

# WORKERS WORLD



Workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite!

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\$1



## SOLIDARITY DAY TWO IN BOSTON:

# Rehire school bus drivers!

By Gerry Scoppettuolo and Steve Gillis  
Dorchester, Mass.

In the Boston working-class neighborhood of Dorchester, hundreds of labor and community leaders and rank-and-file workers jammed the streets Feb. 1 in front of the headquarters of one of the planet's biggest conglomerate corporations, Veolia Transportation. Their voices, music and drumming filled the air with demands for "Union justice now!" and "Down with Veolia's union busting!"

The outpouring was so militant that even the Boston Globe, Fox News and other mainstream media could not ignore it.

The protesters answered the call for Solidarity Day from United Steelworkers Local 8751, the Massachusetts AFL-CIO, the Greater Boston Labor Council, City Councilor Charles Yancey, the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts and dozens of community, labor and anti-war organizations to "Reinstate the fired leaders."

Last June, the city of Boston deemed its new school bus management contract with Veolia "highly advantageous," based on its promise to cut millions from drivers' wages and benefits. In return, the city provided a unique, 50-cents-on-the-dollar kickback, a sweetener in "savings" to the company.

But when Veolia began shorting drivers' pay and shredding the union contract in July, the drivers called it blatant union busting and fought back with 16 unfair labor practice charges and more than 300 grievances. Informational marches, picket lines, bul-

letins and daily yard meetings followed, which put Veolia on notice that Local 8751 would vigorously defend its members' rights and 40 years of contract progress.

On Oct. 8, one day after the company posted across-the-board paycuts and demanded the drivers re-apply for their jobs, the workers showed up for work and demanded the company meet to address the contract violations. Instead, Veolia called the cops, locked the gates and shut down operations. Then on Nov. 1, Veolia terminated Andre Francois, Steve Gillis, Stevan Kirschbaum and Garry Murchison — four officers of the local's progressive and organizational leadership. The vast majority of the nearly 900 rank-and-file immigrant workers are from Haiti, Cape Verde, Vietnam and Latin America.

The case of the fired leaders and the local's struggle to defend itself from this imposed austerity became a rallying point on Feb. 1. Solidarity Day brought out school workers and educators fighting budget cuts and demanding equal, quality education; postal workers and community residents campaigning to save postal services; telephone, food, commercial and hotel workers, themselves fending off austerity and waging campaigns to organize low-wage workers at international corporations like Walmart and McDonald's; anti-war and political activists drawing connections between wars abroad and oppression at home from Boston to Palestine; and civil rights and community leaders inspired by the drivers' struggle against racism and for economic justice.

### Solidarity grows due to struggle

To jump off the rally, Local 8751 militant spokeswomen, Chantal Casimir, Lela Rosboro and Kiett Baptiste, fired up the crowd. Bishop Felipe Texiera, a longtime labor and immigrant rights activist, called on Boston's political leaders to support those who service the city's children, not the 1% corporate elite.

Rich Rogers, from the Greater Boston Labor Council, came with the commitment of the 154-union federation to "Speak out against this injustice!" He said corporations that commit unfair labor practices are not welcome in Boston: "They have a responsibility to honor the union contract. The city is paying for that

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### About the Boston Solidarity Day photos:

Pictured across the top from left are: Nancy Murray, Andrew Slip, Kiett Baptiste, Chantal Casimir, Vanessa Matamoros, Litu Rep. On the second row are Rich Rogers, Garry Murchison, Stevan Kirschbaum, Andre Francois (on the right), Steve Gillis, Larry Holmes, Sandra McIntosh, Mel King and Darrin Howell on the right side.

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## Unjustly imprisoned for 15 years

# Cuban hero to be released from U.S. prison

By Paul Teitelbaum

After spending 15 years unjustly imprisoned for fighting terrorism, Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five, is scheduled to be released from federal prison on Feb. 27. Fernando will be the second of the Five to be released. René González was released in October 2011 after serving his entire sentence.

The Five were sent to Miami in the early 1990s to monitor anti-Cuban terrorist organizations there that were responsible for many violent attacks against Cuba. Their purpose was to gather information about planned attacks so the plans could be stopped before they were carried out.

Unprovoked terrorist attacks on Cuban soil, which have been launched by Miami-based groups, include sabotage and bombings of hotels and department stores. The attacks have resulted in more than 3,400 deaths, with more than 2,000 people wounded.

In 1976, a bomb aboard a Cuban airplane exploded, killing all 73 passengers, including the Cuban national fencing team. This bombing was masterminded by CIA-trained terrorists Orlando Bosch and Luis Posada Carriles. For many years Bosch and Posada Carriles lived freely in Miami. Bosch has died, but Posada Carriles, who is now 86, still resides there.

The Cuban Five were able to amass evidence implicating specific individuals, like Bosch and Posada Carriles, and groups that planned these attacks. In an effort to put an end to them, Cuba shared this information with the FBI in 1998. But instead of arresting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the Five, put them in solitary confinement for more than a year, tried them in the poisonous atmosphere of an anti-Cuban Miami courtroom, and sentenced them to outrageous prison terms.

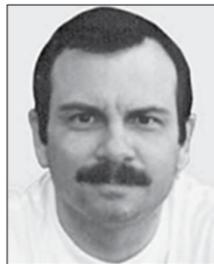
When asked about his impending release, González told this writer via email: "... I would like to ... thank all

those who have been so supportive through the years. My gratitude to all of them. I will also exhort all our friends to support the event that will be held in London at the beginning of March and the 5 Days for the 5 in Washington, D.C., in June that is being organized by the International Committee [for the Freedom of the Cuban 5]. I will also call all our friends to continue in the struggle until Gerardo [Hernández], Ramón [Labañino] and Tony [Antonio Guerrero] are released from prison."

"The return of Fernando appears to be imminent, but there is no real victory until all Five are home," Alicia Jrapko, of the International Committee, told Workers World. "We are very happy that he will soon be reunited with his family in Cuba, but his release was not because of some favorable gesture by the U.S. government, but because he has served his entire sentence. Now is the time for us to increase our efforts in the struggle for the freedom of all of them."

The International Commission of Inquiry into the Case of the Five will take place in London March 7-8. Testimonies are scheduled from approximately 20 key witnesses from Cuba and other countries, including the defense lawyer of the Five, Martin Garbus; representatives from Amnesty International; and family members of the Cuban 5. For more information about the International Commission of Inquiry, visit [voicesforthe5.com](http://voicesforthe5.com).

The International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 is planning the third "5 Days for the Cuban 5," which will take place in Washington, D.C., June 4-11. As in previous years, the week of activities will include a rally in front of the White House to demand that President Barack Obama use his executive powers to free all of the Cuban Five. For more information about the upcoming 5 Days for the Cuban 5, see [thecuban5.org](http://thecuban5.org). □



Fernando González

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# Fannie Lou Hamer remains a symbol 50 years after Freedom Summer

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

More than 1,000 student volunteers, along with rank-and-file workers and professionals from the northern and western cities of the U.S., traveled to Mississippi and southwest Tennessee in the summer of 1964 to assist African Americans in their decades-long struggle to acquire the right to vote.

This effort became known as "Freedom Summer." The volunteers worked alongside tens of thousands of African-American youth, farmers and workers in a massive effort to both build an independent political party in Mississippi and to break down barriers to universal suffrage.

Ideas for the Freedom Summer project grew out of various campaigns for Civil Rights over the previous four years. On Feb. 1, 1960, four African-American students from North Carolina A&T College sat in at a whites-only lunch counter, sparking demonstrations throughout the South and support actions throughout the country.

In April 1960, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was formed, with representation from various campus organizations throughout the South and affiliates in the North and West. SNCC established a field staff and began to dispatch organizers to various locations throughout the South to work on voter registration and desegregation campaigns.

