in Guatemala of the great revolutionary musician Facundo Cabral, urging a serious investigation of his murder.

"I was proud to represent the New York May 1 Coalition and the Popular National Resistance Front of Honduras and to contribute to these conferences, but for me it was a great school for resistance and revolution." □

WORKERS WORLD
editorial

Support prisoners' hunger strike!

The U.S. prisons at Abu Ghraib in Iraq, Baghram in Afghanistan and Guantánamo in U.S.-occupied Cuba gave evidence to the world of the ruthless and criminal behavior U.S. imperialism perpetrates toward those it considers its foreign enemies. This behavior is no aberration. It's as "American" as apple pie.

The heroism of now more than 6,600 California prisoners have put home-grown prison torture, clear evidence of U.S. cruelty and depravity, before the world.

Only struggle can bring out this truth. The prisoners at the Pelican Bay Security Housing Unit began on July 1 just about the only action available to those locked up and isolated: the hunger strike. They have kept up this action for more than two weeks.

It has spread to SHUs and Administrative Segregation facilities all over California. It has spread to the general prison population, inspiring the more than 2.3 million prisoners all over the country. Their courage has sparked solidarity actions in dozens of cities among those outside of the bars in this locked-up country.

The U.S. laws are cruel: One in every 131 people is behind bars, many for long sentences. They are racist: One of every 138 white men is locked up. That's bad enough. But more than one of every 21 Black men is locked up.

At the pinnacle of cruelty and racism in direct competition with Guantánamo are the SHUs and Ad. Seg. units, which add to the physical beatings and discomfits the especially cruel tortures of isolation and sensory deprivation. As in Abu Ghraib, the purpose of torture in these units is to

break the prisoners and force them to give evidence against other prisoners. Those who break are even more isolated.

It is astounding and inspiring that the prisoners have taken this bold action. But it is no easy road. They have lost an average of 25 to 35 pounds. Their health and lives are in danger.

We remember all too well what happened to the Turkish prisoners on hunger strike against isolation just a few years ago, and the Irish freedom fighters in the 1970s. Many lost their lives rather than submit. The perfidy and intransigence of the California prison officialdom puts these current hunger strikers at risk.

The prisoners' demands are clear and fair; see prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com. They add up to ending the physical and psychological torture at these SHUs and Ad. Seg. units, and Workers World stands in solidarity with the prisoners' demands and their struggle. WWP members in New York, Philadelphia, Durham, N.C., in Ohio and throughout California have helped organize or taken part in public solidarity actions with the prisoners, actions that attract the applause of the people.

The prisoners need the solidarity of those on the outside; those outside need the example of the prisoners' courage and solidarity. Like the prisoners in Attica, N.Y., 40 years ago next Sept. 9, they are showing what workers and oppressed people can do under the most difficult circumstances, and setting an example for more working-class struggles looming in the near future. □

Unions must act like unions

State employees in New York and Connecticut, as in so many other states, are being told they have to make painful concessions in order to prevent mass layoffs. But it's not just the politicians who are telling them this. It's their own union leaders.

How many times have workers in the private sector been told by their bosses that there was no money for health care, for raises, for pensions? But the workers knew that was a lie, and they fought for better contracts. Sometimes they had to walk the picket line for days, weeks or even months. But if they held out, they had a chance of winning many of their demands. That's how millions of workers in unions were able to move out of poverty.

Unions in the public sector are often more restricted by reactionary laws barring strikes, but they are still supposed to fight for the workers, not do the work of the bosses and their politicians. When the states or cities say, "Jump," public workers don't want their unions to answer, "How high?"

In Connecticut a month ago, a rotten, giveback contract negotiated by union leaders was rejected by workers in the state employees' unions. They told their unions to fight for something better. Gov. Dannel Malloy, a Democrat, then increased the pressure, saying the state had to immediately institute huge cuts in economic development programs, highway rest stops, bus subsidies and bridge inspections and close courthouses, welfare offices and motor vehicle branches. Layoff notices were sent out to 6,500 workers.

This declaration of war against the workers should have been answered with a plan of struggle to force the politicians to back down. Instead, the union leaders decided to change the rules on how many votes it takes to ratify a giveback contract.

In order to protect the gains made in previous contracts, these rules had required an 80 percent acceptance vote. Only 57 percent had voted in June to accept the giveback contract, even after enormous pressure on the members to do so from the governor and the Democrat-controlled General Assembly. Now the union leaders have decided to make ratification possible with a simple majority.

