

# African-American jobless rate worst in 6 decades

## Washington emphasizes war, not jobs

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

Although the word “recession” has faded completely from the U.S. corporate and government media, a recent jobless report shows that the unemployment rate has risen again to 9 percent. Even though April’s employment figures claimed that more than 200,000 jobs were created, the overall rate of joblessness went up, indicating that many corporations are still not hiring.

Nevertheless, the unemployment rate among African Americans went up at an even higher rate than that for the general population. Whereas the unemployment rate generally rose from 8.8 percent to 9 percent in April, the rate for African Americans jumped from 15.5 percent to 16.1 percent for the same period. African-American women have an unemployment rate of 13.4 percent, while their male counterparts face a rate of 17 percent. The joblessness rate for youth from this oppressed community has reached the staggering rate of more than 40 percent.

In Michigan, which has been adversely impacted by the economic crisis since 2007, African Americans have experienced a jobless rate in excess of 20 percent in every quarter since early 2009. In 2010 the annual unemployment rate for African Americans was 23.4 percent, rivaling the figures characterizing the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Last year the African-American unemployment rate for Michigan was 47 percent higher than the overall rate of joblessness for the entire demographic group throughout the United States. The Economic Policy Institute reports, “The Michigan economy has a long way to go to a solid recovery.” (epi.org, April 28)

The report continues, “With the future of the U.S. auto industry remaining precarious, Michigan’s economic future will continue to be fragile for some time. Michigan’s African-American workforce has felt the pain and uncertainty of the Great Recession disproportionately. Until the Michigan economy gets solidly on track, these disparities are likely to persist.”

In North Carolina, where the African-American population stands at a substantial 21 percent of the state’s residents, both the EPI report of April 28 and one by the Raleigh-based North Carolina Budget & Tax Center, said that the unemployment rate for this nationally oppressed group stood at 17.2 percent in 2010, which was nearly twice as high

as the 8.6 percent average for whites within the same state. This is down slightly from the highest level, which hit 17.6 percent during the first quarter of 2010.

Alexandra Forter Sirota, the director of the North Carolina Budget & Tax Center, said, “Every community in North Carolina has suffered through the Great Recession, but African Americans have taken a particularly painful hit.” (ncjustice.org, April 28)

In neighboring South Carolina, which also has a significant African-American population, the unemployment rate for this community averaged 18.6 percent throughout 2010. These figures paint a grim outlook for recent graduates of colleges and universities.

Keisha Krider, who graduated from Orangeburg’s South Carolina State University in May, said that the job market for her, even with a master’s degree in business administration, is “tough.” Krider noted, “Even at career fairs, a lot of companies will come, but they’re not hiring.” (The Post and Courier, May 9)

### Unemployment, poverty & the Obama administration

These high unemployment rates for African Americans illustrate one of the main contradictions of the Obama administration, which was voted in with overwhelming support from this community across the U.S. Although many African Americans celebrate Obama’s ascendancy to the highest office in the country, he has consistently refused to adopt any programs that address the special oppression of people of color.

In an essay, Boyce Watkins of New York’s Syracuse University writes, “President Obama has a problem, a very serious one. The president’s problem is what I would call ‘The Great Black Disconnect.’ This divide is the place where black America’s love and appreciation for the Obamas disconnects from the intense economic suffering of the African-American

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## SYRIA

### What’s behind protests?

By **Joyce Chediak**

People in the U.S. and around the world have broad sympathy for the popular demonstrations taking place in the Middle East. All the uprisings, however, are not necessarily the same.

Protests against Western client regimes, such as those in Egypt and Tunisia that have so severely squeezed the workers, have the potential to liberate the people from crushing poverty and repression.

However, the situations in Libya and Syria are somewhat different.

These governments, though certainly flawed, have been targets of U.S. destabilization efforts for decades because they have taken positions independent from Washington. The Western powers, led by the U.S., are trying to take advantage of the wave of protests in the region to intervene in Libya and Syria in order to make these countries captives of Western colonialism and reduce

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### May Day protests for workers’ rights

Millions of workers in the developing and capitalist countries marched and rallied on May Day — International Workers Day. The main demands for many of these protests were against austerity and repression. In Cuba, millions marched in support of the revolutionary government and socialism. Read more on page 11.

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# We are Malcolm X

By Lamont Lilly

*"It is incorrect to classify the revolt of the Negro as simply a racial conflict of black against white, or as a purely American problem. Rather, we are today seeing a global rebellion of the oppressed against the oppressor, the exploited against the exploiter."*

— El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, 1964

Not one time was I really taught about Malcolm X in school; once I discovered him I clearly understood why. Could you imagine all the Black men the U.S. has incarcerated converting into disciples of Malcolm X, all the political prisoners? Why, the oppressed would have their own nation by now!

Malcolm's teachings were simple: Black is beautiful; love your roots, family and community; feed the mind and atone within; know thyself and the rest will follow. Though quite the humble type and gentle giant you might say Malcolm was, he did possess an unwavering commitment to Black liberation. Was it true that Malcolm openly declared war against imperialism, colonialism and white supremacy? Damn right! But understand that Brother Malcolm wasn't just a Negro leader; he was a global figure for the entire African Diaspora, for the working, poor and oppressed worldwide — a Nation of Islam apostle turned international Pan-Africanist and human rights advocate.

Malcolm loved The People — his people and all people. And as for any institution, organization or government that wasn't for The People, yes, Malcolm called them out! To Brother Malcolm, one was either for the oppressed or against the oppressed, regardless of race or social class. This from a man so complex, that at times he would even check himself. To Malcolm, no one was exempt from being accountable to the masses. No one was exempt from being accountable to the truth. That was Malcolm, a mercenary for justice.

Not only was Malcolm an avid reader, he was equally the profound listener. Brother Malcolm would take your own words and hang you with them if you weren't careful. Yet Malcolm never spoke and wrote to impress folk. He would instead communicate in a language all could understand, from the highest to the lowest, from the youngest to the oldest. Malcolm was The People's Champ — a street prophet who could relate to Oxford University's most esteemed professors just as sincerely and effectively as with Kenya's revolutionary wing, the Mau Mau.

In many regards Malcolm was long before his time. It

was Malcolm who charged human rights over civil rights — workers' rights over capitalism. He championed women's rights. In organizing his Organization of Afro-American Unity, Malcolm systematically sought strong sisters who could play equal roles in planning and teaching, in helping to build a revolutionary movement. He poignantly articulated upon his return from Ghana, Guinea and Algeria that "Africa will not be free until it frees its women."

More so now than ever, it will be critical amidst our mounting struggles that people of all nations thoroughly re-explore the full range of Malcolm's thoughts and analyses — his actions and his deeds — his personal evolution and stages of development. For many of his ideological building blocks are just as relevant today as they were in 1965.

While today we may have a Black man in office, there's far too many in prison. Job loss and urban renewal continue to wreak havoc, while police brutality seems to have gone up in the Black community — at least from Oscar Grant's perspective. The NAACP is fighting resegregation in Raleigh, N.C. This is what Brother Malcolm was trying to get us to understand almost 50 years ago.

The beauty of Malcolm was that he represented the truth of the Black experience with such fury and eloquence — he dissected the brutality of U.S. hypocrisy with such fearless clarity, with such an impenitent passion. With heart and mind, body and soul, he awoke the dead and led the army ... from the front ... in the street ... in the rain ... in the middle of the ghetto ... right in front of Mr. [FBI head J. Edgar] Hoover and his COINTELPRO.

In the end, Malcolm was me and Malcolm was you. Malcolm was The People and the beat of our hearts, the one who came and gave life as he went. We didn't lose Brother Malcolm; he gave himself. Thanks Brother Malcolm — Black lives on. I too am Malcolm X; the oppressed live on.

*The writer is a master's candidate at North Carolina Central University's Department of Sociology, works with Black Workers for Justice and traveled to Colombia with Witness for Peace.*



Malcolm X's birthday is May 19.

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## At May Day march A drummer's voice carries

One of the groups adding spirit and militancy to the May Day march from Union Square to Foley Square in New York City were the young drummers with the Workers World Party contingent marching just ahead of its banner. Chants were backed by and timed with drumbeats, everything from "The people united" to calls for "legalization" to demands to end the imperialist wars.

One of the group's coordinators, Bronx high-schooler Dinae Anderson, told WW that she found the experience "amazing. People are tired of the mess Obama made deporting a million immigrants and treating them like they were bad people. Workers should all be equal and united. We want to be united and equal and make noise."



Front from left, Aya and Dinae, drumming the truth on Broadway.

Manhattan resident Aya thought the contingent was "fantastic. Drumming and people chanting captures the attention of pedestrians, so that everything you shout is heard and we are listened to. The drums connect with the people. They stop to listen. I have no voice left now, but I was listened to earlier."

— Report and photo by John Catalinotto

## JOIN US

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

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## Shut up and play?

# Patriotism, jock culture, limits of free speech

By Dave Zirin

Taken from an article from the Edge of Sports website at <http://tinyurl.com/3lgxks2>.

In the aftermath of Osama bin Laden's assassination, the sports world embraced the public eruption of patriotism. From the spontaneous cheers of 40,000 fans in Philly, to amped "Military Appreciation Night" celebrations at stadiums around the country; from the chest-thumping tweets of athletes and sports writers, to entire blocks on sports radio exalting in the rush of bin Laden's dramatic demise.

Yet some athletes dared to buck the trend, and in the process have learned a tough lesson about the limits of free speech in the jockocracy. Chris Douglas-Roberts, former Memphis basketball All-American and current Milwaukee Buck, responded to bin Laden's death by listing a litany of reasons for why he wasn't playing the Toby Keith on repeat, tweeting among other things, "It took 919,967 deaths to kill that one guy. It took 10 years & 2 Wars to kill that ... guy. It cost us (USA) roughly \$1,188,263,000,000 to kill that ... ..guy. But we winning though. Haaaa. (Sarcasm)."

Profanity, threats, and the general belief that he was "stupid," a "moron" and that he should shut his "dumb [expletive] mouth" because he is "not intelligent"

came rolling in. CDR tried to hit back, tweeting, "What I'm sayin has nothing to do with 9/11 or that guy (Bin Laden). I still feel bad for the 9/11 families but I feel EQUALLY bad for the war families. ... People are telling me to get out of America now b/c I'm against MORE INNOCENT people dying everyday? B/c I'm against a 10-year WAR? Whatever happened to our freedom of speech? ... What I've learned tonight, athletes shouldn't have perspectives. But I don't care. We feel certain ways about things TOO."

Rashard Mendenhall, the pro-bowl running back for the Pittsburgh Steelers, raised eyebrows even higher with his comments, writing, ["For] those of you who said you want to see Bin Laden burn in hell and piss on his ashes, I ask how would God feel about your heart? ... What kind of person celebrates death? It's amazing how people can HATE a man they have never even heard speak. We've only heard one side."

Mendenhall then took it somewhere Douglas-Roberts did not, raising the exhaustively debunked conspiratorial doubts about the events of 9/11, tweeting, "I just have a hard time believing a plane could take a skyscraper down demolition style." This caused Sports Illustrated's senior football writer Don Banks to write a piece titled, "Mendenhall just the latest NFL player to spout utter nonsense."



Rashard Mendenhall

The outrage intensified to the point where Steelers President Art Rooney II, a big money bundler for President Obama, stated, "I have not spoken with Rashard so it is hard to explain or even comprehend what he meant with his recent Twitter comments. The entire Steelers' organization is very proud of the job our military personnel have done and we can only hope this leads to our troops coming home soon."

Whether or not you supported some or all the wars of the last decade (I think they've been a hellacious, unconscionable waste of human life that has served to make the world a more dangerous place), there is a bigger lesson that the guardians of Jock Culture seem to be trying to teach: by being an athlete you have signed away your right to have an opinion beyond your choice of sneaker or sports drink. This is something that runs very deep in the marrow of our sports culture: that athletes, particularly black athletes should

just "shut up and play." They should feel fortunate just to have the good fortune to get paid and they have no right to say anything that might make anyone even a bit uncomfortable.

If you look historically at athletes who today are admired for their courageous honesty — people like Muhammad Ali, Billie Jean King, Jim Brown, and Bill Russell — they were all told by the sports columnists of their day that they should button their lips and just play. When Tommie Smith and John Carlos raised their black gloved fists [at the 1968 Olympics], a young sportswriter for the Chicago American by the name of Brent Musberger wrote, "One gets a little tired of having the United States run down by athletes who are enjoying themselves at the expense of their country," going on to call them, "a pair of black-skinned storm-troopers."

