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\$1

Jobs, capitalism & the tasks ahead

By Fred Goldstein

The pitiful December jobs and employment numbers are a bitter reminder, four years after the present crisis officially began in December 2007, that capitalism is at a dead end.

There have now been four years of mass unemployment; the foreclosure and eviction nightmare continues for millions; poverty and hunger are growing at record levels. For those with jobs, low wages are spreading like a plague. A whole generation of youth is either locked out of the job market or consigned to dead-end jobs. Recent studies show that the U.S., instead of being the “land of opportunity,” is the land of downward mobility for the vast majority.

That is why it is so outrageous that the big-business media have tried to make a mountain out of a molehill, expressing enthusiasm over the December jobs report. If you are one of the 25 million to 30 million workers unemployed or underemployed, the 200,000 jobs allegedly created in December and the drop in the official unemployment rate from 8.6 percent to 8.5 percent amount to a very tiny molehill.

The jobs report barely mentioned that, according to the government’s own figures, 13.1 million are still unemployed, another 8.1 million are working part-time but need full-time work, and 2.3 million more have “dropped out” of the work force altogether. This last number is drastically understated

because it excludes millions who either haven’t looked for a job in the last year or have never entered the work force because there are no jobs.

The mouthpieces of U.S. capitalism are engaged in a cynical exercise known as “talking up the economy.” Yet they all know that even this tiny increase in jobs is really overstated by at least 42,000, because of the addition of short-term courier and messenger jobs for the holiday season — leaving the net number of jobs created at 160,000.

When you consider that during the month of December anywhere from 125,000 to 150,000 additional jobs were needed just to absorb the young people who became eligible to enter the work force, then even according to the official numbers the net increase in jobs was only between 10,000 and 35,000. If the capitalist economy were to continue to add jobs at that rate, it would take many decades to put the 25 million to 30 million unemployed and underemployed back to work at full-time jobs.

So the molehill gets even tinier, if it exists at all.

Occupy Wall Street: “Enough is enough!”

Month after month, year after year, workers have been waiting for an upturn that would put the millions back to work, with decent pay, benefits and job security. It hasn’t

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HONORING THE LEGACY OF DR. KING 7

LABOR-COMMUNITY FIGHTBACK

- ➔ BALTIMORE
- ➔ BOSTON
- ➔ DETROIT
- ➔ NEW YORK CITY
- ➔ PHILADELPHIA 4-6

LESSONS FROM 1877, 1930s uprisings 2-3

Defying state repression, military

Support builds for longshore workers

By Cheryl LaBash

The San Francisco Labor Council on Jan. 9 unanimously condemned military escort for the union-busting international grain and food cartel EGT, headed by Bunge Ltd. at the Port of Longview, Wash. Read the resolution at workers.org.

In a Jan. 2 resolution, the executive board of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Central Labor Council unanimously called on “friends of labor and the 99% everywhere to come to the aid of ILWU [International Longshore and Warehouse Union] Local 21 ... [and] participate in a community and labor protest in Longview, Washington, of the first EGT grain ship.”

International grain cartel EGT is attempting to break a coastwide grain terminal agreement, held by the ILWU, that was won after years of militant struggle by the union.

Occupy movements up and down the Pacific Coast — including a caravan from Oakland, Calif., nearly 700 miles to the south — are already organizing a quick-response mobili-

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MICHIGAN STOP EVICTIONS

Protesters in Michigan, including trade unionists and community activists, march on Jan. 3 to stop a family’s threatened eviction from their home by Bank of America and Fannie Mae. See story page 5.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

More than a railroad strike Lessons of the Great Uprising of 1877



By Deirdre Griswold

"Blood on the Tracks" by Cecilia Holland, Kindle edition, 79 pages, 2011

Thanks to a writer generally known for her many historical novels, there is now available a gripping account of the real-life struggle of workers in 1877 against the railroad barons — the most hated 1% of that time. As Cecilia Holland writes in "Blood on the Tracks," this Great Upheaval "isn't much discussed in American history classes, in civics classes, in popular literature." She has set out to correct that.

The explosive uprising in the summer of 1877 came about after the heads of the four largest railroads held a secret meeting and conspired to cut the wages of their workers by 10 percent, even though these companies were paying hefty dividends to their shareholders.

Worker resistance to the bosses and their plans quickly drew in tens of thousands of women and men from the communities that surrounded the rail yards. Huge crowds lined the tracks as workers prevented hundreds of freight cars from moving.

When police and eventually militia were sent in to take back control of the switches, which had been blocked by the workers, they were greeted with rocks and bottles. Under intense pressure from railroad big shots to break the strike, the authorities began ordering their troops to fire on the crowds.

The casualties among both strikers and bystanders only enraged the half-starved workers even more and pitched gun battles soon took place in many areas. Just 12 years after the Civil War, many workers were military veterans and knew how to fight.

Holland explains that it was the miserable prevailing wages of the period that had brought so many desperate workers to the point of rebellion. While U.S. industry was expanding at a tremendous rate, there was also a revolution in technology going on. New machinery was eliminating jobs and skills, creating what Karl Marx had

described as a "reserve army of labor" — massive unemployment that pitted worker against worker in competition for fewer jobs, thus enabling the bosses to keep wages at barely a subsistence level.

At the same time, it was a gilded age for the rich, whose fortunes were growing at warp speed.

The rebellion, which started in the Cumberland Valley of northern Virginia, quickly spread along the railroad lines to large cities like Baltimore, Philadelphia, Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Chicago and St. Louis. At one point, the populace of St. Louis was so aroused that they took over the city government and declared a commune. This was undoubtedly inspired by the Paris Commune of 1870-1871, which Marx had analyzed as the first living example of what a workers' government would look like.

To her great credit, Holland does not shy away from drawing lessons for today from this period of militant working-class struggle.

"The parallels between 1877 and 2011," she writes, "are too obvious to need much outlining. The convulsions in the economy, the rise of new technology, the displacement of workers, the sudden systematic enrichment of a very small number of people while the majority sees its prospects flat or dwindling, the sense among many that the government belongs to the bosses and therefore won't help ordinary people, all these things have led to the same kind of polarization."

Holland does not write as a Marxist nor even as an open partisan in the class struggle. But she sheds great light on the real history of class relations in the United States and the inevitable effect of capitalism's intensifying exploitation of the workers.

While this book has not been published in a print edition, it is available from Amazon as a Kindle Single for 99 cents. (Good news for the 99%!) Even if you don't have a Kindle, you can download the eBook in a MOBI format and read it on a computer or other devices. Do a Google search for free MOBI-reading software.

Email: dgriswold@workers.org

OWS protests NDAA

Some 120 Occupy movement activists, progressives and legal rights organizations held a series of actions on Jan. 3 in New York's midtown to protest the National Defense Appropriations Act that President Barack Obama signed into law Dec. 31. The protests focused on that part of the law allowing the government to seize and hold anyone accused of "terrorism" for an undetermined time under military control. After a news conference at the 42nd Street library, the demonstrators targeted the offices of U.S. Senators Kirsten Gillibrand and Chuck



Schumer. Then they held an open mic meeting in Grand Central Terminal, where police arrested

protester Lauren Digioia. See <http://tinyurl.com/6tsmmdc>.

— Report & photo by John Catalinotto

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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 & old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed, undocumented & 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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Everything old is new again

The unemployed workers' movement of the 1930s

By Dolores Cox

The history of economic depressions and joblessness in the U.S. can be traced back to the 19th century. Tens of thousands of people rallied in 1837, 1857, 1873, 1884 and 1893 to demand a public jobs program from the federal government. They opposed high food and rent costs, and big business.

Protests in local communities originated in sporadic street demonstrations, rent rebellions and the disruption of relief centers. Initially, local grassroots organizations were loosely structured, held together mainly by periodic demonstrations. But these groups gathered momentum from direct action victories that yielded public assistance money and food and stopped evictions. Protesters were often confronted by federal, state and local troops, who aggressively dispersed their actions.

The Great Depression of the 1930s was a period of economic crisis that drastically affected the daily lives of millions of people, who faced massive unemployment. The economic collapse also impacted those with low-wage jobs. Industries were devastated, as were the towns where they were located.

The 1930s produced the largest movement of the unemployed and poor that the country had ever known. The jobless rebelled against the inequalities produced by capitalism, an institution of rising profits for the wealthy ruling class. Protest movements emerged that pitted the rulers against those who were ruled — those whom the system had failed.

Beginning in 1929, Communist Party activists formed “Unemployed Councils” (renamed “Unemployment Councils” in

1934). The organizers worked the bread lines, flop houses, factories, relief offices and employment office lines. The CP declared those out of work to be “the tactical key to present the state of the class struggle.” Party organizers concentrated on direct action in the streets and relief offices, seeking out opportunities for leafleting and pamphleteering as well as inciting mass actions and agitation. They held mass meetings and focused on a dual approach of community and trade union unity.

Political demonstrations by the unemployed in big cities marched under Communist Party banners with slogans like “Fight—Don’t Starve.” The Unemployed Councils also led mass protests against police oppression and brutality. Mounted and unmounted cops used bare fists, night sticks and tear gas in mass arrests and even killings to disperse the crowds.

Rising anger led to defiance and resistance. Communists declared March 6, 1930, to be International Unemployment Day, and led marches and rallies of the unemployed in most of the major cities in the U.S. Several thousand marched to factories and auto plants to demand jobs and unemployment insurance. Thousands of unemployed veterans descended on Washington, D.C. Millions of unemployed Blacks and whites marched together, sometimes leading to bloodshed instigated by the cops. Federal troops made war on unarmed people, while the mainstream press branded the demonstrations as “riots.”

During the 1930s, the Communist Party played a leading role in fighting for the demands of African Americans — who were devastated by the Great Depression — and helped mobilize them for their struggle. Thousands of them joined the

CP. The CP also undertook food collections in the Black community of Harlem, N.Y., where unemployment had risen to as high as 80 percent. In many places, CP activists organized squads to turn utility services back on.

Communist Party-led trade union organizations fought against the white chauvinistic policy of the American Federation of Labor, which excluded Black workers, and demanded a united labor movement based on equal rights for all workers. In the Black Belt South, they also led the sharecroppers union, which fought courageously against the tyranny of the planters. Members of the Black working class subsequently became leaders of the Black liberation movement.

The Unemployed Councils' headquarters served as meeting halls and places where tired job searchers could rest and talk. Demonstrations soon became more massive and well organized; they gained momentum and grew in size and frequency. Joint rallies comprised progressive trade unions, communist activists and alliances of communities. They called for the “abolition of the profit system.”

In 1936, most major groups of the unemployed merged, and a national poor people's alliance was formed that agitated and protested to get legislation implemented. Protesters sought to achieve more substantial reform via organizational and electoral pressure for legislative reforms.

Due to people's unrest, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's “New Deal” administration put forth more liberal relief policies. Instead of direct public assistance, he called for a public works program.

While the Works Project Administration did provide jobs, the actual number

of jobs fell short of the number promised. At the WPA's peak, only about one in four persons actually gained employment. Job quotas fluctuated wildly with no apparent relation to unemployment, and workers never knew when they might be laid off.

Organization leaders conducted work stoppages and demonstrations on WPA projects, protesting layoffs and demanding more adequate security wages. These leaders were also recognized as the official bargaining agent for WPA workers. They contacted President Roosevelt with reviews of the economic situation, deplored WPA cuts and called for the expansion of the WPA.

A Wealth Tax Act, Wagner Act and Social Security Act were implemented. Under the 1935 Social Security Act, the federal government paid a share of state and local public assistance costs. A Civilian Conservation Corps, designed to stimulate the economy, provided jobs as well.

Local grassroots protests began to decline in militancy as a result of the Roosevelt administration's more liberal public assistance policy and the absorption of local leaders into bureaucratic roles. The unemployed became less of a threat because they were divided, and the most skilled were absorbed into the WPA. As a result, the government took the stance that less had to be done for them.

By 1936, 2.5 million WPA jobs had been provided, but nearly 10 million people were still unemployed. In 1939, WPA funds were cut, WPA wages were reduced, and workers who had been on WPA payrolls for 18 continuous months were terminated.