Will this make the governor reverse the layoffs? Or will it only whet the appetites of those who are trying to set back the workers' standard of living and destroy their unions?

Now the two largest unions of New York state employees — the Civil Service Employees Association and the Public Employees Federation — are following suit, trying to convince their members to accept a three-year wage freeze, unpaid furloughs and benefit cuts, supposedly as protection against layoffs.

There wouldn't be any unions in this country if that had been the mindset in the last big capitalist crisis of the 1930s. The bosses and their politicians always say there's no money for the workers — until the workers' struggle forces them to cough it up.

Workers who don't have a union need to fight to get one. And workers with unions need to fight to make their unions fight! □

Strike in Dominican Republic



PHOTO: LISTINDIARIO

A 24-hour work stoppage paralyzed commerce and traffic in the Dominican Republic on July 11. The action was called by the Alternative Social Forum, a group of about 50 organizations, in response to the acute disaster produced by the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and the so-called corrective measures being taken by the Dominican govern-

ment. The response to the strike was greatest in the poorest neighborhoods, which are the most affected.

An extensive interview with longtime Dominican revolutionary Narciso Isa Conde in an upcoming issue of WW will expose the situation in that country which ignited the July 11 events.

— Berta Joubert-Ceci

Durham event discusses imperialist attack on Cuba



PHOTO: ESPERANZA MARTELL

More than 80 people, most from the Black community in Durham, N.C., attended a July 12 community educational event, potluck and fundraiser for the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan at the Shepherd's House United Methodist Church. Hosted by Fight Imperialism, Stand Together and Black Workers for Justice, the event opened with discussion about how the U.S. blockade of Cuba causes shortages of food, medicine and other important supplies for the country's 11 million people.

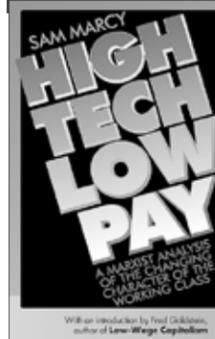
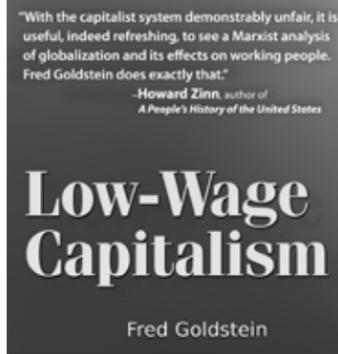
The blockade is an imperialist policy that uses hunger and disease as political weapons, yet the Cuban government, run by the working class, has been able to provide universal health care and education to all the people. Meanwhile, in the U.S. our communities and rights are under attack by budget cuts and economic crisis.

Dr. Bill Sales, a veteran of the Civil

Rights and Student Power Movements, was the keynote speaker on behalf of Pastors for Peace, in one of the caravan's 11 stops on that same day. Dante Strobino of Raleigh FIST and Saladin Muhammad of BWFJ presented talks about how local issues connect and are relevant to the Cuban revolution. Rev. John Gumbo, whose church hosted the event, spoke to the crowd about how U.S. imperialism also impacts his home country, Zimbabwe and how the Cubans have reached out to support Zimbabwe.

This year's caravan is especially important because it is the first one since the death of the Rev. Lucius Walker, the founder of Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization/Pastors for Peace. Many paid tribute to the Rev. Walker's steadfast fight to defend the Cuban revolution.

— Special to Workers World



Low-Wage Capitalism

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

Fred Goldstein's book provides an easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

The author is available for lectures and interviews.

www.LowWageCapitalism.com

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HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool, he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants.

A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

<http://www.workers.org/marcy/hightech/>

Immigrant worker(s) vs. capitalist titan(s)

By Teresa Gutierrez

On June 2 hotel housekeepers who are members of UNITE HERE launched a coordinated eight-city speak-out “to break the silence on the dangers of their jobs.” The workers stated that they were “inspired by the courageous stand taken by the housekeepers in New York against some of the most powerful men in the world.” (www.unitehere.org, June 2)

They were referring to the case of Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who is accused of holding captive and sexually assaulting a housekeeper at New York’s Sofitel Hotel on May 14. DSK was the head of the International Monetary Fund at the time.