In other words, to be a political athlete in any way that doesn't involve wrapping yourself in the flag has always been apostasy in the eyes of the guardians of Jock Culture. I would argue this is a deeply destructive line of thought that damages our society beyond the confine of sports. Athletes are role models whether we want to admit it or not. Do we really want them modeling that a lack of political thought is a virtue? Or that having the biggest contract makes you the best possible human being? Or do we want them modeling the simple idea that having something to say about the world is something to be emulated?

If you disagree with what an athlete says, say so. I don't agree with Tim Tebow that women shouldn't be able to have abortions because the star quarterback disapproves. I don't agree with Rashard Mendenhall that 9/11 was any kind of inside job. But let's argue out these issues on the merits. Let's stop perpetuating the idea that athletes have forfeited their right to say whatever they damn-well please. To Chris Douglas-Roberts: yes, athletes DO have a right to have perspectives, and I hope we can continue to hear what's on your mind. But your silence only will embolden those who believe otherwise, and make it that much harder for the next athlete with something to say.

Dave Zirin is the author of "Bad Sports: How Owners Are Ruining the Games We Love" and just made the new documentary "Not Just a Game." Receive his column every week by emailing [dave@edgeofsports.com](mailto:dave@edgeofsports.com). Contact him at [edgeofsports@gmail.com](mailto:edgeofsports@gmail.com).

## Stop anti-Muslim repression!

In the wake of the killing of Osama bin Laden and the Arab revolutions sweeping the Middle East and North Africa, a conscious climate of anti-Muslim hate is being promoted across the U.S.

Three imams, including a U.S.-born Muslim bound for a conference on Islamophobia, were kicked off U.S. domestic flights.

Two of the imams boarded a flight from Memphis, Tenn., to Charlotte, N.C., on May 6 only to have it return to the terminal so they could be put through "additional screening."

U.S.-born imam Al-Amin Abdul-Latif of Long Island was barred from boarding an American Airlines flight from New York to Charlotte May 6 and told to return to LaGuardia airport for a morning flight May 7, only to be refused boarding again,

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## Journalists in conspiracy against Cuban Five

By Cheryl LaBash

MIAMI

the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals unanimously overturned the Cuban Five's convictions, citing extensive publicity before and during the trial that contributed to a "perfect storm" against the defendants in Miami. Although that decision was later reversed by the full court, it acknowledged the effect of these "journalists" a full year before the Miami Herald made it known that they were paid U.S. government propagandists.

As a result of that storm, Hernández was sentenced to two life terms plus 15 years and is currently being held in Victorville, Calif. Antonio Guerrero, René González, Fernando González and Ramón Labañino are also unjustly being held in U.S. prisons with long sentences.

### Heck Miller's bias

A self-described mastermind of terror campaigns against Cuba, Luis Posada Carriles was involved in bombings of Havana hotels and the first mid-air bombing of a commercial aircraft. In 2000, possessing C-4 explosives, he was arrested and convicted of attempting to assassinate then-Cuban President Fidel Castro and many other innocent people

Miami Assistant U.S. Attorney Carolyn Heck Miller once again attempted to block any justice in the case of the Cuban Five on April 25, by opposing the current motion asking for relief for Gerardo Hernández's convictions and life sentences. Heck Miller also opposed a similar habeas appeal filed for Antonio Guerrero.

The struggle to free the Cuban Five continues to be fought hard in court and in every arena since their arrest on Sept. 12, 1998. Every turn yields new facts to expand support for these five heroic men, who are abused as surrogates for the socialist revolution they defended and that U.S. imperialism has found impossible to destroy.

The Cuban Five monitored the activities of Florida-based anti-Cuba paramilitaries engaged in bombing and violent attacks that have taken more than 3,000 human lives since 1959, primarily in Cuba, but in the U.S. and other countries, too. In the 1990s Cuban tourist hotels became targets in an attempt to block Cuba's economic development after the collapse of Cuba's major Eastern European socialist trading partners like the Soviet Union.

One of several issues presented in the current legal action is that "the U.S. government had been paying at least 10 Miami journalists — regarded as 'among the most popular in South Florida' — to advance an anti-Cuba propaganda campaign." (<http://tinyurl.com/3k8ppq62>) According to documents wrested into public view through Freedom of Information Act requests by the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five and the Washington, D.C.-based Partnership for Civil Justice, these "widely-read Miami journalists were on the government payroll in the months leading up to and throughout the defendants' trial, and the stories they published asserted the defendants' guilt."

In August 2005 a three-judge panel of

## Celebrating Antonio Guerrero's art

On May 6 the Centro Cultural de la Raza in San Diego's Balboa Park was the setting for the opening of an exhibition of the prison paintings of Cuban Five member Antonio Guerrero. Some of the many attendees at this important event gathered for a group photo in the Centro's art gallery area following a program that focused on the struggle to free the Cuban Five, who have been unjustly held in U.S. prisons for 13 years. In the words of Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general and founder of the International Action Center: "The Cuban Five came here to protect their country. They came here to prevent

at a university in Panama.

During a recent perjury trial against Posada in El Paso, Texas, Department of Homeland Security Attorney Gina Garrett-Jackson testified she asked Heck Miller to consider criminal charges against him. According to Attorney José Pertierra's El Paso Diary, Heck Miller wasn't interested in doing so. ([counterpunch.org](http://counterpunch.org), Jan. 21)

Pertierra wrote, "Heck Miller is the Miami prosecutor who insisted on bringing the case of the Five to trial, refused to move the case out of Miami, and was instrumental in seeing that they would be given unjustly long sentences."

"Incredible but true, as we learned today, she is also the prosecutor in Miami who decided not to press criminal charges against Luis Posada Carriles in 2005: the man who directed the terrorist campaign against Cuba that the Five tried to stop in order to save lives."

It is organizing efforts, large and small, that tell the story of the struggle to build the movement to free the Cuban Five that will finally send them home to their loved ones in Cuba. As the Cubans say, "Volverán" — They shall return. □

terrorism. The Cuban Five stand for freedom. They stand for peace."

The evening's program featured talks by Gloria LaRiva of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five; Marjorie Cohn of the National Lawyers Guild; several poetry and song presentations, along with solidarity messages from San Diego Friends of Cuba, the Party for Socialism and Liberation, the International Action Center and Union del Barrio. Ramon Espinal of San Diego Friends of Cuba and Gloria Verdieu of the International Action Center co-chaired the meeting.

— Bob McCubbin

## DETROIT

# Free legal clinic fights foreclosures

By Kris Hamel  
Detroit

About 200 homeowners attended a free legal clinic May 2 at the Detroit offices of the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs. The clinic was organized to inform attendees about how to take advantage of a recent Michigan Court of Appeals decision which held that the federal Mortgage Electronic Registration System has no standing to foreclose in Michigan.

MERS is a “tracking system” organized by the banks to record mortgages on their behalf. According to Jerry Goldberg, an attorney and activist who helped organize the legal clinic, “MERS allows lenders to assign and reassign mortgage notes without ever recording their interests, thus saving them hundreds of millions of dollars in recording fees and preventing homeowners from ever learning who really holds their debt. At one time, MERS recorded 60 million mortgages on behalf of banks.”

Goldberg continued, “The effect of the court ruling is that anyone who was foreclosed on by MERS can have their foreclosure or eviction overturned and remain in their homes.” He and anti-foreclosure attorney Vanessa Fluker were featured on the local ABC affiliate newscast explaining the ruling on April 26. Afterwards, WXYZ-TV 7 posted a notice about the free legal clinic on its website.

During the week before the clinic, Moratorium Now! activists leafleted Detroit’s 36th District Court, where hundreds of foreclosure and eviction hearings take place weekly, to inform people of their rights.

Goldberg told Workers World he received a phone call from a family with



WWW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Attorney Vanessa Fluker gives advice at legal clinic May 2.

six children who had a bailiff knocking at their door to evict them. Goldberg was able to get a judge to use the new court decision to issue an order immediately stopping the family’s eviction from their home.

Moratorium Now! is working with the People Before Banks Coalition on a campaign to demand that Wayne County declare a moratorium on all foreclosures in this hard-hit county, which includes the city of Detroit. The foreclosure epidemic has leveled communities throughout Detroit.

#### Racism & bank profits

“The necessity for the moratorium was

demonstrated by the April 13 release of the U.S. Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations report, ‘Wall Street and the Financial Crisis: Anatomy of a Financial Collapse,’” said Goldberg. The report contains a case study of Washington Mutual, the country’s largest thrift and sixth largest bank, now taken over by JPMorgan Chase.

“It documents how Washington Mutual shifted its mortgage business to where its percentage of high-risk loans rose from 19 percent of loan originations in 2003 to 55 percent in 2006,” continued Goldberg. “These loans included subprime loans with interest rates at least 3 percent above the standard interest rates, directed pri-

marily to low-income families and people of color.

“They included ‘pay-option ARMs’ [adjustable rate mortgages], where families pay a minimum payment that is below the actual interest rate they owe, with the difference between the two amounts added to their principal every month. When the teaser rate is eventually eliminated, families find themselves paying a higher interest rate based on a higher loan amount, resulting in payment shock and massive defaults.

“The study documents how the reason for Washington Mutual’s shift to these high-risk, exotic loans was because the rate of profit was eight times higher than the return on fixed-rate loans when they were ‘securitized.’ It documents how the shift was accompanied by massive fraud, including writing loans based on a family’s ability to pay the minimum payment, knowing full well that when the payments adjusted upward the homeowners would not be able to afford the payments and their loans would go into default.”

The study further exposed how the Office of Thrift Supervision, the government body assigned to monitor Washington Mutual, continued to give the bank solid rankings even as its shady practices grew, as did the ratings services Moody’s and Standard & Poor’s. The study also goes into the role of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, now wholly-owned government agencies, which increasingly became the largest investor in these fraudulent loans.

The Moratorium Now! Coalition is planning a one-day conference, “How the Banks Destroyed Detroit and How to Fight Back,” on June 11 at the United Auto Workers Local 22 union hall. For more information, visit [www.moratorium-mi.org](http://www.moratorium-mi.org). □

# A new union flexes its muscles

By Martha Grevatt

Wisconsin has become a symbol of working-class resistance. Mass rallies and occupations, in defense of collective bargaining, are displaying the kind of militancy that first won that right. Until the upsurge of the 1930s, U.S. workers did not have collective bargaining.

In 1934 autoworkers and the unemployed joined forces against a notoriously anti-worker company — Electric Auto-lite, a major Ford supplier and one of Toledo’s largest private employers.

Just 60 miles south of Detroit, already known as “Motor City,” Toledo, Ohio, was home to a number of auto parts suppliers as well as Willys-Overland (now Jeep) and a General Motors transmission plant.

The Depression hit this industrial city hard. Capitalist overproduction, the collapse of Toledo’s largest banks and a real estate bubble that burst destroyed the tax base and drove unemployment to 70 percent. Not that the workers didn’t know, but Auto-lite management reminded them how easily they could be replaced.

Yet these workers risked their jobs and their lives, fighting cops, goons and the National Guard, for a union. Why?

With the introduction of the moving assembly line and the expansion of mass production during the Roaring ‘20s, a



1934 Toledo Auto-lite strike

#### PART ONE

science of exploitation came into vogue. “Scientific” production systems were designed to raise worker output. Under the Taylor system, once assembly line workers were used to working at a certain speed, the line speed would be increased, incrementally, over and over again.

Another system, Bedeaux, was based on production quotas set by management. Those who failed to meet the quota were disciplined or fired. Those who exceeded it got a proportional bonus. There were two catches: one, supervisors kept part of the bonus for themselves; and two, the quota kept increasing.

Both these systems, developed to accommodate an economic boom, remained in effect at Auto-lite years after the boom collapsed. Yet rarely did workers see a 40-hour paycheck. Their curse was “the

bench.” The standard workweek was 48 hours, but, on any given day, a worker could be told to sit until a job was available. Only then could he or she clock in. After the job was finished, the worker clocked out and went back to the bench, sitting hours or even days in a row without pay. Imagine being in the plant six days a week and being paid for only two or three days.

A worker might be fired for just about anything, certainly for union organizing. However, with the National Recovery Act’s passage in 1933 — section 7(a) gave workers the right to organize on paper — union supporters felt they were exercising their legal rights. The United Auto Workers union had not yet been founded. Line workers joined “federal labor unions” affiliated with the American Federation of Labor.

#### Thousands of workers sign up to fight back

The AFL practiced craft unionism as opposed to industrial unionism, organizing workers by their skill and only reluctantly taking in more exploited industrial workers. AFL President William Green was for peace between labor and capital. Nevertheless Federal Labor Union Local 18384 signed up thousands of workers — who wanted to fight — at Willys-Overland, City Auto Stamping, Logan Gear, Bingham Stamping and Tool, and Spicer

Manufacturing. At Auto-lite, the local’s only strength was in the punch press department, but a strike in Department Two would halt production.

