

# WORKERS WORLD

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# Hungry and jobless, Tunisian masses rebel

## Rich puppet of France, U.S. forced to flee

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Jan. 18 — A popular uprising in the North African state of Tunisia since mid-December has driven President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who had ruled the Western-allied government for 23 years, into exile. Ben Ali fled on Jan. 14 after tens of thousands of workers and youths attacked the Ministry of the Interior and other government buildings in the capital of Tunis and in the city of Carthage.

When a street vendor who was attacked by police committed suicide by self-immolation on Dec. 17, it unleashed this enormous struggle. Defying tear gas and even live fire from the security forces that killed between 50 and 100 people, thousands also demonstrated in dozens of Tunisia's provincial cities until they brought down a repressive head of state.

The courage of the Tunisian people and their success in the first step of a continuing struggle has aroused solidarity and hope worldwide. It has sparked protest in neighboring countries like Algeria and Egypt, where high prices and unemployment have hit hard. It has also aroused interest in Europe, where a year of strikes and protests has not yet stopped "austerity" programs aimed at depriving the working class of its rights.

Initially Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi was appointed to succeed Ben Ali. By the next day, however, on Jan. 15, the speaker of the Parliament replaced the former head of state of this country of 10.4 million people. That same day the army seized the airport near Tunis and then moved into the capital in an attempt to restore state control of the streets.

Militias suspected of being tied to Ben Ali have opened fire on the population and have clashed with the regular army, according to some reports. Popular and neighborhood groups have formed self-defense forces to protect their communities.

### New government shaky

Because Ben Ali's ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) political party was still represented in the new leadership, it immediately drew criticism and protest from the masses. This new group announced on Jan. 16 that it would form a government of national unity to bring in representatives of opposition parties, professional groups and trade union officials.

The RCD officials invited moderate opposition parties into the coalition government. These are the Democratic Progressive Party and the Democratic Forum for Labor and Freedoms. Al-Jazeera journalist Ayman Mohyeldin reported Jan. 16, "We know the incoming national unity government will have three members of the opposition. It will include some technocrats, independents, and economists and some figures from Tunisian labor and trade unions. Some of those have still to be determined."

As of Jan. 18, the political parties banned by the Ben Ali regime — those who were strongest in opposition — were excluded from the proposed government of national unity.

These parties include the Hizr ut-Tahrir, a Pan-Islamic organization formed in 1953 in Palestine that has affiliates throughout the region; another Islamic party, the Hizb al-Nahda or Renaissance Party, which has some electoral support inside the country; and a left organization, the Tunisian Workers' Communist Party (PCOT), which grew out of the student movement and was formed in 1986.

In an interview with Al Jazeera on Jan. 17, PCOT leader Hamma Hammami, who had been freed from prison Jan. 14 during the mass uprising, said, "This is a national government which has nothing national about it. It's intended to conserve the old regime in power with all of its authoritarian institutions in place. This is why people are taking to the street with a new slogan 'we don't want the RCD'."

The General Labor Union of Tunisia (UGTT) has been repressed over the last two decades by the ruling RCD party. However, over the last three years there has been independent trade union activity, particularly in the Gafsa mining basin, where industrial actions have taken place since 2008.

By Jan. 18, three leaders of the UGTT

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WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

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Bronx, New York on Martin Luther King holiday, Jan. 17.

WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

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# Prisoner hunger strike will 'bring a new awareness'

The following statement was read at the Jan. 15 demonstration outside the Ohio State Penitentiary in solidarity with the Lucasville prison uprising leaders' hunger strike for justice.

Sisters and brothers, Prisons inside the United States are not about rehabilitation; they are concentration camps for the poor and working people, especially people of color. There are almost 3 million imprisoned workers who have been isolated, brutalized and super-exploited for their labor. Unfortunately, there are more people outside of the U.S. aware of this fact than inside the U.S. due to a blockade of information by the big-business media.

Actions like the heroic 12-day hunger strike by brothers Bomani, Hasan, Namir and Jason — along with thousands of prisoners who participated in the historic statewide Georgia prison strike last month — will help to bring a new awareness and inspiration, with the movement's support, in the ongoing struggle for political and economic justice.

These class-conscious prisoners are the modern-day Attica brothers who 40 years ago this September made

similar demands we support today, as do the Lucasville prison uprising leaders and the Georgia prisoners. The Attica rebellion was drowned in a bloody massacre by the New York National Guard and state police. These prisoners were more than willing to risk their lives because they pledged to die standing up for their rights rather than on their knees. They stated before they died that their rebellion was the "sound before the fury." The prisoners in Ohio and Georgia have made that same pledge.

The progressive movement must continue to support the prisoners like those in the Ohio State Penitentiary, in Georgia, in Pennsylvania including Mumia Abu-Jamal and many others who are trying to create the kind of fury needed to liberate humankind from a system that puts profits before the needs of the people.

If the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., were alive today, I strongly believe he would be supporting prisoners' rights and demands because he stood with and sacrificed his life for all oppressed people. An Injury to One Is an Injury to All! Tear Down the Walls!

— **Monica Moorehead**  
for the **International Action Center**

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**PHILADELPHIA**

## People's tribunal exposes police brutality

By **Betsey Piette**  
Philadelphia

In a fitting commemoration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, a People's Tribunal Against Police Brutality and Misconduct was held at the Songhai City Cultural Center in north Philadelphia on Jan. 15. Called by the Askia Coalition Against Police Brutality, the tribunal gave voice to community residents who have been victims of police brutality and misconduct and documented cases of police brutality for legal actions against the police department.

Coalition member Gabriel Bryant said, "King's legacy has been turned into a service day, when his real legacy was about protest. ... Forty-three years later there is still no recourse for the people as far as state repression is concerned."

Police brutality and corruption are rampant in Philadelphia. Since early 2009, 11 officers have been arrested on charges including murder, rape and drug dealing. They are among 51 police officers fired for misconduct since May 2010. Brutal beatings and assaults by Philadelphia police continue particularly in African-American and Latino/a neighborhoods.

The Askia Coalition was formed in response to one bloody incident. On Sept. 3, while waiting to pick up food outside a west Philadelphia restaurant, Askia Sabur, an unarmed 29-year-old Black man, was brutally assaulted by several Philadelphia police. He reports that as he sat calmly on the sidewalk repeatedly telling the police that he didn't do anything, police cuffed his hands, put him in a chokehold and struck him at least nine times with a metal baton. One officer drew his gun, threatening onlookers who were yelling for police to stop beating Sabur.

This incident might have ended as another buried statistic except that Sabur's beating was caught on cell

phone videos. He is still recovering from back problems, a broken arm and head trauma from a deep gash that required six staples. Two of the officers involved have been the subject of multiple civilian complaints over the last five years. Despite this and the images captured of the incident, Sabur was charged with two counts of aggravated assault, simple assault, reckless endangerment and resisting arrest.

**Chilling testimony shows extensive police brutality**

A tribunal highlight was testimony by Abdus Sabur, Askia Sabur's father, who described his own first encounter with police brutality in the early 1950s when police came to his house looking for his uncle. "I was a little boy, but I got a broom and I wanted to fight those people coming into my house," he said.

Abdus Sabur also reported about police retaliation and harassment of other family members who organized community protests after Askia's beating. He said that on Oct. 26, police punched and kicked Tanya Yates, Askia's cousin, after kicking in the door of her grandfather's house. Police claimed they were pursuing a male, but Yates was the only one arrested. Like Askia, she now faces assault charges.

Other victims of police brutality related their stories to the two-judge panel: Inez Rogers, Assistant Counsel General of the UNIA-ACL Legal Defense Fund, and Rochelle Bilal, president of the Guardian Civic League and a member of the National Black Police Association.

Tahira Pollard described her assault by 22nd District police officer Scott Ross, who claimed he pulled her over because he saw her talking on her cell phone. Pollard alleges Ross yelled at her, "I'm tired of you b----s," and then punched her in the head, knocking out a tooth, threw her cell phone on the ground and ran over it with

*Continued on page 6*

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# Lucasville prisoners end hunger strike in triumph

## MLK birthday victory rally at Ohio supermax prison

By Sharon Danann  
Youngstown, Ohio

Cars piled into the parking lot of the church next to the Ohio State Penitentiary in Youngstown. The parked cars left just enough room for a contingent of friends and family members of the hunger strikers to defy the frostbite weather and gather with colorful banners and signs. The contingent drove to the prison to deliver nearly 1,200 names on a petition collected through the Internet, including more than 600 collected through [www.iacenter.org](http://www.iacenter.org).

Carloads had come from Columbus and Cleveland and included many relatives of hunger striker Keith LaMar, also known by his chosen name Bomani Hondo Shakur. Siddique Abdullah Hasan, Jason Robb and Shakur, all with false convictions for their leadership roles in the prison rebellion in Lucasville, Ohio, in 1993, had been refusing food since Jan. 3 to protest their extremely stringent lockdown conditions for the past 12 years.

Demonstrators marched in a circle around the church parking lot, chanting, "Our fight, our goal, free our brothers from the hole!" and "Warden Bobby, shame, shame! No more torture in our name!"

The slogans were militant, but the mood was that of a victory celebration. It was announced that in the face of the hunger

strikers' determination and support pouring in from around the world, the prison authorities had crumbled "like wet toilet paper," as one rally participant shouted.

A break-away contingent spontaneously took off across the knee-deep snow toward the monster supermax prison with the 12-foot "Stop the Executions" banner and many other signs, chanting as they went. After they crossed 400 yards of OSP property, security vehicles stopped them at the parking lot. The activists knew they had managed to get close enough to the prison windows that inmates on the east side of the supermax, including Shakur, would be able to see them and take heart in their defiance.

The crowd then gathered in a church in downtown Youngstown for a reception hosted by the prisoner advocacy group LOOP or Loved Ones Of Prisoners. The packed room rocked with cheers at the announcement that Warden David Bobby had agreed to meet and even go beyond the demands of the "long-termers." Shakur's aunt, Carolyn Dailey, spoke of how she will be using the new semi-contact visit privileges to feed him "like I've always fed my nephew." Tears were shed amid talk of kissing relatives not kissed for nearly 18 years.

Access to the computerized database for legal research is also vitally important, given the sobering news that a judge had



March to supermax prison in Ohio.

WW PHOTO: SUSAN SCHNUR

abruptly sent back Shakur's habeas corpus petition without the usual two years of consideration. The other awards of commissary and catalog-ordering privileges and additional phone time, while important concessions to fairness, are also ways prison contractors can make additional profits. The extra eight hours per week out of their cells will ease the inmates' isolation marginally, but the warden did not agree to house them with other death-row prisoners.

The enormous Ohio-wide, nationwide and international movement that swung into action in support of the Lucasville hunger strikers now has to shift focus toward overturning their convictions and halting their executions. As of noon on Jan. 15, all three men had resumed eating. Robb sent this message out to the many thousands of supporters: "Thank you. Your voices were heard. We will be back in touch for the next round." □

# Meeting honors political prisoners & POWs

By Dolores Cox

The 15th Annual Dinner Tribute to the Families of our Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War was held at the Martin Luther King Jr. Labor Center in New York City on Jan. 15. This year's theme was "Fanning the Flames of Liberation: Educating Our Community About Our Freedom Fighters!"

The families of nine political prisoners/prisoners of war were presented and honored, including one of Malcolm X's daughters. They were saluted for their courage and sacrifices to the struggle for self-determination and liberation.

The dinner tribute was sponsored by the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and activists in Service Employees union Local 1199. The program included libation, cultural presentations

and speakers from the committee and from former political prisoners. Keynote speakers were 2008 Green Party vice presidential candidate Rosa Clemente and Jihad Abdul-Mumit, Jericho Movement national chairperson and former prisoner. Moderator was Brother Zayid Muhammed.