The union’s website says, “Nearly all hotel housekeepers are women. The majority are women of color and immigrants.” The workers point out in their union’s Hotel Workers Rising campaign that sexual harassment is a pervasive pattern in their work. Many workers have been subjected to indecent exposure and other types of assaults by hotel guests. (www.HotelWorkersRising.org)

As in all capitalist industries today, hotel workers are facing dangerous speed-ups, which lead to difficult working conditions and serious injuries. In most hotels, housekeepers must clean 15 or more

One woman hotel worker, a housekeeper, a woman of color, an immigrant — in the midst of one of the most vicious anti-immigrant climates ever in this country — dared to stand up to the head of a global multibillion-dollar agency.

She may have known nothing of his role as head of the IMF at the time, but her instincts must have told her he was on the other side of the class barrier.

rooms per day, often having to work off the clock and skip meals in order to finish. Chains such as Hyatt and Hilton are leading these speed-ups. Some of these hotels are being boycotted in places like Boston and San Francisco.

The union explains: “Most hotels have introduced new room amenities without reducing the number of rooms assigned to housekeepers each day. Luxury beds with heavier mattresses and linens, triple-sheeting, and extra pillows are increasingly common. Other add-ons like coffee pots, spa robes and large hard-to-clean mirrors make room cleaning more difficult and time-consuming.”

These conditions lead to an injury rate that is 40 percent higher for hotel work-

ers than for other service sector workers, with sprains and strains being the most common injuries.

David vs. Goliath

Imagine the courage it took after hours of cleaning toilets for a housekeeper to accuse one of the world’s most powerful men — a potential president of France, a major European power, a man who could afford to pay \$3,000 a night for the hotel room, a man whose sense of class privilege and entitlement was so great that he believed he owned the world and everyone in it.

One woman hotel worker, a housekeeper, a woman of color, an immigrant — in the midst of one of the most vicious anti-immigrant climates ever in this country — dared to stand up to the head of a global multibillion-dollar agency. She may have known nothing of his role as head of the IMF at the time, but her instincts must have told her he was on the other side of the class barrier.

It may not be known for decades — or it may never be known — if it was the overwhelming amount of incriminating evidence against Strauss-Kahn that forced law officials to debark DSK from his plane on his way home to France immediately after the housekeeper’s charges. Or whether it was inter-imperialist rivalry between the United States and France that led to his arrest. Or whether it was his enemies at home, including French President Nicolas Sarkozy, whom DSK planned to challenge in next year’s presidential election.

But the evidence that DSK is a misogynist who believed he could do and say anything he wanted to women is beyond doubt. It does not matter if his spouse or his daughters stand behind him. The evidence is overwhelming that he views women as objects and commodities, to be used for his pleasure, at his will.

Blaming the victim

When DSK was arrested, many members of the public thought the case against him was strong. But suddenly the tables were turned. Once again, the victim of sexual harassment and rape was put on trial in a classic turn against female victims. Now it looks as if the charges could be dropped.

The National Organization for Women writes, “The mainstream media is trashing the ‘credibility’ of the housekeeper. They’re saying she lied on her immigration papers and has a boyfriend in jail — as if that means the rape charges should be dropped. Every day more than 600 women in this country are victims of rape or sexual assault. Routine victim-blaming and victim-shaming, like we are seeing in the case of these allegations against DSK, help facilitate this epidemic of sexual violence against women, and make it harder for women to report such crimes.” (youngfeministtaskforce.blogspot.com, July 11)

If one adds to this pervasive sexism the demonization and victimization of immigrants, then it’s clear that immigrants and women of color are being sent a mes-

sage: Suffer in silence. Do not stand up to any injustice, no matter the severity.

The slander raised in the media against the housekeeper was leaked by none other than the prosecution’s office, indicating a decision made from high up that may mean: Hands off DSK. Let him loose.

The housekeeper is from Guinea, which is also the home country of Amadou Diallo, who was cruelly shot to death in a hail of 41 bullets by New York City police officers.

Even though Guinea has almost half of the world’s bauxite — which is what aluminum comes from — 70 percent of the population live on less than \$1.25 a day.

Grinding poverty and contradictory social conditions led this hotel worker to come to the U.S. The media and law enforcement officials are saying that she embellished claims of abuse in order to gain asylum in the U.S., that she knows someone in prison, that she falsified tax returns, and so on. If any of this is true, her situation is about survival and not a test of her character.

Immigration experts stress that asylum claimants are asked to carry out a nearly impossible task to comply with requirements. Most asylum claims are denied.