On Feb. 23, 1934, workers at Bingham, Logan and Spicer walked out in large numbers, but only a handful walked the picket line outside Auto-lite. They called themselves “the unholy 13” as they huddled around blazing 55-gallon drums for five days in the frigid Ohio winter. They had to demonstrate the union’s resolve to the rank and file. They were fired, but not for long.

Local 18384 saw that a sympathy strike — like the one on April 4 by International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 in solidarity with Wisconsin workers — could be a powerful weapon. Even after Spicer workers won their demands for recognition and a pay raise, they refused to go back to work until the 13 were reinstated at Auto-lite. In a conversation at an exclusive club, Spicer President Charles Dana is said to have persuaded Auto-lite President Clement O. Miniger to take the workers back. Many workers at Auto-lite joined the union after this symbolic victory.

The big fight was coming.

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*Sources: “I Remember Like Today: The Auto-Lite Strike of 1934” by Philip A. Korth and Margaret R. Beegle. Michigan State University Press, 1988.*

*Next: The Battle of Toledo*

**ON THE PICKET LINE**

By Sue Davis

**RALEIGH, N.C.****8,000 rally against budget cuts****Protests in 10 cities support FLOC**

The British Embassy in Washington, D.C., and consulates in nine U.S. cities were picketed by union activists, members of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement and community supporters on April 27. They called on British American Tobacco, which owns 42 percent of U.S. tobacco giant Reynolds American, to use its influence to stop “widespread and egregious” human rights abuses suffered by nearly 100,000 tobacco field workers in the United States.

Meanwhile in London, Baldemar Velasquez, president of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, met with BAT officials at their headquarters on April 27. “This is the first time any corporation with close ties to Reynolds American has agreed to meet with workers.” Reynolds has refused such FLOC requests for at least the last four years. On April 28 Velasquez presented to BAT’s annual shareholders meeting findings of a human rights study detailing such abuses as payment of less than the minimum wage to 25 percent of the workers, unhealthy working conditions which cause “green tobacco sickness” (excessive absorption of nicotine through the skin) and inhumane housing conditions. The report, prepared by Oxfam America and FLOC, was also presented to Reynolds’ annual shareholders meeting in Winston-Salem, N.C., on May 6. “Although Reynolds does not directly employ the farmworkers on its contract farms, it sets the terms with its contract growers and profits from the farmworkers’ labor.” (AFL-CIO blog, April 27 and May 5)

On May 5 Metro Labor Council President Jos Williams received a letter from British Ambassador Nigel Sheinwald in response to one he delivered on April 27, which read, “BAT has stressed to us that it is committed to a dialogue ... with FLOC and relevant U.S. organized labor groups so that they can understand the issues first hand” and “they hope the dialogue will lead to an industry-wide forum to address these issues constructively.” Velasquez praised the Metro Labor Council for defending labor rights: “FLOC is indebted to them. Hasta la victoria. (Until victory)” (Union City, Metro D.C. AFL-CIO online newsletter, May 6)

**Rite Aid warehouse workers join ILWU**

May Day 2011 took on special significance for the 500 warehouse workers at Rite Aid’s distribution center in Lancaster, Calif. They celebrated the day by reaching a new three-year contract recognizing them as members of Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 26. The workers had spent five years battling the company’s vicious anti-union campaign, complete with high-priced, union-busting consultants and the firing of union supporters, and then succeeded in negotiating a contract that guarantees fair health insurance rates, job security, wage increases and a worker voice in production standards. (AFL-CIO blog, May 4)

**D.C. nurses negotiate contract**

Registered nurses at Washington Hospital Center reached a tentative agreement with the hospital on May 3. The nurses had held a one-day strike on March 7, which the hospital vindictively

By Ben Carroll  
Raleigh, N.C.

As the North Carolina House met inside the General Assembly building in Raleigh on May 3 to debate a state budget filled with devastating across-the-board cuts, more than 8,000 teachers, young people, students, parents and community members packed the main plaza outside to stop the cuts to education.

The rally was organized by the North Carolina Association of Educators, a statewide teachers’ union with more than 60,000 members. Teachers and education workers came from across the state, with representation from all of North Carolina’s 100 counties.

Many other organizations were on hand to stand with the teachers and to protest attacks on the broader public sector, including the Labor-Faith-Civil Rights Coalition in Defense of the Public Sector; the NC NAACP; Raleigh Fight Imperialism, Stand Together; Farm Labor Organizing Committee; Students for a Democratic Society; and NC Heroes Emerging Among Teens.

The day ended with the arrest of five young protesters as the House voted to pass the draconian budget, which cuts more than \$1 billion for public education and slashes more than 18,000 public jobs.

**Young people mobilize to stand with public workers**

Prior to the start of the protest, more than 150 young people from across North Carolina gathered for a spirited rally at the nearby campus of North Carolina State University. The Student and Youth Rally for Public Education and All Public Services was organized by the NC Defend Education Coalition, a statewide coalition of youth and students united around the struggles to stop budget cuts, fight against resegregation, and demand full and equal access to education for undocumented students.

High school and college students alike mobilized to participate in the youth rally and march, with some coming from as far as Appalachian State University in Boone and East Carolina University in Greenville.

Gathered on the side of a busy street, the students were greeted with supportive honks and fists raised by passing motorists. A number of student speakers took the podium to denounce the deep cuts to education and public services, to oppose war funding and bank bailouts while education is slashed and public workers are laid off, and to speak on the need for unity among students, teachers and all public workers to fight back against the cuts.

“It is amazing that, with marches like

turned into a one-week lockout. Now the 1,700 members of National Nurses United get to vote on the contract recommended by the NNU negotiating team. The contract “strengthens our ability to effectively advocate for our patients and protects RN professional and economic standards,” said Lori Marlowe, a cardiac nurse who is a member of the bargaining team. This will be the RNs first contract as part of the NNU, which they joined last October. (Union City, May 5)

**March for California hotel workers**

On April 21, during a week of religious holidays, hundreds of religious lead-



WWW PHOTO: DANTE STROBINO

Youth and students march in support of teachers on May 3 in Raleigh, N.C.

May 3, students from different grades and different parts of North Carolina can come together and raise awareness of the attacks on our school systems,” speaker Maria Padilla, a high school student at Cary High and an organizer with NC HEAT, said of the march. “We must all stand up and fight the struggles of the students and teachers who are being affected by all the cuts and rising tuition rates and help provide a better education for all.”

With chants of “They say cutback, we say fight back” and “Education is under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!” the students stepped off for a lively march through downtown to meet up with the main rally at the legislature. The march swelled into the streets, stopping traffic for a time on a busy thoroughfare before being pushed back on the sidewalks by the cops. When students arrived at the main demonstration, they were greeted with cheers and applause by the thousands of teachers who were already gathered there. The teachers cleared a path through the center of the rally for the students and joined in their chant of “No cuts! No fees! Education should be free!”

**‘We must fight back!’**

The crowd of teachers, education workers and community members — all dressed in red shirts to signify the bleeding of public education — continued to grow as more than 30 speakers addressed the rally. Speakers outlined how devastating the more than \$1 billion education cuts in the House’s budget would be, including larger classes, laying off thousands of teachers and teacher assistants, and cutting money to already underfunded schools.

“Budget cuts to education that would increase class size will make it even more challenging for teachers to differentiate and accommodate student needs at an

effective and in-depth level,” said Cathey Stanley, a student-teacher at Carrboro High School. “The cuts will serve to widen the achievement gap between students who are culturally, fiscally, socially and academically privileged and the students whose needs are already not adequately accommodated by our underfunded education system.”

The Rev. Dr. William Barber, statewide president of the NC NAACP, delivered a powerful and clear message to the rally: “We must fight back!” Rev. Barber drew connections among many of the struggles to stop the Tea Party and the right wing in NC, from the fight against resegregation — which is bankrolled by multimillionaire Art Pope, a chief funder of Americans for Prosperity — to the attacks on the public sector.

Following the rally, several dozen teachers and students entered the legislature and packed the gallery that overlooked the House floor as legislators were debating the budget. As they neared the end of debate, several students with the NC Defend Education Coalition unfurled a banner that read: “Tax Corporations! Bail out the People! Defend the Public Sector!” Five youth were subsequently arrested for taking this important act of resistance against the devastating cuts that the House later passed.

May 3 was undoubtedly the most significant demonstration, in both its size and its character, against the budget cuts and austerity measures being shoved onto the backs of workers and students in North Carolina. It represented a very important step forward. The budget still has a long way to go before it is enacted, and the NC Defend Education Coalition, along with many other organizations, has vowed to continue the struggle. Groups across the state are already gearing up for the next major day of action against the cuts on May 24. □

**UFCW donates to Alabama food banks**

Responding to the devastating tornadoes that swept through Alabama in late April, the Food and Commercial Workers union delivered 228,000 servings of protein to the West Alabama Food Bank and the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama on May 6. The donation is part of “Feeding the Hungry,” a joint three-year program of UFCW and Smithfield to donate and deliver 20 million servings of protein to food banks around the country. “The partnership is designed to bring much needed assistance to the growing number of people facing hunger and food insecurity in our communities,” states a May 6 UFCW release. □

ers, hotel workers and community allies in San Francisco, Santa Clara, Los Angeles and San Diego led processions carrying heavy mattresses through the streets in front of Hyatt hotels, to demand that Hyatt management treat their workers fairly. Studies show that Hyatt workers have the highest number of workplace injuries in the top five hotel chains in the U.S. Hotel workers in San Francisco, represented by UNITE HERE Local 2, have staged rolling strikes at various hotels, but most often at Hyatt, since August 2009 in their struggle for a decent contract. (union release, April 21)

# 'The banks must pay!'

## Wall Street march targets NYC austerity budget

By Larry Hales  
New York

Billionaire New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, released his city budget on May 6, a day late, and stated, "This budget is full of difficult decisions." The fiscal year starts on July 1, and the budget voting process will extend into late June.

Already activists are planning to fight a plan that will limit city employees to the lowest number since 2002.

In the proposal, Bloomberg, who has been trying to end the "last in, first out" rule regulating the layoff process for teachers, calls for firing 5,400 city public workers, the bulk of them teachers. In addition to mass layoffs, the city will also lose more than 2,000 other teachers through attrition. All told, more than 6,000 teacher slots are slated to disappear by next year.

Five percent of city teachers will be fired if the city budget is passed, an action that will increase class size by at least

four students per class, according to the mayor's new pick for schools chancellor, Dennis Walcott. New York City has the largest public schools system in the country with 1.1 million students.

Walcott was deputy mayor of New York before being asked to take over as chancellor of New York City schools. Bloomberg had first chosen Cathleen Black, who was president of Hearst Magazines and sat on the boards of both IBM and Coca-Cola Co. Black had been a teacher for less than a year and had no school administration experience, but received an experience waiver from the New York State Education Department.

During Black's brief tenure, which saw many demonstrations against her and against mayoral control in general, she was known for appearing lost at public meetings and once made the statement that the solution for overcrowded schools is birth control. She was never made to apologize. Bloomberg forced her to resign because of how unpopular she was and

announced Walcott, who is a Bloomberg education program advocate and will also require a waiver, as the next choice.

The budget proposal also calls for layoffs of health clinic and parks department workers, cuts of \$40 million to the library system, the closing of 20 firehouses and a cut of funding for child care vouchers. An additional \$63 million will be slashed from community colleges while rent subsidies for 15,000 formerly homeless families will be lost.

To answer the critics who point to the city's multibillion-dollar surplus, Bloomberg responded, "This thought that, 'Oh, the city has plenty of money, they can make up for anything,' is just not realistic." Bloomberg stated that the cuts will save hundreds of millions of dollars for the city. The overall budget for the city will be reduced to \$65 billion, almost half of what the New York state budget is.

Bloomberg, who is a Wall Streeter, is worth more than \$12 billion. Though he likes to trumpet that he receives almost

no salary for being mayor, his wealth has more than tripled since being in office. Bloomberg supported the repeal of the millionaires' tax by Gov. Andrew Cuomo and increased the amount of monies given for charter school development.

The city of New York pays billions of dollars to bondholders and banks in interest payments. Though there is a loss of revenue at local, state and federal levels because of high unemployment and because of massive subsidies and tax breaks to corporations and the rich, there is also plenty of money. A budget of \$65 billion is certainly not evidence of governmental poverty and is a great deal more than the budget of many countries around the world.

On May 12, workers, students and community members will be marching on Wall Street to point the finger at banks and financial institutions for being the cause of the austerity budgets sweeping the country. The main slogan will be, "The banks must pay!" □

## Student boycott planned

# Community demands answers to education crisis

By Beverly Hiestand  
Buffalo, N.Y.

The parents of students in Buffalo Public Schools have reached the end of their patience and confidence in the ability of the district school system to address the enormous educational crisis here.