Among statements read was one from Herman Ferguson, former prisoner, co-founder of the Malcolm X Commemoration Committee and original member of Malcolm's Organization of Afro-American Unity.

Participants observed a moment of silence for prisoners who committed their lives to the struggle and died in prison. Most of the prisoners being honored have been in jail for more than 35 years and are scheduled to never be reunited with family or friends. Some are serving life

sentences for fighting for a better world, a world without racism and oppression.

Speakers stressed the importance of coalition building, collaboration and strengthening the movement, as well as the need to expand outreach nationally and internationally. Plus the need to find more effective ways of fighting the system. The National Jericho Movement circulated a petition calling for congressional hearings on the legacy and continuing impact of the FBI's illegal counterintelligence program known as Cointelpro.

The meeting acknowledged several political prisoners who had been imprisoned for more than 35 years and denied parole. At the same time, speakers pointed out that the New York state parole board released Malcolm X's convicted killer this past April after he served the last 20 years in a work-release program.

Also mentioned was that Mumia Abu-Jamal was denied a crucial Supreme Court hearing and that a biased propaganda film against Mumia, "From the Barrel of a Gun," has been made. A progressive film, "Justice on Trial," addressing evidence and issues relating to violations of Mumia's constitutional rights has also been produced.

Among those honored was people's lawyer Lynne Stewart, now serving 10 years, as well as her family. A moving statement from Stewart was read by Rosa Clemente.

All those present were encouraged to write and visit prisoners being held throughout the U.S. criminal injustice system to let them know they're not forgotten. To become involved, visit [TheJerichoMovement.com](http://TheJerichoMovement.com) or email [nycericho@gmail.com](mailto:nycericho@gmail.com). □

# Jan. 25: Stop federal grand jury

By John Catalinotto  
New York

A broad group of New York City area organizations have called for a demonstration at the downtown Manhattan FBI offices on Jan. 25 to protest FBI repression of anti-war and international solidarity activists. This protest is one of dozens planned for cities around the U.S. and worldwide.

The groups have also called for a regional solidarity conference on Feb. 12 "to discuss next steps for fighting back against FBI and grand jury repression," they said in their leaflet.

Revulsion over a Sept. 24 Justice Department-ordered raid on homes and offices, mostly in Minneapolis-St. Paul and Chicago areas, has led to the protest campaign. That day the FBI served subpoenas on 14 people, demanding that they testify before a Chicago grand jury. Those subpoenaed are anti-war organizers or international solidarity activists, mainly with liberation

movements in Palestine or Colombia.

In response all 14 people signed a letter, which said they would invoke their Fifth Amendment rights; that is, they would not cooperate with the grand jury. Following these refusals and a series of protests and petitions, the grand jury dropped the original Sept. 24 subpoenas. In December the Chicago grand jury, under the direction of U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald, issued nine new subpoenas.

Three of the original subpoenas were also reactivated, directed at three women from Minneapolis. The three — Tracy Molm, Anh Pham and Sarah Martin — continue to stand strong against cooperating.

This principled position — no cooperation with what they consider a "fishing expedition" directed at political activists — has won the subpoenaed activists strong support among progressive people around the country and from a broad range of political organizations, anti-war groups and civil liberties' defenders. Those subpoenaed face possible prison

sentences simply for refusing to testify against equally innocent friends and acquaintances, should the grand jury offer them immunity from prosecution.

At a Jan. 10 meeting at the Center for Constitutional Rights' offices in New York, 20 area groups agreed to call for people to gather on the Broadway side of the FBI offices at 26 Federal Plaza at 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 25. From there, the protesters will march at 6 p.m. to the Justice Department's offices at 1 St. Andrew's Plaza on the east side of Foley Square and Centre Street, south of Pearl Street.

In the period since 9/11, the FBI and other police organizations have stepped up repression of the entire Muslim community in the United States. Many people have been framed up by FBI and police informants who set up an entire alleged "terrorist" conspiracy, entrapping people from the community. The current attacks now expand the repression beyond the Muslim community to all anti-war and solidarity activists.

Besides asking people to come out on Jan. 25, the New York groups also suggest that people can show solidarity if they:

1. Sign the National Petition to Stop FBI Repression of Activists: [www.stopfbi.net](http://www.stopfbi.net).
2. Call President Barack Obama (202-456-1111) and U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder (202-353-1555) and demand: Stop the repression. Immediately return all confiscated materials. No grand jury proceedings.
3. Donate at [StopFBI.net/donate](http://StopFBI.net/donate) or mail checks to Committee to Stop FBI Repression, P.O. Box 14183, Minneapolis, MN 55414.
4. Volunteer time and skills. Organize an event, join a support committee, and help with web design, graphics or many other things.
5. To get involved with the conference in New York, email [NYCStopFBI@gmail.com](mailto:NYCStopFBI@gmail.com). □

## North Carolina

# Struggle of 'Sanitation Two' shows need for collective bargaining

By Scott Williams  
Chapel Hill, N.C.

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day 2011, over 250 people marched through downtown Chapel Hill, N.C., demanding "Re-hire the Sanitation Two." The Sanitation Two, Clyde Clark and Kerry Bigelow, are two leaders of the Chapel Hill Chapter of United Electrical Workers Local 150, North Carolina's Public Service Workers Union. Clark and Bigelow worked for the Town of Chapel Hill Public Works Department where they have been leaders and activists in UE 150, filing grievances and speaking out against racist hiring decisions, issues of unsafe working conditions and consistently abusive management.

In late September, the Town of Chapel Hill suspended the Two and spent \$22,000 of taxpayer money to investigate a complaint from one resident about issues on their route. The subsequent biased investigation carried out by an anti-worker, anti-union private investigator led to the Town of Chapel Hill firing the two workers on Oct 29 for one minor incident.

The real reason Chapel Hill fired the Sanitation Two was because they organized and fought back against racism, for safe and respectful working conditions and to build UE 150.

Since September hundreds of workers, community members and students have spoken out at Town Council meetings to demand the town immediately rehire the



Clyde Clark of 'Sanitation Two' argues for his rights.

WW PHOTO: SCOTT WILLIAMS

Sanitation Two. Lawsuits and appeals have been filed, but real pressure needs to continue to build with people in the streets.

Reverend Kerry Bigelow, a waste collector and one of the Sanitation Two, inspired by Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, spoke to hundreds at the Peace and Justice Plaza on MLK Day, stating, "It takes a mass of people to stand up and say we aren't going to tolerate this. That's when things are going to change. We need people to get out of their living rooms and join us as they realize that this is not just an issue of two

workers, but it's the same issues which affect all workers, white or Black."

The unfair firing of the Sanitation Two shows the need for workers' rights in North Carolina. If there were a union with a collective bargaining contract with the Town of Chapel Hill, this incident would not have happened. North Carolina is one of two states which make it illegal for public workers to have a union contract. This anti-labor Jim Crow law, General Statute 95-98, has been condemned by the U.N. International Labor Organization as a violation of basic human rights. □

## No matter who is in the White House

# Dr. King would demand justice

The following statement was issued by Black Workers For Justice, P.O. Box 1863, Rocky Mount, N.C. 27802.

Dr. King marched, got beaten, went to jail and was assassinated fighting for justice, worker rights and human rights.

The fight against racial oppression and injustice was more than a struggle to change the color of the president and political leadership throughout the U.S. It was a struggle to change the racist, sexist, economic and military policies, conditions and power relationships that maintain the oppression of Blacks, people of color, women and poor people in the U.S. and the unjust wars and occupations throughout the world.

Dr. King said that "people should be judged, not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

Dr. King would not be silent against the continuation of these injustices under the Obama administration. He would not be content by saying that Obama is not as bad as Bush. He would probably be more disappointed and upset, because of the many sacrifices that have been made to elect an Obama and the many Black elected and appointed officials throughout the country.

Dr. King would call for people to take actions against massive unemployment; housing foreclosures and evictions; budget cuts of vital public services, social programs and attacks on worker rights; murderous police actions against Black youth; millions without health insurance; environmental racism; attacks on

public education; and the billions given to the banks and corporations to bail them out of the crisis they created.

Dr. King would strongly oppose and expose the racist and divisive message of [Tea Party,] who are financed by big corporations, who blame the crisis on Black people and Latina/o immigrant workers, and who oppose any government spending to address the needs of working class and poor people.

The honoring of Dr. King must be shown by the rebuilding and mobilization of the mass movements for social and economic justice challenging the forces of oppression, corporate greed and war. There can be no real honoring of Dr. King if there are no mass struggles against oppression and injustice.

The call for compromises between the Democratic and Republican parties, both of which have favored the corporations and rich over the working class and poor, is not a solution to the problems faced by millions today. The masses of people must be organized independently of both corporate-dominated parties into peoples assemblies, community transformation councils and labor unions that put forth real programs for a people's recovery and progressive changes that empowers the people over institutions and resources.

### Defend public sector unions

The attack on public sector workers and unions, blaming them for the state and local government budget crises, is the new corporate line to place the bur-

den on the backs of the working class. It is an attempt to separate the needs of the public sector workers from the services they provide to the people.

The attack on the more than 630,000 North Carolina public sector workers is a major part of the attack on health care, education, public services, social programs and public safety that affect the lives of millions of mainly working-class and poor people across the state.

The NC Public Service Workers Union, UE150 has been in the forefront of the struggles challenging the attacks on public sector workers in state and local government and repealing the Jim Crow law that bans collective bargaining rights for public sector workers in North Carolina.

These struggles need the support of Blacks, working class and poor people across the state, nationally and internationally. They should be seen as a clarion call for a movement to build and expand working-class power to stop the destruction and human rights violations that capitalist greed is inflicting on the lives and communities of peoples throughout the U.S. and globally.

Dr. King's last major fight against injustice was his support of the public sector workers in Memphis, Tenn. Despite the fears by many of Dr. King's participation with the Memphis workers, and not unlike the fears of many today because of the economic crisis, Dr. King said the struggle must be waged!

Honor Dr. King by Rebuilding the People's Movements for Social and Economic Justice! □

## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

### Cincinnati's King Day challenges gov's attacks

Cincinnati's annual AFL-CIO Martin Luther King Jr. conference moved to City Hall on Jan. 14 to condemn Gov. John Kasich's plan to strip Ohio child care and home health care workers of their collective bargaining rights. The 400 union activists wanted the new Republican governor to know that "Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream of social and economic justice is not dead" and it's just plain wrong "to blame and punish low-income workers for the state of the economy." As 13-year home care worker Teresa Laws stated during the protest, "Without home-care workers, the state would be spending three times as much to keep their patients in institutions. ... When [Gov. Kasich] tries to take away collective bargaining, he is trying to take our voice." (aflcio.org, Jan. 14)

### Md. public sector unions strategize

On Jan. 11 about 100 Maryland and District of Columbia area labor leaders met to strategize about defensive measures to stop cuts to public workers' pensions and health care benefits. "We have to gear up and work together to protect ourselves against attacks on public sector employees, attacks on immigrants and ballot initiatives that attack labor," said area AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Donna Edwards. (Union City!, online newsletter of the Metro Washington, D.C., AFL-CIO, Jan. 12)

### Public sector workers earn less, not more

The Economic Policy Institute issued a study in 2010 proving that, contrary to right-wing demagoguery, public sector workers were paid less than workers in the private sector. Rutgers professor Jeffery Keefe showed in "Debunking the Myth of the Overcompensated Public Employee" that after controlling for many factors, including level of education, hours worked and non-cash compensation, full-time state and local employees are underpaid compared to "otherwise similar private sector workers." Private sector workers were paid on average \$6,061 more annually than public sector workers. Even when benefits were included, private sector workers still were paid \$2,001 more than public sector workers. As a Jan. 5 EPI release noted, cutting public employee wages and weakening their unions would continue 30 years of declines in working class wages and union representation. It's time to unite and fight back: An injury to one is an injury to all!