However, none of this has anything to do with this case. Nothing at all.

Justice demanded

Some say that DSK was a more progressive thinker than some in the IMF and to the left of many. However, the IMF like any capitalist entity remains committed to the free flow of money and commodities. It remains committed to structural adjustment policies that fill banks’ coffers and restrict the free flow of humans as well as force an unprecedented wave of human migration.

The IMF has robbed and plundered Africa for decades. It owes the people of Guinea reparations. If it paid reparations, perhaps this housekeeper would not have been forced to migrate.

But rape is rape. Rape is forced sexual violence, and what happened in that hotel room on May 14 should not be removed from the realm of the reality of sexual violence. If DSK is guilty, he should pay for his crime.

Who will win this case? A powerful European man of extreme privilege or a West African hotel housekeeper?

Tabloids report on DSK dining at a New York Upper East Side restaurant where the bill was \$700 for four people. They say he attended a concert in Tanglewood, Mass., and spent the night at a hotel where a suite can run to \$2,000 a night on the July 15-17 weekend.

Yet, on July 17 several Black community leaders and organizations, along with women’s and immigrant rights’ groups, held a press conference and rally in Harlem called by State Sen. Bill Perkins to demand justice for the hotel worker. No U.S. press came, but the French press showed up and was not friendly.

If DSK is set loose, it will be an insult not only to the housekeeper but to all the people of Africa. It will send a message to women, immigrants and people of color that they should shut up and stay down.

At a time of reeling economic crisis, it will mean that the capitalist institutions that are forcing workers to pay for their crisis will feel emboldened and free to carry out their plunder. But the workers of the world — with women playing a fundamental role — will soon take center stage and victory will be ours.

For more information, see UNITE HERE’s hotel workers’ campaign at www.HotelWorkersRising.org.

HOUSTON

Cuba caravan honors Rev. Lucius Walker

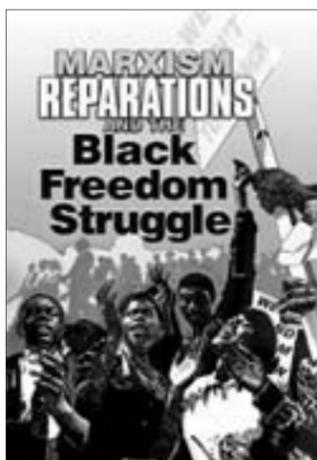


One of the four buses in the Pastors for Peace Cuba Caravan that arrived in Houston on July 16 had an image of caravan founder Rev. Lucius Walker that caught everyone’s eye. Two artists affiliated with New York’s La Peña del Bronx — one a Mexican, the other a Chilean — painted the striking image. These two men used their talent in solidarity with the Cuban Revolution and to honor Walker, who died last September. At a welcome dinner and program for the caravan, the room



reverberated with the chant “Rev. Lucius Walker, Presente!”

— Report and photos by Gloria Rubac



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EDITORIAL

¡No toquen el Seguro Social!

Una fraudulenta y peligrosa colaboración entre los dos partidos capitalistas en los EE.UU. ha puesto al Seguro Social en situación de riesgo. La excusa para atacar el Seguro Social es la falsa crisis sobre el límite de la deuda federal.

El límite de la deuda podría ser resuelto en un instante por un acuerdo entre republicanos y demócratas para elevar este límite arbitrario. No resolvería la crisis real del capitalismo que ha producido un alto y prolongado desempleo además del sufrimiento de tantos millones de personas, sino que pondría fin a la falsa crisis que permite a la clase dominante atacar todos los programas sociales.

Nadie puede sorprenderse de que el liderazgo republicano se haya centrado en el Seguro Social. Ronald Reagan habló en su contra, y George W. Bush trató de realizar audiencias para privatizarlo. Pero incluso las bases republicanas querían mantener los beneficios para sus padres y para ellas mismas.

Ahora, uniéndose a los republicanos de extrema derecha, el presidente Barack Obama ha ofrecido poner el Seguro Social en la mesa de “compromisos” con los republicanos, junto al Medicare y al Medicaid.

La clase potentada ha estado atacando al Seguro Social desde que la lucha de los/as trabajadores/as lo logró hace 76 años durante la Gran Depresión y el Nuevo Trato. Es el programa más amplio y popular de beneficios sociales en los Estados Unidos, junto al Medicare. Fuera de algunos/as trabajadores/as del gobierno federal y del ferrocarril, casi todas las personas activas en la economía de los EE.UU. terminan recibiendo beneficios de Seguro Social.