The district's graduation rate is about 25 percent for Black males and about 50 percent for all students. In this city of pervasive poverty, many young children lack basic skills, while students of all ages face situations where day-to-day survival comes before doing homework or even attending school.

Leaders of the District Parent Coordinating Council sent an ultimatum April 6 to the Buffalo schools superintendent, Board of Education, Board of Regents, Education Department, and state and local politicians to attend the DPCC's May 3 open meeting. Invited participants were asked to present their specific plan for fix-

ing the structural problems which keep many children in Buffalo from learning.

The auditorium was filled on May 3 with several hundred parents, teachers and community members. Audience members jumped up and cheered approval when City Council member the Rev. Darius Pridgen, in response to the question "Is there a structural cause to the education crises?" answered: "I say no. Structure is set up to achieve something. It's achieving what it's set up to achieve. Jail. Poverty. Everything some folks want it to achieve. Folks who are wealthy are not involved in this fight. There are people in this city who make more than we all make combined." (Buffalo News, School Zone Blog, May 4)

Pressure is on the district to select one of four "turnaround plans" for low-performing schools that comply with the federal "Race to the Top" initiative in order to receive \$58 million. The superintendent selected a plan that would move hundreds

of teachers and principals out of the "persistently low achieving" schools. The Buffalo Teachers Federation said that plan would cause chaos in the schools, and the union would not approve it.

The New York State Senior Deputy Education Commissioner then warned that failure to submit successful plans to turn around the failing schools could result in the state revoking the schools' registration and taking them over. The state has never done this before in any district.

The superintendent then changed his mind and chose another plan that will turn over administration of individual schools to "educational partnership organizations" which will manage the schools. These organizations, must be set up as non-profit organizations that can be led by private businesses, banks and other educational institutions. The DPCC did not have an opportunity to have input into this decision.

Many attendees later expressed great

confusion at what they had heard at the meeting and said there was little agreement among the major players in the educational system.

At the close of the May 3 meeting the DPCC decided to move to mass organizing and called a one-day citywide student boycott of the schools on May 16. This decision came after listening to almost three hours of testimony. At that point DPCC leader Sam Radford asked the parents if they felt they had heard answers to the problems or if they believed the politicians and school administration would follow through on resolving them. Most parents responded with "no!"

Radford said children cannot wait any longer for solutions to low graduation rates and underperforming schools. "We cannot let another generation fail," he said. The DPCC wants the boycott to send a sense of urgency to state and local officials. Radford vowed that mass action will include all forms of protest until there is change. □

# Palestine, CUNY & rightwing suppression

By Shelley Ettinger

Playwright Tony Kushner has done some good work. His most famous plays, the "Angels in America" cycle, were some of the first mainstream dramas to draw attention to how the AIDS crisis was devastating the gay community in this country. His musical "Caroline, or Change," which I saw in 2004 during its all-too-brief Broadway run, is an honest, tough-minded yet tender treatment of race, racism, and Black-Jewish relations in the 1960s South.

Kushner is not a radical. He is thoroughly at home in the mainstream. Basically he is a left social democrat, a devotee of what he sees as the potential of bourgeois democracy while acknowledging its shortcomings, and also aware of other possibilities and even of the ubiquitousness of anti-communism in this country and how it has damaged and distorted culture. This brief take on his political sensibilities, based on having read a number of his pieces and interviews with him

over the years, is offered to lead in to commenting on the current dust-up drawing much notice here in New York.

At its meeting [on May 2], the board of trustees of the City University of New York voted to cancel the honorary degree that John Jay College had planned to bestow on Kushner at this month's graduation ceremony. The reason: The playwright is not sufficiently rabidly racistly violently Zionist.

He is a Zionist. A left-liberal Zionist, the sort who says "I love Israel" and expresses his "strong support for Israel's right to exist," but does oppose the occupation and criticize what he sees as its worst extremes in the treatment of the indigenous Palestinian population. Kushner has acknowledged at least some of the crimes committed during the creation of the state of Israel. Yet "the occupation" that he opposes is the post-1967 occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, not the larger occupation — that is, the theft of the entire land of Palestine, on which is imposed the Zionist state, a state

that is by definition racist, exclusionist and illegitimate.

Never forget this: Kushner, or I, or any U.S. Jew can move to Israel at any time and get automatic citizenship. Simply because we're Jews (and, by the way, regardless of religious practice; smart move since most Jews are atheists). By contrast, no Palestinian-American — not a young person whose parent or grandparent was forced out of the family home, nor an elder who was herself/himself driven out of the house by the terrorist thugs whose murderous ethnic cleansing campaigns were crucial to the creation of a Jewish state — not a single Palestinian is permitted to return home to live. Think about that. I, someone with no tie whatsoever to "Israel," someone whose ancestry goes back to Eastern Europe for hundreds of years and to Spain for hundreds of years before that, could pack up and move there tomorrow. And be welcomed as an automatic citizen.

But my Palestinian sister whose parents still keep the key to their stolen home in a precious box, who still yearn

for home, who still grieve over their forcible expulsion from the land their people had lived on for untold generations — she is barred from returning. (Here I'll point to Susan Abulhawa's wonderful novel "Mornings in Jenin," which conveys this reality in a gripping literary tour de force.)

So. Here's a famous playwright who despite all that proclaims his love for Israel. Who says he is "moved and excited by its culture, its meaning in Jewish history" (which is to my way of thinking a reprehensible sentiment since its meaning in Jewish history is a blot, a shame, a stain, a crime against humanity, a turning away from a tradition of righteous struggle and solidarity against oppression). Who does criticize some of its crimes, as indeed do many Israelis, but does not at all part ways with Zionism itself, or with a fundamental support for the Zionist state's right to exist.

Who, furthermore, explicitly does not support the BDS — Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions — movement, an international effort to bring pressure on Israel to end

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## At UW-Milwaukee

# 66-day occupation against budget cuts ends

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

Since the beginning of the people's upsurge in Wisconsin in early February, the students and workers have resisted in numerous mass actions. One of the most courageous of these was a student occupation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, which ended in the early morning hours of May 7 after the students were evicted from their occupied space by the administration and charged with "trespassing."

"For the past 66 days our occupation has been an aid and inspiration to students, unions and community organizations. We have participated in marches, rallies, the days-long occupation at the state Capitol, educational activities, canvassing, and even improvisational musicals. We have been organizing and building solidarity for the benefit of Wisconsin's educational system, our communities and the labor movement worldwide," said Jeremy Kowalski of UWM Occupied. ([uwmoccupied.com](http://uwmoccupied.com))

The students' occupation began at the Theatre Department, which is facing virtual elimination under Gov. Scott Walker's 2011-2013 budget proposal, which entails at least \$22.4 million in cuts to UW-Milwaukee and tens of millions more for the entire 24-campus UW system.

The students then moved to occupy space in the Student Union, which became the longest occupation in U.S. history according to the students. During the occupation, UWM Occupied, along with supporters, set up a kitchen, held educational workshops, hosted cultural events and engaged in other activities for the entire campus community.

On May 2 the students were given 24 hours' notice to vacate by the administration, but they and their supporters fought back, and the university then gave an eviction notice of midnight, May 6.

Throughout the week the students garnered support from around Wisconsin and beyond. Signers to the "Showing Solidarity with UWM Occupied" petition included people from over 30 states in the U.S. as well as supporters from other countries, including India, Croatia, France, Canada, Britain, Portugal, Italy, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ireland, Australia and Germany. A Bail Out the People Movement international petition also generated numerous signers, including struggling students and workers from the University of Puerto Rico.

Just before midnight on May 6, all of the students involved in the occupation moved into their space and set up live

Ustream feeds, where they gave regular updates. After they shut off the live stream in the early morning hours, the campus police came in and forced the students out. They were taken to a different location on campus and told they would be given municipal citations for trespassing after hours on campus.

The administration hasn't yet moved on the occupying students' demands, which include the administration's public denunciation of the state budget as devastating for the future of UW-M and Wisconsin; public support for the integrity of the UW system; participation in a pay cut of administrative salaries; a tuition and fee freeze for students; no union busting; and keeping in-state tuition for undocumented students.

Despite being evicted, the students remain defiant and continue to fight for their and other poor and working people's lives.

"Our aim in this action was to go out on our own terms and re-energize the anti-austerity movement in Wisconsin and all over the country. The university did not want us arrested on camera. I think that speaks volumes to the level of true support of the university administration, which, on one hand, has come out against the anti-collective bargaining legislation, and on the other hand, has had no problem

stifling us. But they were too cowardly to arrest us in front of the entire world," said Peter Adamczak of UWM Occupied.

UWM Occupied is continuing the fight for its demands along with the Students for a Democratic Society, the Milwaukee Graduate Assistants Association-AFT, AFSCME Local 82, and other student and worker organizations within the UW-M campus community.

The next major statewide protest against union busting and other anti-people attacks is a May 14 "We Are Wisconsin" rally at the state Capitol in Madison. A major focus of this rally will be fighting the new attacks by Gov. Walker and his capitalist backers, including a May 4 announcement by Republicans in the Wisconsin Legislature that if the courts have not ruled on the legality of Wisconsin's collective bargaining bill that was passed earlier this year by early June, it will be added into the proposed 2011-2013 state budget by the Joint Finance Committee.

Contact UWM Occupied at [uwmoccupied@yahoo.com](mailto:uwmoccupied@yahoo.com). Sign their petition at <http://tinyurl.com/4yhvy9r>. To support the Wisconsin struggle, visit [www.wisaficio.org](http://www.wisaficio.org); [wwwisaficio.typepad.com](http://wwwisaficio.typepad.com); [www.vdlf.org](http://www.vdlf.org); [www.defendwisconsin.org](http://www.defendwisconsin.org); and [www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org). □

## Confronted by militant protest

# School board forced to delay vote on Ethnic Studies

By Paul Teitelbaum  
Tucson, Ariz.

On May 3, the Tucson Unified School District board met once again to take up the issue of Ethnic Studies. This meeting had been rescheduled from the previous week, when nine courageous youth occupied the TUSD board members' seats and forced cancellation of the meeting.

Board President Mark Stegeman is pushing a plan that would change many Ethnic Studies classes from core curriculum classes to electives, relegating them to second-class status. Stegeman's plan is viewed as being compliant with the racist, unjust, HB2281 law, which falsely accuses Ethnic Studies of teaching hatred and promoting the overthrow of the U.S. government. The Stegeman plan would be a first step towards dismantling the program in its entirety.

HB2281 has been condemned by U.N.

human rights experts, who assert that the state has the "responsibility to respect the right of everyone to have access to his or her own cultural and linguistic heritage and to participate in cultural life." They state, "Everyone has the right to seek and develop cultural knowledge and to know and understand his or her own culture and that of others through education and information." (U.N. Human Rights/Arizona, May 10, 2010) The 11 teachers in the TUSD Ethnic Studies Department have also filed a lawsuit in federal court challenging the law's constitutionality.

Board Superintendent John Pedicone followed through on his threats of a police clampdown on the meeting. More than 100 police in full military-style gear were on the scene. Streets were blocked off and a helicopter flew overhead. Everyone who entered the TUSD building was searched and scanned with a metal detector. Inside the meeting room a barrier of

police protected the podium.

This massive police presence did not stop the hundreds of people who had gathered to protest the board meeting and defend the Ethnic Studies program. The crowd outside continuously chanted, while those who had gotten inside the building refused to be silent. They condemned the Stegeman proposal and the board's complicity with the attack on students' rights to learn their culture and history. The meeting was forced to recess twice. Seven supporters were arrested and forcibly removed from the building.

After four hours, Stegeman recommended that the board delay voting on his proposal until after a community forum was held to allow for more discussion. It is clear that he delayed the vote because of the militant and determined

struggle to save the Ethnic Studies program. This concession from the Stegeman/Pedicone faction of the board was won because the youth group UNIDOS decided on April 26 that there would be no more business as usual, and they then occupied the board's meeting room.

The week-long media vilification campaign, the threats of criminal charges and the massive military-like police presence didn't scare people away from the May 3 board meeting. Their outrage and willingness to go face to face with the police under threat of arrest intimidated the TUSD board and caused them to back down.

The community forum has yet to be scheduled. Further, 27 cases of police abuse have been documented and filed against the Tucson Police Department for their actions on May 3. The struggle continues. □

## March demands good contract, education

A picket line of university faculty, staff and students outside City Hall on May 5 was boisterous and militant. Seven hundred protesters then marched from City Hall to a rally at Borough of Manhattan Community College, where they spoke truth and bitterness about conditions at the City University of New York.