### Law profs support S.F. hotel workers

When an ad hoc committee of law professors learned that the Association of American Law Schools was planning to hold its annual meeting in San Francisco at the Hilton Union Square Hotel, hundreds of law teachers, librarians and administrative staff asked that AALS events take place elsewhere. The hotel has been boycotted for nearly a year and a half at the request of hotel workers represented by UNITE HERE! Not only were the majority of programs relocated, but hundreds of AALS attendees joined the hotel workers' picket line on Jan. 7. As Northeastern University law professor Karl Klare noted in the committee's statement, "Our professional lives and our professional association should model a commitment to social justice and a special sensitivity to the needs of vulnerable, excluded and marginalized [workers]." (UH release, Jan. 8)

# Woodlawn cemetery workers rally to fight bosses' threats

By Dee Knight  
Bronx, N.Y.

The 350,000 permanent inhabitants of Woodlawn Cemetery in the northwest Bronx were not disturbed by the militant crowd that rallied at the main gate during the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday. But Woodlawn management was definitely disturbed, as they cowered behind the gate, protected by New York City police. The Jan. 17 rally was organized by Teamsters Local 808, representing the Woodlawn workers led by the Band of Brothers, who have conducted a three-year campaign against plantation-style racist abuse on the job.

The Brothers and their union are now fighting Woodlawn management's threat to abolish almost two-thirds of the union jobs at the cemetery and replace them with a contractor who employs immigrant workers on "special visas." Despite the intensified anti-immigrant frenzy fueled by right-wingers, Woodlawn management and other bosses prefer workers whom they can bully into thinking they have no rights and no recourse to sub-minimum-wage pay and miserable working conditions.

Enrique Coss, a leader of the Band of Brothers and union steward, told Workers World he felt "an overwhelming feeling of love at the amount of support we received." He added, "Many standing with us know these issues affect all workers, not just the Woodlawn workers. We are lighting a torch for the sake of all workers and all union workers in a climate in which they want to bust unions and kill union contracts."

Coss pointed out that newly elected Democratic New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg are bringing a long-predicted storm to the workers of New York. "The storm is in the shape of Cuomo and Bloomberg, who want to bust unions, freeze pensions and get rid of union workers," Coss said. "Today we showed the Bronx and New York that this is only the beginning of a volcano that is slowly erupting in response to this storm."

## Teamster power

Teamster power was evident at the rally. "I noticed a large group of Teamsters

there: Locals 831, 805, 814 and 804, as well as 808," Coss observed. These locals cover warehouse workers, UPS drivers, MetroNorth railroad employees and others. Local 805 President Sandy Pope, a leader of Teamsters for a Democratic Union who is running for Teamsters general president, expressed strong support for Local 808 leader Chris Silvera.

Silvera said Woodlawn management talks about needing to save \$750,000 per year, so they must either eliminate 23 of the 38 union jobs or impose a 35 percent pay cut. But management has not discussed eliminating some of the super-high top management salaries. Cutting just two of these, plus perks like chauffeured limos and other luxuries, would close the gap while helping to beautify the cemetery.

Silvera points out that Woodlawn is not just robbing 23 people of jobs, but the community and state itself, which would lose the wages circulating in the community and the tax money to pay for public services. Instead workers would be forced to become recipients of public services while their families would be severely hurt.

Silvera said: "This is the beginning of a struggle. We are going to make the president of this cemetery uncomfortable at his house. We're going to take it to his house so his neighbors will know the crap that he is. This is a country that has in excess of 10 percent unemployment, and if you are telling me you want to kick me to the curb and bring a guy from 2,000 to 3,000 miles away to take my job, you got a war. The bosses are going to see an insurgency."

Speaking of Cuomo, Silvera said, "He is anti-labor. He wants to throw 100,000 state workers off the payroll, but he doesn't want to raise taxes on the rich — that's wrong!"

"There's a lot wrong in this system," Silvera continued. "This war is wrong. This war is sucking money out of the society that could go toward dealing with these budgetary problems that we face, or that they claim we face. ... We need to end the war and still tax the rich! We need to become part of a global struggle that supports people in Guatemala," Silvera said. "NAFTA destroyed Mexico. CAFTA destroyed Central America. We are going to assault all of these trade bills. We are not going to stop here — Dr. King lives!"



WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

## Youth at Band of Brothers protest.

Teresa Gutierrez, coordinator of the May 1 Coalition for Workers' and Immigrants' Rights, said that while we want jobs for all workers, including undocumented immigrants, we're not for Brickman and Woodlawn management using the plight of workers in other countries to drag them here and use them to break unions or replace the jobs of workers here.

## Strong union solidarity

Most notable in the outpouring of union solidarity was District Council 37 Local 374, workers at the world-famous New York Botanical Gardens. When these workers heard of the Band of Brothers' struggle at nearby Woodlawn, steward Fredy Fret declared, "We're the Band of Brothers, too." Their banner showing unity between Local 808 and Local 374-DC37 was prominent at the rally and showed up on television reports on several channels. It was hoisted by Local 374 members wearing newly minted "Band of Brothers" sweatshirts.

Another notable delegation was workers from other cemeteries around New York City as well as Westchester County, which is just north of the Bronx. Enrique Coss commented that these workers "are going through the same issues and harsh treatments as we are. They all feel this is not just happening to us but to workers throughout the cemetery industry."

There were also strong delegations from Transport Workers Union Local 100, including President John Samuelson, District 32BJ-Schools Division, and Service Employees union District 1199-Health Division. Also United Federation of Teachers and New York State United Teachers, as well as the Professional Staff Congress/American Federation of Teachers at City University of New York, UNITE-HERE and the New York State Nurses Association, with members from nearby Montefiore Hospital. There were also members of the solidarity committee with the Stella D'Oro bakery workers, who put up a protracted battle a year ago.

## Community joins in

The New York Labor Chorus brightened the march and rally with labor songs. There was also a delegation of high school and college students from FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together). Bronx high school students carried a sign that read: "The working class has a right to a job." Many workers' families were present. At one point Chris Silvera noted that "if our kids

are to have a future where they can actually afford to live, we have to fight back now."

Community groups included the South Bronx Community Congress, of which the Band of Brothers are members, the Freedom Party's Bronx chapter, the Bronx Green Party, the Bail Out the People Movement, BAYAN-Alliance for Filipino Concerns, May 1 Coalition for Workers' and Immigrants' Rights, Picture the Homeless, the Million Worker March Movement and Workers World Party.

In addition to union representatives, speakers included a BAYAN leader who placed the Woodlawn workers' struggle in the context of the international fight against imperialist exploitation. Brenda Stokely of the MWMM highlighted the importance of involving the broadest possible support from all unions in New York. She and Chris Silvera highlighted the fact that there are 1.4 million union workers in New York City and that they need to be mobilized.

Gavrielle Gemma of Bail Out the People Movement called for all to pledge that if management tries to bring in contractors, "they will not get through the gates — Teamsters work at Woodlawn!" BOPM's Larry Holmes pointed out that if Woodlawn management is permitted to prevail, it will be a setback for all workers, while a victory at Woodlawn will stimulate many more victories to come for both organized and not-yet-organized workers of all nationalities.

Pastors Lydia Lebron of the Church of the Resurrection in the south Bronx and Doug Cunningham of the New Day United Methodist Church in the northwest Bronx both spoke on behalf of their congregations, whose many members were present. Both underscored the importance of this fight against racism. Cunningham highlighted Martin Luther King Jr.'s prophetic observation that over and over in history the side of the oppressed has been able to win against overwhelming odds because the power of justice and right is on our side. Bronx State Assemblyperson Jose Rivera also spoke, expressing strong solidarity with the Woodlawn workers.

Next steps were announced. Chris Silvera declared that plans are underway for another rally on Presidents' Day, Feb. 21. He added that he and other union leaders are planning a major Labor-Community Forum at Hostos College on Jan. 29 to broaden this struggle and link it to a fight-back against Cuomo's and Bloomberg's union-busting programs. □



Band of Brothers members, Jan. 17, Bronx, N.Y.

WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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## Behind Arizona shooting

# Politicians, media remain silent on conditions

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

A week after the assassination attempt on Congressperson Gabrielle Giffords, the political climate in Arizona remains unchanged.

President Barack Obama came to Tucson on Jan. 12 to meet with survivors of the shooting and families of the victims. He gave a televised speech at the University of Arizona's McKale Center that

evening. During his speech Obama made some mild criticisms of the vicious right-wing language that encouraged these murderous acts, but the essence of his speech was an appeal to people's emotions and a call for calm "civil discourse."

Obama was accompanied by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, who served two terms as Arizona governor immediately prior to being picked as director of DHS. It was during Napolitano's tenure that plans for the

multibillion-dollar Secure Border Initiative project were developed; Sheriff Joe Arpaio was given free rein to terrorize and round up immigrant workers in Maricopa County; and the fascist Minutemen and Border Guardians were permitted to recruit and train in Pinal and Cochise counties.

Both Napolitano and Obama are aware of racist law SB 1070; the attack against Tucson's Ethnic Studies program; and the intention of reactionary legislators in Arizona and 13 other states to attack the

Fourteenth Amendment, which gives citizenship to all people born in the U.S. Yet none of these subjects was mentioned during Obama's speech.

Arizona ranks in the top 10 states for foreclosure rates, second in the country in poverty, and its official unemployment rate is 9.4 percent. The effects of the capitalist economic crisis are devastating. The corporate media, which have been camped out in Tucson since the shooting, have not uttered a word about these economic conditions. □

# Palin invokes anti-Semitism to deflect blame for Arizona murders

By Edward Yudelovich

Twenty people were shot and six of them died while attending a political rally for Rep. Gabrielle Giffords in Tucson, Ariz., on Jan. 8. Giffords, who was seriously wounded in the attack, was the first Jewish woman congressional representative from Arizona and openly identified as Jewish during the election campaign.

Sarah Palin, the unsuccessful Republican candidate for vice president in 2008 and spokesperson for the racist Tea Party movement, during the 2010 elections put a map on her website with Rep. Giffords' district behind the crosshairs of a rifle, accompanied by the words, "Don't

retreat, RELOAD!"

Palin commented on the Arizona massacre on Jan. 12: "Especially within hours of a tragedy unfolding, journalists and pundits should not manufacture a blood libel that serves only to incite the very hatred and violence that they purport to condemn. That is reprehensible." How dare Sarah Palin compare her situation to that of the Jewish victims of anti-Semitism, which included 6 million murdered by the Nazis, one-third of all world Jewry, during World War II.

According to Wikipedia: "Blood libel refers to a false accusation or claim that religious minorities, usually Jews, murder children to use their blood in certain

aspects of their religious rituals and holidays. Historically, these claims — alongside those of well poisoning and host desecration — have been a major theme in European persecution of Jews. The libels typically allege that Jews require human blood for the baking of matzos for Passover."

According to Jewish historian Walter Zeev Laqueur: "Altogether, there have been about 150 recorded cases of blood libel (not to mention thousands of rumors) that resulted in the arrest and killing of Jews throughout history. ... In almost every case, Jews were murdered, sometimes by a mob, sometimes following torture and a trial."

In 1910 many Jews, including this writer's family, fled to the U.S. from czarist Russia following anti-Jewish pogroms, similar to the night raids of the Ku Klux Klan in the U.S. An anti-Semitic flier in Kiev read: "Christians, take care of your children! It will be Jewish Passover on March 17." In the 1920s the capitalist auto industrialist Henry Ford published a virtual encyclopedia of this type of anti-Semitic material in his series of books, "The International Jew." For this effort, Adolf Hitler awarded him the Grand Cross of the German Eagle in 1938.

Sarah Palin is not the clown portrayed by Tina Fey on "Saturday Night Live." She rose to prominence to give the ultraright a new lease on life. Her political mentors in Alaska politics were Mark Chryson, a leader of the extremely right-wing Alaska Independence Party, and Steve Stoll, a John Birch Society activist. The AIP is so racist and right wing that it considers the U.S. Civil War an act of Northern aggression.