En la actualidad, 55 millones de personas reciben pagos mensuales. La mayoría de estas personas depende de ese cheque como parte o como la totalidad de sus ingresos por jubilación o por incapacidad. Al igual que sus hijos/as u otros familiares, que de otra manera se verían forzados a tomar decisiones desagradables. Su aplicación casi universal ha hecho del Seguro Social algo popular hasta ahora intocable. Sus enemigos no han podido dividir a los/as trabajadores/as utilizando la edad, la raza o el sexo cuando se trata de la defensa del propio programa.

Eso no quiere decir que el Seguro Social es perfectamente equitativo o igualitario o que no se puede mejorar. Pero casi todo el mundo quiere quedárselo, y mucha gente no podría sobrevivir sin esa ayuda.

La clase obrera y sus organizaciones deben dejar claro que cualquier entrega de los beneficios del Seguro Social — o de cualquiera de estos programas que son esenciales para la clase obrera — es inaceptable y se luchará con uñas y dientes. Todo lo que reduzca los beneficios o elimine la cobertura de las personas o que diferencie entre los que actualmente reciben beneficios de Seguro Social y los/as trabajadores/as más jóvenes, sólo puede perjudicar al programa y llegar a debilitar su apoyo.

La clase obrera, que incluye a los/as desempleados/as, a los/as pobres y a los sectores oprimidos de la población, tanto jóvenes como viejos, debe dejar muy claro tanto a Republicanos como Demócratas: “¡No toquen el Seguro Social, ni el Medicare, ni el Medicaid!” □

A pesar del bombardeo de EEUU/OTAN sobre Libia, la guerra imperialista se estanca

Por Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Tras cuatro meses de intensos bombardeos, las fuerzas de EE.UU./OTAN no han logrado desplazar al gobierno de Libia en Trípoli. Las fuerzas contrarrevolucionarias del Consejo Nacional de Transición, respaldadas por Occidente, permanecen limitadas en áreas del este y el oeste de este país petrolero de 6,5 millones de habitantes.

No hay evidencia concreta de que el CNT y sus patrocinadores imperialistas estén a punto de llevar la guerra a la capital, a pesar de sus constantes declaraciones al respecto. Cientos de miles de personas en Trípoli continúan manifestando públicamente su oposición a la guerra de EE.UU./OTAN. El ejército libanés continúa golpeando a los rebeldes en los alrededores de la ciudad portuaria de Misurata y en las montañas Nafusa cerca de la frontera con Túnez.

Con la escalada de los combates en Misurata, que está siendo utilizada como área de transporte para las fuerzas rebeldes y las organizaciones humanitarias occidentales, las condiciones de la población civil han empeorado en las últimas semanas.

En su esfuerzo por ayudar a que el CNT logre una presencia más fuerte en el oeste de Libia, los aviones de la OTAN han intensificado su campaña de bombardeos contra el pueblo. El 9 de julio las fuerzas de la OTAN atacaron las unidades del ejército apostadas en las afueras de Misurata. Sin embargo, Prensa Asociada admitió el 9 de julio que: “La guerra civil ha caído en un estancamiento con los rebeldes sin poder avanzar significativamente, aún con las fuerzas de la OTAN bombardeando las fuerzas de Gadafi para hacer cumplir una resolución de la ONU de proteger a los civiles”.

En realidad la guerra nunca ha sido para proteger a los civiles. Las acciones del CNT y sus protectores de EE.UU./OTAN han creado condiciones nefastas para la población en Libia y para quienes han huido del país por tierra y por mar.

La OTAN y el CNT causan crisis humanitaria

El comienzo de la guerra civil en Libia el 17 de febrero llevó a la peor crisis humanitaria en el norte de África en los tiempos modernos. Inmediatamente, las bandas rebeldes basadas en Bengasi se dispusieron a atacar a aquellos/as que son percibidos/as como simpatizantes y

aliados/as del gobierno central en Trípoli. Los/as libios/as de piel oscura y los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes de los estados africanos vecinos fueron hostigados/as, golpeados/as e incluso asesinados/as.

Videos y fotografías de estas ejecuciones se han distribuido ampliamente a través del Internet. Se asemejan a las turbas racistas de linchamientos realizados en el sur de los EE.UU. contra los/as afroamericanos/as al final del siglo 19 y comienzos del siglo 20.