The state cut CUNY funding by \$107 million this year and billionaire Mayor Bloomberg wants to cut \$63 million more. These recent cuts and years of underfunding guarantee overcrowded classrooms, fewer full-time faculty positions, less time for student mentoring and guidance, abuse of hard-working but underpaid adjuncts, and reliance on tuition instead of

public investment. Meanwhile, wealthy New Yorkers are scheduled to receive \$5 billion in tax breaks.

At an opening rally in City Hall Park, Professional Staff Congress President Barbara Bowen told other protesters, "We're rallying to puncture the myth of economic austerity, used by Albany and City Hall to justify massive budget cuts. If we let politicians continue to say 'we're broke' with one side of their mouth while they promise tax breaks for the rich with the other, millions of ordinary New Yorkers will pay the price." The PSC represents faculty and staff at CUNY, which is jointly funded by the state and city of New York.

— Workers World New York Bureau

NEW YORK



## Rome Contact Group, ICC

# Further proof of Western aims in Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The various governments and economic interests that are attempting to overthrow the Libyan government convened a meeting of the so-called "International Contact Group" in Rome on May 5.

The ICG announced the establishment of a fund to finance the counterrevolutionary rebel groups that are fighting to overthrow the Libyan government. Under the banner of the Transitional National Council, the rebels are slated to receive hundreds of millions of dollars from the imperialist states.

As Libya's former colonial ruler, Italy killed or displaced nearly half of Libya's population while repressing an anticolonial struggle in the early 20th century. That this European capitalist country, which is a large recipient of Libyan oil and natural gas, would host such a gathering speaks volumes about the blatant efforts by Western capitalist states to seize Libya and its natural resources.

Media reports indicate that the TNC requested \$2 to \$3 billion in funding. The Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini said at the conference that the creation of a rebel fund would "permit funds to be channeled effectively and transparently" to Libyan opposition forces. The British government has also been cited as a major proponent of the creation of the fund to finance the rebels. (BBC, May 5)

The British government has also placed Special Forces inside Libya to train the rebel troops as well as identify targets for NATO's bombing campaign. Other reports have indicated that the British are placing military advisers inside Libya and on the border with Tunisia. According to the BBC, "The UK has already provided

\$21.5 million in aid to the rebels."

The Obama administration has also pledged \$53 million in so-called "humanitarian aid" and an additional \$25 million to provide medical supplies, combat boots, rations and protective gear to rebels in eastern Libya. Another shipment of U.S. aid is scheduled to the rebel stronghold of Benghazi during the second week of May.

The U.S.-backed monarchies in Qatar and Kuwait also pledged aid to the anti-Libyan forces. In Rome, Qatar said it would supply \$500 million to the rebels. Kuwait offered \$180 million.

The Rome participants also deliberated about how to tighten the Western imperialist states' economic sanctions against the Libyan government. The meeting reiterated its aim of preventing the oil-rich North African state from exporting crude oil or importing refined petroleum, as well as using other means to isolate Libya from world trade markets. In addition, there were plans to seize Libyan government funds frozen by the U.S. and the European states, reputed to be over \$50 billion, to finance operations in the war against the North African country.

Economic sanctions are designed to bolster the U.S./NATO military campaign of bombing from the sea and air, along with sabotage attacks by the rebels on the ground.

### Why the ICC is attacking Libya

The International Criminal Court based in The Hague announced on May 4 it would seek arrest warrants against high-level Libyan officials, including Moammar Gadhafi and his family members.

Referred to by many as the "African Criminal Court," the ICC has a reputation of only targeting and indicting states and individuals on the continent. The ICC has

issued warrants against Sudan President Omar al-Bashir and other leading figures within the oil-rich nation. ICC Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo has already indicated that he will issue indictments against at least three Libyan officials.

In May 5 Moreno-Ocampo addressed the United Nations Security Council, which passed Resolutions 1970 and 1973 that provide the legal rationale for direct NATO military intervention in Libya.

There was no reference to the U.S. CIA's decades-long plans to assassinate and overthrow the Gadhafi-led government. The ICC has never taken any action against the U.S. and British imperialist states for the crimes committed against the peoples of Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan and Palestine.

The indictments by the ICC are clearly designed to coincide with the stated aims of the U.S., its allies within NATO and those in other geopolitical regions. These imperialists have maintained that they do not want a negotiated settlement and that Libya must be totally transformed into an outpost for Western military and economic interests.

### Libya resists military assault

The Libyan government is resisting the imperialist onslaught and is defending its territory and state. It has prevented the arming of the rebels from the Tunisian border or through the port at Misrata, where Libyan forces have been targeted by NATO bombing raids.

Conditions for people inside the country have worsened since the beginning of the NATO bombing on March 19. The bombing has imposed great hardship on the people of Libya as well as on the 2 million guest workers who relied on Africa's most vibrant economy for their

livelihoods.

Tens of thousands of Libyans and guest workers have fled the country, and many have been seriously injured or killed in unsafe boats. A May 8 report in the Guardian asserted that NATO forces left 70 African migrant workers to die: "All but 11 of those on board died from thirst and hunger after their vessel was left to drift in open waters for 16 days. International maritime law compels all vessels, including military units, to answer distress calls from nearby boats and to offer help where possible."

These incidents are coming to light daily. Finding a just peace will be crucial in any reconstruction and national reconciliation process.

As the 53-member African Union has emphasized repeatedly, the peace plan advanced by the continental organization on March 11 must be implemented. The AU plan calls for an immediate ceasefire, the withdrawal of foreign military forces, respect for the territorial sovereignty of the country, the protection of civilians and migrant workers, and the beginning of serious negotiations between the warring parties.

At the same time, high-level meetings between Russia and China have taken place, and a joint statement on the situation in Libya was released. It points out that "every nation should determine its future independently without outside interference." (Asia Times, May 9)

All the major Western military interventions are exposing these countries to extreme economic crises as well as growing political opposition, both domestically and internationally. There is no solution for the workers and oppressed in the capitalist countries except by ending the imperialist wars of occupation. □

## Syria – What's behind protests?

Continued from page 1

the workers there to day laborers for imperialism.

Contrast this to Bahrain and Yemen, both ruled by U.S. client regimes long alienated from the workers who live and work there. These regimes have fired upon, arrested and tortured demonstrators. Yet neither country has been declared a no-fly zone, and neither government has been the object of sanctions. In Libya, however, the West's "humanitarian intervention" to "protect civilians" has meant six weeks of bombing that has destroyed much of the country's civilian infrastructure.

Now the same Western powers bombing Libya are threatening Syria, the sole remaining independent secular state in the Arab world. Both the U.S. and the Economic Union have imposed sanctions on Syrian government officials. Why?

For one thing, Washington is trying to break up the strategic progressive alliance between Syria and Iran. It is also trying to stop the crucial support Syria gives to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas on the West Bank. To do this, U.S. finance capital seeks to destabilize Syria, destroy its sovereignty and bring it back into the imperialist orbit.

### Who is protesting in Syria?

Demonstrations are taking place against the Bashir Assad government in Syria, which has responded with force, at least on some occasions. But the actual character of these demonstrations remains unclear. To what extent are they

true popular outpourings? What has been the governing Syrian Socialist Arab Baath Party's actual response?

Very clear is the fact that U.S. imperialism is trying to use these protests to its own advantage. This has nothing to do with any demands raised by Syrian workers, who are suffering from an austerity plan imposed by the International Monetary Fund in 2006. Michel Chossudovsky wrote on May 3 that among the protests is "an organized insurrection composed of armed gangs" that entered the Syrian town of Dara'a from Jordan. (GlobalResearch.ca) Dara'a is where the protests began.

Meanwhile, the Syrian government-run media is not saying much, while the Western corporate media as well as Al Jazeera have been accused of exaggerating both the protests and the Syrian government repression. Russia Today on April 30 quotes a travel agent living in Syria who says pro-Assad rallies were called "anti-Assad" by Al Jazeera; anti-government protests reported by Al Jazeera and Reuters did not take place; and protest footage from other countries has been attributed to Syria.

While front-page articles give the im-

pression that most of Syria has taken to the streets against Assad, most establishment Middle East pundits admit that the Syrian government, at this point, is supported by most Syrians.

### Marxist political perspective needed

World finance capital and its media mouthpieces appear to be "setting up" the Syrian government. But imperialism is not all-powerful. It can be fought and defeated. What could the Syrian government and people have done, and still do, to avoid leaving an opening for the U.S. to intervene? What can close this opening now? Marxism provides the tools to answer these questions.

The Marxist term for the kind of government that exists in Syria is "bourgeois nationalist." This is also true of Libya, Iran and Iraq before the U.S. invasion. They are nationalist because they seek to develop their countries free from imperialist domination. They are bourgeois because they are ruled by an exploiting class of capitalists.

Marxists support these governments against imperialism because they are manifestations of self-determination of

the oppressed. This does not mean that Marxists support every policy of these governments.

Marxists also recognize that these regimes have a dual character. Bourgeois nationalists seek to push out the imperialists so they can better exploit their workers. But they have a common interest with the workers when imperialism threatens the country's sovereignty. These governments cannot consistently fight imperialism, however; only the working class can.

### On the front line with Israel

How has this worked in Syria?

Syria has been ruled since 1966 by a secular government dominated by the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. The current head of state is Bashir Assad. Syria is a "front-line state," having a border with Israel. This fact affects every aspect of Syria's history and has made it an object of constant imperialist and Zionist pressure, which links the fate of the Syrian people to the Palestinian struggle.

Syria's nationalization of a U.S. oil pipeline precipitated the 1967 war, when Israel attacked and occupied Syria's Golan Heights, the Palestinian West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The Golan Heights has since been annexed by Israel.

While Syria plays a regionally progressive role right now, this was not always the case. In 1976 the Syrian government intervened on the side of Lebanon's fascists, who were armed by Israel, in Lebanon's civil war against a revolutionary Palestinian-Lebanese alliance. The Syr-

Continued on page 9



## GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

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## Despite Bin Laden assassination

# Events show the limits of U.S. power

By Sara Flounders

President Barack Obama has praised the targeted assassination of Osama bin Laden as a turning point and “one of the greatest military and intelligence operations in U.S. history.”

However, events in the week running up to the execution exposed the limits of U.S. imperialist power and showed why the imperialists are so desperate to project an all-powerful image.

Obama’s message was that the Pentagon can do anything, go anywhere, kill anyone, bomb any country. Sovereignty is now irrelevant. The compliant media are glorifying Navy SEALs, Army Special Forces and Airborne Night Stalkers as “America’s quiet professionals.” We are told they have recently carried out 50 operations in a dozen countries. International lawlessness — the use of torture, kidnapping, secret rendition, extrajudicial killings and targeted assassinations — is justified and defended.

It is clear that this summary execution will be used to justify further expansion of the military budget, new weapons systems and a stepped-up level of domestic repression.

But all this has been unable to reverse U.S. imperialism’s steadily eroding position in the region. Consider a few events that took place in the two weeks before and after the bin Laden assassination. Clearly events are spinning out of their control.

### Prison break in Kandahar

All their night-vision goggles, electronic listening gear and special ops units couldn’t prevent the escape on April 24 in Kandahar of 541 prisoners labeled as Taliban, including 104 commanders described as the very backbone of the insurgency.

The tunnel they had dug for months stretched half a mile and had electricity and air holes. Keys they had obtained to the

cells allowed organizers to open cellblocks and escort prisoners to the escape route.

The facility had undergone security upgrades and tightened procedures since a Taliban attack in 2008 had freed 900 prisoners. In that assault, an explosives-laden tanker truck at the prison gate diverted attention while an explosion at a back wall opened an escape route. Dozens of militants on motorbikes aided the escapes.

Afghan government officials and their NATO backers had repeatedly asserted that the prison now had vastly improved security since that attack with new guard towers, night illumination, a ring of concrete barriers topped with razor wire and an entrance reached by passing through multiple checkpoints and gates.

### Turn the guns around

On April 27 nine U.S. officers — two lieutenant colonels, one of whom had retired and become a contractor, two majors, four captains and one master sergeant, all of them armed — were killed in a meeting room at Kabul airport. The shooter was not with al-Qaida or the Taliban but was a trusted Afghan Air Force pilot with 20 years’ seniority.

This is the seventh time this year that a trusted Afghan officer has turned his gun around and killed U.S. military officials.

The same week also saw attacks inside the Afghan Defense Ministry, at a Kandahar city police station and at a shared Afghan/U.S. military base in the east. In neighboring Helmand province on April 29, the top civilian chief of Marjah district was assassinated.

On the same day, April 27, the Wall Street Journal ran a front-page article headlined, “Karzai told to dump U.S.” The article explained that “Pakistan is lobbying Afghanistan’s president against building a long-term strategic partnership with the U.S., urging him instead to look to Pakistan — and its Chinese ally — for help in

striking a peace deal with the Taliban and rebuilding the economy, Afghan officials say.” The article described the tensions between the U.S. and Pakistan and the deep hostility to U.S. domination throughout the region. Even the forces U.S. imperialism has created, armed and financed are increasingly wary of their alliances.