By 1963, the Civil Rights Movement had experienced a renewed sense of urgency, with mass demonstrations in Birmingham, Ala., and many other cities during the spring and summer of that year. Hundreds of thousands would gather and march in Detroit in June and in Washington, D.C., in August, demanding the passage of a federal Civil Rights bill guaranteeing the total abolition of racial segregation in education, housing and public affairs.

A project called "Freedom Vote" was organized in Mississippi during the fall of 1963. African Americans were encouraged to participate in order to illustrate the mass sentiment in favor of voter registration. The success of this program led to the announcement of a plan to recruit approximately 1,000 volunteers to come to Mississippi during the summer of 1964 to expose the systematic racism that prevented African Americans from voting and from participating in segregated political parties and public institutions.

The Freedom Summer project in Mississippi was coordinated by a coalition of organizations including SNCC, the Congress of Racial Equality, the Mississippi chapter of the NAACP and others. The alliance was called the Council of Federated Organizations, and was initially formed in 1962 with leaders such as Bob Moses of SNCC and Aaron Henry of the NAACP.

## Fannie Lou Hamer and the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party

A leading figure in events during Freedom Summer was Fannie Lou Hamer, who had been working since 1962 in voter registration campaigns and as a SNCC organizer. Hamer was born on Oct. 6, 1917, in Montgomery County, Miss., into a family of sharecroppers. After registering to vote, she was immediately fired from her job and evicted from a plantation in Ruleville, Miss.

In 1963, Hamer was arrested after attending a voting rights workshop and se-

verely beaten by police at a jail in Winona, Miss. She suffered injuries so severe that her kidneys were permanently damaged.

The next year, Hamer was elected vice-chair of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, an independent political organization formed that summer in response to the racial exclusionary policies of the state's official Democratic Party. Although a massive amount of work was carried out to register African Americans to vote, reports indicate that as few as 1,200 were able to successfully complete the process due to intimidation and violence.

The Civil Rights activists and volunteer allies in Mississippi were subjected to arbitrary arrests, beatings, church bombings and lynching. Andrew Goodman, Michael Schwerner and James Chaney were kidnapped and brutally murdered in Neshoba County during the first week of the summer project. The three Civil Rights workers' bodies were not found for six weeks. During the course of the search for their remains, bodies of other African Americans, some of whom were Civil Rights activists, were unearthed and found in rivers, including Charles Eddie Moore, Henry Hezekia Dee, 14-year-old Herbert Oarshy and at least five others.

Nonetheless, as many as 80,000 people joined the MFDP. The party elected delegates to the Democratic National Convention, held in Atlantic City, N.J., that year, and attempted to unseat the all-white official state delegation.

Hamer's direct appeal to the national credentials committee of the Democratic Party was carried live on national television. Testifying about the horrors of living as an African-American political activist in Mississippi, she noted that "we have to sleep with our telephones off the hook because our lives are being threatened daily."

The power of her testimony worried the White House under President Lyndon B. Johnson. He immediately called a live press conference in order to get Hamer's live statement off national television. Although it was pre-empted during the day, her full testimony aired that same evening.

Faced with a political crisis during an election year in which the African-American vote was crucial to the Democrats in the White House, the Johnson administration attempted to strike a compromise by allowing two MFDP delegates to be seated at-large, while the all-white delegation from Mississippi was allowed to maintain its credentials and seats. MFDP rejected the compromise, despite a pledge by the Democratic Party leadership to ban all-white, racist delegations in future conventions. The delegation continued to protest, attempting to seize seats assigned to the all-white state delegation.

Hamer would run unsuccessfully for Congress in 1965. She continued her activism until her death in 1977.

## Freedom Summer in Southwest Tennessee

In Fayette County, Tenn., on the border with the Mississippi

Delta, one of the first voting-rights struggles of the Civil Rights era was initiated in 1959. When African Americans attempted to register in mass from 1959 to 1960, hundreds of tenant farmers were put off the land they had worked for decades, land owned by wealthy white farmers.

Fayette and neighboring Haywood counties had been large-scale cotton producers going back to the antebellum slave period. By the conclusion of the Civil War, African Americans outnumbered whites substantially. After Emancipation and during the Reconstruction Era, African Americans elected local and state representatives in these counties.

These officials served through the 1880s, when they were forced out due to Jim Crow and Black Code segregation laws instituted by former slave owners. African Americans were systematically prevented from voting, serving on juries and having access to public life.

A Tent City established in both counties in the winter of 1960 received national media attention. Material assistance came in from around the country while SNCC, CORE, the NAACP and other organizations provided support. Local organizers formed the Fayette County Civic and Welfare League and the Haywood County Civic and Welfare League.

In 1963, Charlie Haynie, a Cornell University graduate student and peace activist, visited Fayette County and made contacts with local organizers such as FCCWL leaders John McFerren and Viola McFerren. Haynie returned to Cornell and played a leading role in recruiting dozens of students to participate in a

voter registration and outreach program during the summer of 1964.

The students assisted Fayette County residents through political education and mass mobilization in preparation for sheriff and tax assessor elections. Two candidates, L.T. Redfearn, a progressive white farmer, and the Rev. June Dowdy, ran for the respective positions.

Although the elections were stolen, the experience added impetus to the struggle in the region, which expanded well into the early 1970s. Events during 1964 led to a massive school desegregation campaign beginning in 1965.

## Significance of Freedom Summer

There are many lessons to be learned from the events of 1964. The first Civil Rights Act since 1875 was passed that summer, and the following year the Voting Rights Act became law. In 1964, the Johnson administration declared a "War on Poverty," but without attacking the fundamental structures of capitalism, which are at the root of underdevelopment, joblessness and hunger.

Currently, attacks are still being made on these gains. In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down key enforcement provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

A new generation of youth must take up the struggle for the full realization of racial equality and the right to self-determination for African Americans and all oppressed nations in the U.S. Absent a concerted, organized and protracted struggle, every gain won through the Civil Rights Movement will be taken away by the ruling class. □

## AFRICA & THE STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPERIALISM



From Libya to South Africa, to Egypt, South Sudan and beyond, we see endless imperialist exploitation and militarization in Africa. What is the role of the USA and other western countries across Africa? What is the political balance of forces? Why is self-determination crucial for people across Africa? How do we help these struggles to defeat imperialism from within the USA? Come to a discussion where we take up these questions and more



FEATURING: **ABAYOMI AZIKIWE**  
EDITOR OF PAN-AFRICAN NEWS WIRE  
& WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER

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# Chrysler workers must resist 'culture of poverty'

By Martha Grevatt

Chrysler became 100 percent owned by Fiat on Jan. 20, when the trust fund responsible for United Auto Workers retirees' health care sold its 41.5 percent stake in Chrysler to the Italian auto company. In five short years — since the 2009 bankruptcy, when President Barack Obama's Auto Task Force put Fiat in charge of Chrysler — a company that had been a nonentity on the U.S. auto scene has increased its stake in Chrysler fivefold. Now the newly christened "Fiat Chrysler Automobiles" is the seventh-biggest auto manufacturer in the world.

The backdrop to the acquisition was the glitz and glamor of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, where Sergio Marchionne — who was CEO of both Fiat and Chrysler and is now the CEO of FCA — typically gets star treatment. With the conquest of Chrysler fully consummated, media from around the world tailed the man in the black sweater.

Marchionne has, in fact, made out like a bandit in the whole five-year process. First, under the U.S. Treasury loan terms, Fiat was given a 20 percent stake in a restructured Chrysler at no charge. After meeting certain benchmarks, by the end of 2011, the company's no-cost share grew to 35 percent. The share held by the Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association, which funds retiree health care, was correspondingly reduced by 15 percent, but with no compensation to the fund. The U.S., Canadian and province of Ontario governments, which had been given a share in the new Chrysler under the bankruptcy loan terms, all sold their shares — combined, almost a quarter of the company — to Fiat for just about \$2 billion.