In her speech at the 2008 Republican

National Convention, Sarah Palin quoted from the infamous anti-communist, anti-Semitic and anti-labor John Birch Society writer, Westbrook Pegler, who publicly advocated the assassinations of both Franklin Roosevelt and Robert F. Kennedy. With fake populism, Pegler had said, "We grow good people in our small towns with honesty and sincerity and dignity." Palin most likely got this quote from her ally, Nazi and Klan sympathizer Pat Buchanan, who used it in his 1990 book, "Right from the Beginning."

In 1939 a cartoon appeared in newspapers across the country showing the Statue of Liberty holding the sign "KEEP OUT." It was an ironic comment on "Lady Liberty," the New York harbor statue which supposedly welcomed immigrants to the U.S. That year a ship full of Jewish refugees was denied entry to the U.S. The Jewish passengers were sent back to Germany and Hitler's death camps. The message of that cartoon has never been rescinded by the U.S. ruling class. Its targets include Latinos/as, especially in Arizona, Asian Americans and really anybody who does not fit Sarah Palin's definition of "good people grown in our small towns."

There is a historic antidote to anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism, anti-LGBT attacks and all forms of bigotry. In 1943, the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto, the only survivors of Warsaw's Jewish community, which had once numbered 500,000, rose up in rebellion against the Nazis and held off the German army for an entire month. Their example is universal, inspiring and empowering to members of every oppressed community to assert their right to freedom and equality and to sweep into the dustbin of history each and every one of imperialism's racist storm troopers. □

## Philadelphia police brutality

Continued from page 2

her car. The incident was caught on a security camera and witnessed by Pollard's friend. Pollard was charged with resisting arrest. She has since learned that 13 other women filed assault complaints against Ross in the past five months.

Basiymah Mu-Bey, a long-time activist and Mumia supporter, described another assault on a Black woman by 22nd District police. Mu-Bey reported that on Nov. 27, Niamah Shabazz-Jones parked outside her home to pick up a suitcase, leaving her 12-year-old in the car to watch over two younger siblings. When Shabazz-Jones returned, she saw a white man banging on the car window.

Shabazz-Jones says that when she approached the man to tell him to keep away from her children, he grabbed her in a chokehold, pushed her face down to the ground and only then identified himself as an undercover police officer before repeatedly tasing her. Shabazz-Jones could not testify on her own behalf because she still faces charges.

Diop Olugbala, president of the International People's Democratic Uhuru Movement, showed a video of his assault by police during a 2010 protest at Philadelphia's City Hall against massive city budget cuts.

Ernest Ford, Haitian activist and Mumia supporter, described how police targeted and beat him at a west Philadelphia rally against police brutality in July 2005. Ford was charged with 27 counts, including making terroristic threats. He was convicted only of simple assault for stepping on a police officer's foot as he was being tackled to the ground. Ford has written a book about his case.

Ramona Africa, sole survivor of the 1985 police fire bombing of the MOVE house in Philadelphia, described the ongoing murderous police campaign against her family. She is in the process of bringing a civil suit charging city officials with murder.

Annette Dickerson of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York described an October 2010 report about the New York Police Department's Stop-and-Frisk statistics, which revealed a pattern of unconstitutional stops disproportionately affecting Black and Latino/a New Yorkers. Of almost 600,000 people stopped in 2009, 80 percent were Black or Latino/a. A similar pattern involving Philadelphia's Stop-and-Frisk program is the basis for a recent American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit.

Dickerson stated that the motivation behind these police tactics, usually directed against people of color, the homeless, residents of public housing and lesbian/gay/bi/transgender communities, is about control. "The administration wants to sanitize the city and drive us out," Dickerson said. "They don't care where we go."

Sobukwe Bambaata, an Askia Coalition member, compared these tactics to the U.S. military's scorched earth policies in Iraq: "In Iraq it was for oil. Here they need to drive us out of areas where million-dollar condominiums are being built. It's for profit."

Conditions in the once predominantly African-American neighborhood around the Songhai City Cultural Center, long a gentrification target, bear this out. Blocks of high-priced town houses ring the area, with huge billboards in vacant lots advertising luxury condos yet to be built.

Bambaata also noted, "If you're a young Black man in Philadelphia your chances of getting locked up and thrown into jail are considerably higher than your chance of getting a job."

Shasheena Bray announced the Askia Coalition would hold training on community control over the police in late February. "We have given too much power to too many people who do not have our interests at heart." She invited audience members to attend the coalition's weekly Monday meetings at 6 p.m. at 5301 Media St. in Philadelphia. □

## On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

### Musicians target Ford at auto show

Musicians in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, who have been on strike since Oct. 4, passed out copies of a letter to Ford Motor Co. at the annual auto show on Jan. 10. The musicians, represented by the American Federation of Musicians Local 5, are asking Ford to cease funding the DSO until the 15-week strike is over. Part of the AFM members' strategy is to encourage donors and funders to withhold support until management settles the strike "in a fair and equitable manner." Though DSO management offered a new compensation package over the holidays, a Local 5 spokesperson gave thumbs down, saying that average player compensation would actually be about \$60,000 lower than DSO's stated offer. (Crains, Jan. 10)

### S.F. Labor Council defends WikiLeaks

On Jan. 10 the San Francisco Labor Council unanimously passed a resolution in "firm opposition to the efforts of the U.S. and other governments and corporations to criminalize, financially destroy and shut down WikiLeaks and to silence, jail and prosecute Julian Assange as well as Bradley Manning." Noting the "criminal record of the U.S. government in violating international agreements and committing war crimes against people throughout the world, including wars in Iraq and Afghanistan," the resolution urges unions "to publicly reaffirm and defend our fundamental right to freedom of speech, freedom of the press and the ability to freely and openly expose and criticize the illegal, corrupt and undemocratic practices of governments and corporations." □

## WWP leader on Tucson:

# 'Don't let the system off the hook!'

Following is a somewhat condensed version of a talk by Workers World Party Secretariat member Teresa Gutierrez to a Jan. 14 WWP forum in New York.

In the wake of the events in Tucson, one of the running themes in the media all week was: "This is not the time to point fingers; this is the time to remember the fallen." We say no. This is exactly the time to point fingers while remembering the victims.

And we point the finger not only at the racist, reactionary rhetoric of the right, not only at the Sarah Palins, Glenn Becks and the Tea Party, but at the entire capitalist system.

The bourgeoisie, the media and the government want to narrow the focus on this tragedy. The theory of a "lone assassin" or "a deranged killer" is in their interests; it keeps the system off the hook. This we must not allow.

We have to point out that the capitalist system cannot function without terror and violence at its command. It needs and counts on divisions and alienation in society so that it can be free to carry out its war against the workers and the oppressed.

From day one this country was built on such violence and terror: the horrific enslavement of African people, the robbery of Mexico, the genocide of Native people, the foreign domination of oppressed lands.

What else can we expect except tragedies like Tucson when the foundation of this country is built on aggression and putrid to its core? This is the "America" we are expected to rally around.

The International Action Center and Workers World Party were the first to call this a political assassination attempt. It was obvious that the extreme anti-immigrant, racist, anti-worker climate in Arizona led to Saturday's events.

### Deepening economic crisis behind tragedy

We did not need to know the mental stability of the suspected shooter, Jared Lee Loughner, because he was influenced by the rhetoric filling the air waves. It was the racist, anti-Obama, right-wing language; the militarization of the border; the ban on ethnic studies; the lying, deceitful rhetoric on health care; attacks on abortion; and so on that led to his actions.

As the sheriff of Pima County, Clarence Dupnik, said: "Arizona has become the Mecca of hatred." And while we do not characterize a political climate with an emotion, we agree that the reactionary climate was behind these events.

Dupnik is a life-long cop, a representative of the state, and he is motivated by a desire to preserve capitalist order. Since his comment, the right wing in Tucson has gone after him and is calling for his resignation.

We may never know who was whispering what to Jared Lee Loughner. That may be revealed in some scandalous exposé years from now. But we do know this: Mental hospitals are being shut down with no concern at all for the mentally ill. The sick are forced to sadly walk the streets alone and homeless because of cuts in health care.

Much has been revealed about Loughner's state of mind. Reports indicate that he was psychologically severely ill. There is no evidence yet to show whether or not there was a fascist conspiracy to use him, but it is clear he was immersed in vile attitudes manipulated by the right.



Teresa Gutierrez, second from left, is a leading organizer of the May 1 Coalition. The focus of the movement across the country has been on the vicious anti-immigrant legislation and repression.

Loughner had been rejected by the military, kicked out of school, had several encounters with police, was even arrested. He could have made any of these a target. But instead he went after an elected official.

If we lived in another kind of society, where genuine help was available for the ill, an organized community based on solidarity, not profit or individualism, would have stuck to him until it was assured he was being taken care of. Financial issues would not be obstacles to proper treatment.

But that is not the picture of capitalism at all. Capitalist society reeks with alienation and individualism. Every person, every family is on its own. This is fostered by every single racist, anti-worker, anti-poor institution from the courts to the education and health care systems.

Look at what is happening in the prisons around this country. It is state-sponsored terror and violence.

Two women — the Scott Sisters — were in a horrible jail for 16 years for allegedly taking \$11! The prisoners of Ohio and Texas are tortured every single day. In a way that is a much worse crime than anything a lone person does.

And we cannot forget terrorist acts like the FBI killing of an Imam in Detroit, the ongoing police shootings of Black and Latino youth, the murder of a 17-year-old migrant on the border just a few days before the Tucson tragedy. All are examples of the violence that is a by-product of the capitalist system.

Above all, we know that behind the tragedy in Tucson is the deepening economic crisis. As the capitalist class goes after public workers, unions, immigrants and oppressed people, as it moves to make conditions here like those in oppressed countries around the world, it needs divisions, racism and reaction to carry out its brutal program.

Tucson was a political, fascist assassination attempt because it took place at ground zero of the right-wing climate; because the target was not random individuals but an elected official, a member of Congress who had been steadily singled out by the right wing.

Paul Teitelbaum, in his article in the Jan. 20 Workers World, lists all the attacks against Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, including the infamous crosshairs that Sarah Palin put on Giffords' district on her website.

Just a word on Giffords. She is no progressive. She supported the militariza-

tion of the border and was basically quiet on SB 1070 and the Arizona ban on ethnic studies. But the right wing hated her nonetheless.

We do not know if the fact that she was a Jewish woman contributed to why Loughner went after her. A lot has to do with how her opponent in the congressional race, Jesse Kelly, conducted his campaign. He invited supporters to join him at a gun range to fire an M-16 assault rifle; his election poster showed him cradling one with the words, "Send a warrior to Congress." Some on the right attended Giffords' events carrying arms.

In our statements, we pointed out that if the shooter had been a person of color, an immigrant or a Muslim, this would have immediately been characterized as a terrorist act.

The case is now in the hands of the FBI, the same ones who have not rounded up fascist right-wingers or Minutemen but have instead gone after anti-war activists. That is why a people's investigation and a people's response is the only alternative to the events in Tucson.

It is very likely that the Justice Department and its FBI will cover this all up. If the state proceeds with a nonpolitical interpretation of Saturday's events and restricts the action to that of a lone deranged individual, this will be a signal to fascist elements: Keep doing what you are doing; you are safe. This will allow the fascist elements in society to grow. And this we cannot allow.

The memorial on Jan. 12 was a rally of social democratic forces and the more moderate wing of the ruling class. Not all of those there, of course, were social democrats; many were part of the capitalist establishment. But the event definitely strengthened the social democrats in the movement who are loyal to the capitalist parties.

President Obama's initial statement after the shooting was rather weak and completely skirted the politics of the event. He appeared fearful, and rightly so, as he is the target of a racist and violent campaign himself.