### Cutting supply lines

Meanwhile, there were mass sit-ins and rallies near Peshawar, Pakistan, involving thousands of people who blocked the main supply roads used by the U.S. and NATO to resupply their forces in Afghanistan via the Khyber Pass.

The organizers threatened that if drone strikes inside Pakistan did not stop within 30 days, they would block all NATO supply routes across Pakistan and march to the capital, Islamabad, to force the government to take a stand on the issue. U.S. drones have killed more than 1,000 people in Pakistan alone.

The execution of bin Laden came just one day after U.S. bombs meant for Moammar Gadhafi, the Libyan head of state, killed his son and three young grandchildren. The U.S./NATO war on Libya, once considered an easy “regime change,” continues without even a pro-forma congressional discussion or vote.

### Arab spring

All these immediate setbacks for imperialism reflect also the millions in the streets in Egypt and Tunisia who totally overwhelmed those U.S.-government-supported, long-term dictatorships that Washington had relied on in the region.

The April 27 announcement by Fatah and Hamas of a historic agreement of Palestinian unity, reached in Cairo with the assistance of Egyptian officials, led to immediate U.S. threats to cut off all aid to Fatah and to outraged denunciations by Israel. For decades U.S./Israeli policy has been to keep the Palestinian movement divided and the democratically elected government of Hamas isolated.

On that same day, the station that pumped natural gas from al-Sabil terminal near El Arish, Egypt, into Israel was blown up. This third attack in three months will close the pipeline for weeks. Egyptian officials have also announced they are reviewing the below-market contract for natural gas that Egypt had formerly granted to Israel. Recent polls show the majority of Egyptians want to end the “peace treaty” with Israel.

On April 30 Egypt announced it was opening the Rafah border crossing into Gaza and ending the blockade of Gaza on a permanent basis. The U.S. and Israel had imposed a strict blockade on Gaza since 2007 with Hosni Mubarak’s full compliance. Mubarak’s overturn in Egypt has meant an end to many reactionary policies. The people are in motion, asserting their rights and making new demands.

Meanwhile thousands of Iraqis continue to take to the streets and demonstrate in front of U.S. bases protesting shortages of electricity, food and jobs and calling on all U.S. troops to leave. U.S. officials are having a difficult time negotiating an agreement for continued bases in Iraq, even with a compliant and corrupt government of their own making.

### Execution fuels outrage

The U.S. position in Pakistan was further eroded after the killing of bin Laden. Resolutions by the Lahore High Court Bar Association, not considered sympathetic to al-Qaida, speak volumes about the mass mood. One resolution, which passed unanimously, demanded the resignations of the

president, the prime minister, the interior minister, the chief of army staff, the director general of Inter-Services Intelligence and the director of military intelligence for their failure to protect the sovereignty of Pakistan when the U.S. conducted its operation against bin Laden.

The U.S. operation in Abbottabad, close to the Pakistan Military Academy and the restricted site of the Kahuta nuclear plant, sparked deep apprehension.

Pumped up by the bin Laden execution, the Pentagon launched another drone attack on Pakistan on May 6, killing 17 people.

In Yemen that same day a drone attack failed to kill Anwar al-Awlaki, a U.S. citizen and radical cleric who has never been charged with any crime but is now on a U.S. international hit list. The announcement said the drone attack “may have killed some members of al-Qaida in Yemen.” The attack is a disaster for the U.S.-supported military dictatorship in Yemen, which is on the brink of collapse. For three months millions of people have courageously demonstrated in the streets against the government. The Pentagon had stopped drone attacks, fearing they would further undermine the military dictatorship. Last year after a U.S. drone mistakenly killed the leaders of a Yemeni province, even the government expressed great anger.

On May 8, the Taliban allegedly launched a multipronged attack on the offices of the governor, the national security directorate, police headquarters and a U.S. Special Forces base in Kandahar, Afghanistan. It created chaos in the capital of a province that NATO has spent the past year trying to pacify. The May 8 Guardian of Britain explained, “The dream of turning the city into a bulwark of security was badly tarnished.”

U.S. media polls have measured a temporary “bump” in President Obama’s ratings. But U.S. imperialism’s own standing is in continuing decline. It has economic problems it can’t solve and terrifyingly destructive weapons that are increasingly raising more anger and organized resistance than fear.

After promises of an economic rebound, U.S. unemployment in April climbed to 9 percent. Wholesale attacks on Medicare and Social Security are proposed as solutions to the budget deficit. The capitalist economy can no longer afford guns and butter. Now the ruling class is pinning its hopes on the superprofits of military contracts and conquest.

While it is true that the Pentagon has weapons enough to destroy the world, it is increasingly coming up against the limits of the capitalist system it serves. □

## Anti-Muslim repression

*Continued from page 3*

without explanation.

Racists have been mobilizing against the building of a masjid in Sheepshead Bay in Brooklyn, N.Y. An injunction against building and opposition to the building of the Islamic Center is from the same racist forces that mobilized against building an Islamic Center in Lower Manhattan several blocks from the World Trade Center site.

The FBI is continuing its attack on Hatem Abudayyeh, executive director of the Arab American Action Network. Following a Gestapo-type raid on the Abudayyeh home, the family’s bank accounts were briefly frozen as the U.S. steps up its anti-Muslim campaign as part of the so-called “War on Terror.”

— Gene Clancy

ian capitalists feared that a revolutionary Lebanon might lead to their overthrow by Syrian workers.

Relentless pressure from the U.S. and Israel, however, and the refusal to return the Golan Heights have turned Syria’s rulers back toward an anti-imperialist stance. The role they play today as an ally of Iran, of Hezbollah in Lebanon and of Hamas in Gaza is crucial to holding back U.S. and Israeli aggression in the region.

### Capitalist downturn destabilizes independent states

Like other bourgeois nationalist governments, Syria has not broken with the capitalist world market, nor does it have the perspective to do so. Instead, it seeks a better deal in this market, which is completely dominated by Western banks. During economic downturns, nationalist governments like in Syria are forced by Wall Street to make economic concessions that attack the workers and stimulate the growth of a pro-imperialist elite, the “comprador bourgeoisie.” This undermines the government’s independence from imperialism while isolating it from the workers.

In 2006 Syria adopted an IMF plan calling for austerity measures, a wage freeze, opening the economy to foreign banks, and privatizing government-run industries. For working people this has meant unemployment, inflation and deteriorating social conditions. The imperialists know this.

“The Syrian state once brought electricity to every town, but ... can no longer

afford the social contract of taking care of people’s needs,” wrote the New York Times on April 30.

“Critics of the regime say economic liberalization has benefited a group of elite businessmen, such as Rami Makhlouf, Mr. Assad’s maternal first cousin who controls a significant amount of the economy, including SyriaTel, the country’s mobile network operator.” (Financial Times, April 26) According to the New York Times report, Makhlouf, a focus of dissent, has become a symbol of “crony capitalism, making the poor poorer and the connected rich fantastically wealthy.”

The Syrian government could protect itself from imperialist destabilization by reversing this economic attack on the workers, whose support constitutes Syria’s best strength. Measures could include reversing the liberalization of the economy by barring the penetration of foreign capital; reinstating state ownership of electricity, communications and other key industries; prioritizing food production; and restoring subsidies. This would win back those elements of the population who are protesting, restore their faith in the government, and make sure there is no fertile soil for imperialist destabilization.

At the same time, workers and progressives here must oppose U.S. intervention in Syria in every way possible. For the imperialists to regain total control would be the worst thing for all the oppressed people in the Middle East and for the working class and oppressed people here at home as well. □

# Does unemployment matter?

The official jobless rate is in for the month of April. Unemployment went up — to 9 percent.

What? You didn't know that? Then you're like most people, who try to find out what's happening by watching television or reading commercial newspapers.

Here's how MSNBC played the Labor Department's monthly report on employment: "Solid April jobs report shows economy gaining momentum."

CBS: "Businesses now hiring at fastest pace since 2006."

CNN: "Analysis: Jobs matter, unemployment rate doesn't." This "analysis" went on to tell us exactly how to react to the jobs report: "Ignore the unemployment rate, and ignore anything you read that highlights the fact that it increased from 8.8 percent in March to 9 percent in April. It doesn't matter. It's an irrelevant number." Yes, CNN actually said that.

According to the way all the capitalist print and electronic media spun this report, which came out on May 6, the rise in the unemployment rate means nothing. Some 244,000 new jobs were created in April, so we can all feel better.

So how can unemployment be going up if the number of new jobs is increasing? The capitalist media came up with various explanations. The New York Times said it was because the number of new jobs came from payroll data while the unemployment figure came from household interviews. Others said it was just a fluke.

Tell that to the 205,000 additional people out of work in April. Losing your job, especially in tough times like these for the working class, is like a dagger to the heart.

And what about young people trying to get their first jobs? Whatever jobs were created last month, they didn't affect unemployment in the 16 to 19 age group. It is still at the highest ever since the government started keeping these records — a whopping 25 percent.

And in Black communities, the jobless rate for all ages is twice that for whites — proof that institutional racism is entrenched in the United States, no matter who is president, and "equal opportunity" is just a mirage.

Of course, these are not tough times for the banks, brokerage firms and corporations that got bailed out after going bust in 2008-2009. Trillions of government dollars went to put them back on their feet, making big profits. Why do the Republican and Democratic politicians conveniently get amnesia about that when they moan that they have no choice but to cut all social programs because "there's just no money"?

The fact is that this crisis goes much deeper than the capitalist political parties will ever admit. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. Look at it this way: Permanent, full-time jobs for most of the 30 million people in the U.S. who are either unemployed or underemployed are not coming back. Even big business media like the Wall Street Journal are talking about that.

Companies that are now making big profits again, and actually increasing production, are not hiring back most of the workers they laid off. They've raised productivity through employing new technology and by intensifying the labor of those on the job — what we know as speed-up, which today can come in many different forms as workers are tracked by cameras and GPS devices throughout the day.

Massive unemployment, leading to homelessness, hunger and emotional pain, alongside a glut of products piling up faster than ever — this is the kind of wacky contradiction that can exist only under capitalism. It arises directly from the profit system, and it is wrecking life on this planet.

What do all workers want? A chance to be productive, learn skills and use them in a way that benefits their communities and their families. That kind of life is more than possible — it's absolutely necessary for human society to move forward. What we need to get there is social ownership of all the means of production. The people who do the work must collectively own and control the factories, the mines, the hospitals, the offices, the railroads and so on.

This struggle by the working class to throw the capitalists off their backs and establish socialism has been going on all over the world for many generations. What has held it back has been the strength of capitalism in the U.S. and Europe, most of all. Through colonialism and then imperialism, the capitalists in these countries grew immensely rich and grudgingly allowed some of that wealth to "trickle down" to the workers. That saved the system and prevented revolutions.

But those days are over. The bosses are forcing class war on the workers — from Wisconsin to Arizona to New York. The question is being posed sharply inside the bastion of imperialism itself: Which side are you on? That of the bosses or the workers? Capitalism or socialism? □

# U.N. blames Haitian victims in cholera epidemic

By G. Dunkel

Nearly 5,000 Haitians have died from cholera since October 22, with another 300,000 made ill by the disease. As the spring rainy season begins in Haiti, the number of new cholera cases is ballooning.

The leading medical journal, The Lancet, recently predicted that there would be nearly 800,000 cases of cholera and 11,000 deaths this year by the end of November. (TheLancet.com, March 16)

On May 4, the United Nations put out a 32-page, "Final Report of the Independent Panel of Experts on the Cholera Outbreak in Haiti," carefully claiming that a "confluence of circumstances" — which is not the fault of any group or individual — was responsible for the fast-moving outbreak (un.org)

However, cholera had not been known in Haiti for more than a century. This outbreak began near the Mirebalais garrison of Minustah, the U.N. occupation forces, which have been in Haiti since 2004. They replaced U.S., French and Canadian troops who were sent there after President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was kidnapped earlier that year.

The U.N. military camp is on the Meye River, which is a tributary of the Artibonite, the main river in Haiti. Epidemiologists have established that the cholera pathogen was spread because Haitians use the river's water out of necessity as part of their daily lives.

After a TV station in Mirebalais documented the U.N. garrison's dumping of raw excreta into the Meye River, and students confronted the troops, Hai-

tians pointed at the Minustah troops as the source of the epidemic. The camp's wholly inadequate "sanitary facilities" are shown in photographs in the U.N. report. (See pp. 21-22)

The source of the cholera epidemic doesn't make much difference in how victims are treated. They need quick hydration and require antibiotics in serious cases. However, it does make a difference in how cholera is controlled. If the outbreak had been caused by a long dormant pathogen native to Haiti or Latin America, different measures would have been taken than if it was introduced from a recent external source. The U.N. report documents this cholera pathogen's genetic composition as being very similar to types found in South Asia, the origin of the U.N. soldiers based at Mirebalais.