Fiat had no trouble coughing up the \$2 billion to gain a majority share of Chrysler. Nevertheless, like any greedy boss, Marchionne cried poverty when Fiat wanted concessions from Italian workers. He threatened to move work to Eastern Europe. Now, Fiat workers are stuck on schedules similar to the "alternative work schedules" that are the bane of U.S. Chrysler workers.

In the latest sale, the agreed-upon price of \$4.35 billion was reached after the VEBA refused a lower offer and a judge turned down Marchionne's request that the court set the price for the stake held by the fund. Fiat is still the winner in this deal, with the company only putting up \$1.75 billion of its own cash. Another \$1.9 billion was generated by a "special disbursement" that Chrysler, not Fiat, provided funds for. The final \$700 million of the \$4.35 billion is to be paid to the trust in four annual installments of \$175 billion out of the Chrysler coffers. The first \$175 billion payment has been made.

Fiat now gains complete access to Chrysler's \$10 billion in cash reserves. The cash infusion comes as the Italian company continues to lose billions in Europe, where the continental auto industry is still in recession. Fiat has only been kept afloat by the billions in profits generated by the labor of Chrysler workers. On Jan. 29, Chrysler announced its profits for 2013: \$2.8 billion after taxes, interest, depreciation and amortization are deducted.

Fiat's bottom line is stronger because of contract concessions, foisted on the work-

ers during the bankruptcy and reinforced in the current contract, which expires in 2015. These concessions, on top of major concessions given in 2007, represent a huge transfer of wealth from labor to capital.

What the media never point out is that the VEBA, a creature of the 2007-2011 contract, was a concession. Under previous contracts, retirees' health care benefits were nearly identical to those of active workers, and General Motors, Ford and Chrysler were contractually responsible for providing them until death. Over the decades, retiree ranks swelled while active workers' numbers were decimated by technology and outsourcing. The companies cried that the high cost of retiree health care — "legacy costs" — put them at a disadvantage compared to plants of their European and Asian competitors. The UAW agreed to set up the VEBA, to which the companies contributed a one-time lump sum and were henceforth relieved of future legacy costs. The problem is that if the VEBA's investments perform poorly, retirees can lose their benefits. Already they have lost most of their dental and vision coverage.

In 2007, Chrysler agreed to pay \$8.8 billion to the VEBA. In 2009, this figure was cut almost in half; in exchange the VEBA was given the Chrysler stock that

Fiat just purchased.

What's in store for the workers?

Chrysler workers and retirees are wondering what Fiat's takeover means for them. Marchionne is a hardliner when it comes to union workers, having made a now famous statement during the bankruptcy proceedings that the UAW had to "get used to a culture of poverty." Yet the UAW leadership has partnered with Fiat/Chrysler — as it has with General Motors and Ford — to keep labor costs "competitive."

The VEBA is an independent fund with only a minority of its directors appointed by the UAW; its board cannot negotiate contract terms. What is therefore peculiar about the purchase from the VEBA is that a memorandum of understanding, an addendum to the UAW-Chrysler collective bargaining agreement, has been attached to these transactions.

The UAW leadership agreed to the memo of understanding in exchange for Fiat's commitment to make the four \$175 million contributions, pledging the workers to "continue to support the industrial operations at Chrysler Group and the further implementation of the Fiat-Chrysler alliance, including to use best efforts to cooperate in the continued roll-out of Fiat-Chrysler 'World Class Manufacturing' programs ... and actively assist in the achievement of the Group's

long-term business plan."

WCM, based on the Toyota production system, is Fiat's version of "Lean Manufacturing." "Lean" really means more vehicles built by fewer workers. One "pillar" of WCM is titled "Autonomous Maintenance." Autonomous maintenance shifts more work onto line workers — routine maintenance tasks traditionally done by skilled trades workers — but with no increase in pay for them. Meanwhile, the highest-paying jobs are cut to the bone. This is just one example of how WCM slashes jobs.

Using technology to cut jobs is not new under capitalism. As Karl Marx observed, "The whole aim of capitalist production is appropriation of the greatest possible amount of surplus-labor, in other words, the realization of the greatest possible amount of immediate labor-time with the given capital."

It is pure insanity for the UAW to agree to help the capitalists cut jobs. The leadership must wake up to the fact that the partnership is only hurting the workers on the shop floor. If they don't wake up, the membership will have to find ways to circumvent this obstructive bureaucracy and build independent rank-and-file resistance to the "culture of poverty."

*Martha Grevatt is a 26-year UAW Chrysler worker.*

## Why the Times is worried

By David Sole

Most progressive activists in the United States probably know about the reactionary, racist Koch brothers. But one has to wonder when a New York Times editorial (online Jan. 25) publicly worries about the financiers of the Tea Party and their growing influence on the political system.

The Times reveals that the "Democrats have been staggered by the \$20 million advertising blitz produced by Americans for Prosperity, the conservative advocacy group organized and financed by the Koch brothers, billionaire industrialists." The Times rues that the Democratic Party cannot "match the resources or the cunning of the Kochs, who are using vast pools of money earned through corporate revenues to build a network unrivaled in complexity and secrecy."

The Koch apparatus includes "a political consulting firm to recruit, train and support like-minded ... candidates, ... a center that provides technology and administrative services to right-wing groups and candidates, ... and a youth advocacy group." In 2012, this machine reportedly spread out \$407 million to influence elections.

Much of this information has long been known. Why, then, is the New York Times now seemingly worried and driven to denounce these "cunning" billionaires?

The Times is the leading organ of the mainstream capitalist class. More than most, they are aware that a tiny percent of the population controls the vast majority of the wealth in the U.S. and around the world. The paper is an unabashed supporter and promoter of the capitalist system, with the imperialism, racism and militarism that prop it up, and the Wall

Street ruling class that pulls all the

### WW COMMENTARY

strings to increase its own wealth.

The Times, however, is concerned that the carefully engineered two (capitalist) party system and the huge governing apparatus are not functioning properly. A crisis is emerging that is showing up in the gridlock in Congress and an open struggle inside the Republican Party.

A significant sector of the capitalist ruling class, led by the Koch brothers, is hell-bent on assaulting the living standards and political rights that workers and poor people have won through struggle since the 1930s. To this aim, they created and finance the Tea Party movement with its agenda of destroying civil rights, women's rights, unions, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, etc. And because some in the Republican Party have a bit more sense, although still racist and reactionary to the core, the Tea Party crowd is now taking aim at them.

### Need to fight both capitalist parties

Thus a fight is going on in the open between the right-wing Republicans and the ultra-right-wing Republicans shaped around the coming midterm elections. At the same time, the U.S. legislative process has ground to a halt. The ultra-right agenda dictates that Congress will not approve an extension of unemployment benefits to those longest out of work. Food stamps, often critical to the survival of many children and whole families, have been slashed. No bill can pass to raise the minimum wage, which is at starvation levels.

It isn't just the Republicans who are responsible for this. The Democratic Party shares the blame with its inaction and pro-capitalist bias. After all, didn't both

parties bail out the banks to the tune of trillions of

dollars? Hasn't President Barack Obama kept the bank bailout going, handing out \$80 billion a month, year after year? Didn't administration officials side with the Emergency Manager in Detroit, who wants to slash retirees' pensions in order to pay these same banks?

But the Times isn't worried about hungry families, workers out of a job, retirees losing pensions or minimum wage poverty. This mouthpiece for finance capital is worried that public approval of Congress and the president are at all-time lows. It is worried that the Koch brothers and their minions are moving too fast and that a powerful fightback movement might erupt at any time. If Congress and the president can't fool people with token actions and sweet talk, if they can't pass bills to provide a few crumbs to those in desperate need, maybe the many millions of victims of capitalism might organize a militant movement in their own defense.

It wasn't so long ago that young workers in Wisconsin seized the state Capitol building, drawing in tens of thousands of supporters against union busting. Then, a totally unexpected Occupy Wall Street movement swept the country, uniting unemployed youth, unionists and other activists exposing the machinations of the notorious 1%.