Las vastas reservas de petróleo en Libia, con la reputación de ser las más grandes en el continente africano, permitieron al país alcanzar el mayor nivel de vida e ingreso per cápita de la región. Entre 1,5 a 2 millones de trabajadores/as inmigrantes eran empleados/as en proyectos de petróleo, construcción y servicios por todo el país.

Los ataques del CNT y de la OTAN obligaron a cientos de miles de estos/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes a abandonar Libia. La Organización Internacional para la Migración, (OIM), que monitorea el desplazamiento de los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes, así como el de los/as nacionales libios/as, informa que 150.000 personas ya han abandonado el país.

Jean-Philippe Chauzy, vocero de la OIM dijo que unos/as 2.000 trabajadores/as de Chad se quedaron sin transporte en la ciudad de Sabha al sur de Libia: “Son inmigrantes realmente muy vulnerables — niños, mujeres y ancianos — débiles y enfermos”, demasiado débiles para continuar el viaje. Otros/as 300.000 inmigrantes que quieren irse no pueden debido a la crisis causada por la guerra de EEUU/OTAN. (AP, 9 de julio)

Un artículo del New York Times del 10 de julio expuso el carácter político de las fuerzas del CNT. Cuando el CNT invadió la aldea de Qawalish, muchos de los residentes evacuaron la zona.

El Times señaló que las tiendas estaban bien abastecidas de frutas frescas, vegetales y pan. Sin embargo, casi inmediatamente “los rebeldes [del CNT] comenzaron a apropiarse del combustible en la única estación de gas en Qawalish. ... Poco después, los rebeldes disparaban a los candados de las puertas metálicas de las tiendas y empezaban a robar”. El artículo mencionó que “La ciudad, en pocas palabras, estaba siendo saqueada por los rebeldes, y cometían actos de vandalismo, y cosas peores”.

Este informe expone la mentira imperialista de que el ejército del CNT cuenta

con el apoyo de las masas. Después del bombardeo de estos pueblos y ciudades por la OTAN, las fuerzas del CNT se mueven para tomar nominalmente el control. Sin embargo, la mayoría de la población huye por temor a la violencia perpetrada en otras zonas del país.

Esto es cierto hasta en las montañas de Nafusa donde los grandes medios de comunicación occidentales han afirmado que existe un amplio apoyo al bombardeo de la OTAN y al CNT. El pueblo de El Harabah “aún ondea la bandera verde del gobierno de Gadafi”, informó el Times.

Francia hace llamado al diálogo

El 11 de julio el Ministro de Defensa francés Gerard Longuet pidió a los rebeldes negociar un acuerdo con el gobierno libio. Enfatizó que las conversaciones serían el único mecanismo para poner fin a la intervención extranjera en este país del norte de África.

Al mismo tiempo, Saif al-Islam, hijo del líder libio Muammar Gadafi, anunció que el gobierno de Trípoli se encuentra actualmente en negociaciones con París. En una entrevista, el funcionario libio dijo que el gobierno de Libia “estaba negociando con Francia y no con los rebeldes. Nuestro mediador se reunió con el presidente Nicolás Sarkozy. (El Khaber, 11 de julio)

Después de cuatro meses de bombardeos y del bloqueo naval de Libia, las fuerzas de la OTAN han comenzado a tener serias diferencias internas sobre la guerra. Noruega anunció hace varias semanas que detendría sus operaciones en agosto. Italia, la antigua potencia colonial, llamó a un alto al fuego a principios de julio.

Un artículo en el Philadelphia Tribune del 5 de julio reportó que: “En los Países Bajos, el ministro de Defensa, Hans Hilten se quejó la semana pasada de una “expansión de la misión”, y sugirió que los defensores de la campaña fueron engañados para que creyeran que podían aplastar a Gadafi. “La gente que pensaba que con sólo tirar algunas bombas ayudaría no sólo al pueblo, sino también a convencer a Gadafi que podría renunciar o modificar su política, era un poco ingenua”.

En el Congreso de los EE.UU tanto republicanos/as como demócratas, aunque expresaran reservas sobre la guerra, han seguido apoyando su financiación. Esto llega en el mismo momento en que una propuesta para el presupuesto de defensa proporcionaría otros \$17 mil millones en fondos para el Pentágono. □

Libertad para los cinco cubanos



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