The U.N. seeks to escape blame for this cholera outbreak by pointing to "simultaneous water and sanitation and health care system deficiencies," in Haiti. However, the U.N. has spent billions of dollars in its seven-year military occupation of Haiti and is well aware of the country's sanitation situation and that there is not a public sewerage system.

Although U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed his sympathy to those stricken with the disease and their families, the organization will not accept the full blame for the cholera epidemic. If it did, it would open up the U.N. to a tidal wave of lawsuits, damage claims, and tremendous political fallout and international criticism.

Even more, it would add more fuel to the just demands of the Haitian people for an end to the imperialist occupation.

# African-American jobless rate

Continued from page 1

community." (Huffington Post, May 8)

This problem is further highlighted by the growing rate of poverty inside the U.S. and its devastating impact on African Americans. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, "An astonishing 47 million Americans out of a population of about 310 million live in poverty in the United States, a number equivalent to one out of every seven people." (Press TV, May 7)

However, the Teheran Times points out: "Poverty rates for African Americans and Latinos are close to three times that of white Americans. African Americans suffered disproportionately during the recession with unemployment rates in that community reaching near depres-

sion levels." (Press TV, May 7)

Under the present course, this problem will grow even more with the ongoing attacks on public sector employees and their unions. The public sector has provided employment and job benefits to large numbers of African Americans and women. These ruling class assaults on public workers take on a rabidly racist and sexist character by blaming the most oppressed within class society for the economic crisis that was created by the banks, the transnational corporations and the Pentagon.

Consequently, the program of action to fight the austerity budgets imposed on public employees must strongly emphasize the ruling class' role in creating the global crisis of capitalism and worsening the social situation by the ongoing

bailouts of the financial institutions and the corporations and by the imperialists' escalating war drive in Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa

The workers and oppressed are saying even louder that the money utilized for bank bailouts and wars of occupations must be utilized instead to provide jobs, housing, quality education, health care, childcare and senior services to people living and working in the U.S.

This cannot be done as long as the federal government prioritizes the interests of the ruling class and the Pentagon at the expense of the masses of people. The peoples of the world are not the enemies of the workers and oppressed of the U.S. but their natural allies in the struggle for a decent life free of war, economic exploitation and national oppression. □

# Palestine, CUNY & rightwing suppression

Continued from page 6

the 1967 occupation even though that in itself is a moderate demand and even though the BDS tactic is a time-honored one honed during the struggle against that earlier apartheid state, South Africa; but no, even so, Kushner opposes BDS. Here, in other words, is a friend to Israel. But in the landscape of U.S. culture, where the ultra-right has an ever tighter grip on consciousness and culture, even that is not good enough.

And so CUNY pulls his honor. And Kushner cries foul. In his letter to the board expressing his dismay at the action, he asserts his "strong statement of support for Israel's right to exist, and my ardent wish that it continue to do so." He

decries the BDS movement, explaining: "I have never supported a boycott of the state of Israel. I don't believe it will accomplish anything positive in terms of resolving the crisis. I believe that the call for a boycott is predicated on an equation of this crisis with other situations, contemporary and historical, that is fundamentally false, the consequence of a failure of political understanding of a full and compassionate engagement with Jewish history and Jewish existence."

The [last sentence] seems to me to smack shockingly of a Jewish exceptionalism that objectively aligns with the base racism of the Zionist ideology rather than conveying any meaningful point about the history of European persecution of

the Jews to which he's obviously referring and to which Zionism was and remains a backward, reactionary response; his view, apparently, is that apartheid in Israel cannot be compared to apartheid in South Africa because those imposing apartheid in Israel had terrible things happen to their grandparents in Europe — I include his own words expressing his unfortunate views to show how far from anti-Israel Kushner is. As he indeed took pains to show. Which underscores how extreme is the chokehold of reaction in every realm of this culture.

Now Facebook groups spring up. PEN, that bastion of anti-communist bourgeois liberalism, enters the fray. No one asks why reactionary investment bank-

## MAY DAY 2011

# Millions of workers fight austerity, repression

By John Catalinotto

From Manila to Milwaukee, from Kolkata to Cairo and Cape Town, from Seoul to Santiago de Chile and from Lisbon to London, millions of workers marched and rallied for May Day 2011, to demand an end to austerity and the bosses' attack on workers' rights, and in some cases, for an end to a repressive regime. In Havana and other Cuban cities the massive marches supported the embattled government that has been withstanding U.S. imperialist pressure for more than 50 years.

One of the largest and most militant of the anti-government protests took place in Taksim Square, Istanbul, where more than 200,000 Turkish workers, called by four trade union confederations, assembled. From 1977, when regime-backed fascists murdered 33 demonstrators, until last year, the square had been banned to demonstrators. This year's march was even larger than last year's in this city of 15 million people.

Red flags waved across the now-famous-worldwide Tahrir Square, as thousands of Egyptian workers celebrated May Day in Cairo. Holding up Egyptian, Libyan, Syrian, Palestinian and Communist Party flags, the marchers chanted for "social justice." (Workers World, May 12)

Pro-communist demonstrators in Moscow got their inspiration from the Egyptian revolution as they chanted: "Whether Cairo or Moscow, only through fighting will you obtain rights!" (AFP, May 2) The pro-capitalist regime organized its own May Day actions, attempting to build on traditions established during the existence of the USSR, but eliminating the socialist content.

In south Korea, the rightist administration that won the election three years ago has both threatened the neighboring Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea with military action — in coordination with the Pentagon — and has attacked the working class at home. In Seoul at least 50,000 workers gathered and chanted slogans demanding higher pay and better job security, and attacking the regime.

Protesters in Indonesia, brought out by 60 labor unions, marched in the thousands and were confronted by some 10,000 cops. They shouted slogans such as, "The country is rich but the people are poor!" (AFP, May 2)

In the Philippines, more than 3,000 workers protested in a Manila square, demanding higher wages. They burned an effigy of Philippine President Benigno Aquino III, shown grinning in a luxury car.

ers and bosses sit in control over CUNY, the college of New York's working class funded by the workers' taxes; why the majority of the board is white when most students are people of color; why tuition is no longer free and is in fact about to go up drastically again, making college an unreachable dream for more young workers.

CUNY should belong to the people of New York City. Militant students are right now organizing to take it back, fighting alongside staff and teachers against the vicious funding cuts and layoffs dictated by the banks. This will be a long, hard struggle, but it can be won. When it is, when CUNY is in the hands of the working class, I'll love to see who that new improved CUNY chooses to receive its honorary degrees.

*This article is excerpted from Ettinger's Read Red blog (<http://readwritered.blogspot.com/>).*



Air India pilots at May Day protest, Mumbai.

In the United States, a major march of 100,000 people in Milwaukee and other marches and rallies of thousands in cities across the country showed that International Workers' Day — revived by the massive action of immigrant workers in 2006 — is very much alive. Not only that, there was evidence of a growing solidarity between immigrant workers and those in the traditional labor unions. (See WW, May 12)

### European workers fight 'austerity'

Workers throughout the European imperialist countries — industrialized, monopolizing technology, with financial investments worldwide and allied militarily with U.S. imperialism through NATO — have seen their rights and living standards diminish steadily over the last two decades. During the last few years, the bosses' attacks have focused on cutting social benefits and laying off or cutting

benefits for public service workers.

The bosses' pretext for the cuts is budget deficits — as it is also in the U.S. — and in Europe the workers hardest hit have been those in the less stable economies on Europe's periphery: Greece, Portugal, Ireland and Iceland. But in Italy and Britain, and even in France, Germany and Austria, workers have been under attack.

On May Day, more than 400,000 workers marched in Germany; 100,000 in Vienna, Austria; and there were 200 separate marches across France.

While in most countries the May Day actions followed a traditional script, in some the "traditional" May Day was quickly followed up by direct worker actions.

In Greece, some 15,000 workers hit the streets across the country on May Day to rally against austerity measures. And Greek unions have called for a general strike on May 11 to oppose the measures. It is the latest of a series of a dozen general

and near-general strikes over the last 17 months.

In Portugal, another country where the ruling class and their European bankers are using the economic crisis to cut wages and benefits and lay off workers — all imposed under a European Union and International Monetary Fund bailout plan — tens of thousands rallied on May Day itself. Four days later, on May 5, some 250,000 public service workers held a one-day general strike. Another mass protest is planned for May 19 in Lisbon, the capital, and Porto, the second largest city.

### Pro-government rallies in Cuba

Hundreds of thousands of workers in Havana, Santiago de Cuba and other cities rallied and marched not in opposition to the government but to show support for the country's attempt to establish a socialist system and maintain Cuban independence only 90 miles from the country that is the center of world imperialism. President Raúl Castro was among those at Revolution Square in Santiago de Cuba, considered the cradle of the Cuban revolution.

A massive march and rally in Caracas, Venezuela, supported the government of President Hugo Chávez, which had just put through an increase in the minimum wage. Chávez promised the marchers plans to provide full employment in 2012.

In other Latin American capitals, anti-regime protests took place, including one of more than 50,000 people in Guatemala City, protesting the high cost of living and calling for an end to child labor, and in Santiago, Chile, where 30,000 people filled the main boulevard of the capital, calling for more worker rights and criticizing the rightist policies of the Sebastián Piñera government. In Bogotá, Colombia, the U.S.-backed, rightist regime brutalized the protesting workers. □

## MAY DAY IN COLOMBIA

# Repression can't stop massive march

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

While the United States-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is being pushed by President Barack Obama's administration, the Colombian government continues to violate the human rights of unionists and social activists. However, this time it's not by paramilitary president, Álvaro Uribe, but by the new "democratic" president, Juan Manuel Santos, Uribe's former minister of defense.

On May Day, hundreds of thousands of people marched throughout Colombia in honor of the Chicago martyrs who marched in 1886 for workers' rights: They inspired generations of working people around the world in upholding the banner of international working-class struggle and solidarity. Colombians also marched in opposition to President Santos. Their message was urgent: No to the National Development Plan and the signing of the FTA with the U.S.

Santos is pushing education and health care reform laws aimed at privatization of these essential services, which will further endanger access to schooling and health care for the vast majority of Colombians. Already U.S. transnational corporations keep a hold on the natural wealth and riches that belong to the Colombian people. An FTA will completely destroy the economy just as it did in Mexico.

Massive marches were held in many cities. The largest demonstration was in Bogotá, where more than 200,000 people peacefully converged in the central Plaza Bolívar. The march was called "United May Day," to highlight the unity among diverse social, student, youth and labor organizations.

The government's forces, the National Police and the ESMAD (riot police) furiously attacked the protesters with a massive amount of tear gas, shock grenades and bricks. Activists point at state agents who had infiltrated the demonstration for provoking the attack. The coordinator of Organizations and Social Movements of Colombia released a public statement at the end of the day saying that 65 people were detained and 17 injured in Bogotá. ([www.polodemocratico.net](http://www.polodemocratico.net))

This violence was repeated in the Colombian cities of Cali, Medellín and Facatativá, where even youth and physically disabled people were attacked.

### International solidarity keeps labor and social activists alive

Colombia suffers the highest number of unionists killed per year. Were it not for the attention and solidarity from labor and progressive forces throughout the world, the numbers would be even higher.

This has been the situation for many

years. However, now it is even more crucial to show solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Colombia, since the public image of the new Colombian administration is being painted as "fair" and "friendly," in order to gain approval of the FTA.

However, the brutal fact is that the same forces that were active under Uribe are carrying out the repression. They are just targeting victims more selectively. On May Day, for example, leaders of Sin-altrinal, the union of Coca-Cola workers, were beaten and arrested. The father of a youth killed on May Day in 2005 was arrested for defending youth in the march, and police shot a tear gas canister at an opposition representative in the Bogotá government.

Santos is determined to end "the conflict," the decades-old struggle of the armed insurgency, not by a negotiated political solution, but by military means. In the process, he is criminalizing any opposition to his neoliberal policies, from electoral opposition and labor struggles to students protesting privatization of education. Days before the May Day march, the mainstream media announced "agents of terrorism" would be on the marches. With this approach, Santos is increasing the repression and stigmatization of social protests, making it extremely difficult for the people to voice their opposition. □

## EL PRIMERO DE MAYO EN CIUDAD DE NUEVA YORK

# Inmigrantes y sindicalistas se unen

Por John Catalinotto

El movimiento obrero en los Estados Unidos dio un paso significativo este Primero de Mayo cuando organizaciones sindicales y de inmigrantes en Nueva York se reunieron después de una marcha y concluyeron el día intercambiando oradores/as bajo el lema “El Primero de Mayo es el Día de los/as Trabajadores/as”.