As the economic crisis for hundreds of millions in the U.S. working class (the "99%") deepens, an organized response to the attacks of the Koch brothers — and of both big parties of the capitalists — will result. That's what has the more intelligent section of the ruling class worried. That's what workers and oppressed people need and must work toward. □

# Victory for airport workers and their union - Challenges remain

By G. Dunkel  
New York

It was a “big win” according to the Service Employees union, Local 32BJ, the union trying to organize airport service workers at the three New Jersey/New York airports: Kennedy, LaGuardia and Newark International. The three airports are owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

On Jan. 20, 32BJ members and supporters marched on LaGuardia Airport, blocked the main access road and sat down. The cops arrested 30 people.

Eight days later, 32BJ received a letter from the PA proposing that Martin Luther King Jr. Day be a paid holiday for airport contract workers; a phased wage increase to \$10.10 an hour; and consultations over the next 90 days among the airlines, contractors and 32BJ to hammer out a three-to-five-year plan, with the goal of delivering fair wages and benefits to airport workers.

The 4,000 airport workers at Newark weren't covered. While the PA presents itself as a single agency, it really consists of

two independent operations — one in New York and the other in New Jersey.

The letter to 32BJ came from PA Executive Director Patrick Foye, who reports to Democratic New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo. But PA Deputy Executive Director Deborah Gramiccioni, who controls Newark Airport, reports to Republican Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey.

Christie, even though weakened by the Bridgegate scandal and reports of his political bullying, still has dreams of running for president. Cuomo, whose presidential aspirations are not so open, still wanted to do his bit in building a Democratic wedge issue. He also sought to placate New York's labor movement, which generally did not support him in his last run for governor.

Gramiccioni released a statement saying that Foye's “directive raises complex labor, business and legal issues that our airlines, their business partners and employees are facing, and we need to consider the significant financial and operational impacts at our airports.”

Speaking plainly, she could have just said that paying workers more will hurt somebody's bottom line and there is a dis-



PHOTO: SEIU 32BJ

pute over whose will be hit. There are airport service workers at Newark who don't get the state minimum wage. How complicated would that be to fix?

The airlines are saying they can't tell their contractors what to do — that it would violate anti-trust laws.

All of this squirming and posturing reflects the growing anger, militancy and organization of airport service workers.

United NY, which played a big role in organizing the Jan. 20 protest, held a conference call on Jan. 31 to honor the workers who participated in that action and to announce the creation of a watchdog committee to guarantee that the PA keeps its promises. It also intends to hold a broader “Low-wage Workers Coalition” meeting on Feb. 14. □

## CAPITALISM AT A DEAD END The 'recovery' and the rich

By Fred Goldstein

Between 2009 and 2012, years of so-called U.S. economic “recovery,” 90 percent of the increase in consumption was accounted for by just 20 percent of earners, according to a recent study. In the same period, 38 percent of the increase in consumption came from just the top 5 percent of earners. This trend is continuing right up to the present.

The study titled “Inequality, the Great Recession, and Slow Recovery,” discussed in the Feb. 3 New York Times, was carried out by Steven Fazzari of Washington University and Barry Cynamon of the Federal Reserve Bank, both in St. Louis.

The recession officially ended in 2009. Since then, spending by the top 5 percent has risen 17 percent, but spending by the bottom 95 percent has risen only 1 percent.

It is a misnomer to call this layer of rich and near-rich “earners.” In fact, most of their consumption fund comes from profits won playing the stock market and from other speculative ventures. The wealth they have accumulated comes at the expense of the workers.

The consumption fund the workers have, on the other hand, consists of wages, salaries or government payments and subsidies. This is an ever-shrinking proportion of the national income.

This distinction is very important. It means that the so-called consumer “recovery” depends on the flow of speculative wealth — speculation in stocks, real estate and other ventures which fuel the income that goes primarily to the rich and their consumption fund. Their spending, therefore, totally depends on the unstable foundation of the financial markets — not on the expansion of capitalist production, which is growing at a snail's pace.

Furthermore, U.S. financial markets depend upon unstable world markets

and the world economy, which is artificially propped up by central banks around the world. This was dramatically illustrated by a sudden drop in the New York Stock Exchange in mid-January after stock market and currency crises in Turkey, Argentina and Indonesia were followed by reports of declining growth rates in China and other countries.

The anemic growth of the U.S. capitalist real economy — the economy that employs workers — is completely insufficient to absorb the growing millions who are unemployed or underemployed or have dropped out of the work force. High technology further decreases the need of the bosses for labor.

So capitalism has very little foundation on which to recover.

### Masses left out of recovery

This study and other recent information have profound implications for understanding the dead-end state of the capitalist system.

Wall Street analysts know about this trend and big business knows about it, too. As one financial mouthpiece, John G. Maxwell of PricewaterhouseCoopers, bluntly told the Times: “Those consumers who have capital like real estate and stocks and are in the top 20 percent are feeling pretty good.”

The Times gives the example that “At General Electric, the increase in demand for high-end dishwashers and refrigerators dwarfs sales growth of mass-market models.” GE's fastest growing brand of refrigerators, the Café line, sells at \$1,700 to \$3,000.

Spending at the upscale restaurant chain Capital Grille, where the average person spends \$71 per meal, has been increasing 5 percent a year for the last three years.

In Manhattan, the exclusive men's

Continued on page 8

## On the picket line

by Sue Davis

### 'Stop Staples: The U.S. mail is not for sale'

Chanting “Stop Staples! The U.S. mail is not for sale!” about 200 members of the American Postal Workers Union, representatives of many other unions, and their supporters protested outside Staples stores in San Francisco and San Jose, Calif., on Jan. 28. Demonstrators oppose a deal between the company and the U.S. Postal Service that has Staples employees staffing “postal” counters in Staples stores. APWU President Mark Dimondstein stated, “We cannot accept USPS plans to replace good-paying union jobs with nonunion, low-wage jobs held by workers who have no accountability for the safety and security of the mail.” With 40 percent of APWU members working in retail operations, the threat to postal jobs and to public post offices is very real, he added. (apwu.org, Jan. 28)

The union is demanding that postal employees be assigned to perform postal work at Staples stores. If Staples and the USPS refuse, the APWU will ask customers to take their business elsewhere.

More than 80 Staples stores in California, central Massachusetts, and in the Pittsburgh and Atlanta regions are participating in the trial program. If Staples and USPS executives consider it successful, the program would be expanded to the chain's 1,600 other stores.

The union is planning a national day of protest in the near future. Stay tuned.

### Federal case threatens home health workers

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the National Right to Work Committee's Harris v. Quinn case on Jan. 21. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees International President Lee Saunders noted that by bringing the case “the NRTW seeks to end collective bargaining for home health care and other independent providers. It would also do away with exclusive representation; severely limit the topics for collective bargaining; and eliminate fair share in the public sector.” The court's decision is expected in June. (afscme57.org, Jan. 22)

The case, filed against the state of Illinois, SEIU Healthcare Illinois & Indiana, Service Employees Local 73 and AFSCME District 31, threatens the right of home care workers to collectively bargain with states to improve working conditions. If the Supreme Court rules against the workers, it would be a major blow to national efforts to unionize home health care workers, the vast majority of whom are low-paid women of color. It would also be a huge attack on the ability of seniors and people with disabilities to get the reliable care they need to remain in their homes.

A number of disability and senior advocacy organizations, along with 20 states and the District of Columbia, filed amicus briefs in support of Illinois and the unions. (seiu.org, Jan. 13)

### Illinois public unions sue to protect pensions

A coalition of public employee unions filed a long-awaited lawsuit Jan. 28, seeking to overturn so-called “pension reform” measures passed late last year. “We Are One Illinois,” which has fought the reform for months, says the resulting decrease in pension benefits violates the state's constitution. Noting that pension theft is unfair, Illinois AFL-CIO President Michael Carrigan said in a statement, “The Legislature and governor shirked their responsibility to uphold the constitution, so we are seeking justice in court to right their wrongs.” (journalstandard.com, Jan. 28) □



## SOLIDARITY DAY 2 IN BOSTON

# Rehire school bus drivers!

*Continued from page 1*

contract, and it's wrong." City Councilor Charles Yancey called for an in-depth council investigation into Veolia's lockout and unfair labor practices: "We are not going to tolerate anyone disrespecting our workers, particularly those workers who transport our precious children every day."