Source: “Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail” by Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward.

Tarek Mehanna falsely convicted on all counts, faces life sentence

By Frank Neisser
Boston

Justice-loving people were outraged on Dec. 20 when, after a nearly two-month trial, a federal jury falsely convicted Dr. Tarek Mehanna on trumped up “terrorism” charges. Sentencing will occur on April 12. He faces possible life imprisonment.

Mehanna is a 28-year-old Muslim, an Egyptian-American and a graduate of the Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. He has been held in solitary confinement 23 hours a day since his arrest in 2009.

Mehanna's supporters say he is a respected leader in his community who has done nothing other than to criticize U.S. foreign policy, particularly as it affects Muslims here and abroad. Because of his stature in the Muslim community, the FBI repeatedly pursued him to be an in-

formant on others in his community.

When he steadfastly refused, he was arrested in 2008 and charged with making “false statements to the FBI.” When Mehanna was arrested again in 2009, the charge was “material support for terrorism.” There was no new information about any actions on his part.

The actions Mehanna was charged with involve conversations, translating books, traveling to the Middle East and posting to websites. He has been denied bail twice, even though the FBI released him to the community after his first arrest and presented no information about why or how he has since become much more dangerous.

Prosecutorial misconduct leads to unjust conviction

Mehanna's trial began on Oct. 24. Throughout the trial, support for him was

strong every day. The main courtroom was filled. Often one or two other courtrooms were needed to accommodate supporters. During the entire six weeks of prosecution testimony, no evidence was presented of Mehanna committing any violent or criminal act.

In contrast, the six FBI informants who testified against Mehanna had committed such acts. They were given prosecutorial immunity in exchange for their testimony. The prosecution spent six weeks showing videos and chats taken out of context from Mehanna's computer, thereby distorting their meaning. That was deliberately designed to prejudice the jury. The judge's repeated denials of defense motions and objections seeking to exclude irrelevant and highly prejudicial material were met with six defense motions for a mistrial. The judge denied them all.

What was shown was that Mehanna was an Islamic scholar, that he supported the right of Muslim nations to defend themselves against armed invasion and occupation, and that he opposed the U.S. war in Iraq. The incessant propaganda and anti-Muslim prejudice fed to the U.S. public influenced the jury to find Mehanna guilty on all seven counts.

Supporters, who were present throughout the proceedings and who packed the

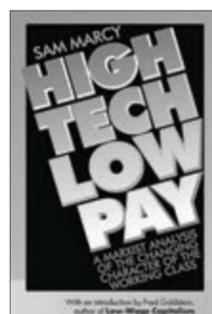
Tarek Mehanna



court for the closing arguments, vowed to support Mehanna's appeals and to mount a campaign to stop the government's goal of railroading him to life in prison.

This case follows the alarming pattern of persecution of Muslims that has emerged since 9/11: the secret evidence; inflammatory pre-trial accusations fed to the press by government prosecutors; manipulation of informants and cooperating witnesses through threats and rewards; and the use of “material support of terrorism” charges to criminalize dissent. Cointelpro-style tactics of prosecutorial misconduct have produced many unjust convictions.

President Barack Obama's signing of the National Defense Authorization Act goes beyond the policies of former President George Bush. This bill authorizes the indefinite detention in military custody of U.S. citizens and legal residents detained in this country. It nullifies the Bill of Rights. This increased repression and racism are the expression of U.S. rulers' desperate fear of workers and oppressed peoples who are rising up worldwide to resist capitalism, which is increasingly incapable of meeting their basic human needs. □



HIGH TECH, LOW PAY

A Marxist analysis of the changing character of the working class

Twenty years ago Sam Marcy wrote that the scientific-technological revolution is accelerating a shift to lower-paying jobs and to more women, Black and Latino/a workers. Using Marxism as a living tool he analyzes the trends and offers strategies for labor including the occupation of plants. A new introduction by Fred Goldstein explains the roots of the current economic crisis, with its disastrous unemployment, that has heightened the need for a working-class resurgence.

Available at Amazon & bookstores around the country.

www.workers.org/marcy/hightech/

PHILADELPHIA

Nurses lead fight against school cuts

By Joe Piette
Philadelphia

In response to recent education cut-backs, Philadelphia school nurses are demonstrating their anger by rallying on the steps of the School District Headquarters every Wednesday. They are demanding the return of recently furloughed nurses and other school staff members, who are the latest victims of budget cuts which could mean the additional layoffs of up to 1,400 district workers.

In the middle of Hanukkah and just days before Christmas, 47 nurses, 28 secretaries, 20 supportive services assistants, 18 nonteaching assistants, 13 school operations officers, five library assistants and a handful of other support personnel were told by school administrators they were no longer needed. Officials have said the midyear cuts aren't finished.

Roxborough High School nurse Eileen DiFranco said at a rally: "The mayor is saying that he wants high-quality schools. Well, you can't have high-quality schools manned by skeleton crews, so I don't understand. To me, he's talking out of both sides of his mouth."

As the rally was taking place, Mayor Michael Nutter and members of the School Reform Commission were in Denver attending a conference by the Gates Foundation on how to privatize schools.

Philadelphia Federation of Teachers President Jerry Jordan, in a statement to the press, said: "Surely the SRC has better options than to cut nurses who are the schools' first-responders protecting children's health; library assistants who provide literacy support and keep open the remaining school libraries; other school employees who support not only students, but assist teachers, staff and families; and non-teaching assistants, who are crucial to keeping children safe." (Dec. 22)

The union plans to go to court to contend that it is illegal to disrupt children's



WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

Jan. 4 nurses' protest at School District headquarters.

education by laying off school employees in the middle of the school year. These cuts are being made on top of more than 1,000 teachers who were laid off over the summer.

In addition, 276 building engineers, 126 custodial assistants, 503 general cleaners and 501 bus attendants received layoff notices the week of Jan. 2. The 1,406 layoffs are in addition to 848 pink slips sent in September. The newest blue-collar reductions are effective Dec. 31, 2012. By contract, union members require a full year's notice of layoffs.

The average Service Employees Local

32BJ worker is paid \$18.43 an hour (less than \$40,000 annually) plus benefits. Local 32BJ International President George Ricchezza complained that his members have "been decimated" by layoffs over the last few years.

Underfunded public schools vs. profitable charter schools

These outrageous cuts are part of a decades-long campaign to create a two-tier system of education in Philadelphia, as well as other big cities across the country. In Philadelphia, 46,000 students are now in charter schools, compared to 146,000

in public schools.

The closing of low-performing public schools, rather than fixing them — while opening more charter schools — is textbook union-busting. More significantly, it is guaranteeing a future of poverty, menial labor or prison to a whole generation of children in severely underfunded neighborhood schools, especially in communities of color.

Charter schools, which are given the opportunity to choose which students to accept, receive better funding than public schools. Yet, the Center for Research on Education Outcomes at Stanford University found in a 2009 report that only "17% of charter schools outperformed their public school equivalents, while 37% of charter schools performed worse than regular local schools, and the rest were about the same." (<http://tinyurl.com/3cybfp3>)

The mixing of education and profit-making has resulted in a scandalous report in which 19 out of 74 charter schools operating in Philadelphia are under investigation for fraud, financial mismanagement and conflicts of interest. (<http://tinyurl.com/7wy3omb>) As more and more of the city's public schools are privatized into non-union charter schools, the pressure is increasing to eliminate the unionized workforce at the remaining public schools.

This education crisis is not limited to Philadelphia. President George W. Bush's No Child Left Behind program accelerated the ruling-class plans to restructure education — to make it consistent with the long-term effects of low-wage capitalism, in which millions of skilled workers will not be required as in the past.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett cut almost \$1 billion for education in 2011, while at the same time increasing the budget for prisons by almost \$1 billion for three new prisons. Just this week the state announced further cuts of between 2 percent and 5 percent for education and welfare. □

In struggle for contract

Workers picket Winter Classic

The Winter Classic is the most-watched, nationally televised hockey game of the year, including Canadian viewers. As hockey players in the Winter Classic hustled on ice Jan. 2 to score goals, over 200 UNITE HERE members and supporters picketed outside the Classic at Citizens Bank Park in Philadelphia for more essential goals. Concession-stand workers, beer vendors, suite attendants and cashiers are fighting for health care, wages and improved working conditions from Aramark, the international corporation that provides food to many of the sports venues, universities and prisons around the world.

Aramark workers came to the spirited, two-hour demonstration from sports venues organized by UNITE HERE in New York, Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Food and beer vendors from Pittsburgh's Consol Arena, who recently turned down Aramark's latest offer, came with a banner and strong voices. Despite the cold mid-30s temperatures, Occupy Philly activists, as well as members of the teachers union, Service Employees union and other labor organizations, chanted, marched and heard CBP workers explain their struggle.

The Philadelphia-based food service

provider reportedly earned \$13 billion in 2011, and is listed as the 189th largest employer of Fortune 500 companies. Yet the company is demanding that the workers accept the elimination of overtime pay and a reduction in the minimum number of hours they get paid during each game — in effect a pay cut.

One union member still in his beer vendor uniform, who came to the picket line at the end of the game, explained to the crowd that there are co-workers who work 250 days a year, five to ten hours a day. They work in Citizens Bank Park (baseball), Lincoln Financial Field (football) and the Wells Fargo Center (hockey/basketball) for sports, concerts and other events.

This union worker further explained to Workers World that Aramark treats each employee as a part-time worker for each venue, refusing to combine hours from each location so that workers would qualify for more benefits, such as health care. "That's our business model" is the company argument when workers maintain that the same Aramark name is on the paycheck from each venue, so benefits should be based on the combined



work from all three locations.

UNITE HERE Local 274 contends only 240 of the 1,500 employees are eligible for basic health insurance benefits, and Aramark's contract proposal would reduce the number of eligible workers to 81. CBP workers in Philadelphia earn an average of \$11 an hour, much less than

Aramark workers in Boston's Fenway Park, who average \$12.32 an hour.

Local 247 members have been working under the old contract since February 2011. The workers turned down Aramark's latest offer in September by a vote of 570 to 240.

— Report & photo by Joe Piette

MICHIGAN

Anti-eviction fight targets bank, feds

By Mike Shane
Southgate, Mich.

More than 100 people gathered in bitterly cold weather outside the home of Debbie Henry and Robert Henry, in Southgate, Mich., for a rally and press conference on Jan. 2 to denounce their threatened eviction by Bank of America and Fannie Mae. Southgate is a working-class suburb south of Detroit.

The rally, sponsored by Occupy Our Homes, People Before Banks and the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, included neighbors and friends, as well as a large delegation of United Auto Workers and Steelworkers members.

Debbie Henry explained to the crowd of supporters assembled in her front yard what had happened. She suffered a stroke in 2008 and could no longer work full-time. The Henry family fell behind in their mortgage payments and sought a loan modification from Bank of America, which was initially approved. Then, after the family made payments for nine months and demonstrated their ability to pay under the terms of the trial loan



Support for Henry family.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

modification, their tenth payment was rejected by the bank. The bank claimed it was because the payment was not in the form of a certified check. The first nine payments were not by certified check, but the bank accepted them. Bank of America then rescinded the loan modification.

Fannie Mae, a corporation now owned by the U.S. government, owns the mortgage note for the Henrys' home. Bank of America is the loan servicer. Fannie

Mae — the U.S. government — is forcing the eviction, permitting Bank of America to make a huge profit through fees and penalties imposed during the foreclosure process while paying the bank the full inflated value of the home.

After the rally, the Henrys' supporters marched a mile to a Bank of America branch office, where they picketed, chanting "BoA, BoA, How many homes did you steal today?" They denounced the banks

for creating the foreclosure crisis.

The protest concluded with speeches and pledges to continue the struggle to stop the Henrys' eviction. A UAW Local 600 vice president vowed to use civil disobedience to stop the eviction, if necessary, which drew a tremendous response from everyone present.