Our party understands the contradiction that the Obama presidency poses for our movement. On the one hand are his thoroughly imperialist policies of war, bailing out the banks and so on. On the other hand, we deeply understand the national question in this country, and would

defend Obama from any racist, right-wing attack in the context of solidarity with the Black community and against racism.

The moderate wing of the Democratic Party recovered itself on Jan. 12. What was a memorial to the victims also became a political event. It became an opportunity for mainstream forces among the ruling class and the Democratic Party to send a message to the right wing. It was very mild; it was very touchy-feely. But it was nonetheless a rebuke to the Palin-type ideology.

The event was opened by a Native person, a U.S. citizen who is half Mexican and proudly declared it. There was an immediate round of almost thunderous applause. For sure many Mexicans among the masses must have sighed a small sigh of relief. After all the racism and vilification of Mexicans in Arizona, it was a teensy-weensy blow against racism.

I am positive that many Mexicans wished that when a tribute

was paid to the gay Mexican who saved Gifford's life and he took the mike, he would have said something, anything about the anti-immigrant and anti-Mexican climate raging in the area, anything against the senseless, brutal and cruel deaths of Mexican immigrants on the Arizona border. But he did not. Oh, well; I know many gay Latinos who will.

### Workers & oppressed must push right wing back

The social democratic forces who rallied in Tucson cannot have the last word on these events. This is an issue for the working class; an event that revolutionary forces and class-conscious activists must take hold of. We cannot allow the liberal bourgeoisie, much less the far right of the ruling class, to set the agenda on this or any other such important development.

The working class and the oppressed must be the ones to push the right wing back. Arizona may be ground zero for the right, but it must also become ground zero for the fightback.

Who will benefit the most from the events in Tucson? Will it be the right wing? Will it be the Obama forces, who will only use the events to continue their war on the working class? Or will it be the progressive and revolutionary forces?

Can events in Arizona become the magnet for a broad working class May Day, where not just immigrants march in record numbers but other sectors of the working class join them in large numbers? This is long overdue.

Our party is committed to finding ways to connect the struggles, to build the movement against the cuts and attacks on all workers, here and around the world, to illustrate that the capitalist system is the root of all the problems and must be destroyed if humanity is to prevail.

Whatever the political landscape in the coming period, the time is long overdue to wage a militant, righteous struggle against the dire economic crisis, which is at the heart of everything in this period.

So on to defeating the right and ending fascist terror! On to winning justice for the workers and oppressed of Arizona, for land stolen from Mexico! Down with the Tea Party and Sarah Palin! Enough with the Democrats and Republicans!

Down with U.S. imperialism!  
Abolish capitalism and build socialism!  
Si se puede! □

## U.S.-South Korea Free Trade Agreement

# Attacks workers in both countries

**Martha Grevatt**  
Detroit

"I am very pleased that the United States and South Korea have reached agreement on a landmark trade deal that is expected to increase annual exports of American goods by up to \$11 billion and support at least 70,000 American jobs," stated President Barack Obama last December.

This "landmark deal" makes modifications to KORUS — the free trade agreement negotiated by former President George W. Bush and former south Korean President Roh Moo-hyun in 2007. Obama had campaigned against this agreement during his 2008 presidential bid. KORUS-FTA's selling points are changes affecting the import and export of cars, trucks and agricultural products. The United Auto Workers and United Food and Commercial Workers union also issued statements of support.

Few workers, however, are raising a glass to what looks to them like another NAFTA. In effect since January 1, 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement was passed with the support of Congressional Democrats and President Bill Clinton. NAFTA was followed by passage of similar trade pacts with Peru, Singapore and the Dominican Republic.

Since then, claims that lowering trade barriers would create jobs have been proven false. In 1994 the UAW had almost 766,000 dues-paying members. Today that figure is about 355,000. In 2009 the largest number of job cuts in a single company occurred at General Motors.

The "side agreements" covering labor rights and the environment have been worse than ineffective. In the U.S. thousands of workers are fired every year for trying to organize unions. Recently, electrical workers fighting privatization in Mexico were beaten and arrested. What about protections for the environment? Can you spell BP?

In fact, free trade agreements protect polluters through "investor-state dispute settlement" (ISDS) provisions that allow corporations to file lawsuits when their investments are negatively affected.

When the Mexican town of Guadalcázar blocked the U.S. company Metalclad from constructing a landfill over local objections, NAFTA's ISDS language allowed the company to sue and force Mexico to grant the permit and pay a fine of \$16.5 million.

Worse than NAFTA, the "labor rights" language of KORUS has not been touched in the supposedly improved version. The agreement expressly prohibits any reference to the International Labor Organization's conventions on the right to organize and bargain collectively. Instead, disputes are to be resolved by a "Labor Council" comprised of representatives of the two governments — neither of which is a friend of unions.

The International Metalworkers Federation states that in south Korea "labor repression is among the worst in the world." ([www.imfmetal.org](http://www.imfmetal.org)) Around 200 union activists are in prison; they include leaders of the Korean Metal Workers Union, jailed for over a year for a 2009 sitdown strike at Ssangyong Motors, and of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions that protested KORUS in 2007.

Recent struggles of autoworkers at Hyundai and GM Daewoo have drawn attention to the plight of 8.5 million temporary or "precarious" workers, who are more than half of all south Korean workers and two-thirds of women workers. The KMWU predicts that KORUS-FTA will increase precarious work.

For the 30 million unemployed or underemployed U.S. workers, 70,000 jobs would do little. In fact, any job creation due to exports will likely be more than offset by imports of other products. Moreover, the agreement encourages companies to move jobs overseas.

According to the U.S. State Department's 2010 Investment Climate Statement, south Korea, KORUS-FTA "would be a major step to enhance the legal framework for U.S. investors operating in Korea. All forms of investment would be protected under the KORUS-FTA agreement. ... In addition, these protections would be backed by a transparent international arbitration mechanism, under which investors may, at their own initiative, bring claims against a government for an alleged breach of the KORUS-FTA chapter."

Like NAFTA, KORUS-FTA is bad for the environment. Communities that take action against corporate polluters could likely see a repeat of the Metalclad case. The changes in the new free trade agreement, hailed by both Ford CEO Alan Mulally and UAW President Bob King, make it easier for Detroit to export vehicles by lowering south Korea's fuel economy standards and reducing higher taxes on larger engines. That means more carbon

emissions, adding to global warming.

On both sides of the Pacific, unions are raising their voices against this rotten deal. The AFL-CIO has come out against it, along with the Steelworkers, Machinists, Communication Workers, and United Electrical workers, as well as the International Longshore Workers Union.

Rank-and-file autoworkers are circulating petitions against KORUS-FTA. The KMWU, the KCTU and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions remain steadfastly opposed to any free trade agreement. Stopping the FTA was a major demand of November protests in Seoul during the G-20 Summit. Last month thousands of farmers, fearing the loss of 200,000 agricultural jobs if U.S. agribusiness floods south Korea with mass-produced food items, took to the streets in protest.

*The writer has worked at Chrysler for 23 years. Next week: Unions and the new NAFTA: Which side are you on? E-mail: [mgrevatt@workers.org](mailto:mgrevatt@workers.org)*

## What choice do we have?

### A letter to fellow youth in the United States

By Caleb T. Maupin

#### A different kind of 'hard work' needed

All our lives we've been told to work hard, study hard, get an education and go to college. If we just do this, the mythology goes, we can "get ahead" and maybe even "get rich."

Some of us grew up in relative comfort, getting some of the "glitter" that came from living in an imperialist country.

However, the days of the so-called "American Dream" are over.

We are the generation that takes Ad-derol, not to "get high," but to stay up all night studying, and that has to take an endless stream of standardized tests, designed to discredit the public schools and destroy public education.

We've certainly worked hard. We are a generation of workaholics. Yet, despite our hard work and high levels of stress, we find ourselves amidst poverty and hopelessness.

There is no factory work for us. There is no house in our future. The hope we've been fed about "making it" if we just "try hard enough" is a lie. No matter whether we are college graduates or how skilled, intelligent or determined we may be, we are coming of age amid capitalism's ruins.

What is waiting for us? A lifetime of minimum wage jobs? Our parents' base-ments? Prison? The military? Permanent unemployment?

We want to contribute to the world. We want to have meaningful lives. We want to make a difference. We want to work.

In the past people starved because there was no food. Today we are laid off and some of us are lucky enough to survive on food stamps. But skilled jobs like "short order cook" are not available. Food preparation is now assembly line work, with no skill necessary.

To find work these days, we must not only compete with other unemployed youth, but with laid-off older workers, who are adjusting to "low-wage jobs" after factories and offices closed their doors or downsized.

We find ourselves desperately trying to find a place to live, while countless homes are foreclosed and sit vacant. No one is hiring us for construction.

We may get some temporary work tearing down auto plants where our parents labored or schools abandoned in a "budget crisis."

There is a grain of truth about "working hard." It's the only way to hope for a better future. The "hard work" that is our generation's duty is to build a revolutionary, working-class youth movement.

In the 1930s Depression, working people formed "unemployment councils." They demanded, "Jobs or income now!" They said, "Fight or starve!" and "A job is a right!" When families were evicted from their homes, communities fought the cops and put them back in. When workers feared layoffs, they took over factories, which accounted for more than 500 sit-down strikes.

The students of that era formed a "National Youth Congress." They demanded free college for all, an end to campus racism and discrimination, and a jobs program for unemployed youth. Students against War & Fascism, the Young Communist League, the Young People's Socialist League, the Young Pioneers, Students for Industrial Democracy and countless other groups fought back.

They understood that millions of youth weren't unemployed because they didn't work or study hard enough. They knew that unemployment was a result of the capitalist system, where a wealthy few control resources and only hire workers when it's profitable.

Youth were in the vanguard of the Black Liberation struggle in the 1960s, sitting in at lunch counters, taking over campus buildings and marching to demand justice, integration and equality. A fighting spirit put an end to the military draft in the 1970s.

In recent days, Tunisian youth helped topple a repressive U.S.-backed regime. Young people in Haiti protest the U.S.-U.N. occupation and phony election. French, British, Italian, Greek and Puerto Rican youth are battling attacks on workers' and students' rights and benefits. Latin American youth fight for socialism and against the U.S.-backed fascist regime in Honduras.

Youth are leaders in defending Cuba's socialist system. North Korean youth mobilize as the threat of war looms. Palestinian youth are the backbone of the anti-Zionist struggle.

When will U.S. youth join the world's young people? When will we rise up?  
*Continued on page 10*

## High school student prefers socialism

*My teacher assigned my class to write an essay on whether we are for capitalism or socialism. I chose socialism. Here is my essay. I got 100 on it.*

The system of socialism is far better to me than capitalism. Socialism, in which the people own public property and have equal distribution among the people, was an idea brought up because people were sick of capitalism. Capitalists show self-interest by the tactics to make profit for themselves; some means can be by corruption for these profits. In a system of socialism, a community of comrades work together to form profit and it's fair when it would be done.

I could also agree with socialism on different standpoints. Socially, everyone is united and helps each other through socialism. Through capitalism, people care about themselves and not the welfare of their community. It's financial, which leads to people's ideas that socialism couldn't work.

Well, the question I have in mind is, "If we are living in a system now in which no one cares, then are we made to believe that this mindset is human?" It couldn't be, but some say it is. Economically, economists and business owners make profits through competition, which causes them

to charge prices as high or as low as they could get by demand. This affects how people are able to afford products, but since they're priced that way, we have to buy them.

Through socialism, a system would be made to make things affordable for the people and their interests. Politically, reforms that are usually made always seem to fail. A socialist government would make actual change that would give better effect on the country. As people under capitalism, we are eager to compete and be materialistic through name brands, etc., compared to a socialist society where we would not be materialistic and the people would actually give a helping hand to their communities.