Steelworkers International Staff Representative Andrew Slipp called the drivers' fight "a noble cause" and vowed the international's full support until victory. Dumond Louis, president of Local 8751, laid out the members' ultimatum: "Veolia has a choice, either get it right, or we will get it right for Veolia. We will ask the city to get rid of Veolia."

Paul Kilduf, president of American Postal Workers Local 100 and a leader of the Coalition to Save Grove Hall Post Office, joined Ross Kiely, of Food and Commercial Workers Local 1459, in pledging their organizations' resources and total solidarity to force Veolia to reinstate the fired leaders and defend the drivers' contract.

Nancy Murray, from the Boston Palestinian Solidarity Committee, and Riana Good, from Jewish Voice for Peace, con-

demned Veolia for having run segregated buses in the occupied territories and dumping refuse of illegal Israeli settlers in the West Bank. The crowd cheered when they announced recent victories in the Dump Veolia campaign — from St. Louis to London to Richmond, Calif., to Massachusetts' Jan. 8 decision to cut off Veolia's \$4 billion commuter rail contract.

Tony Yovo, fired by Veolia from his job as a SuperShuttle driver at Baltimore-Washington International airport, outraged and inspired the crowd with greetings from the mostly West African drivers, who are staging militant actions to stop what he called "Veolia's wage slavery." "We'll be there!" was the overwhelming response to his request to bring Boston solidarity to Baltimore's Workers Assembly on Feb. 15.

Former Roxbury City Councilor Chuck Turner reminded the crowd of Local 8751's concrete solidarity with oppressed communities' civil rights and justice struggles going back four decades. Peoples Power Assembly National Organizer Larry Homes captured the significance of the rally, stating, "All of Boston's low-wage workers are inspired by this strug-

gle. This is not just a Boston struggle or a U.S. struggle. We are in a global struggle against capitalism and austerity!"

Rally activists greeted Boston's elder statesperson, Mel King, who waged a Rainbow Coalition campaign and nearly became Boston's first African-American mayor in 1983, with rousing applause when the 85-year-old King surprised the crowd: "I could not not be here today. The school bus drivers have stood with us since 1974."

Darrin Howell, a lead organizer of SEIU 1199's low-wage workers campaign, called the crowd into the street for a march to Veolia's barbed-wire-encircled office.

Bolstered by the marchers' energy, other rally speakers included Johnnie McGinnis, president of the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts, and Sandra MacIntosh, coordinator of the Coalition for Equal Quality Education, both of whom recognized the union's historic role in fighting school segregation in Boston since 1974. They also commended the union's efforts that helped defeat the 2009 resegregation "5-zone plan" and opposed the 2013 Boston Public School's "walk to school" plan, which would deny students of color and poor whites access to the best schools outside their neighborhoods.

Litu Rep described intolerable conditions in U.S. retailers' sweatshop factories in Bangladesh and condemned Veolia's attempts to privatize water supplies there and throughout Asia. Vanessa Matamoros, from Boston Bolivarians, inspired the rally with greetings from Venezuela, where the people have elected a workers' president, Nicolás Maduro, a bus driver and union organizer.

Emily Royce, noting the huge rainbow flag flying from the union's sound stage, read a statement by



Pride at Work, the national AFL-CIO organization for lesbian, gay, bi, trans and queer union members: "We want to let you know that we stand with you in your current struggle and will do whatever we can to make sure that justice prevails for all of you. USW Local 8751 has always been there when the LGBT labor community has needed you and when we still need you."

Other speakers included Moonanum James, co-leader of the United American Indians of New England; Judy Rouse, from UNITE HERE Local 26; and Justin Eivers, from Veterans for Peace. Charles Clemmons, a popular radio commentator on Touch 106 and a strong supporter of the Local 8751, fired up the crowd. Three of the four fired drivers, Francois, Kirschbaum and Murchison, spoke. Gillis provided hours of sound from inside and outside his truck, which had been turned into a people's stage with colorful signs.

Drivers and their supporters danced or marched back to the first rally site to a popular Haitian tune, whose words refer to the violent, U.S.-backed coup against elected liberation-theologist and Fanmi Lavalas candidate President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. They also proclaim the people's determination to "chase out the coco rats for good."

As the three-hour rally was winding down, Boston's newly elected mayor Marty Walsh, a former state representative and head of Boston's building trades unions, who campaigned with vocal support of Boston unions and progressive activists, issued his first statement about the conflict, which read in part: "I urge the parties involved to act quickly in this private matter to ensure that our students have reliable, safe transportation getting to and from school." □

## Pride at Work stands with Boston school bus drivers

*The following statement, issued by Pride at Work AFL-CIO's National Executive Board, was read at the Feb. 1 Solidarity Day Rally for the Boston School Bus Drivers, USW 8751.*

On behalf of the National Executive Board and the members of Pride at Work from all around the country, we want to let you know that we stand with you in your current struggle and will do whatever we can to make sure that justice prevails for all of you. USW Local 8751 has always been there when the LGBT labor community has needed you and when we still need you. And that is why we could not be silent about your current struggle. Just like you've always been there for us during some very difficult struggles, we always knew that we could count on you.

We wish that we could be there standing with each and every one of you today to send the message that "enough is enough" and that we will all continue to fight until justice prevails. While the Board members of Pride at Work cannot be there, some of our local chapter members are, and we want our brothers and sisters to know that we stand with you today, in solidarity, with our voices and our commitment to be with you in every other way possible until you get justice. And we will let the entire LGBT community know what is happening to you.

— Lori Pelletier and Shane Larson, co-presidents, National Executive Board, Pride at Work



Robert Traynham

WW PHOTOS: BRENDA RYAN, G. DUNKEL AND LIZ GREEN

## To fight austerity & oppression

# Moral Mondays emerge as dynamic movement

By Saladin Muhammad

Moral Mondays in North Carolina have a particular history that needs to be understood to recognize its political aims and the dynamics in moving it forward as a mass campaign and human rights social movement.

The critiques of social movements by many progressives too often rely on what's written by the mainstream media without any contact with left and progressive forces, which are active in those social movements. They also tend to analyze social movements as if there is only one permanent, leading political tendency and that other tendencies are merely tailing it and have no internal struggle, strategy and independent initiatives.

Yes. There are many who see the Moral Mondays campaign as mainly a struggle against Republican Party control of the state Legislature, and as part of an electoral strategy to prepare a Democratic Party base for the next state and national elections. This is clearly one of the strong tendencies, but it is not the only tendency active in shaping the direction of the Moral Mondays.

Moral Mondays grew out of a People's Assembly movement known as Historical Thousands on Jones Street

(HKOJ) that was formed in February 2007. The Black masses are the social anchor of the HKOJ, even though its composition and program is broader.

The Rev. William Barber II, North Carolina state president of the NAACP, along with others engaged in struggles for social and economic justice and human rights, mobilized to convene a People's Assembly in February 2007 where a 14-point program was developed, and the HKOJ coalition was formed, which included the 120 branches of the N.C. NAACP and 150 community, labor and social justice organizations.

The HKOJ began holding annual mobilizations to the N.C. General Assembly each February, declaring it the People's House and calling on legislators to implement the People's Assembly program. Rev. Barber's leadership and the HKOJ mobilizations began to radicalize and transform many of the 120 N.C. NAACP branches, and a large and active youth wing was recruited.