Steve Babson, a leader of the People Before Banks Coalition, exposed the role of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in foreclosures all across the U.S. and the federal government's hidden bailouts of the banks. He pointed out that these two government-owned corporations own most U.S. mortgages and that the banks collect the full value of foreclosed homes from both of them. That is the reason, Babson said, that foreclosures take precedence over loan modifications, which would keep families in their homes. He concluded his talk by calling for a national moratorium on foreclosures and evictions.

The Henrys have vowed to stay in their home. Their next court date is Jan. 19 at 10 a.m. Supporters are asked to pack the courtroom at 33rd Judicial District Court, 19000 Van Horn Road, Woodhaven, Mich. □

Detroiters rally to stop takeover

By Kris Hamel
Detroit

Thousands of Detroiters came together Jan. 2 for a rally to overturn Public Act 4 and to stop the threatened imposition of an emergency manager on the City of Detroit. Community, union, religious and political activists joined elected politicians at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church to make a final push for the last few weeks of petitioning to place a referendum on the November ballot to overturn the statewide emergency manager law. Volunteer petitioners have garnered more than 170,000 signatures and are seeking 250,000 in total to ensure the referendum is put on the ballot. If they succeed, enforcement of the act will be stayed pending voting results.

Dozens of speakers denounced the anti-democratic, anti-Civil Rights and racist law, which has already been imposed on the cities of Benton Harbor, Pontiac and Flint, Mich. Among the speakers were Detroit City Council members Joann Watson, chair of the rally, and Kwame Kenyatta and Brenda Jones; U.S. Rep. John Conyers Jr.; Wendell P. Anthony, head of the Detroit NAACP; Sandra Williams, president of the Metro-Detroit AFL-CIO; and Al Garrett, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 25.

Other speakers included Maureen Taylor, chair of Michigan Welfare Rights Organization; representatives of the Sugar Law Center, which is leading the litigation challenging the constitutionality of the act; Rev. David Bullock of Operation PUSH, who announced plans for a civil disobedience action at Gov. Rick Snyder's house on Jan. 16; and Brandon Jessup of Michigan Forward, the community organization spearheading the petition campaign.

Jerry Goldberg, a leader of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, addressed the rally on the role of the banks in creating Detroit's fiscal disaster. He described how the emergency manager act is a "bankers'

law that provides for the breaking of union contracts and selling off and privatization of city assets while guaranteeing full payment of debt service to the banks — the same banks that have destroyed our city with racist, predatory subprime lending and massive foreclosures."

Imposition of an emergency manager will lead to the immediate declaration of a default on debt service by the banks, resulting in the city having to pay a \$400 million penalty, which amounts to one-third of the city's budget. The call for a moratorium on debt service to the banks was well-received by the audience. □



Jan. 2 rally.

WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

Autoworkers picket Auto Show

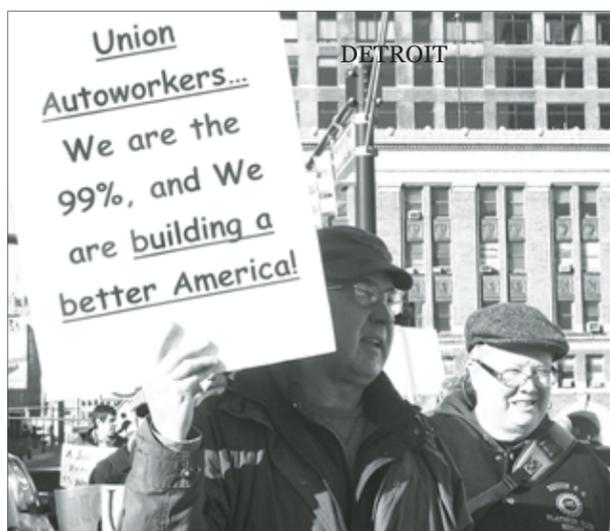
By Martha Grevatt
Detroit

Held in Detroit every January, the North American International Auto Show claims to be "where the global automotive community comes together." In fact, solidarity of the global community of real autoworkers was a theme of a spirited picket line outside the show on Jan. 8.

The rank-and-file group Autoworkers Caravan, which called the Rally for Jobs demonstration, stated in a leaflet, "All over, we see the 1% making the most outrageous demands. Chrysler/Fiat boss Sergio Marchionne is threatening to pull out of Canada and Italy if workers resist his demands for more concessions. This is global whipsawing!" A long banner at the protest called on workers to "Stand with Fiat unions" and the Canadian Auto Workers union.

Solidarity messages were read from workers at plants of Fiat and Lear, an international auto seat supplier in Italy, as well as Polish Fiat workers.

The Rally for Jobs also called for reopening the many closed auto plants in Michigan and other parts of the country. Specifically, the Caravan wants those



WW PHOTO: KRIS HAMEL

workers doing the exact same work.

In General Motors' Orion Assembly Plant in Orion Township, Mich., the United Auto Workers agreed to allow the company to pay 40 percent of the workers — those with the lowest seniority — the second tier rate. This was only 50 percent of the "traditional" rate, and even under the new contract it's \$10 an hour below top rate. GM's goal is to make the plant 100 percent lower tier.

plants to produce "green" products, including solar panels, wind turbines, and buses and light rail cars, which will help reduce carbon emissions. A green jobs program could provide good-paying union jobs in Detroit and other hard-hit areas.

The other major theme of the protest was about equal pay for equal work. The Caravan has actively campaigned against two-tier and multi-tier pay structures that allow companies to pay newer employees much lower wages than higher seniority

There are hundreds of workers in Orion and other plants making even lower wages. They put parts together in subassemblies and work for subcontractor Matty Moroun, a much-disliked local billionaire. One of the demonstration's popular chants was "Matty Moroun, billionaire, nine bucks an hour just ain't fair."

Among the groups supporting the auto-worker protest were Occupy Detroit and Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs. □

With labor-community solidarity

Bus drivers' union wins historic contract

By Steve Gillis

The writer is Vice-President of Boston School Bus Drivers Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751.

Following nearly a year of bitter struggle, the 800 members of the Boston School Bus Drivers' Union, United Steelworkers Local 8751 rang in the new year, having won a successful contract. It contained the first-ever "Retirement with Dignity" package for those who have served the city's schoolchildren and the cause of equal, quality education since 1974.

The city's bosses had planned 2012 quite differently for these workers. Last spring, British-based First Student, a monopoly stakeholder in U.S. school bus transportation, and its client, the city of Boston, presented the drivers' union with 43 concessions at the bargaining table — a relentless strategy private and public employers have pushed with devastating effect across the nation.

First Student sought cuts in health benefits, wages, hours, working conditions and rights on the job. Behind the scenes, they implemented a new high-tech routing system, designed to consolidate bus stops, carry more students, speed up driving time, and cut driver hours and positions. They orchestrated a media campaign railing against the rising costs of school transportation, demanding a return to segregation-era neighborhood schools, and calling for increased privatization of public school services to charter corporations.

The bosses' strategy didn't consider the fighting mood of the school bus drivers



Local 8751 members, supporters fight for successful contract.

and their allies in the labor and community movements. On June 25, the workers struck back. At 4 a.m., hundreds massed at the company's main bus yard, surprising private security and city cops. By sunrise more than 500 workers, wielding "No Contract, No Work!" signs and backed by AFL-CIO officials and a courageous city councilor, shut down the corporation's scheduled bid for summer work. Within days, most of the bosses' demands were withdrawn, but the drivers had more on their minds.

"We don't go to retirement parties; we go to funerals" became the rallying cry for the largely Haitian, African-American, Cape Verdean and Latino/a drivers. Many

have been forced by lack of retirement benefits to work into their 60s, 70s and 80s. Some die before their next shift.

This outrage resonated throughout the city. On Aug. 24, the night before drivers' work began for the fall school term, hundreds of drivers and supporters jammed the Boston Teachers Union hall for a Community/Labor Solidarity Rally. Teachers, parents, students and Coalition for Equal, Quality Education leaders spoke, backing the drivers.

City Councilors Charles Yancey, Tito Jackson and Felix Arroyo, elected by Boston's communities of color, pledged their clout for "Retirement with Dignity." Strik-

ing Verizon workers, wearing red shirts proclaiming "Will Strike if Provoked," came in solidarity. Progressives from MassUniting, the Women's Fightback Network and the International Action Center raised the drivers' demands as their own, earning rousing cheers. While "Solidarity Forever" choruses filled the air, the bosses requested more negotiations immediately.

At 2:00 the next morning, First Student's CEO found nearly \$2 million. The union's demands appeared on their proposal, although for year three. On Sept. 7, the eve of the school term and with the local ready to strike, the union's issues moved up to year one. The local's elected, 15-member nego-

From Baltimore to Washington, D.C.

Jobs marchers plan civil rights walk

By Andre Powell
Baltimore

At a Jan. 4 press conference held at the Workers United Union Hall in Baltimore, representatives of local and national groups announced their plans to hold a "March for Jobs & Justice" beginning in Baltimore on Jan. 14 and ending in Washington, D.C., on Jan. 16, the official holiday honoring the legacy of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The march is part of a national call by the Occupy 4 Jobs Network for actions on the King holiday weekend.

Marchers plan to walk 41 miles from Baltimore, which suffers a youth unemployment rate of more than 56 percent, to Occupy Washington, D.C., to underscore the national significance of joblessness and to demand a jobs program.

With Civil Rights veteran Dr. Helena Hicks present, along with representatives of Occupy Baltimore and many others, the group also made a commitment to march from the Union Baptist Church to the historic Read's drugstore in downtown Baltimore. Organizers state this will constitute the Baltimore leg of the march before proceeding to Washington, D.C.

Read's was the site of the 1955 Civil Rights sit-ins, led by students, which paved the way to wider actions and other sit-ins. A fight to keep Read's from being torn down by developers, either outright or through neglect, has begun. Dr. Hicks received several standing ovations by the group for her participation in those early sit-ins. She, along with other senior Civil Rights leaders of that era, will lead the

Jan. 14 March for Jobs & Justice.

Rev. Cortly "C.D." Witherspoon, the 30-year-old president of the Baltimore Southern Christian Leadership Conference, explained the significance of this struggle, and plans to continue the fight to preserve Read's following the march. He also explained why the group wanted to emphasize the demand for "Jobs, not jails" and how this impacts Baltimore's youth.

Asher Strauss from Occupy Baltimore explained how the Occupy movement saw the connection with the community and why they were joining the march.

National Action Network representative Marvin "Doc" Cheatham spoke on how the younger activists from the Occupy movement were an inspiration for the fight for justice. He pledged his group's assistance on that day.

Sharon Black, speaking on behalf of the newly formed Occupy 4 Jobs Network, added that there was a connection between the struggle against racism and for Civil Rights with the struggle for jobs. She referred to the recent study by Scoop Daily which announced that Baltimore was one of the top five worst cities for youth. The criteria included unemployment and incarceration rates. All five cities and regions in the study have the largest concentration of African-American populations in the country. They include Chicago, Atlanta, Detroit, Baltimore and Cleveland.

Black also noted that some of the walkers will remain in Washington for the Jan. 17 Occupy Congress protest.

For those interested in staying in touch after the march for future activities, go to www.Occupy4Jobs.org. □



Left to right, Colleen Davidson, Dr. Helena Hicks, Rev. Cortly "C.D." Witherspoon, Sharon Black at Jan. 4 March for Jobs press conference.

Billionaire mayor mocks poor M

By G. Dunkel
New York

It was a display of arrogance that made even politicians' jaws drop, brought more than a thousand posts to media around the state, according to Google News, and even drew condemnation from some of the most reactionary media corporations in New York, like the Wall Street Journal.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo in his state of the state speech Jan. 4 had called for eliminating the requirement that food stamp recipients be fingerprinted in New York City because this practice makes it harder and more onerous for poor people to get the food they need. Most people associate being fingerprinted with the stigma of

being arrested. It also costs hundreds of thousands of dollars to pursue each suspected food stamp "fraud" case, far more than the amount actually received in food assistance.

Billionaire New York City Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, speaking at a news conference after the governor's speech, said fingerprinting was "a prophylactic measure."