Though I do not know how it would be like to live in a socialist country, the values I've learned make me believe the capitalist system I live in is unfair. Through capitalism, all I've seen is people caring about money, being better than everyone else (from materialism to racism), and being disconnected to our communities. If people learn how to come together, realize workers are being taken advantage of and want equal rights, things could work out with socialism.

– Dinae Anderson  
New York City high school student



## As U.S. ratchets up rhetoric

# People's Korea reaches out to south for peaceful dialog

By Deirdre Griswold

U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said on Jan. 11 that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was "becoming a direct threat to the United States."

The U.S. capitalist establishment, whose military is spread across the globe and is armed with the most destructive weapons in the history of the world, has created the myth that People's Korea is a threat to the U.S. and much of Asia.

This myth by itself would be totally unconvincing, since the DPRK — the northern half of the Korean Peninsula — could not rationally contemplate an unprovoked attack on the U.S., a military superpower. So a second myth is necessary: that the DPRK leaders are not rational. Every accusation that the DPRK poses a threat to world peace requires this second myth.

These two myths are repeated ad nauseam in the powerful U.S. corporate media.

According to Gates, the DPRK is within five years of being able to strike the U.S. with an intercontinental ballistic missile and is continuing to develop nuclear weapons.

Of course, the U.S. has had ICBMs since 1959. The Pentagon showed in 1945 that it would not shrink from using atomic weapons against civilians when it dropped bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, incinerating hundreds of thousands of people. With the development of ICBMs, it became possible for Wash-

ington to order such instant destruction almost anywhere in the world.

Using Gates's own logic, the United States became a "direct threat" to the entire world long ago.

The U.S. certainly has been a direct threat to People's Korea for more than half a century. It invaded the northern part of Korea in 1950 and carried out a brutal three-year war with vastly superior air power and weapons, yet failed to conquer this valiant country. It has tried to cripple the DPRK's economy ever since with sanctions and keeps almost 30,000 troops right on the other side of the demilitarized zone that separates the socialist north from the U.S.-allied south.

Is it not really rational, therefore, that the leaders of the DPRK feel they need strong weapons to defend themselves? Isn't Gates really afraid that if the U.S. were to militarily attack it, the DPRK could have the ability to retaliate?

For at least two generations, the U.S. ruling establishment argued that it needed to keep developing and stockpiling nuclear weapons as a "deterrent" in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. Once that struggle was over, they promised a "peace dividend" and disarmament. But most of the weapons remain and U.S. foreign policy has become more aggressive and belligerent.

Is it irrational for the leaders of the DPRK to also want to have a deterrent against attack? Why isn't this rational

for a much smaller country than the U.S. — one that has been targeted again and again by the Pentagon and included in former President George W. Bush's mythical "axis of evil"?

### New Year's message emphasizes peaceful development

The leaders of the DPRK don't represent huge corporations and banks that suck wealth out of countries around the world and need a strong military to enforce their exploitation. That's the U.S. government. The DPRK wants nothing more than to be left alone to carry out peaceful development on a socialist basis.

They showed this on Dec. 19 when, after being wildly provoked for the second time in a month by the U.S. and its south Korean allies, the DPRK leaders defused a terribly dangerous crisis. Troops of the Seoul regime in the south, backed up by U.S. advisors, again fired live shells into waters just off the DPRK during so-called war games. The north had warned that if that happened again, it would respond. It did happen again — but the armed forces of the DPRK held their fire in the interests of all the Korean people.

An authoritative joint New Year's editorial by the DPRK's three leading newspapers stated that the allocation of state resources will continue to emphasize the development of light industry and agriculture in order to raise the standard of living of the people.

For almost a decade, the people of the DPRK have tightened their belts in order to give priority to the building up of their defenses in reaction to increased U.S. threats. They have made great gains in this area. Beginning last year and continuing into 2011, the emphasis now is on using high technology to provide the people with manufactured goods of greater quality and more abundant food.

On Jan. 5 another joint statement was issued that reflected decisions of the government, the Workers' Party of Korea and other parties and organizations. This one addressed the desire of all Koreans for peace and reunification. It called for an unconditional and early opening of talks with "the political parties and organizations of south Korea including its authorities, be they authorities or civilians, ruling parties or opposition parties, progressives or conservatives."

Saying that "the issue of inter-Korean relations can never be solved by confrontation," it added that the DPRK was "ready to meet anyone, anytime and anywhere. ... The danger of war will be defused and the day of peace, reunification and prosperity be brought earlier when all Koreans assert in concert and pool their wisdom and efforts."

The south Korean authorities have yet to give a positive response. They know that the people certainly want peace. If they reject this overture from the north, the opposition in the south is sure to grow. □

# Haiti 2010: A year of tragedy & resistance

By G. Dunkel

Haiti has endured a year of unimaginable and profound suffering, under a government dedicated to greed and serving the interests of the imperialists. More than 1.5 million people are living in huts or under sheets and tarps throughout Port-au-Prince, still homeless since last January's earthquake. There is an unemployment rate of 80 percent. More than 3,600 people have died and another 171,000 are infected from the cholera epidemic, imported by Minustah, the U.N.'s occupation force.

But the last year also saw mass, popular anger and militant street protests over the terrible conditions and the fraudulent November elections and phony vote count.

The voting was so obviously rigged that 12 of the 18 presidential candidates demanded the elections be annulled. Some candidates even demanded that Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) members be arrested on fraud and incitement to violence charges.

The CEP announced on Dec. 7 that President Rene Prével's protégé Jude Célestin had edged out popular singer Michel Martelly for a run-off spot in the presidential election against Mirlande Manigat.

However, the popular reaction was swift and angry. Protesters shut down most of the major cities. Barricades were burned. As a result, the CEP and Prével backed down and said the results were provisional.

The Organization of American States then sent a "technical" mission to Haiti at the end of December to review the election's vote counts, aiming to arrive at a politically acceptable arrangement for

the Haitian ruling class and their imperialist patrons.

The OAS's subsequent report found rampant voting irregularities and fraud, which invalidated the purported voting results. It said that Manigat was in the lead, with Martelly second and Célestin third. Haiti-Libre says that it appears that Manigat and Martelly will be the candidates for the second round. However, this result was only due to the people's struggle in the streets against the phony election.

The elections were fake from the start because the most popular political party, former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas, was excluded from the ballot by the CEP — because if Fanmi Lavalas, a party detested by the imperialists, ran, it would win. Even the CEP found that less than 23 percent of eligible voters went to the polls, very likely because they didn't like the choices.

The Prével administration hasn't even been able to keep its handpicked members on the Interim Haiti Reconstruction

Commission, in charge of approving all international fund allocations donated after the earthquake, from kicking up a fuss. The 12 Haitian members wrote an open letter to the IHRC chair, former U.S. President Bill Clinton: "The twelve Haitian members signing this letter feel completely disconnected from the activities of the IHRC. ... In spite of our role in the governance structure of the institution, we have so far received no follow-up on the IHRC activities." (Le Matin, Dec. 12)

Before the earthquake, Haiti had the lowest income of any country in the Western Hemisphere, the least developed state institutions like schools, roads and water systems, and no functioning sewage treatment plant. This was the result of 200 years of economic isolation and intensely greedy neocolonial exploitation. Losing 316,000 people in the earthquake, with hundreds of thousands more severely injured, put unbearable stress on its institutions.

This natural disaster cost Haiti \$7.75

billion last year, and the country's gross domestic product declined by 7 percent, according to the U.N.'s Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Barely any of the large donations pledged by the imperialist countries have arrived, nor have they provided much help in building housing and sanitation facilities or providing medical care. Private nongovernmental organizations have offered some relief and medical care — services that governments furnish in wealthier, more developed countries.

The cholera epidemic is a huge problem. Clean water, soap and latrines would prevent cholera from spreading, but millions of Haitians have no access to these simple necessities. The disease is easy to treat, but, according to Reuters, the Cuban Medical Brigade and Doctors Without Borders provide most of the care to cholera victims. (Jan. 5)

The government hasn't yet chosen one of the proposed plans to move the earthquake debris, so barely 5 percent of the debris has been removed. Without this, houses or even temporary shelters can't be built. The one large-scale temporary housing project, for about 15,000 families, was put together on a flood plain with no reasonable access to schools or jobs. Some of the shelters first put up are now falling apart.

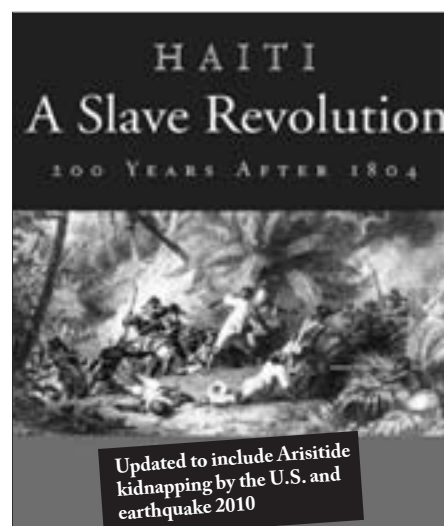
However, despite the deep hardships endured by the Haitian people, they are fighting back. When Prével tried to commemorate Haiti's independence in Gonaïve's main square on Jan. 1, the people booed him down. Anger is growing among the people of Haiti, especially those living in the camps, who have had no improvements in their living situation. □

## HAITI: A Slave Revolution 200 Years after 1804

UPDATED 2010: Includes the coup against President Aristide and the January 2010 earthquake.

Authors include: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Ramsey Clark, Pat Chin, Edwidge Danticat, Frederick Douglass, Greg Dunkel, Ben Dupuy, Sara Flounders, Stan Goff, Kim Ives, Fleurimond Kerns, Paul Laraque, Maud LeBlanc, Sam Marcy, Franz Mendes & Steve Gillis, Felix Morriseau-Leroy and Johnnie Stevens.

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**WORKERS WORLD**  
*editorial*

## Baby Doc no! Aristide yes!

In the midst of unspeakable suffering of the Haitian people and just days after the anniversary of the 2010 earthquake, one of the figures most reviled by the Haitian masses has returned to the country.

Tens of thousands were jailed, tortured and killed under the successive regimes of François “Papa Doc” Duvalier and his son, Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier, mostly by the paramilitary Tonton Macoutes. When the people of Haiti were able to force out Jean-Claude Duvalier through a mass struggle in 1986 (the father had died in office), he fled on a U.S. plane accompanied by a U.S. guard.

Duvalier had been in exile in France until he boarded a plane and arrived back in Haiti on Jan. 16.

After many Haitians demanded that Duvalier be indicted for human rights violations, he was brought to a court on Jan. 18, questioned and then returned to his luxury hotel. It is up to a judge to decide whether he’ll be formally charged with “corruption, theft, misappropriation of funds and other alleged crimes.” (Guardian, Jan. 18)

In addition to torture and killings, Duvalier’s monetary schemes are directly related to the impoverishment of Haiti. In the last six years before he fled the

country, he rerouted \$500 million in U.S. loans into his own bank accounts. It was the Haitian people, and not Duvalier, who were forced to repay the loans.

Whatever brought about the outrageous return of this mass murderer to Haiti, it raises another even more important question about another exiled president: Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Isn’t it long past time Aristide was allowed to return?

After years of repressive military regimes, the people of Haiti elected preacher and mass leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990 in a landslide, and re-elected him in 2000 with 92 percent of the vote. Washington organized a coup in 2004, kidnapping Aristide on Feb. 29 and flying him out of the country in the custody of both private security forces and the U.S. military. Some of the same Haitian military leaders who participated in the 2004 coup had previously been leaders of the Tonton Macoutes.

Aristide had the support of most Haitians when this U.S.-backed coup deposed him. And yet, in this time of need for Haitians, he is prevented from returning from Haiti. His political party, Fanmi Lavalas, is even prevented from running in the elections.

Jean-Claude Duvalier, to jail!