The HKOJ and its demands on the General Assembly began when the Democrats held the majority in the state Legislature. A ruling by the International Labor Organization (ILO), an agency of the United Nations, on a complaint filed by the UE-initiated International Worker Justice Campaign, found North Carolina was out of compliance with international conventions and treaties by denying public sector workers collective bargaining rights. Following the ruling, a bill was presented to the N.C. Legislature by an ally in the Democratic Party, calling for the repeal of the ban on collective bargaining rights for public sector workers.

Despite the Democratic Party having a majority, and that support for the bill was shown by organized labor and many community and social movement organizations, the bill never got out of a committee to make it to the floor for a vote by the General Assembly. It is clear to many in the Moral Mondays campaign that the Democratic Party is not in favor of empowering the working class against the



Raleigh, N.C., June 2013

PHOTO: [HTTP://AFLCIONC.ORG/MORAL-MONDAY-8-REVERBERATES-WITH-SOLIDARITY/](http://AFLCIONC.ORG/MORAL-MONDAY-8-REVERBERATES-WITH-SOLIDARITY/)



forces of capital that largely dictate and shape the policies of the state.

### Strategy & tactics

Moral Mondays have mobilized thousands to take away the moral high ground from the religious right — whose so-called “moral agenda” is racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic and divisive — and try to appeal mainly to the white working class. Moral Mondays have injected a liberation theology, creating a popular social ministry, which is radicalizing many faith leaders as part of the fightback against the neofascists that not only have a base in state legislatures and the U.S. Congress, but also a social base in the white working class, and have been growing and mobilizing during the Obama administration.

The next step in the moral argument will be to challenge the capitalist system as Dr. King did. Moral Mondays must embrace the demand for human rights, elevating the demands for social justice above the laws of U.S. imperialism; to demand them places the struggle in an international context.

An important part of the HKOJ strategy that has yet to be implemented is the building of local peoples assemblies in every major city and county to bring together social justice forces as a people's movement infrastructure. This would help to build mass-based power to impact not only on the legislative and local political districts, but also to build organizations and solidarity, which would empower the people working in and relying on the social and economic institutions where state policies are carried out.

The civil disobedience phase that resulted in the arrests of 941 Moral Monday activists was a very important tactic. Some viewed it as replicating a tactic of the Southern Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. King to give it a historical political connection. Others viewed it and engaged in it as a tactic to help raise the level of militancy of the mass struggles, as well as to expose the increasing repression

and role of the state in pushing austerity policies, as it denies democratic and constitutional rights to people's movements.

The trials of about 50 of the Moral Mondays arrestees have helped to expose the repressive role of the state. They showed how the police agencies were secretly coming into the Moral Mondays meetings and conducting surveillance, and how the court's rulings were inconsistent and sought to divide and create confusion among the arrestees.

Moral Mondays have helped to create a statewide climate of mass fightback that can encourage and support local fightbacks led by local organizations and social movements. North Carolina is referred to as ground zero in the mass fightback against the right.

In generalizing that the attacks on the people are morally unconscionable in an effort to reflect the multiclass and multiracial breath of the Moral Mondays mobilizations, it is important not to downplay the racist and depression-level impacts that the cuts and policies are having on working-class Black and other people of color and women; how the media criminalize these disproportionately impacted communities, and why there is greater police brutality, government repression, vigilante violence against and mass incarceration of the people in and from these communities.

The Black Workers For Justice made a call at the “No More Trayvons” rallies it sponsored for people to come to the Moral Monday the following day with signs and banners demanding: “Justice For Trayvon Martin!” and “Stop the War on Black America!” A few hundred signs were distributed and held high by Black people, other people of color and many whites.

### Mobilizing labor's rank & file

On Sept. 21, 2013, the Southern Workers Assembly (SWA) organized a labor fightback conference that brought together North Carolina rank-and-file members, and leaders and organizers of several unions and organizing campaigns to hammer out a “Workers Democracy Campaign” to raise the visibility of labor in the Moral Mondays movement, and to carry out and promote fightback at the workplace, as well as the right to organize.

Following the conference and the agitation by the SWA, we began to see the following rank-and-file actions: Teachers, parents and students held “walk-ins” at the public schools in cities across the state. They wore red T-shirts to protest overcrowded class sizes, low teachers' pay and the state budget cuts in education. Unit-

ed Food and Commercial Workers union members held a flash mob about poor working conditions and the right to organize inside of a Walmart store. The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) continues the struggle and demands that the R.J. Reynolds Corporation bargain with the tobacco workers organized by FLOC. The N.C. Public Service Workers Union-UE 150, held rallies at mental health hospitals and delivered demands to the state's Department of Health and Human Resources headquarters. The fast-food workers campaign to raise the minimum wage to \$15 per hour helped to popularize and energize the growing struggles for workers' democracy and power that are beginning to converge.

This conscious effort to organize and raise the profile, voice and influence of labor is a growing aspect of the Moral Mondays movement. The passage of a resolution at the AFL-CIO National Convention in 2013 on organizing the South was partly influenced by the success of the Moral Mondays mobilizations of thousands in North Carolina, and it recognized its potential to expand south-wide as another civil rights movement.

Another weakness in the Moral Mondays has been the lack of demands on and criticisms of the federal government's complicity with the dictates of big capital and the impact of this on the states. This is due, in part, to not wanting to appear to attack the Obama administration, especially when he is constantly under racist attack from the right. This is also a result of the lack of a popular understanding that Obama is the president of an imperialist state-dominated international economic system, and that the corporate powers demand that he protect this system. Helping to raise consciousness on this is one of the important tasks of the left within this movement.

The Black Left Unity Network (BLUN) must help to spread the Moral Mondays and similar movements to other cities across the country. Part of the BLUN role must be to mobilize radical-thinking people rooted in the mass struggles to join the fight; work to raise the level of thinking of the people being radicalized by the struggle; and work to organize cooperation of the radical forces to help advance the strategy and tactics that can guide the movement on to victory at this juncture.

*Saladin Muhammad is a leader of Black Workers For Justice based in North Carolina and a founding member of the Black Left Unity Network.*

*Read the entire article at [workers.org](http://workers.org)*

# What Obama did and didn't say

By Deirdre Griswold

President Barack Obama's State of the Union address to Congress was an effort to touch the right buttons to retain the allegiance of millions of people in the U.S. who are suffering from the prolonged economic crisis.

In that sense, it was very like the State of the Union speeches made by presidents in the last century in times of economic crisis and hardship for the masses, from Herbert Hoover in 1930 to Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934, Richard Nixon in 1974 and Ronald Reagan in 1982.

Roosevelt said in 1934, four years into the Great Depression, that "we are definitely in the process of recovery." But it took six more years of massive suffering before that happened. And the Depression ended only through the intervention of an even worse disaster — World War II.

A huge expansion of industry began in the late 1930s that was geared to production for war, which had already started in Europe. Within a few years, tens of millions of the formerly unemployed were either in uniform or working in the war industries.

## Economic suffering — but why?

Like most of the other presidents, Obama gave no explanation for why the economy has gotten so bad for so many. That there will be recessions and depressions was taken as a fact of life, like bad weather.

It is interesting to note that of all the presidents mentioned here, it was only Hoover who, in his 1930 address, spoke frankly about "overproduction" being the cause of the Depression then raging, although he did not explain what that meant. More on that later.

It is now more than five years since the housing bubble burst and the financial system turned out to be a house of cards. Millions of workers have begun to despair that things will never get better. They haven't forgotten that the government bailed out the banks, and they're asking, When will it bail me out?

## Five years with no relief for unemployed

Obama's advisers and speech writers know that the polls show a definite shift to the left in this country. A big majority now say that the growing gap between rich and poor is the major problem. They say that wages are far too low.

So Obama's message was largely to

reassure the electoral base of the Democratic Party that his administration has their interests at heart, and will "focus on creating new jobs, not creating new crises." He said he'd make sure that "if you work hard and take responsibility, you can get ahead in America."