"There are always people who want to game the system, unfortunately — it's just society," Bloomberg stated, completely ignoring the fact that food stamps are "society's" way of ensuring that people get to eat.

The day before, the Wall Street Journal had written: "On Friday [Dec. 30], during his weekly radio show, Mayor Michael

tiating committee voted to continue the struggle for more justice.

At the job, the workers were confronted with Tyler Technologies' routing software, Versatrans. The bosses' program produced routes with zero minutes between stops, required drivers to pick up 70 students at more than 20 stops in 20 minutes, and defied other laws of physics.

Crisis was the result. More than 40,000 students were late to school daily. The mayor and media demanded drivers be disciplined. The union insisted that the company and School Department scrap the software and meet with drivers to re-write the routes.

Ultimately, no drivers were disciplined. Instead, the city's transportation director was demoted. For three months, bus company and city officials reluctantly met with hundreds of drivers at the bus yards. Route schedules were rewritten, reflecting human and actual-time realities, based on driver input.

Simultaneously, the union rallied daily with the Occupy Boston encampment at Dewey Square and Occupy the Hood in Roxbury's Dudley Square. They led militant marches with Verizon and hotel workers, set up sound trucks for anti-war and labor marches, and participated in teach-ins, community speak-outs and veterans' demonstrations.

The bosses noticed, even docking union officers' pay when they left a meeting early to join the occupation, hoping in vain to slow the workers' momentum. The union gained the upper hand in the yards, on the streets and in the communities.

Union wins 'Retire with Dignity'; all concessions defeated

On Dec. 15, the local ratified a historic contract that for the first time provides the resources for its members to "Retire with Dignity." It includes 40 new hires; 3,500 additional paid hours weekly; wage increases; and improved life insurance, medical, dental and long-term disability benefits. All concessions were defeated.

Moreover, senior drivers can now retire with assured medical benefits and a unique severance payment. Most of the workers' financial gains came in a first-time company match to workers' retirement savings, a victory that countervails current employer attacks on retirees' pensions.

Stevan Kirschbaum, a union founder and a driver since 1974, explained, "In the face of a united, militant effort to win economic justice by our members, the 1% showed themselves to be weak, uncoordinated and entirely subject to the determination of the drivers to shut them down if our demands were ignored.

"We plan to use this momentum to organize with the communities to stop the resegregation of Boston Public Schools, to stop the shutdown of post offices and other vital social services, to turn around the schools-to-prison pipeline, and to build the movement that will truly empower the workers." □

New Yorkers

Bloomberg said advocates for the homeless and low-income New Yorkers tend to focus on the negative: "'Oh, it's terrible. The economy is terrible,'" the mayor said, mimicking critics." (Jan. 3)

In contrast to his mocking derision of workers and the poor, this arrogant billionaire has been curiously silent about how to prevent fraud and extensive money loss in the high-tech outsourcing the city uses. For example, updating the CityTime payroll system, originally budgeted for \$63 million, has cost the city over \$600 million, with massive alleged fraud and multiple indictments. (Information Week, June 21, 2011)

Bloomberg likes to keep quiet about de-

Continued on page 10

Martin Luther King Jr. Day helps launch new year of fightback

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would have been 83 years old on Jan. 15. In honor of this iconic civil rights, anti-war and social justice activist, the federal government and other public agencies close every year on the Monday following his birthday. King was martyred in Memphis, Tenn., on April 4, 1968.

This year the King Day holiday will take on profound significance in light of the political and social developments that have occurred over the last year. Millions have taken to the streets around the world in the fight against poverty, increased attacks on working people and the oppressed, and imperialist wars.

Since January of last year, revolutionary movements have emerged from Tunisia and Egypt to Bahrain and Yemen. Rebellions and general strikes led to the resignation of long-time Western-backed puppet President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in Tunisia and the forced removal of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

In Morocco the monarchy was shaken by mass demonstrations that were largely unprecedented in recent times. Other states throughout the Middle East, Africa and Europe saw popular movements erupt in opposition to rising food prices, the imposition of austerity and the intervention of U.S. imperialism along with its NATO allies.

Workers in European capitalist countries, especially Greece, Spain and Portugal, suffered tremendously from the ongoing world economic crisis. In Britain Black and working-class youth rose up in rebellion in response to the blatant police killing of a Caribbean-British man, who was followed and shot to death in cold blood in London.

Inside the U. S., a people's uprising in Wisconsin was a direct response to intensifying attacks on public sector workers and their right to collective bargaining. Workers and youth occupied the state capitol in Madison for weeks and drew the attention of people throughout the world.

Occupation participants in Wisconsin paid direct tribute to their class brothers and sisters in Egypt. The progressive forces in Egypt, during the same time period, expressed their solidarity with the people in Wisconsin.

This movement of workers and youth, aimed at defending the right to organize as well as the right to quality education and a decent wage, spread to other states around the Midwest and nationally. In Ohio, legislative actions that were just as draconian as those passed in Wisconsin prompted mass action by trade unions and their supporters.

In Lansing, Mich., the conservative-dominated legislature wasted no time, after securing a majority, to enact bills that drastically cut public spending. These cuts resulted in salary reductions, massive layoffs of public sector employees and the obliteration of city services.

The passage of Public Act 4 in Michigan superseded the former Public Act 72, which allowed for the imposition of emergency management of school systems and municipalities. Public Act 4, now popularly known as the "dictator law," provides for the nullification of the authority of elected officials, the abrogation of labor and vending contracts, and the forced payment of debt service to the banks, irrespective of the desires of the electorates or the unions.

Public Act 4 has been implemented in several majority African-American cities such as Flint and Benton Harbor. In Detroit — the largest African-American-

dominated city in the U.S. — Gov. Rick Snyder recently appointed a financial review panel. The appointment is an effort to justify forcing the city to accept a consent

agreement that could ultimately lead to installation of an emergency manager.

Election years — from 1968 to 2012

The year that Dr. King was killed represented a watershed of mass struggle and urban rebellion. The previous year, 1967, saw more than 160 instances of civil unrest throughout the U.S. as well as the emergence of a mass youth movement in opposition to the war in Vietnam.

Although Dr. King was a proponent of nonviolent direct action, he did not condemn the rebellions that swept the country between 1964 and 1968. The civil rights leader viewed the unrest within the urban areas as a result of the failure of the U.S. system to provide adequate living conditions, decent jobs and incomes to the majority of African Americans.

In a "Face to Face" television interview conducted on July 28, 1967, just one day after President Lyndon Johnson announced the appointment of a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorder, Dr. King said, "I am not calling for a guaranteed annual wage as a substitute for a guaranteed job. I think that ought to be the first thing, that we guarantee every person capable of working a job." ("Testament of Hope, The Essential Writings and Speeches of Martin Luther King, Jr.," 2001)

Dr. King pointed out that "this can be done in many, many ways. There are many things that we need to be done that could be done that's not being done now. And this could provide jobs."

In 1968, Dr. King and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference set out to wage a real "war on poverty" by taking thousands of poor people to Washington, D.C., to demand jobs and a guaranteed annual income. King had founded the SCLC in 1957 in the aftermath of the Montgomery Bus Boycott. In March 1968, he was invited to Memphis to support a sanitation workers strike that was representative of both the class struggle and the national question.

The year 1968 was an election year just like 2012. The failure of the Democratic Party between 1961 and 1968 to effectively resolve the problems of national oppression, discrimination, economic exploitation, poverty and war played a large part in its losing the elections in 1968.

Despite the fact that the Democratic and Republican parties have different constituencies, both organizations are controlled by the ruling class of bankers and industrialists. Today, even though the Democratic Party has commanded a majority in both houses of Congress between 2006 and 2010 and has controlled the White House since 2009, rates of poverty and exploitation are continuing to rise.

The 2010 election results were a reflection of the lack of motivation on the part of working-class people and the nationally oppressed to once again support Democratic candidates without any real improvement in the concrete conditions under which they live.

The year 2011 saw an acceleration of attacks against workers and the oppressed. The only real defense against these assaults has emanated from the unions, the youth and the oppressed communities themselves.

This is why there needs to be a concerted effort outside of the established ruling class



parties to address the crises now facing the majority of people inside the U.S. The response of the Department of Homeland Security to the Occupy Wall

Street movement across the country — with DHS operating through local municipal administrations, many of which are led by Democrats — demonstrates that both of the capitalist-controlled parties do not want to see a real grass-roots revolutionary struggle emerge that focuses on the role of the banks and the corporations as the fundamental cause of the economic crisis.

It was the political repression carried out under a Democratic administration in 1968 that created the conditions for the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. That same year, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover declared the Black Panther Party as the leading threat to the national security of the U.S.

After 1967, during the height of the rebellions, the FBI's Counter-Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) sought to crush the Black Liberation movement and the anti-war struggle. Scores of activists were killed and imprisoned while the National Guard and conventional military forces were deployed into the cities to smash the rebellions.

Since 2010, the FBI and other DHS branches have targeted immigrants, the nationally oppressed, Muslims, anti-war and solidarity activists for deportation, raids, targeted assassinations and grand jury subpoenas. In the final days of 2011, President Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act, which provides further ammunition for the ruling class to crack down on activists and organizations deemed to be threats to the status quo.

2012: Another year of momentous struggle

In all likelihood this year will also be one of protracted struggle and resistance. Signs of this are already developing, with Jan. 16 King Day actions under the banner of Occupy 4 Jobs — inspired by the Occupy Wall Street movement — in New York, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., Boston, Philadelphia and elsewhere.

Detroit is the focus of a growing mass struggle against the imposition of emergency management. On Jan. 2, more than 2,000 people rallied at Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church to say "no" to the appointment of an emergency manager.

In a statement, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shut-offs stressed, "The same banks that caused the economic crisis and destroyed the City of Detroit's tax base, with their fraudulent and racist predatory loans resulting in approximately 150,000 foreclosures in the past five years, now get first lien on city tax dollars for debt service payments."

Detroit's 9th Annual MLK Day Rally & March will be held under the theme of "Escalating the Struggle for Jobs, Peace and Justice." Featured speakers will include contributors to the groundbreaking first-person account "Hands on the Freedom Plow," which examined the role of women in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the vanguard organization within the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s.

The emphasis at Detroit's MLK Day rally will drive home the need for a cadre-developing organization, a working-class orientation, the important role of women and the oppressed, and the need to build a movement outside the ruling-class-dominated political parties. □

Jobs, capitalism & the tasks ahead

Continued from page 1

happened. Things have only changed for the worse.

It is to the credit of the Occupy Wall Streeters that they decided not to wait any longer. Since Sept. 17, they have taken action all across the country to expose the rich and powerful.

In the face of police repression, they have found ways to continue. Their message of fightback is getting through to broad layers of the population, including the labor movement, the communities, students and working people in general.

To keep the OWS message of resistance from getting any further, the capitalist media, after an initial burst of coverage, have decided on near-total censorship of the hundreds of activities going on around the country. OWS has at least the passive support and sympathy of millions. The ruling class wants to shrink that support and prevent it from spreading.

Ruling class fears spread of revolutionary Marxism

The ruling class has another great fear about OWS — the fear that sections of the movement will turn toward revolutionary Marxist ideology.

Right now the OWS movement is directing its fire against the most powerful capitalist institutions: the banks and the politicians who bail them out.

It has also targeted the mortgage companies and put people back in their homes after foreclosure. It has demonstrated against industrial corporations as exploiters, polluters and merchants of death — part of the military-industrial complex. It has taken on the prison-industrial complex and the police for racist stop-and-frisk policies. It has expressed solidarity with immigrant workers. Sections of this movement have rejected the two capitalist parties — the Democrats as well as the Republicans.

Marxism has a comprehensive view of all the institutions and evils that OWS is fighting against. It has a scientific view that ties all these institutions to the system of private property. Marxism has

shown that the capitalist class has created a global system of production and distribution based upon a complex, socialized labor process involving hundreds of millions of workers on every continent.

Marxism illuminates how a tiny group of billionaires is able to treat the vast, globalized productive forces as their own private domain. The obscene inequality, the extraordinary wealth of the 1% — shorthand for the capitalist ruling class — is generated over and over again by the process of capitalist exploitation.