Jean-Bertrand Aristide, to Haiti! □

## Meeting begins mobilization for April 9 anti-war march

By John Catalinotto  
New York

Efforts for major anti-war protests on both U.S. coasts on April 9 are picking up steam. Organizers and activists from national, regional and local anti-war organizations packed a meeting hall near Times Square on Jan. 13 in the first regional mobilizing meeting for the New York demonstration. A regional conference of the United National Anti-war Committee in November had given the first push to what should now become a major anti-war campaign.

In prior conferences and interim activities, UNAC established its opposition to the active U.S. aggressive wars and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and set forth positions on other issues. The committee opposes U.S. drone attacks on Pakistan, threats against Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; U.S. arming of the Israeli state against the Palestinian people; and U.S. interventions in other regions. UNAC also defends the Muslim community in the U.S. against repression and supports actions defending the political activists recently targeted by the FBI.

Imam Abdul Al Amin Latif, president of Majlis ash-Shura, the Islamic Leadership Council of Metro NYC, representing 40 mosques in the region, spoke at the meeting. He reported on a Muslim Peace Summit held on Jan. 6 at the Long Island Islamic Center that focused on the April 9 rally.

The Muslim community will be giving strong support to the anti-war efforts. Among those who took the floor were representatives of immigrant communities, political organizations and dozens of local anti-war groups from New York City,

nearby Long Island, upstate Albany and New Jersey.

At the Jan. 13 working meeting people begin plans for outreach, especially to unions, students, the African-American community and Latinos/as, as well as all immigrants. They took copies of a leaflet publicizing the April 9 demonstration, which were brought from Albany by UNAC organizer Joe Lombardo. Participants decided to hold planning meetings every other Wednesday, starting Jan. 26. Sara Flounders of the International Action Center and Hanalei Ramos of FiRE, Filipinas for Rights & Empowerment, co-chaired the meeting.

For more information see UNACpeace.org. □

## What choice do we have? A letter to fellow youth

*Continued from page 8*

Building a revolutionary movement is the only choice we have. The work will be hard and not all fun and glory. The ruling class will try to stop us. We will need youth who are courageous, eager to take risks and willing to make sacrifices, who have the fearlessness and rage often found only in youth. What choice do we have? If we want a future, we have to forge it for ourselves.

This is a chance to have meaning in our lives that so many of us are missing. We have the potential to be the generation that finally tears down capitalism and builds a future where profits no longer rule. It’s time.

*Maupin is a member of the youth group, Fight Imperialism, Stand Together (FIST).*

## Tunisians demonstrate at U.N.



Tunisian residents living in the New York City area gathered at the United Nations to rejoice at the fall of the regime of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Their placards were decorated with images of atrocities committed by the imperialist-supported dictatorship and with slogans such as “Down with RCD!” — Ben Ali’s

party that still has control of the Tunisian state — and “Prosecute Ben Ali’s crimes against humanity!” Entire families joined the rally, joyfully chanting and waving the Tunisian flag. The crowd marched several blocks to the Tunisian U.N. mission where, held back by police barricades, they chanted in opposition to the regime.

— Report and photo by Caleb T. Maupin

## Hungry and jobless, Tunisian masses rebel

*Continued from page 1*

opposition parties who had accepted cabinet posts resigned. Two cabinet members who were RCD leaders resigned from that party. The situation was still fluid.

### Military and security forces split

Since the rebellion began throughout Tunisia, there seems to have been a split between leaders within the security forces presumed to be more loyal to ousted president Ben Ali and the military, headed by Gen. Rachid Ammar. The head of the security forces, Ali Seriaty, was reportedly arrested on Jan. 15 while trying to flee over the border with Libya.

There were claims the following day of gun battles outside the presidential palace in Carthage between elements still loyal to Ben Ali, on one side, and the regular military on the other. Interior Minister Rafik Belhaj, who had been relieved of his duties by Ben Ali earlier in the week in an effort to calm protests, was also reported to have been detained.

With rising tensions between the military and the security forces, people are arming themselves for protection against state violence. Al-Jazeera correspondent James Bay reported, “In between the roadblocks, we were coming across large groups of people who had their own homemade weapons, axes and steel bars.”

### Whither Tunisia and North Africa?

Protesters said all Jan. 17 that they wanted more than just Ben Ali’s departure. The demands of the youth and workers have been centered on the need for full employment and the control of inflation stemming from the impact of the global economic crisis. Ayesha Sabavala, deputy editor of the Economist Intelligence Unit based in London, told Al-Jazeera, “If the interim government doesn’t quickly implement measures to reduce the level of unemployment and increase standards of living, we are going to see more of these protests.”

Demonstrations on Jan. 14 and 15 focused on the hated Ministry of the Inte-

rior and other government buildings. The new interim administration, which is still controlled by the ruling RCD party, will not willingly give up control of the police and army — the state. Nor will leading officials within the political establishment give up their posts unless, like Ben Ali, they see no other alternative when faced with a concerted, organized mass force.

In neighboring Algeria, demonstrations have also been taking place since late December. Four young Algerians tried to burn themselves to death, as did one person in Egypt and one in Mauritania. These developments in North Africa impact U.S. and French imperialism, which have both escalated their military and economic involvement in the region over the last several years.

The outcome of these developments in Tunisia and throughout the region will depend upon the degree of organization and political determination of the workers and youth. Will the Tunisian masses rejuvenate a national democratic revolution inside the country that will be anti-imperialist in its orientation? The anti-colonial and neocolonial histories of both Tunisia and Algeria have encompassed left tendencies that have operated both within the trade union movement and among the youth.

Washington has targeted North Africa in its so-called “war on terrorism.” Revolutionary developments there can lead to new military interventions, and anti-imperialists and anti-war activists here will have to oppose imperialist intervention. The outcome of these developments in the region portends much for the international working-class struggle against the worsening economic crisis throughout the world.

Throughout the past year European workers have held massive demonstrations and general strikes protesting austerity programs connected with the worsening global economic crisis. In Portugal, Italy, France, Spain, Ireland and even Greece, where demonstrations and rebellions have been the most widespread and militant, the actions of the workers and youth have not yet stopped the austerity

## Gaza 2011:

# Determination & organization defy hardship and scarcity

By Sara Flounders

I had the opportunity and honor to travel to Gaza and the West Bank in 2000, shortly after the beginning of the heroic second Palestinian Intifada, or uprising, and in 2003 during the most intense Israeli repression against the Intifada. A visit to besieged Gaza in early January of this year, along with former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, was a new opportunity to meet with Palestinians there and to see conditions on the ground.

Clark is well known in the Arab world. He was the official attorney for the Palestine Liberation Organization in the U.S. for 35 years until its leader, Yasser Arafat, died in 2004. Clark spent years successfully litigating against attempts to close the Palestine Mission to the United Nations and seize Palestinian assets in the U.S.

Along with visits with families of detainees, doctors and human rights activists, an important highlight of the solidarity visit was a meeting of Ramsey Clark with Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh, a senior political leader of Hamas, to discuss the impact of the continuing criminal blockade, the danger of a new Israeli attack and the importance of national unity in the Palestinian movement.

At a press conference after the meeting, Haniyeh thanked Clark for his visit and asked him to encourage other international dignitaries and heads of state to travel to blockaded Gaza. Clark called for an end to the violation of human rights of Palestinians and said that the people of Gaza are being punished for their democratic choice. He criticized the international community for not doing enough to lift the siege, and he urged support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

The strongest impressions of this 2011 visit were of the even greater hardship

and scarcity caused by the Israeli blockade and the heightened social organization and fierce, steadfast determination of the people of Gaza.

Although a short visit, we were able to meet with elected political leaders, doctors, educators, students, displaced families and families of political prisoners being held in Israeli jails.

There is no clearer example that Gaza is truly an open-air prison than to stand at the border crossing at Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, for hours. One by one, Palestinians arrive from both sides and must appeal to enter or to leave. The Palestinian government has no control over the border. At Rafah, the Egyptian government controls the gate.

The Egyptian authorities denied us entry all day on Jan. 4. We waited in the cold wind and then were ordered to leave Rafah. They said they were closing for the night, although we understood that the crossing station was open 24/7. The Egyptian Foreign Ministry told us that we needed U.S. Embassy approval.

We mobilized supporters, both in the area and internationally, and prepared a major e-mail and press release on our experience, including the Egyptian authorities' statements. Suddenly they reversed their decision. It appeared they did not like the implication that they might be taking open direction from the U.S. Egyptians value their sovereignty, which they won in a revolution against the imperialist powers in the 1950s that included the heroic seizure of the Suez Canal.

Although it was after midnight, when we crossed into Gaza we got quite a greeting. Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Ahmed Yousef was there with a delegation to meet us.

One might say that the Israeli military also announced its presence: As we waited at Rafah, we heard a bomb exploding

nearby. The air seemed to vibrate and the ground trembled. The Israelis have been threatening new attacks on Gaza and from time to time continue to bomb targets in Gaza from the air. Two sites were bombed that night.

We came to express solidarity with the 1.5 million people in Gaza — the overwhelming majority of them refugees — and to learn how they survived years of blockade, siege and bombardment on an already poor and underdeveloped coastal strip of densely populated land. This is the most extreme form of collective punishment enforced by Israel and financed by the U.S.

Less than one-quarter of the supplies that impoverished Gaza survived on before the blockade are now allowed through the Israeli siege.

Five years ago, the Palestinian people voted overwhelmingly for representatives of the liberation group Hamas in the January 2006 democratic elections, which were monitored by international organizations including U.S. officials. The U.S. and EU, which did not approve of the Palestinian people's choice, responded by cutting off all financial aid to Gaza.

In May 2007 Israel and Egypt established an iron blockade of Gaza. Even the most basic civilian supplies were denied in an effort to overthrow the popularly elected government. Then on Dec. 27, 2008, Israel bombed and then invaded Gaza in an attack lasting 22 days. The assault killed 1,500 people, injured more than 5,000 others, and destroyed thousands of homes and almost all of the area's small industries and agricultural enterprises. This was a continuation of attacks over decades in an attempt to destroy Palestinian organizations.

Comparing Gaza after the Israeli bombardment and Haiti after the January 12, 2010, earthquake puts Gaza's accomplishments and survival problems into some perspective.

In Haiti there are thousands of U.N. officials, military forces, nongovernmental organizations and international aid organizations, and hundreds of tons of supplies brought by ship, truck and air that cover acres outside of capital city, Port-au-Prince. Yet earthquake rubble has hardly been touched. Most schools are still not open; except for the help of Cuban doctors, health care — even in the face of a cholera epidemic — is almost nonexistent. For the population imperialist aid has meant total chaos.

The Haitian people lack their own government. The U.S. kidnapped elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004; now U.N. occupation troops decide

which privileged collaborators can run for office. All organizations of the people face relentless attack.

In Gaza, with thousands of ruined buildings, rubble has been cleared. Every building in Gaza has been tested; buildings deemed structurally unsafe have been evacuated, dismantled and cleared. Social services are operating, and there is distribution of some essential supplies and foods, such as grain, cooking oil, baby formula and powdered milk. Schools reopened within five days of the end of the attacks, even though a third of the schools were damaged. Both the elected government and popular organizations conduct these many programs for the people.

Gaza today functions under conditions of a war economy. Electricity can be sporadic; power cuts are frequent. When lights flicker off, conversation barely pauses. The one power plant in Gaza operates at only 20 to 50 percent of capacity.

Scarce supplies must be rationed and allocated. For example, according to U.N. reports priority was given to repairing the shattered windows of schools and health institutions first.

But even the distribution of the most essential supplies is constantly targeted and at risk. Israel has suspended U.N. food distribution several times since June 2007. This U.N. aid is essential for life. Without aid, 70 percent of families in Gaza live on less than a dollar per person a day, according to U.N. reports. More than 38 percent of the population are unemployed.