What stood out most was his promise to raise the minimum wage for federally contracted workers to \$10.10 an hour. That got a lot of applause from the Democratic side of the aisle. Yet what is remarkable about it is that today, unlike in earlier times, working for the federal government is no guarantee at all that one will have a secure income adequate for raising a family. Ten dollars now buys less than the minimum wage of years past.

Obama made much of the fact that he would do this on his authority as president if Congress did not pass the required legislation. So it turns out that the president does have some authority after all!

However, most of what he half-promised in his talk was hedged with the qualification "working with the Congress." In a political system completely dominated by two capitalist parties that both bow to the dictates of big business, the good-cop, bad-cop routine carried out in Congress pretty much guarantees that few progressive laws ever get passed. The failure can always be blamed on the other party.

Obama said he was offering "a set of concrete, practical proposals to speed up growth, strengthen the middle class and build new ladders of opportunity into the middle class," but that some of them "require congressional action."

It would have been more honest to talk about making it possible for the working class to earn decent wages, since the real middle class — people like farmers and shopkeepers, who are self-employed but don't have many others working for them — have been virtually eliminated by the advent of agribusiness, chain stores and franchisers.

The term "middle class" is generally used in a way to divide the better-paid workers from the lower-paid and the unemployed. It has often had racial overtones.

Putting a bright face on what is to come, Obama said that "companies say they intend to hire more people this year." This remark was typical of the whole approach the president took, which not only urges that current problems be resolved through "bipartisan" compromise, but rests on "cooperation" between workers and their exploiters to iron things out.

## New face, same substance

Nothing more can nor should be expected from a political figure whose career has been embedded in an arena dominated and controlled by the capitalist ruling class.

True, the election of Obama broke the mold of U.S. politics in one very important sense: It ended the era when only white men, preferably rich, could be the symbol, the face of the country. That change in the external appearance of the political machinery was made possible only because, after World War II, there were more than five decades of struggle by oppressed peoples inside the U.S. to break their chains.

Around the world, tremendous battles were also waged for independence and self-determination by colonized peoples. Decolonization dissolved the direct political hold of the oppressors, if not their economic domination. In many ways, the election of a Black president in the U.S. came very late, given the fact that most world political leaders — but not the bankers and corporate heads who hold the economic power! — are today people of color, in keeping with the majority of the world's population.

This symbolic change aroused the hopes of the masses that government was in the hands of someone more like them than the previous heads of state. Obama's style is certainly refreshing in contrast to the cynical Bushes, the cardboard Reagan and the venal Clintons.

Yet it is becoming clear that nothing fundamental has changed. Obama's refrain of business and labor cooperating for a brighter future is calculated to counter the growing demand by workers to take the struggle to the streets — whether to demand better wages, resist givebacks in labor contracts or organize the unorganized.

He is also dodging the big issue: the inability and outright unwillingness of the capitalist bosses to expand employment in this era of high technology. He said in his talk that he was "asking" employers to hire the long-term jobless. He's the president. Why can't he tell them, not merely ask?

We know what their answer will be. That they can't afford it — even though the rich are getting richer at an unprecedented rate.

There was lots to gladden the hearts of the profit makers.

Obama promised to lower taxes on businesses that "keep the jobs here." That's been done already. Companies like

The Gap and Benetton would much rather contract work to garment companies that pay the lowest wages in the poorest countries, like Bangladesh and Vietnam. But lower taxes on businesses? They're all for that.

## High-tech here and there

Obama pledged government support to create more high-tech industry, citing competition with "China and Europe." An entire essay could be written on that alone.

The Chinese government, which still owes most of its success to its mighty socialist revolution that shook the world, has propelled what was an overwhelmingly poor, agricultural country into a model of high-tech planning — without causing any unemployment! In fact, wages in China have risen between five- and nine-fold in the last decade, partly in response to the militant workers' movement there and partly because of a shortage of labor.

In the U.S. and other thoroughly capitalist countries, however, high-tech is intimately connected to the lowering of wages and shedding of workers — all in the interest of profits. That's what is so interesting about Herbert Hoover's mention of "overproduction" in his 1930 State of the Union speech.

Overproduction is a phenomenon of the capitalist economic system — and no other system. In ancient times, surpluses were celebrated. Today they lead to layoffs and shutdowns.

In a socialist society, the ability to produce more than what is needed in one area of the economy will be handled by reallocating human and material resources into areas where they are needed, with all the appropriate retraining that requires.

But of course Obama can't say any of this, and his training precludes him even thinking about it.

The movement to transform society into one where the workers' desires for security and comfort can be fulfilled must break out of the ideological and political framework of both capitalist parties. It must revive the class-struggle traditions of the working class, which today more than ever before encompasses all nationalities, sexes and genders.

Harmony between the classes is a myth. We are in a struggle against the insatiable owners of capital, and we must say that openly and proudly. □



## The 'recovery' and the rich

Continued from page 5

clothing store, Barney's, is expanding into space vacated by Loehmann's, a store where working-class women could buy bargains on fairly high-quality apparel. Loehmann's is in bankruptcy and is closing 39 stores.

Sears and J.C. Penney, both of which sell to workers, are in crisis. Sears is closing its flagship store in Chicago, and Penney will close 33 stores and lay off 2,000 workers this year.

The least expensive Dollar Tree and Family Dollar stores, on the other hand, are thriving as workers' wages go down and unemployment and underemployment go up.

All of this is no news to the mass of the workers and the oppressed, who keep

hearing about the recovery but are experiencing only increased hardship. The near rich, the rich and the super-rich are driving the so-called consumer "recovery." The masses know full well they are left out of the recovery picture.

As the Times noted about the study findings: "Even more striking, the current recovery has been driven almost entirely by the upper crust."

Speaking the mind of an important section of the ruling class who are reading the behind-the-scenes statistics, study author Fazzari noted that for the economic recovery to depend on the small slice of the population who are rich means it depends on the rise and fall of the stock market and/or the real estate market.

Of course, the corporations would

need a vast expansion of the mass market to get anywhere near an economic rebound that would put tens of millions back to work at decent-paying jobs. But this mass market is being destroyed day by day with the impoverishment of the workers, caused by corporate and government austerity, along with the steady introduction of job-killing technology.

As Fazzari concluded about the shaky foundation of the economy, "We might be able to muddle along, but can we recover?"

What he and his fellow Wall Street worriers cannot admit is that the crisis of capitalist overproduction has brought the system to a dead end of slow growth, stagnation and collapse as its only future. For the workers, rebellion and struggle are the only way out.

Goldstein is the author of "Low-Wage Capitalism" and "Capitalism at a Dead End," which has been translated into Spanish as "El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida."



For more information on these books and other writings by the author, Fred Goldstein, go to

[www.LowWageCapitalism.com](http://www.LowWageCapitalism.com)

Available at Amazon and other bookstores.



# Challenges the Monroe Doctrine

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The development of countries and regions is an ongoing dialectical process, just as the peoples' movements throughout the world are. In the Latin American and Caribbean area, the peoples' participation in political life, with a renewed involvement of sectors of the population who had been excluded for decades, has brought about significant positive changes in their governments. In turn, many of these governments for the first time in history are looking toward each other for trade and associations, instead of looking only toward the United States and Europe.

One such association is the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States. A significant development, CELAC has openly challenged the 200-year-old Monroe Doctrine of U.S. intervention in and domination of the region. CELAC is a block of 33 nations that purposely excludes the USA and Canada. Puerto Rico is also absent because of its condition as a colony of the USA.

CELAC's goal is to allow its members to work together for the benefit of their peoples, to strengthen their relationship as a regional block toward creating a more beneficial international presence and to improve trade. Founded in 2011, due to the inspiration of that giant of Bolivarian regional integration, Hugo Chávez, CELAC held its third summit on Jan. 28-29 in Havana.