Under capitalism, workers are completely cut off from owning or controlling the means of production, distribution or services. Hospital workers cannot afford health care, yet they work in medical institutions owned by bosses or the capitalist state. Agricultural workers cannot afford to give their families healthy diets, yet they produce the food. Workers making \$14 an hour under the new two-tier, low-wage contracts in the auto industry will not be able to afford the cars they produce.

The hospital services, the food, the autos will all be sold by the owners for profit. Meanwhile, the workers have to sell their labor to some boss and receive just enough to live on — more or less, depending upon conditions and the level of class struggle.

What the boss takes is unpaid labor in the form of what Marx called surplus value or capitalist profits. That is how the capitalist system runs. That is what generates inequality and all the instruments and institutions of repression necessary to enforce such an unjust system — not just in the U.S., but throughout the world capitalist profit system.

Marx showed that banks are the financial nerve center of capitalism. Money is the start of everything under capitalism — production and exploitation begin with money capital. Banks control the financial arteries of capitalism. Updating Marxism in the age of imperialism, Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin showed how the banks merged with the industrialists and the giant retailers to control the lives of businesses large and small.

Corporations are understood by Marx-

ists to be the engines of exploiting the workers. They steal the labor of the workers, turn it into profits, and use the wealth to expand their capital — as well as enable the corporate owners to live in obscene extravagance. In the long run, the banks thrive off the profits extracted by the capitalists from the workers — profits that are deposited in corporate bank accounts or wind up in federal, state and local government treasuries, from which they return to the banks in the form of interest.

Marxism has a view of the state as an instrument for the oppression of one class by another to secure its form of class rule — today, that means the capitalist exploitation of the workers. The police in the U.S., together with Homeland Security and other government agencies like the FBI, the courts and the prisons are the hard core of the capitalist state. They enforce capitalist law against the workers and the oppressed and anyone who wants to defend the interests of the masses. They protect capitalist private property.

The cops break strikes, protect strikebreakers, put down rebellions, protect the drug trade and enforce racist police-state rule against the African-American, Latino/a and Asian communities. There is also the Bureau of Indian Affairs — federal cops used to oppress Native people.

The Pentagon is the enforcer of global imperialist domination on behalf of transnational capital, including the banks, the oil companies, and big industrial and service corporations that super-exploit workers in low-wage, underdeveloped, formerly colonial countries and plunder their resources.

Socialist revolution is the solution

Many in the Occupy movement already consider themselves revolutionaries and anti-capitalists. It is a natural transition from struggling against all the essential institutions of capitalism to developing an analysis of the fundamental nature of the system and a revolutionary perspective for ending it.

Marxism has shown that the fundamental contradiction in modern capitalist

society is the contradiction between the socially organized system of production and the private ownership of the productive forces of society.

The capitalists treat this global system as their own. When it brings them profit, they keep it going. In pursuit of greater and greater profits, each capitalist grouping tries to make its workers more and more productive through the application of technology. What results is more and more commodities produced while wages remain in a narrow boundary. In recent decades wages have generally gone down due to technology and the deskilling of jobs.

The result is greater and greater crises of capitalist overproduction — a mass of goods that cannot be sold for a profit. That is when layoffs begin. Enterprises are shut down. Workers' hours are cut. Wages and benefits are cut. A handful of billionaires in boardrooms decide the fate of tens and hundreds of millions.

The present "recession" is the longest downturn by far since World War II. Capitalism, still going through a jobless "recovery," is facing a new downturn. The system has become so productive it cannot revive itself. It has reached a dead end.

Marxism has shown that the only historical alternative to private ownership of the socialized productive system is to overthrow private property and socialize ownership. This means that the working class and the oppressed have to organize to seize political power and take the means of production and distribution away from the billionaires — the 1% who are the capitalist exploiters — in order to make the economy the social property of the people, to be used for human need, not profit and human greed.

This transformation of property relations will take a thoroughgoing and profound proletarian revolution made by the workers and all the oppressed, ultimately involving the mobilization of millions. This will lead to the liberation of the entire human race.

Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism." See ad below.

Support builds for longshore workers

Continued from page 1

zation to "meet and greet" this latest provocation, supported by the San Francisco Labor Council. Expected soon, the exact date of the ship's arrival is being kept secret by EGT in an attempt to deter protest. Labor for Palestine has also issued a statement supporting the ILWU.

Supporters are undaunted by ILWU International President Bob McEllrath's report, in a Jan. 3 letter to members, that EGT has enlisted an "armed" U.S. Coast Guard escort, using small vessels and helicopters, for that anticipated ship. This act of intimidation violates the Coast Guard's public procedures: "Under no circumstances will the Coast Guard exercise its authority for the purpose of favoring any party to a maritime labor controversy." (<http://tinyurl.com/7tsrb2s>)

EGT is using the police, the courts — which have levied fines exceeding \$300,000 on the union — the commercial media and now a Coast Guard armed escort to craft a false perception that EGT is the victim of militant longshore workers and their allies from the Occupy movement. In the background looms the threat of the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act, a tool of the 1% that tries to strip away any effective tool for unions to fight for justice.

In reality, it is the ILWU and the working class as a whole that are under attack in Longview. The same conditions as in Longview spurred the state Capitol occupation and mass struggle in Wisconsin, which echoed the mass rebellions in Tunisia and Egypt's Tahrir Square.

EGT has sued the Port of Longview in federal court to resolve its issues. A hear-

ing is scheduled for March. Although workers are told to file grievances, National Labor Relations Board complaints and lawsuits to "let the system" work, EGT isn't waiting for a court ruling in its favor. EGT aims to go to court with the ILWU's coastwide agreement already shattered, clearing the path for the other international grain profiteers to oust the union when an unusually short, one-year contract ends later this year.

EGT is pushing the trains and now a ship to realize the profit from its \$200 million investment in the port terminal — on public land and with public tax breaks. A equally massive EGT construction in Montana is to supply the terminal with the agribusiness giant's grain.

The labor movement in the Pacific Northwest continues to fight the anti-worker and blatantly anti-ILWU thrust of EGT at every step, from massive rallies protesting the construction of the terminal by low-wage workers to blocking the trains supplying grain. A joint leaflet by ILWU Locals 10 and 21 issued on Jan. 4 commends Longview sisters and brothers for "doing their part. Under a police reign of terror Local 21, with only 225 members, has 220 arrests for defending ILWU jurisdiction."

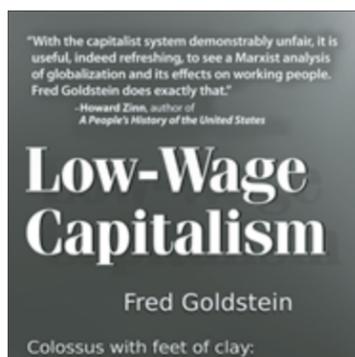
Juries acquitted defendants in the first two cases that came to trial. TDN.com reports that on Dec. 19, ILWU member

Shelly Ann Porter was found not guilty of fourth-degree assault against EGT manager Gerry Gibson. Porter had slapped Gibson's hand to prevent him from snapping an unwanted photo of her. On Dec. 30, ILWU member Kelly Palmer was acquitted of disorderly conduct in only 12 minutes. That same day, trespass charges were also dropped in nine cases resulting from protests on the train tracks.

But it was the Occupy Wall Street movement that lasered attention on this crucial West Coast labor battle and the port truckers' organizing efforts — as Goldman Sachs and EGT/Bunge Ltd., representatives of the 1%, waged war on these port workers. Occupy movements organized the massive community pickets that shut down and disrupted terminals up and down the West Coast on Dec. 12, as well as earlier actions interrupting the just-in-time profit stream at the port of Oakland. The call from Occupy Oakland spoke plainly: "We want to disrupt the profits of the 1% and to show solidarity with those in the 99% who are under direct attack by corporate tyranny." (See call at workers.org)

Occupy blunts Taft-Hartley

In the Longview call to action, Kyle Mackey, secretary-treasurer of the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Counties Central Labor Council, quotes Harry Bridges, the leader of the



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Behind the Ohio earthquakes

Big money leads to big risks

By **Betsey Piette**

After 11 earthquakes recently rocked northwestern Ohio, seismologists acknowledged there is strong evidence linking the quakes to the disposal of waste water produced in the process of drilling for natural gas, known as hydraulic fracturing.

On New Year's Eve, an earthquake registering a magnitude of 4.0 occurred five miles from Youngstown and very close to a 9,000-foot-deep disposal well owned by D&L Energy. The company receives most of its waste water from drilling operations in Pennsylvania's Marcellus Shale.

Hydraulic fracturing involves pumping millions of gallons of water mixed with sand and toxic chemicals deep into underground shale formations to release natural gas. This brine water contains carcinogenic chemicals and radioactive particles.

Initially, the water was sent to treatment plants in Pennsylvania and discharged into rivers. This practice was halted in early 2011 after alarming levels of pollutants were found in streams. Now, there is more reliance on the deep-well disposal process.

Since the earthquakes, Ohio Gov. John Kasich, a drilling booster, has been forced to shut down the Youngstown-area disposal well and four others. Similar unusual seismic activity in Arkansas, Colorado and Oklahoma has also led to temporary bans on the use of some disposal wells.

It's a lot like closing the barn door after the horses escape.

As many as 800,000 underground injection wells exist across the U.S. Some 30,000 dispose of waste water from oil and gas operations.

With the rapid expansion of drilling in neighboring Pennsylvania, Ohio was expected to become the leading importer of fracking waste water. The estimated amount of waste water pumped into Ohio's disposal wells increased to more than 9 million barrels in 2011. Even with five wells now shut down, 176 others are still operating there.

Natural gas industry representatives continue to deny there is any link between hydraulic fracturing and increased seismic activity, even though earthquakes were previously almost unheard of in these areas. Kasich even told reporters that he didn't think the energy industry should be blamed for problems arising from the disposal of their byproducts.

The link between increased earthquake activity and injection wells was established more than five decades ago, after

scientists connected a Colorado earthquake of magnitude 5.5 to U.S. Army disposal of toxic fluids into a 12,000-foot-deep injection well. Nevertheless, there is still no government regulation of such practices.

An estimated \$1 trillion worth of shale gas is trapped underground in Pennsylvania. Geologists predict that around 5 million acres of rural Ohio also sit atop the Marcellus and Utica Shale gas and oil deposits, which contain the energy equivalent of billions of barrels of oil. (The Plain Dealer, Nov. 18)

In Ohio, energy companies have already distributed \$1 billion to landowners to sign lease deals for future wells. Some of these earlier lease agreements paid landowners as little as \$25 per acre. Now property owners are being offered signing bonuses of up to \$5,100 per acre, even though few shale wells have actually been drilled in the state.

Chesapeake Energy, forced to suspend its Pennsylvania drilling operations after a well blowout in April 2011, applied for 99 shale drilling permits in Ohio with lease rights to more than 1.5 million Ohio acres. Total S.A., a multinational company operating in 130 countries, just bought a 25 percent share of Chesapeake's Ohio operations for more than \$2 billion. ExxonMobil, Chevron and Hess are expected to begin filing for permits in 2012.

Campaign contributions pay off

In the last three years, campaign contributions from natural gas companies have more than tripled, especially in the wake of the January 2010 Supreme Court's Citizens United decision giving corporations the same rights as individuals.

Kasich came to office in 2010 thanks to heavy financial backing from the oil and gas industry. He received \$213,519 in campaign contributions from oil and gas interests — the most of any politician in Ohio, according to Common Cause. It found Ohio's fracking regulations to be among the weakest of any state.

The report tracked \$2.8 million in energy industry campaign contributions to Ohio politicians, including House Speaker John Boehner, who raised \$186,900 from fracking interests.

Pennsylvania's governor, Tom Corbett, beat them both — taking in more than \$1.6 million from the energy industry. It has shelled out \$747 million in political contributions in the last 10 years, according to Common Cause.

Aubrey McClendon, Chesapeake's chief

through the encrustation of laws and rulings that tip the class struggle scale overwhelmingly in favor of the rule of the 1%.