The U.N. Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees states that 80 percent of households in Gaza rely on some kind of food aid. According to the World Health Organization, one-third of children under five and women of childbearing age are anemic. (BBC News, July 6)

Gazans have the ability and the climate to produce their own food. But olive and citrus trees, fields, livestock, greenhouses and nurseries were consciously destroyed during the Israel's Operation Cast Lead in 2008-2009.

The U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization says the closed borders are a major obstacle to reconstruction, with fertilizer, livestock, seedlings and agricultural equipment not allowed in. Food is limited in choice and lacks the protein and vitamins of a healthy diet. But food quality and choices have improved as essential supplies, seedlings and fertilized eggs have arrived via the hundreds of tunnels that the people of Gaza secretly dig and maintain.

*Next: Education, health care and solidarity meetings.*



Tunisian protest in Vienna.

PHOTO: ANTI-IMPERIALIST CAMP

### Historical lessons

As Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin wrote in a letter to the Central Committee of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in September of 1917, prior to the successful seizure of power by the Bolsheviks, "To be successful, insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon the party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point."

Lenin continues saying that "insurrection must rely upon a revolutionary upsurge of the people. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon that turning point in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the vacillations in the ranks of the enemy and in the ranks of the weak, half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution are strongest. That is the third point."

He then notes that "these three conditions for raising the question of insurrection distinguish Marxism from Blanquism [referring to a French revolutionary who focused on insurrection by a small group]. Once these conditions exist, however, to refuse to treat insurrection as an art is a betrayal of Marxism and a betrayal of the revolution." (Lenin, "Marxism and Insurrection") □



## GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

WW compilation, 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.

Send \$25 per book to Worldview Forum, 55 W. 17th St., 5th floor, NY, NY 10011. Include your name and address.

## El legado de Martin Luther King y los nuevos ataques contra trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as

Por Azikiwe Abayomi  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

El Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., activista por los derechos civiles, justicia social y por la paz que fue asesinado el 4 de abril de 1968, nació el 15 de enero hace 82 años. Desde el 1986, el cumpleaños del Dr. King ha sido una conmemoración federal el tercer lunes de enero. Este año ese día festivo cayó el 17 de enero.

El reconocimiento del cumpleaños del Dr. King como día festivo federal fue el resultado de casi dos décadas de lucha por líderes políticos afro-americanos y artistas. Llevaron a cabo manifestaciones masivas en este día todos los años y promovieron una legislación en el Congreso estadounidense que finalmente fue aprobada, incluso bajo el gobierno de derecha de Ronald Reagan. Hoy en día las oficinas federales, estatales y locales, así como los bancos y muchas instituciones educativas están cerradas, y literalmente, miles de conmemoraciones se celebran en todo los Estados Unidos.

En el 2011, el día de Martin Luther King se da en un momento en que todo por lo que el Dr. King y el movimiento pro derechos civiles lucharon durante los años 1950 y 1960, se encuentra bajo ataque por Wall Street y sus agentes en la administración y el Congreso. La propaganda de la clase dominante que se transmite diariamente a través de los medios corporativos sancionados por el gobierno, está específicamente diseñada para reforzar las condiciones actuales de explotación y opresión contra la clase obrera en general.

Se está llevando a cabo una nueva ronda de ataques que busca culpar de los crecientes déficits presupuestarios en numerosos estados y ciudades impactando los beneficios de los/as empleados/as del sector público, de los/as desempleados/as y de los pobres; beneficios que han sido arduamente ganados. Las elecciones de 2010 fueron ideológicamente manipuladas para que una agenda social reaccionaria fuera la prioridad para el actual Congreso y las legislaturas estatales en todo el país.

Por lo menos durante dos décadas y media, los despidos masivos, las reducciones salariales y los recortes en beneficios han hecho estragos en los/as trabajadores/as del sector privado. Utilizando la misma metodología, la clase dominante ahora se ha dirigido al sector público. Los principales voceros de la clase dominante, tanto dentro como fuera del gobierno, están abiertamente demandando la eliminación del derecho a la huelga de los/as maestros/as y otros/as empleados/as públicos/as, reducciones drásticas en los salarios y beneficios, la incautación de los fondos de pensiones municipales y estatales por Wall Street, y la erradicación completa de los derechos de negociación colectiva para los/as funcionarios/as públicos/as, allí donde todavía existen.

La clase obrera debe afrontar este desafío político y construir alianzas más amplias para impulsar su propio programa para exigir trabajos, seguridad laboral y beneficios; moratorias sobre las ejecuciones hipotecarias, desalojos y cortes de servicios públicos, y el fin del presupuesto del Pentágono y el rescate de los bancos, los cuales cada año drenan billones de dólares de las arcas nacionales.



**Lecciones del 1968: Dr. King y la lucha contra la pobreza, la guerra y el racismo**

Cada año, los medios corporativos deliberadamente ignoran o distorsionan el papel fundamental de los movimientos pro derechos civiles y del Poder Negro en el período antes y después del asesinato del Dr. King. Aunque King y otros/as líderes carismáticos/as fueron importantes en la lucha para terminar con la segregación y ganar el sufragio universal y programas de acción afirmativa, fue la participación de millones de afro-americanos/as, latinos/as, mujeres, jóvenes y trabajadores/as conscientes, lo que constituyó el factor decisivo para obtener los logros de ese período.

En la primavera del 1967, el Dr. King y la Conferencia del Liderazgo Cristiano del Sur se pronunciaron decisivamente en contra de la ocupación militar de EEUU en Vietnam. Al adoptar esta posición contra la guerra, la CLCS vinculó la guerra en Vietnam con el fracaso de EEUU para abordar adecuadamente los problemas de pobreza, desempleo, discriminación nacional y opresión.

El Comité Coordinador Estudiantil Pacífico había adoptado una posición clara en contra de la guerra de Vietnam en enero de 1966. En junio, durante la "Marcha Contra el Miedo" a través de Mississippi, la consigna "Poder Negro" había avanzado. Estos acontecimientos coincidieron con una creciente rebelión en las comunidades afro-americanas y puertorriqueñas en todo el país.

La posición de King sobre la guerra de Vietnam sirvió de base para una mayor unidad entre el Poder Negro y los movimientos por los derechos civiles y anti guerra de la época. Además de la posición de King contra la guerra, la CLCS había identificado la necesidad de erradicar la pobreza en los Estados Unidos como prerrequisito para la creación de una sociedad realmente democrática e igualitaria.

En febrero de 1968 los trabajadores del saneamiento en Memphis, Tennessee, que eran casi todos negros, se declararon en huelga para exigir el reconocimiento y el derecho a la negociación colectiva a través de la Federación Americana de Empleados del Estado, del Condado y del Municipio. La administración racista del alcalde Henry Loeb se negó a negociar con los trabajadores, y se estableció un comité de apoyo a la huelga dirigido por James Lawson, un veterano organizador por los derechos civiles.

King fue invitado a Memphis para

hablar en una asamblea de la comunidad el 18 de marzo donde 13.000 personas se reunieron para escucharlo. Llamó a una huelga general en Memphis para forzar a la administración municipal a reconocer a los trabajadores de saneamiento.

El 28 de marzo, el día de la huelga general, la policía se amotinó y atacó una manifestación masiva en el centro de Memphis. La administración municipal disparó, matando a un joven afro-americano de 14 años y declaró un estado de emergencia, llamando a la Guardia Nacional para suprimir las manifestaciones y la huelga de los trabajadores de saneamiento.

Tres días después, el 31 de marzo, Dr. King pronunció un importante discurso en la Catedral Nacional en Washington, D.C. Dijo "No se puede negar el hecho de que una gran revolución está teniendo lugar en el mundo hoy en día. En un sentido es una revolución triple: es decir, una revolución tecnológica con el impacto de la automatización y los adelantos cibernéticos; también hay una revolución de armamentos, con el surgimiento de armas de guerra atómicas y nucleares". ("Testamento de esperanza", 1991)

King continuó diciendo: "Entonces [también] hay una revolución de derechos humanos, con la explosión de liberación que está teniendo lugar por todas partes del mundo. Sí, vivimos en una época en que están teniendo lugar cambios y hay todavía la voz que grita a través del tiempo diciendo, 'Mirad, yo hago nuevas todas las cosas, las cosas antiguas desaparecen'".

A continuación, King hizo hincapié en la necesidad de una visión global de los acontecimientos durante el período: "Primero, tenemos el desafío de desarrollar una perspectiva mundial. Ningún individuo puede vivir solo, ninguna nación puede vivir sola, y cualquier persona que crea que puede vivir sola, está durmiendo mientras acontece una revolución. El mundo en que vivimos es geográficamente uno solo. El reto que enfrentamos hoy es hacerlo uno en términos de hermandad".

Después del asesinato del Dr. King, brotaron rebeliones y manifestaciones masivas por todo Estados Unidos. En Washington, D.C., miles de tropas federales fueron despachadas para resguardar la Casa Blanca y el Capitolio.

Aunque la Campaña de los Pobres iniciada por la CLCS tuvo lugar unas semanas después y cientos de trabajadores/as marginados/as de todas las nacionalidades acamparon en Washington exigiendo ayuda inmediata al Congreso de los Estados

Unidos, el esfuerzo fue frustrado y eventualmente destruido por el gobierno federal.

Las rebeliones continuaron en ciudades y recintos universitarios durante el verano y el otoño de 1968. En Detroit, trabajadores/as afro-americanos/as formaron el Movimiento Revolucionario del Sindicato de Dodge, el cual se envolvió en huelgas "wildcat" (no autorizadas por la dirección del sindicato) contra los patrones racistas.

En la Universidad Estatal de San Francisco y en otros recintos alrededor del país, estudiantes afro-americanos/as y sus aliados/as cerraron las universidades, demandando programas de Estudios Étnicos Negros y otros esfuerzos para hacer los estudios académicos relevantes a la situación de la gente oprimida en los Estados Unidos. En la Universidad Estatal de Wayne en Detroit, estudiantes afro-americanos/as tomaron control del periódico del recinto de South End, haciéndolo un órgano revolucionario que fue repartido al pueblo en las comunidades, en escuelas secundarias y en las entradas de las fábricas.

### Retos para la clase trabajadora y oprimida de hoy

La clase dominante tomó ventaja de la crisis económica causada por la sobreproducción capitalista, la cual ha resultado en un desempleo masivo y una pobreza creciente para intensificar la represión política y los ataques contra los sueldos y beneficios de los/as trabajadores/as. La posición estratégica de los/as trabajadores/as afro-americanos/as dentro de la industria y las zonas urbanas se ha debilitado con la globalización del capital y la reducción sistemática de los sueldos y el nivel de vida entre los/as oprimidos/as y la clase trabajadora en general.

Hoy, se ha forzado al pueblo oprimido y a los/as trabajadores/as a una posición defensiva. Hay más ataques proyectados contra todos los sectores de la clase trabajadora, especialmente donde los/as trabajadores/as pudieron conquistar empleos en el sector público, derechos de educación y otros beneficios sociales. La reestructuración del capital por la clase dominante, sin una lucha monumental, inevitablemente resultará en millones más lanzados al desempleo y la pobreza.

A los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as no les queda más remedio que formar alianzas más amplias para luchar contra el sistema de capitalismo de bajos salarios. Este es un período crítico y la cuestión de los/as trabajadores/as con salarios bajos debe ser específicamente discutida para contrarrestar la propaganda de la clase dominante que dice que no tienen nada en común con sectores del proletariado que tienen seguros de salud, unos pocos días de vacaciones y pensiones — todo lo cual está amenazado y puede terminar incautado por los bancos.

Si los sindicatos del sector público fueran destrozados, esto proveería aun más oportunidades a la clase dominante de explotar y reprimir más a todos/as los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as. Si se sigue permitiendo la continuación de todas las guerras de ocupación contra los pueblos del mundo, los/as jóvenes oprimidos/as y de la clase trabajadora estarán aun más condenados/as al estrago del Pentágono y el complejo prisión/industrial. □