El año pasado en Nueva York se hicieron dos manifestaciones por separado el Primero de Mayo. Este año el gran deseo de unidad por parte de los/as miembros de base de los sindicatos, hizo que los/as organizadores/as del Primero de Mayo celebraran varias reuniones para organizar algún tipo de mensaje conjunto. No sólo hubo un intercambio de oradores/as en los mítines de cada uno, sino que la Coalición Primero de Mayo, que se reunió en Union Square, decidió marchar a Foley Square, en un intento por unir a los/as trabajadores/as de las dos manifestaciones.

Miles de trabajadores/as provenientes de las diversas comunidades de inmigrantes en Nueva York así como de sindicatos, además de los contingentes de organizaciones contra la guerra, pro derecho de mujeres, comunidad LGBT y otras, marcharon por 20 bloques en este soleado día primaveral desde Union Square a lo largo de Broadway hacia Foley Square.

El Primero de Mayo se celebra en todo el mundo como un día de fiesta de los/as trabajadores, con fuertes raíces en el movimiento socialista. A pesar de haberse originado en los Estados Unidos, hasta el 2005 — cuando La Marcha de un Millón de Trabajadores/as intencionalmente lo revivió — el papel del Primero de Mayo como día festivo de los/as trabajadores/as, había sido usurpado por el Día del Trabajo.

La co-coordinadora de la Coalición Primero de Mayo pro Derechos de Inmigrantes y Trabajadores/as Teresa Gutiérrez, dejó en claro desde el principio que el grupo daría una alta prioridad al construir la unidad entre los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes — de

los cuales un millón han sido deportados/as desde que el presidente Barack Obama asumió el cargo — y los/as trabajadores/as sindicalizados/as. La coalición redujo el tiempo de su mitin en Union Square para poder unirse a tiempo a la manifestación de los sindicatos.

Este fue el sexto año consecutivo que La Coalición Primero de Mayo organiza una acción en Union Square. Comenzó en el 2006 cuando un torrente de trabajadores/as inmigrantes acudió a marchar y posteriormente logró anular el proyecto de ley Sensenbrenner impidiendo que esta legislación anti-inmigrante se convirtiera en ley. Como ha sido su tradición, la marcha tuvo una fuerte representación no sólo de muchas comunidades de América Latina, sino de prácticamente todas las naciones del mundo, cuya gente viene a Nueva York para trabajar y vivir.

Los/as organizadores/as del Primero de Mayo le dieron un carácter nacional a la acción al invitar a dos dirigentes sindicalistas afroamericanos cuyas luchas sindicales están mostrando la dirección en que el movimiento obrero debe moverse para contrarrestar el ataque implacable de la patronal y los banqueros.

Gilbert Johnson, presidente del Local 82 de la Federación Americana de Empleados del Estado, Condado y Municipales de la Universidad de Wisconsin en Milwaukee, trajo a la manifestación el estado de ánimo de lucha de los/as trabajadores/as de Wisconsin. Desde que el gobernador Scott Walker de Wisconsin utilizara los supuestos déficits presupuestarios como pretexto para romper todos los sindicatos del sector público, una respuesta masiva ha resonado en todo el estado, lo que ha llevado a acciones políticas y sindicales casi diariamente. “Si el Estado y los políticos están dañados”, dijo Johnson, “entonces los/as trabajadores/as tenemos que arreglarlo”.

Clarence Thomas, líder del Local 10 de la Unión Internacional de Trabajadores Estibadores y de Almacenes, contó cómo el 4 de abril los trabajadores de su Local de forma voluntaria cerraron los puertos de

Oakland y San Francisco en California, durante 24 horas en solidaridad con los/as trabajadores/as en Wisconsin. Thomas señaló que si bien “las marchas y concentraciones y vigilias son buenas, los patronos las pueden ignorar, pero si los/as obreros/as suspenden su labor, ése es el poder real”.

A pesar de los ataques contra los/as inmigrantes que han visto un millón de personas deportadas desde 2008, la marcha fue militante y optimista. Incluyó una banda y unos cuantos grupos que gritaban consignas continuamente, a veces al ritmo de tambores.

Jornaleros, vendedores/as ambulantes, trabajadores/as domésticos/as y sindicalistas marcharon detrás de pancartas que reflejaban sus organizaciones. La multitud incluía miembros de por lo menos un centenar del grupo Vamos Unidos, una asociación de vendedores latinos, además de grupos como Trabajadores/as Domésticos/as Unidos/as, Jornaleros Unidos de Woodside, el grupo filipino BAYAN, el Centro de Desarrollo de la Mujer Dominicana, Desis Rising Up and Moving, Trabajadores/as del Cuidado de la Salud del 1199 SEIU Este, el Comité Contra la Violencia Contra Asiáticos, el Local 808 de Teamsters, el Partido Workers World/Mundo Obrero, Las Buenas Amigas y el Movimiento Independiente de los Trabajadores.

Llegando a Foley Square, los/as manifestantes marcharon hacia un mitin de miles de trabajadores/as sindicales que gritaban, “trabajadores unidos jamás serán vencidos”. El grupo de Foley Square incluía a sindicalistas de Laborers’ union, Teamsters Local 210, Empleados de Servicio 32B-J, Trabajadores de la Alimentación y Comerciales, Congreso del Personal Profesional de la Universidad de la Ciudad de Nueva York, Unión Trabajadores de Transporte Local 100 y muchos miembros de AFSCME DC 37.

“Los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes nuevamente desafiaron las amenazas de deportación para exigir la legalización, el fin de las redadas y el derecho a la sindicalización” dijo Gutiérrez. “Hoy, miles de trabajadores/as inmigrantes y trabajadores/

as sindicalizados observaron el Día Internacional de los/as Trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos reuniéndose lado a lado contra los recortes y exigiendo empleos. En Nueva York, Los Ángeles, Milwaukee, Búfalo y otras ciudades grandes y pequeñas, los dos movimientos se unieron para enfrentar el aumento en los ataques contra la clase trabajadora. Al unirse, estas dos fuerzas han fortalecido todo el movimiento en contra de los recortes, los despidos y los desahucios, así como ofreciéndose solidaridad mutuamente.

“Ahora las comunidades de inmigrantes tienen más aliados en su lucha contra el programa racista de Comunidades Seguras del Departamento de Seguridad Nacional”, continuó Gutiérrez. “Y los sindicatos tienen más aliados en la lucha por preservar la negociación colectiva.”

“En 2006 el movimiento de los/as trabajadores/as inmigrantes revivió el Primero de Mayo en todo el país”, dijo Gutiérrez. “Ahora lo está adoptando la clase trabajadora más ampliamente”.

Los/as oradores/as en el mitin de Union Square incluyeron a Roberto Meneses de Jornaleros Unidos; Chris Silvera de Teamsters Local 808; Julia Camagong de la Alianza Nacional para Cuestiones Filipinas; Rhadames Rivera del 1199 SEIU; Víctor Toro de La Peña del Bronx; Larry Hales de Neoyorquinos contra los Recortes Presupuestarios; Joe Lombardo del Comité Nacional Unido Contra la Guerra; y Charles Jenkins del Local 100 de la Unión de Trabajadores del Transporte. Silvera y Camagong también hablaron en el mitin de Foley Square.

Otros/as oradores/as fueron Michelle Keller-Ng, Vicepresidente de DC 37; Lucy Pagoada de Honduras USA Resistencia; Marina Díaz del Centro Tecuman; Hanalei Ramos, BAYAN USA; Jocelyn Campbell, Trabajadores/as Domésticos/as Unidos/as; y Wilfredo Larancuent, Copresidente de Derechos Laborales, Derechos de Inmigrantes, Empleos para Todos y oficial de la Junta Combinada de los Trabajadores de la Lavandería de Trabajadores Unidos. □

## Tribunal de apelaciones confirma nueva audiencia sentencia para Mumia Abu-Jamal

Por Betsey Piette  
Filadelfia



El 26 de abril el Tribunal del Tercer Circuito de Apelaciones en Filadelfia emitió unánimemente una sentencia manteniendo su decisión anterior de citar a una nueva audiencia para sentenciar a Mumia Abu-Jamal, quien fuera condenado por asesinar al policía Daniel Faulkner en 1982. En el corredor de la muerte de Pensilvania durante casi 29 años, Abu-Jamal, un prisionero político mundialmente conocido y ex miembro del Partido Panteras Negras, ha sostenido su inocencia.

Este último hallazgo confirma una sentencia del 2008 por este mismo Tribunal apoyando la decisión del juez de distrito William H. Yohn Jr, que en 2001 rechazó la sentencia de pena de muerte contra Abu-Jamal luego de determinar que tanto las instrucciones dadas al jurado, así como un documento de votación del jurado durante el juicio de Abu-Jamal en 1982, eran confusas y engañosas. En el 2010, la Corte Suprema ordenó al Tercer Circuito a reexaminar su decisión anterior en vista de que la corte superior había rechazado una petición similar en un caso de pena de muerte en Ohio.

Aunque probablemente sea disputada, la

reciente decisión del Tercer Circuito requiere que los fiscales de Filadelfia convoquen a una nueva audiencia si quieren presionar para reinstalar la pena de muerte.

No es probable que el actual fiscal de Filadelfia, Seth Williams, deje que eso suceda ya que requeriría seleccionar un jurado nuevo que podría considerar nueva evidencia sobre circunstancias atenuantes y agravantes en el caso. Aunque la cuestión de culpa o inocencia no sería tratada en el proceso, la defensa podría llamar a testigos/as cuyos testimonios pudieran plantear preguntas sobre la validez de la condena.

Los fiscales también podrían decidir no tener una audiencia nueva y convertir automáticamente la pena de muerte de Abu-Jamal en una cadena perpetua. En Pensilvania esto significa que no habría ninguna oportunidad de libertad condicional. Sin embargo, Williams ya ha indicado que va a apelar la decisión de la corte del Tercer Circuito a la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos. Mientras tanto, Abu-Jamal queda en el corredor de la muerte igual como ha estado desde la decisión de Yohn en 2001.

La abogada principal de Abu-Jamal, Judith Ritter, profesora de leyes en la Universidad Widener quien representó a Abu-Jamal durante el proceso de apelación que resultó en la decisión más reciente de

la Corte del Tercer Circuito, dijo que la decisión del Tercer Circuito reforzó decisiones que “encontraron que su sentencia de pena de muerte es inconstitucional. La opinión más reciente del Tercer Circuito refleja un análisis detallado que demuestra que su decisión unánime está respaldada por un precedente de la Corte Suprema. Creemos que este análisis racional prevalecerá”, dijo Ritter al Philadelphia Inquirer del 27 de abril.

En abril, la Defensa Jurídica y Fondo Educativo del NAACP anunció que iba a unirse a Ritter en el equipo de defensa de Abu-Jamal. En un informe a la prensa del Fondo, el abogado-director John Payton dijo, “Esta decisión marca un paso importante hacia adelante en la lucha por corregir los errores de un capítulo desgraciado de la historia de Pensilvania”.

### Evidencia de discriminación racial

Sin duda los fiscales temen la presentación de evidencia obtenida durante los largos años de confinamiento de Abu-Jamal que hace cuestionar seriamente la mala conducta de la policía y los testimonios dudosos dados por testigos de la fiscalía durante el juicio de 1982.

En años recientes se han revelado fotos de la escena del crimen sacadas por el

fotógrafo independiente Pedro Polakoff que fuertemente contradicen el escenario presentado por la policía que dice que Abu-Jamal disparó múltiples balazos a la acera donde yacía Faulkner. Las fotos de Polakoff no muestran signos visibles de balazos que deberían ser evidentes en la acera.

“El Tercer Circuito Federal por ejemplo, rechazó conceder un nuevo proceso a Abu-Jamal basado en cuestiones legales sólidas que van desde la discriminación racial por parte de los fiscales en su selección del jurado, a errores documentados [cometidos] por el juez del proceso Albert Sabo, el difunto jurista que tenía la mala fama de favorecer la fiscalía”. (thiscantbehappening.net)

Mientras que los/as abogados/as de Mumia han impedido al estado el restablecer la pena de muerte, la reciente decisión de la corte no es verdaderamente un triunfo para Abu-Jamal ya que no llama a un juicio nuevo. Una nueva audiencia para sentenciarlo solamente le ofrecería la opción de cadena perpetua o la pena de muerte. ¡Ninguna de las cuales es una opción aceptable!

Mientras que el estado claramente teme la introducción de nuevas evidencias en el proceso, su problema más grande gira alrededor del creciente movimiento internacional que apoya la inocencia de Abu-Jamal y demanda su libertad. □