The ILWU — targeted by the 1%

The ILWU's motto is "An injury to one is an injury to all." This unity underlies the strength of the ILWU — a rank and file, bottom up, democratic union — and its coastwide contract. It is the strength of the historic Local 10, where Bridges won the 1934 San Francisco general strike by bringing African-American workers into the union as equals.

Local 10, the conscience of the ILWU and the labor movement, acts on the understanding that the issues of apartheid in South Africa, military dictatorships in Latin America, the U.S. wars of conquest in Iraq and Afghanistan, the killing of Gaza flotilla participants by the Israeli military, and the constant battle against racism and discrimination are working-class issues and must be addressed by the labor movement. □

executive officer and one of Corbett's earliest backers, contributed \$450,000 to finance Corbett's 2004 run for attorney general in Pennsylvania. McClendon has told shareholders that Ohio's Utica Shale could be worth \$15 billion to \$20 billion.

Corbett's first political appointment after taking office in January 2011 was to name energy company executive, C. Alan Walker, to head the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, charged with overseeing "job creation" in the state.

Michael Krancer, Corbett's appointee to head the state's Department of Environmental Protection, issued an internal directive in October 2011 telling DEP field agents they could no longer issue a notice of violation related to Marcellus Shale drilling without first getting permission from a DEP deputy director in Harrisburg. Public protest quickly forced Krancer to rescind this memo.

Kasich appears to be reading from the same script. His appointee to head the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, responsible for regulating disposal wells, was David Mustine, a former executive at

American Electric Power, who directed an oil and gas services business in Dubai. After less than a year on the job, Mustine left to become general manager of JobsOhio, the newly privatized department of development, where he will focus on developing oil and gas reserves in eastern Ohio.

The gas industry's political "investment," which has so far helped to avoid government regulation of fracking, will be even more critical in 2012 when the Environmental Protection Agency will publish new findings about the potential dangers of fracking.

"Players in this industry have pumped cash into Congress in the same way they pump toxic chemicals into underground rock formations to free trapped gas," said Common Cause president, Bob Edgar. "Thanks to the Supreme Court and its Citizens United decision, the natural gas industry will be free to spend whatever it likes next year to elect a Congress that will do its bidding. The industry's political investments already have largely freed it from government oversight." ("Deep Drilling, Deep Pockets in Congress & Ohio," Nov. 10) □

No shale gas in Socialist Cuba

While capitalism is expanding its environmentally destructive practice of hydraulic fracturing around the globe, at least one country — socialist Cuba — has stood firmly opposed. Speaking out against the practice, former Cuban leader Fidel Castro blamed the discovery and exploration of vast reserves of shale gas as part of the reason the world was on an "inexorable march toward the abyss." (Reuters, Jan. 5)

Castro wrote that "numerous dangers threaten us, but two of them — nuclear war and climate change — are decisive and both are ever further from approaching a solution."

Siding with international critics of fracking, Castro commented on research that has found that shale gas emits more greenhouse gases than gas produced from conventional wells. "It is sufficient to point out that among the numerous chemical substances injected with the water to extract this gas is found benzene and toluene, which are substances terribly carcinogenic."

Fidel concluded that the problem of shale gas was something "no political cadre or sensible person could ignore."

For more WW articles on this related issue, go to www.workers.org and add "fracking" in the search engine.

FREE THE CUBAN 5 Unjustly held in U.S. prisons for more than 13 years

MUNDO OBRERO

Washington debate guerra afgana mientras crecen los costos

Continua de página 12

Barnes estimaron el costo de la guerra para EE.UU. de \$3 a \$5 billones. Recientemente, Stiglitz estimó otros \$600 a \$900 miles de millones en pagos futuros por incapacidad y cuidado de salud.

El costo y el impacto de 10 años de combate en Afganistán no han sido estimados por ser imposible recoger estadísticas allí de forma segura. Respecto al nivel de vida de la población, el Índice de Desarrollo Humano de la ONU, el cual mide en forma general el bienestar de la población de un país, clasifica Afganistán en el puesto 181 en un total de 182 países. La cifra de muertes maternas durante el parto — 1.600 a 2.000 por 100.000 nacimientos — son las peores en el mundo. También tiene la proporción más alta de gente con discapacidades como resultado de minas de tierra y por el polio. (Barnett Rubin, "The Fragmentatio of Afghanistan," [La fragmentación de Afganistán], pág. xi)

Desde que el CRS hizo sus cálculos, un factor nuevo se añadirá a los costos futuros de la ocupación de Afganistán; la clausura por Pakistán de la frontera Pak-

istán-Afganistán a las caravanas de suministros estadounidenses, la cual empezó el 27 de noviembre. Pakistán impuso este bloqueo después de que días anteriores ataques aéreos estadounidenses mataran a 24 soldados pakistaníes. Washington se negó a pedir disculpas, y el pueblo pakistaní comenzó a bloquear las entregas a las tropas estadounidenses.

Después de cierres temporeros anteriores, el Pentágono reportó que el 30 por ciento de sus provisiones estaban entrando a través de Pakistán. Otro 30 por ciento de estas provisiones llega por avión, y el resto llega por camión y tren desde los puertos de Rusia a través de mucha de la tierra de Eurasia, llegando a Afganistán por Uzbekistán o Tayikistán. En un programa de NPR el 25 de diciembre, una tropa estadounidense dijo que un galón de petróleo entregado por esa manera a un cuartel aislado cuesta \$100 ó más. Al seguir con esta ruta se elevarán los costos.

Un bloqueo continuado intensificará los costos de guerra aún mientras el Congreso estadounidense trata de imponer "austeridad" en todos los programas sociales en este país y se estanca la economía. □

Continued from page 8

1934 San Francisco general strike: "The most important word in the language of the working class is solidarity."

This is precisely what the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act tries to outlaw: the right of workers to join together for mutual aid against the capitalists.

Taft-Hartley leaves corporations free from any of the harsh penalties threatened and used against unions, including injunctions, jail, fines and "cooling off" periods, to let the bosses reorganize during a strike. It allows the bosses to get mutual aid from the banks and other corporations while unions are prohibited from mass picketing, sympathy strikes or secondary boycotts — for example, boycotting EGT parent company's oil products or other consumer goods. "It acts to frighten conservative leaders and also to restrain militants." (See Chapter 15, "Low-Wage Capitalism")

However, the Occupy movement is a powerful working-class ally that is busting

Turning swords into ploughshares? Not!

President Barack Obama, flanked by the top brass of all the military forces, announced changes in the Pentagon budget on Jan. 5 that will supposedly make it leaner and meaner.

What will this mean for the tens of millions of U.S. workers suffering through these times of high unemployment, low pay and all the ills that follow?

Not much, we're sorry to say. While the plan proposes to cut \$487 billion in Pentagon spending over the next decade, this is small compared to the trillions that will still be lavished on the business of war. Taking all the agencies involved, the cost of U.S. military domination of the world takes up about one-quarter of the federal budget, and will continue to do so, especially as government spending on human services shrinks.

If anything, the change in focus from "counter-insurgency" to high-tech warfare — drones, satellites, cyber war and Special Forces — will add up to fewer jobs in the economy for all but the most skilled workers.

In addition, the armed forces will shrink, with the Army and Marine Corps taking the biggest hits. It is sad but true that for a lot of young people, the military has represented a job when no others could be found — especially in oppressed communities and rural areas where the options for survival have become so limited.

But relying on actual human beings to carry out their brutal orders is becoming less appealing to the brass. Sending troops into other countries, no matter how much they destroy, has proven not very effective in cowing the populations. In Iraq, Afghanistan and earlier in Vietnam, it has only consolidated opposition to the invaders.

Moreover, the recent wars have left a generation of young men and women with deep physical and psychological scars. They are bitter and angry, often at the military, because of what they were forced to do. Their high levels of unemployment, homelessness and suicide bear witness to the profound dislocation of their lives.

When one of these veterans was badly injured by police during an Occupy Oakland march, and hundreds of other veterans then joined the movement in solidarity, it was a wakeup call to the rulers that they may be sitting on a powder keg.

So the new emphasis of the Pentagon is to get away from "labor-intensive"

wars and interventions and concentrate more on high-tech devices that rain down death and destruction from the skies.

It will spend more money on training operators of its doomsday weapons and on developing hardened killers, like Navy Seals, to "take out" those the Pentagon deems a threat to U.S. domination.

Respect for national borders, sovereignty, the right of nations to self-determination — all are chucked overboard as the Pentagon and CIA plan to focus more on satellite-guided spying devices to select "targets" wherever they like and then guide in high-powered explosives to kill and, they hope, terrorize the population into submitting. They have already begun this strategy in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya and elsewhere in Africa.

While announcing the cuts, Obama stressed that the U.S. will nevertheless be "strengthening our presence in the Asia Pacific, and budget reductions will not come at the expense of this critical region." Why is it so critical? Have countries in this region been threatening the U.S. lately so that it needs to beef up its military there?

The answer is only too plain. Their target is China, which has been developing at an extraordinary rate because of the strength of its planned economy. For a country like China, which just half a century ago was so poor and underdeveloped, to become a modern economic power is viewed with alarm by the U.S. imperialist ruling class — no matter how much China abides by international laws that Washington violates all the time.

Imperialism is a danger to the rest of the world. It also wreaks havoc on the workers here. The bosses' success in super-exploiting workers abroad lets them shed workers here, cut the wages of those still employed and decimate vitally needed social services such as the heating assistance program, HEAP, and food stamps. And the huge military exists for this very purpose.

Maj. Gen. Smedley Butler of the Marine Corps, who changed sides because of the Great Depression, said it best in a speech in 1933. His military job had made him "a high class muscle-man for big business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism." Butler's photo was carried recently in an Occupy Wall Street demo. Consciousness is catching up to reality. □

NYC Billionaire mayor mocks poor

Continued from page 6

tails of the deals he makes. The city announced Dec. 19 that its competition for a new high-tech graduate school had been won by a partnership of Cornell University and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology. Bloomberg didn't explain why the city's investment was going to private institutions instead of its public university, which has been systematically starved of funds.

In all the press coverage of this new deal, there was no mention of the role Technion plays in the Israeli apartheid state. According to a report by Tadamon (Solidarity), which is a Montreal-based

collective, "a good part of Technion's work is linked to weapons development for the Israeli military. Technion faculty and students are involved in helping develop combat and surveillance drones and medium range missiles. ... Then there are the spy cameras perched on Israel's illegal Apartheid Wall. Technion had a hand in developing those too." □

MARXISM, REPARATIONS & the Black Freedom Struggle

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CELAC: A step forward for the region, with contradictions

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

This new year of 2012 promises to be an interesting one for the region south of the Río Grande. The formal founding of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) in Caracas, Venezuela, marks an exciting development, yet one not devoid of challenges and contradictions.

On Dec. 2-3, delegations and heads of state of the 33 independent countries in Latin America and the Caribbean met to discuss and approve a historical and ambitious program of regional integration and collaboration in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres. This will be the first time that these countries will all gather under an organization without the presence of the United States and Canada.

This approval by itself is a gigantic step forward for a region that Washington since the 1823 Monroe Doctrine has considered its "backyard" and sole "property." That so many politically dissimilar governments could gather under the same umbrella is an amazing accomplishment.

The idea for CELAC had been developing over years. Momentum for such a grouping accelerated after the Organization of American States failed to take firm action against the June 2009 coup in Honduras that ousted president Manuel Zelaya and the 2010 attempted coup against Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa. In light of imperialist campaigns brewing against Cuba, Venezuela, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Ecuador, CELAC is now even more important.

To begin to analyze CELAC's potential, one must first place it in the context of the global economic and financial crisis. Although impacted by the crisis, it has been generally accepted that the CELAC region has fared better than other parts of the world.

Cuban President Raúl Castro said in his opening remarks in Caracas: "The recent economic developments in Latin America and the Caribbean show that, despite the deep global crisis, export revenues have increased, mainly basic commodities; that the burden of external debt, although unjust and oppressive, has been less; and that the accumulation of reserves has increased. This scenario gives us an opportunity if we act with responsibility and true spirit of solidarity." (www.cubavision.icrt.cu)

What contradictions in CELAC?

This reality, however, underlines the differences within the region. Who has benefited from these revenues? What are the contradictions within CELAC?

Cuba, where there are no 1% superrich, and Venezuela, where the Hugo Chávez government is trying to begin the road towards the socialist transformation of society, are in CELAC along with Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, México and Panamá — all these with right-wing governments closely allied to Washington and where profits aren't reinvested on behalf of their people.

There is Haiti, where the productive forces are less developed, alongside a Brazil which is the largest economy and whose military forces are still part of the U.N. Mission for Stabilization in Haiti

(Minustah), which Haitians see as an occupying force.

Except for revolutionary Cuba, in all other CELAC countries the capitalist class still controls the main sectors of the economy, even in the most progressive societies like in Venezuela, Bolivia and Ecuador. The bourgeoisie's power might be declining as a result of policies established by progressive governments and the uprisings of the masses, but they are still a force tied mostly to the transnational companies and finances.

However, the volatility of the U.S. and now the eurozone's economy, and the increasing trade of many CELAC countries with countries Washington considers its opponents — China, for example — might cause this same bourgeoisie to look at CELAC as a way to increase their profits and secure their future.

The U.S., although not a part of CELAC, will try to influence it through their allies mentioned above and their well-funded nongovernmental organizations in progressive countries like Venezuela, Bolivia, Nicaragua and Ecuador.

Puerto Rico, absent!

One country, Puerto Rico, was not invited to join CELAC. A U.S. colony, the island did not meet the criterion of being a sovereign, independent nation. The only voice representing Borinquen was that of Calle 13, a Puerto Rican musical group with 19 Latin Grammys that supports independence for the island nation. Calle 13 performed, accompanied by the Bolivarian Youth Orchestra from Venezuela under the baton of famous musical director, Gustavo Dudamel.

Dudamel is a product of the Orchestra System, which teaches music to poor children in the Bolivarian Republic. The performance was an awesome act reflecting CELAC'S goal of cultural integration. During his performance, René Pérez, Calle 13's lead singer, spoke against the colonialism imposed on his homeland and the need for the integration of all of Latin America.

Socialism, the only way for true integration

Before last year's uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt and Bahrain, and before the mass protests and strikes in some European countries and Occupy Wall Street in the U.S., the movements in Latin America had been the vanguard of popular uprisings at an international level.

It is beyond the scope of this article to assess the current situation of all of Latin America. That a CELAC could even be founded at this juncture is due mostly to the progressive peoples' movements throughout the region. These movements forced into office governments that are more responsive to the people than to the transnational corporations. These governments, in turn, pushed for the establishment of CELAC.

It is also important to keep in mind, however, that until their capitalist structure is replaced by socialism, the power of these governments to carry out progressive policies will be in direct correlation to the strength of the workers' side of the class struggle. Left to do as they want, the capitalists will always try to suppress mass struggle and any progressive advancement for the masses. As long as the economic power of a nation rests in the hands of the wealthy, the president will always be a figure with limited power.

Only a government where the power truly rests in the working class can guarantee a system with social and economic justice. □

U.S. heats up war moves against Iran

By John Catalinotto

As 2012 began, Washington's actions and threats gave substance to U.S. imperialism's long-standing war plans against Iran. The actions included sanctions aimed at breaking Iran's economy, warship deployments off Iran's shores and plans for joint war exercises with Israel.

On Dec. 31, President Barack Obama signed a military funding bill that included imposing sanctions on any countries or companies that buy Iranian oil and pay for it through Iran's central bank. Oil is Iran's main revenue source. European imperialist countries are also preparing an Iranian oil embargo. Such serious economic sanctions amount to acts of war.

Despite its own nuclear overkill arsenal, the U.S. — and its European imperialist allies and the Israeli settler state — claim their conflict in the oil-rich region of Southwest Asia stems from Iran's steps to enrich uranium. Without evidence, they accuse Iran of having a nuclear-weapons program.

The Israeli military announced on Jan. 5 that thousands of U.S. and Israeli troops would hold a major exercise sometime in January. "Both Israeli and U.S. officials said the exercise would be the largest-ever joint drill by the two countries." (Washington Post, Jan. 5) The Israeli state, which is said to have as many as 200 nuclear weapons, often threatens to attack Iran's nuclear power program.

U.S. hostile since 1979 revolution

But Washington has been hostile in word and deed to the Iranian government ever since a mass uprising overthrew the shah's regime in February 1979. The CIA had put this monarch in power with a coup in 1953. He remained a U.S. client dictator until this revolution.

Israel is hostile to Iran also because Tehran has supported the liberation movements in the region: Hezbollah in Lebanon — which drove out the Israeli army in 2000 and stopped the Israeli invasion in 2006 — and Hamas in Palestine, and is an ally of Syria.

The massive 1979 revolution failed to overthrow capitalist property relations or end the exploitation of labor. It instead put into power a section of Iran's capitalist class in the form of the Islamic Republic. Up to now that government has defended this class's economic and political interests from imperialist aggression.

The Iranian armed forces, starting on Dec. 24, held 10 days of exercises in the Strait of Hormuz. This is a narrow body of water — about 40 miles wide — between Iran and Oman that connects the Persian/Arabian Gulf to the Sea of Oman and from there to the Indian Ocean.

About 20 percent of the world's supply of petroleum sails through the Strait of Hormuz. The Iranian government said they could be forced to block the strait in response to the sanctions aimed at strangling its people. Iranian Army Cmdr. Brig. Gen. Habibollah Sayyari said the country

can block the Strait of Hormuz "easily." (ISNA, Jan. 8)

Conflict in the strait would immediately cut worldwide oil supplies and inflate oil prices.

The Iranians also announced that they were about to begin production of enriched uranium at a second site — this one at the Fordo plant near the city of Qum. The site is 300 feet underground and well-defended by anti-aircraft weapons.

The Iranian government has stated it has no plans to manufacture nuclear weapons. Iran insists, however, that it has the right to produce enriched uranium as an alternative energy source to its large but finite oil supply.

Despite the crisis, Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad began a tour Jan. 8 of four Latin American countries, starting with Venezuela.

Panetta, Gen. Dempsey on 'Face the Nation'

U.S. Defense Secretary Leon Panetta spoke on CBS's "Face the Nation" on Jan. 8, where he said: "Are they trying to develop a nuclear weapon? No. But we know that they're trying to develop a nuclear capability. And that's what concerns us. And our red line to Iran is: do not develop a nuclear weapon. That's a red line for us."

Panetta had to reflect the results of two studies, in 2007 and 2010, by U.S. intelligence agencies, that concluded that "the Iranian leaders had made no political decision yet to build an actual weapon." (New York Times, Jan. 8)

Gen. Martin Dempsey, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on the same show that the Pentagon was evaluating the risks and difficulties of "taking out" Iran's nuclear plants to "position assets, to provide these options in a timely fashion." (New York Times, Jan. 8)

Among those assets is the Fifth Fleet, stationed in Bahrain only hundreds of miles from the Strait of Hormuz. This consists of aircraft carriers, nuclear submarines, amphibious units of the Marines, destroyers, frigates and warplanes. The British are also sending an aircraft carrier to the Gulf.

Some analysts argue that the potential impact of battles around the Strait of Hormuz during the capitalist economic crisis, along with all the stresses on the U.S. military, make it unlikely Washington will launch another war. The history of imperialism, however, is that even the most risky adventures can occur at times of crisis, as the two world wars of the 20th century show.

Major anti-war coalitions treat the danger of war seriously. The United National Antiwar Coalition in the U.S. and the Stop the War Coalition in Britain, which include organizations with diverse evaluations of Tehran's internal policies, actively oppose imperialist sanctions and all military provocations against Iran.

For more information and to join protests of U.S. policies, see the Iran section of the International Action Center at iacenter.org.

Ceremony marks ANC's century of struggle for South Africa freedom

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The African National Congress, the continent's oldest liberation movement, marked the 100th anniversary of its formation on Jan. 8. After struggling for decades against apartheid and settler-colonialism, the ANC has governed the Republic of South Africa since its 1994 victory.

More than 50,000 people jammed the local stadium in Bloemfontein in the Free State that had been upgraded to host one of the 2010 World Cup soccer matches. Current ANC leader and president of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, delivered the keynote address concluding the rally.

Earlier, dignitaries from countries around Africa and the world attended a ceremony located at the Wesleyan Church, where the ANC was formed in 1912 during the height of the colonialist hold on the continent. A torch was lit, designed to burn for the entire year to commemorate this milestone in the fight against legalized racial oppression.

The ANC Today newsletter reported that 100,000 people were mobilized for the celebrations, which shall continue throughout the year. ANC National Chairperson Baleka Mbete, who is also chairperson of the National Centenary Task Team, wrote, "This movement is the legacy of stalwarts like John Langalibalele Dube, Pixley Ka Isaka Seme, Chief Albert Luthuli, Mama [Albertina] Sisulu, Nelson Mandela, (OR) Tambo and Lilian Ngoyi amongst others." (ANC Today, Dec. 16-22)

Each month throughout the year, the ANC will recognize the various historic leaders. In January, it will honor

the ANC's first president, uBaba uLangalibalele John Dube (Mafukuzela), who served between 1912 and 1917.

Perhaps the best-known past ANC president, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who due to frail health was unable to attend Jan. 8, will be honored in July under the theme of "Building a Caring Nation." Mandela was a political prisoner for more than 27 years in the apartheid state's dungeons, where his imprisonment gained worldwide recognition for the liberation movement until his release in 1990. He then led negotiations setting up the first nonracial democratic elections that brought the ANC into office in 1994.

Since 1994, South Africa has had four ANC presidents: Nelson Mandela, (1994-1999); Thabo Mbeki, (1999-2008); Kgalema Motlanthe (2008-2009); and the current head-of-state, Jacob Zuma, who was elected to office in 2009.

Mass, labor and armed struggle led to ANC victory

Known for its vast wealth in gold and diamonds, South Africa developed as the most industrialized state on the continent as well as the most repressive.

Consequently, the character of South Africa's national liberation struggle differed from others in the region. The mining sector spawned a considerable manufacturing sector as well, and by the 1920s, a huge labor movement would emerge.

To maintain the racially exploitative system, the ruling class sought to separate out and superexploit the African working class. Nonetheless, during the post-World War II period, broad alliances emerged encompassing the majority African population in coalition with Indians, peoples of

mixed race and progressive whites, many of whom were communists.

The South African Communist Party, formed in 1921, eventually recognized the indispensability of building a national liberation movement that was led by African people. The Tripartite Alliance would emerge during the 1980s, which brought together the Congress of South African Trade Unions, the SACP as well as the ANC. This alliance has maintained political control of the country since 1994.

The ANC and internationalism

In recognition of international support for the liberation struggle from people of conscience and goodwill throughout the world, ANC Today noted that it "will host an International Solidarity Conference where former anti-apartheid organizations and individuals throughout the world will converge on our soil to craft a way forward" and "at an ANC-led government level, our country will in May 2012 host a conference to be attended by the African Diaspora."

The celebrations will also recognize Cuba for its contribution to Southern Africa's liberation. Cuba sent hundreds of thousands of its own internationalist volunteers to fight for the defeat of the racist South African military in Angola between 1975 and 1988. These battles contributed to the liberation of Namibia and the elimination of apartheid.

The ANC Today thanked Cuba and all international supporters: "The humane people of Cuba are amongst the many dear friends across the world that marched side by side with us during the epic periods of our struggles for the liberation and freedoms of our country and the continent."

The global struggle against imperialism

Although the 1994 events were a monumental victory against racism, national oppression and imperialism, South Africa still remains integrated within the world capitalist system. Consequently, the world capitalist economic crisis has impacted South Africa. Unemployment and poverty remain major challenges for the ANC, COSATU and the SACP.

The struggle of South Africa's working class, the largest and best organized on the continent, is still a tremendous force worldwide. COSATU and other labor federations are fighting for a living wage and political empowerment for the working class inside the country. Meanwhile, international finance capital is still working to maintain its grip over the majority of the population inside the country.

With the growing U.S. intervention in Africa through the U.S. Africa Command, national liberation movements, progressive governments and working class organizations must intensify their struggle to defeat imperialism once and for all.

The U.S., France and Britain have intervened in Libya, Somalia, Ivory Coast and other states. They have targeted neighboring Zimbabwe with economic sanctions since 2000, when the ruling party sought to re-correct the legacy of colonialism with a massive land redistribution program to more than 400,000 African families.

Inspired by the victory against apartheid, the working class, farmers and youth of the continent, in alliance with the genuine forces of progress throughout the world, must defeat all these efforts to maintain imperialist domination in Africa and finally end exploitation and oppression on the continent. □

Gasoductos crean ganancias y peligros

Por Betsey Piette

No tan oculto en el "acuerdo fiscal" a finales de diciembre había una disposición para forzar una decisión rápida sobre el proyecto del oleoducto Keystone XL, que se extendería desde el proyecto de extracción de petróleo Tar Sands en Alberta, Canadá, hasta el Golfo de México. Aunque al principio amenazaba con vetar cualquier proyecto de ley que incluyera este plan, el presidente Barack Obama terminó aprobando el paquete final sin mencionar la amenaza ambiental.

El propuesto oleoducto de 1.700 millas amenaza un acuífero vital para millones de personas y atenta contra los derechos de muchas naciones indígenas por cuyas tierras pasaría. Miles de personas rodearon la Casa Blanca a principios de noviembre para oponerse al oleoducto.

Billones de dólares están en juego para empresas estadounidenses y canadienses, incluyendo las industrias Koch valoradas en \$100 mil millones. Esta es uno de los principales compradores, transportistas y exportadores de crudo de Canadá. Los hermanos Koch también operan la Koch Exploration Canadá, LP dedicada a la exploración y refinamiento del 25 por ciento del petróleo de arenas bituminosas. (The Guardian, Reino Unido, 8 de septiembre)

Los promotores del proyecto dicen que el proyecto crearía 20.000 puestos de trabajo. Sin embargo, una organización de evaluación independiente de la Universidad de Cornell afirmó que en el mejor de los casos, el proyecto podría producir solo entre 2.500 y 4.650 puestos de trabajo temporales que durarían dos años.

Dado que el proyecto desviaría una enorme cantidad de petróleo de arenas bituminosas de las refinerías del occidente de EE.UU. para ser vendido a precios más altos a la Costa del Golfo y a los mercados de exportación, aumentarían los precios que los/as consumidores/as pagan por la gasolina y el diesel, y agregaría hasta \$5 mil millones al costo anual de la factura de combustible de EE.UU. (U. S. News & World Report, 16 de diciembre)

Falta de normas de seguridad

Al expandirse la perforación en búsqueda de nuevas fuentes de gas natu-

ral y de petróleo por todo los EE.UU. y en todo el mundo, eso seguramente conllevará la construcción de nuevos gasoductos. Junto a esta expansión viene la creciente preocupación por los posibles daños ambientales y los accidentes mortales debido a la poca supervisión y a la falta de normas de seguridad.

En Pennsylvania, la rápida expansión de la extracción de gas natural ha impulsado la construcción de gasoductos, a menudo sin reglas de seguridad. En muchas zonas rurales — común cuando se trata del fracturamiento hidráulico, ("fracking" en la terminología inglesa), y el transporte del gas desde los pozos del Marcellus Shale — no se aplica ninguna norma de seguridad estatal o federal. (Philadelphia Inquirer, 11 de diciembre) [Nota de la traducción: "Shale gas" o gas en esquistos o gas de pizarra es "Gas natural que se encuentra en yacimientos compuestos predominantemente por esquistos o pizarras (una roca sedimentaria de grano que se fractura fácilmente en láminas finas y paralelas)." www.sedigas.es]

Sin embargo, los datos federales indican que las muertes por accidentes de gasoductos van en aumento. En 2010 hubo 230 accidentes de líneas de gas en los EE.UU., resultando en 21 muertes y 105 personas heridas. Del 1990 al 2009, hubo 5.625 accidentes teniendo como resultado 365 muertes, 1.553 heridos, más de \$4,3 mil millones en daños a la propiedad y derrames de más de 2,5 millones de barriles de gas.

Para marzo de 2011, había 2,4 millones de millas de tuberías de gas natural en los EE.UU. Aunque están principalmente en zonas rurales, muchas pasan a través de las ciudades. Según Carl Weiner, director ejecutivo del Fideicomiso de Seguridad de Gasoductos, "en promedio... hay un incidente significativo en algún lugar cada dos días, y alguien acaba en el hospital o muerto cada nueve o diez días". (NPR, 1 de marzo)

Los gasoductos son clave para la expansión de la producción del gas de esquisto, que ahora representa el 34 por ciento de la producción de gas natural en EE.UU. lo que resulta en miles de millones de dólares en ganancias. Muchos

de estos gasoductos requieren la destrucción de cientos de miles de hectáreas de bosques, resultando en la erosión del terreno, daños a los arroyos y la obstrucción de los pozos de agua. Las empresas constructoras de los gasoductos pueden construir con poca o ninguna restricción por parte de los gobiernos locales.

La fracturación genera un enorme volumen de gas que se transporta en grandes tuberías, corriendo a presiones mucho mayores que en las líneas tradicionales. Sólo en la región del Marcellus Shale, que abarca gran parte de Nueva York, Pennsylvania, Ohio y Virginia Occidental, se estima que contiene 410 billones de pies cúbicos de gas, más del 50 por ciento del total de EE.UU.

En Pennsylvania, el gobernador Tom Corbett y otros políticos están impulsando una legislación que prohibiría que funcionarios locales impongan restricciones sobre pozos de gas y oleoductos en sus comunidades.

La industria del gas natural sostiene que están trayendo puestos de trabajo a las comunidades locales. Esto suena parecido a las promesas hechas por la industria del carbón. Cientos de años de explotación de minas de carbón en Pensilvania han dejado más de 2.400 kilómetros de arroyos contaminados por minas abandonadas y gran parte de las tierras deforestadas. Mientras que los propietarios de la industria se volvieron ricos, más de 31.000 trabajadores murieron.

Problemas de gasoductos generalizados a nivel mundial

La potencial amenaza de la creciente industria de gas natural se está sintiendo alrededor del planeta. Empresas estadounidenses, incluyendo Halliburton, Chesapeake Energy, Shell y Exxon Mobil, se benefician a expensas de los/as residentes locales y el medioambiente.

El gobernador de Puerto Rico Luis Fortuño está promoviendo un proyecto valorado en 450 mil millones de dólares para construir un gasoducto de 92 millas, apodado la Vía Verde. La isla de Puerto Rico mide 110 millas de largo.

Los/as opositores/as la llaman la Vía de la Muerte, porque pasa por el centro de la isla, atravesando bosques y más

de 235 ríos e impactando 32 especies en peligro de extinción. También representa un riesgo para más de 200.000 personas porque gran parte del área es propensa a los sismos. Los planes prevén la inmediata deforestación de un área de 150 pies a través de los bosques en las montañas del interior de la isla. (Democracy Now, 9 de junio) Las manifestaciones contra el gasoducto han sacudido a Puerto Rico.

En Sudáfrica, grandes compañías quieren perforar miles de pozos de gas natural mediante la fracturación, lo que requiere millones de galones de agua por cada pozo de gas, en un área que "en algunas partes ve menos lluvia que el desierto de Mojave". (New York Times, 30 de diciembre)

Las perforaciones para la obtención del gas de esquisto en Indonesia provocaron la erupción de un volcán de lodo que mató a 13 personas y dejó más de 30.000 personas sin hogar en 2006. En Perú, un proyecto financiado por EE.UU. para exportar gas desde la selva amazónica ha estado plagado de derrames.

En Pennsylvania, muchos propietarios de tierra firmaron contratos para permitir la perforación en sus propiedades esperando lucrativas regalías, que con frecuencia no se han materializado. No se dieron cuenta que las excavaciones para contener las aguas residuales de las perforaciones se construirían en sus tierras o que el líquido de estos pozos se fugaría, derramando líquidos contaminados que matarían cultivos y animales.

Las perforaciones se realizan a menudo cercanas a las zonas residenciales. Se perforan múltiples pozos en un sitio que abarca más de una milla cuadrada y algunos pozos conllevan el uso de compresores que operan constantemente. Los sitios pueden estar llenos de camiones y equipos industriales. Los gasoductos están excavados a través de tierras de cultivo y de áreas que anteriormente eran bosques.

La promesa de que la perforación traería empleos al Estado tampoco ha significado más puestos de trabajo para los/as residentes locales. "Más del 70 por ciento de las personas que trabajan en los sitios de perforación del Marcellus Shale vienen de afuera del Estado". (Centre Daily Times, 6 de febrero) □

Washington debate guerra afgana mientras crecen los costos

Por G. Dunkel

Hay un debate velado en las salas de poder de Washington sobre si proseguir y cómo, la guerra de EE.UU./OTAN en Afganistán. Mientras tanto, el Gobierno de la vecina Pakistán está bloqueando una ruta de suministro militar vital para las tropas estadounidenses.

El comandante de las fuerzas estadounidenses en Afganistán, General John Allen dijo al New York Times el 20 de diciembre que una cantidad considerable de tropas estadounidenses se quedaría, incluso después de la programada fecha de retirada en 2014. Unos días más tarde, el presidente afgano Hamid Karzai anunció bajo la presión de Washington, que está de acuerdo con permitir a los talibanes establecer una oficina en Qatar para que negocien. (ABC News, 30 de diciembre)

Existe un apoyo significativo de la clase dominante para las negociaciones. Tanto el Fondo de los Hermanos Rockefeller como la Fundación Carnegie ayudaron a financiar una reciente propuesta detallada de la Fundación Century titulada "Afganistán: negociando la paz" sobre lo que implicaría un acuerdo de paz en Afganistán.

No está claro si todas las facciones del Talibán, tanto en Afganistán como en Pakistán, están dispuestas a negociar.

Al permitir que el Talibán establezca una oficina, Washington está admitiendo que el ejército estadounidense y sus aliados no pueden estratégicamente derrocar la resistencia afgana. Esto es cierto a pesar de las aproximadamente 98.000 tropas estadounidenses que ocupan Afganistán, junto a los 90.400 contratistas del Departamento de Defensa y los 30.000 soldados de aliados como Francia y Alemania. (Congressional

Research Service, CRS, R40764 [Servicio Congresional de Investigaciones]).

Las cifras del CRS cuentan solamente las tropas en tierra — excluyen las Fuerzas Especiales y el personal de las fuerzas aérea y naval que están asignadas al teatro de guerra. Puede que también el CRS esté desestimando la cantidad de mercenarios, un nombre más exacto para los que el Departamento de Defensa llama "contratistas".

El costo de mantener los niveles actuales de tropas más allá del 2014 resultaría muy alto. Hasta el 18 de marzo, el Congreso había aprobado \$1,28 billones para todas las operaciones mayormente militares, que Washington justificaba como respuesta a los eventos del 11 de septiembre de 2001. Cerca de \$444 mil millones de esa cantidad fueron gastados en Afganistán. Usando las predicciones de reducción de tropas del

"plan de retirada" del 2014 del Presidente Barack Obama, los costos proyectados para todas estas operaciones hasta el fin del 2021 serían \$1,8 billones. Esto dejaría todavía miles de "asesores y entrenadores" en tierra afgana. (CRS, RL33110).

Actualmente, el Depto. de Defensa está gastando alrededor de \$6,7 miles de millones al mes en Afganistán. Así que, el mantener los niveles actuales hasta 2021 costaría aproximadamente de \$250 a \$300 miles de millones más, alcanzando un total de hasta casi \$2 billones.

Estas cifras representan solamente lo que el Depto. de Defensa está dispuesto a admitir que gastó. Hace tres años en su libro sobre Irak, "La guerra de tres billones de dólares" ("The Three Trillion Dollar War", el economista ganador del premio Nobel, Joseph E. Stiglitz, y Linda

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