Heads of state represented 29 of all 33 countries present. Some countries, like Costa Rica, had not sent a head of state to Cuba since 1961, before Cuba was expelled from the Organization of American States, a U.S.-dominated organization. Invited guests were the secretary generals of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, and of the OAS, José Miguel Insulza.

The countries' foreign ministers met a day earlier to draft the "Havana Statement" that would later be debated by the presidents. All CELAC's resolutions must be unanimous. Considering the vast political differences among the governments, which encompass the complete political spectrum from socialist to far-right administrations, reaching a consensus is a phenomenal feat.

At the end of the summit, a 16-page statement with 83 points was issued; it included a significant point: the declaration of the region as a peace zone and a zone free of nuclear weapons. Bearing in mind that U.S. imperialism has many military bases in the region with the possibility of storing nuclear weapons, it will be important to see how this resolution develops.

## Cuba: breaking through isolation

That Cuba hosted the summit was an important international development, though one either ignored or dismissed in the U.S. corporate media. During 2013, Cuba, through its President Raúl Castro, held CELAC's temporary presidency — an office rotated annually among member countries — so that meant Cuba would host the summit.

Latin American and Caribbean countries have unanimously condemned the U.S. blockade of Cuba and Cuba's forced exclusion from U.S.-dominated international forums such as the OAS. Thus the presence of this year's summit and 29 heads of state in Cuba was a blow to U.S. imperialism.

Many sources reported that the State Department tried but failed to convince several countries to meet with the Cuban right-wing opposition. Instead, many met with Cuban officials. Ban Ki Moon, for example, met with Mariela Castro, head of the National Center for Sexual Education, and praised Cuba's work on

behalf of ending violence against women.

Many CELAC members have embraced Cuba and consistently shown solidarity with the revolutionary nation, while defying U.S. policies aimed at isolating Cuba.

A major development toward breaking the U.S. blockade is Brazil's financing and construction of improvements to Cuba's Port of Mariel, 28 miles west of Havana. Brazilian President Dilma Rouseff and Cuban President Raúl Castro inaugurated the first phase of the project on Jan. 27.

Brazil has been increasing trade with Cuba, setting up joint projects in sugar production and in the biopharmaceutical sector. Cuba, in turn, provides Brazil with 5,000 physicians. Brazil is a thoroughly capitalist country with a powerful business sector. Nevertheless, the Mariel "Megaport" seems to be economically advantageous for both countries. It will also help Cuba in its effort to expand interregional and international trade, so damaged by the criminal U.S. blockade.

Brazil's government banks are providing about \$1 billion to finance the building of the Port of Mariel's necessary infrastructure to accommodate the new post-Panamax super-container ships that the current Havana port is unable to receive. The project will be part of a "Special Zone for Mariel Development" that includes improvements to sea and land transport. Owned by the Cuban Almacenes Universales S.A., the port will be administered by the International Singapore Port Authority, the major port operator in the world.

## Puerto Rico's independence: a task for the CELAC

Another significant development was the debate about Puerto Rico's independence. In response to Puerto Rican independence activists' plea to include the island in CELAC — the music group Calle

13 brought a request to the prior summit — Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro vowed to make it possible for Puerto Rico to have a voice in CELAC. Maduro even hosted a magnificent "Forum for a Free and Independent Puerto Rico" on Jan. 22 in Caracas, where he invited and brought several Puerto Rican independence activists from the island. The event was transmitted live through Telesur.

Since Puerto Rico is not yet a sovereign country, Boricua activists attended the summit as observers. The final Havana Declaration included three points about Puerto Rico, making the task of ending the island's colonial status a priority for CELAC. The points reaffirmed the Latin American and Caribbean character of the island; pledged to raise its independence at international forums, including the U.N. Decolonization Sessions next summer in New York; and declared the CELAC region a zone free of colonialism.

Four countries — Cuba, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Trinidad and Tobago — were assigned the task of following-up the necessary steps to make the independence of Puerto Rico a reality.

The importance that CELAC's actions have for the independence movement in Puerto Rico can't be underscored enough. This movement has been condemned for decades by the repressive policies of the United States. The island is in a particularly difficult situation now due to the serious economic crisis, and pro-independence activists will benefit greatly from solidarity from the international community.

Among other significant outcomes of the summit were establishing a China-CELAC forum to strengthen the region's trade with that Asian country and support for peace negotiations between the FARC-EP (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army) and the Colombian government. □

# U.S./EU imperialists aim to seize Ukraine

By John Catalinotto

U.S. and European Union imperialism are deep in Ukraine, backing one side of the internal power struggle, with the goal of making this former Soviet republic a colonial appendage of the West, while handing a setback to Russia.

Imperialist government representatives from the U.S., the EU and Germany have stood with "opposition" protesters in capital city Kiev against the Ukrainian government, even with pro-fascist opposition party leaders who fill their hateful rhetoric with anti-Russian, anti-gay and anti-Jewish diatribes.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier met in Berlin on Jan. 31 and had the arrogance to dictate to the Ukrainian government their terms for a settlement with the opposition.

## No benefit for workers in imperialist conquest

U.S. and Western European workers share no interest with the imperialist ruling class in the conquest of Ukraine. The workers' best interests, and of course the interests of the Ukrainian workers, would

be best served by keeping NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and U.S. and European bankers out of Ukraine.

It's important to state that at the beginning of this article, because the imperialist politicians and corporate media have distorted the events in Ukraine beyond recognition — just as they did earlier with Syria, Libya and other parts of the world on the imperialist reconquer list.

What is happening in Ukraine is far from a struggle between a "democratic" pro-EU opposition and an "autocratic" pro-Russian regime. The pro-EU parties in Ukraine grew out of the 2004 "Orange Revolution" and are enemies of both the Ukrainian working class and of Ukrainian sovereignty.

On the other hand, the government party, which won the last elections in 2010 and put President Viktor Yanukovich in office, has a social and economic program hardly different from the main opposition parties.

Yanukovich's government supports all the privatization of the Ukrainian economy that has continued since the end of the USSR. He was poised to accept an agreement with the EU until he about-faced on Nov. 21. He even ordered

a Ukrainian frigate to participate in EU-led maneuvers known as Operation Atalanta to combat "piracy" off Somalia.

As of Feb. 3, Yanukovich had offered to discuss a coalition government with the opposition under the condition that they stop the demonstrations.

The secretariat of European communist parties called the "Initiative," meeting in Brussels on Jan. 27, made its own assessment of the events from a working-class point of view: "The recent bloody developments in the Ukraine highlight the intervention of the USA-EU in the internal affairs of this country, the confrontation between sections of capital with the involvement of imperialist powers that are fighting each other over who will prevail in a relentless competition over markets and energy resources. There is an attempt to entangle the people of the Ukraine on the one or the other side of this confrontation.

"We call on the workers of Ukraine to organize their own independent struggle according to their interests for socialism and not according to which imperialist the one or the other section of the plutocracy of their country chooses." (inter-kke.gr)

## End of USSR a disaster for Ukraine

Ukraine was the second most economically developed republic during the existence of the Soviet Union, producing more than 25 percent of its agricultural goods. It was also the second most populous republic, with 51 million people in 1991.

Since then the economic collapse brought about by the reintroduction of capitalism — production dropped to 40 percent of the 1991 level by 1999 — impelled 6 million workers to migrate to the EU and Russia and prompted a drop in the birth rate and an increase in the death rate. Now the population is less than 45 million.

About 25 percent of the Ukrainian people live in poverty. Many are dependent on remittances from the 2 million young Ukrainian workers doing construction in Western Europe or farming in Portugal, Spain and Ireland — work that fails to reward them for the education most had at home. Even more Ukrainian migrants are working in Russia, but with lower wages than in the West. Total remittances provide 25 percent of Ukraine's gross domestic product.

Both the government and the main

*Continued on page 11*

# More on the wealth gap

An editorial in our last issue explained how a simple statistic arrived at in an Oxfam study on wealth illuminates the immense problem facing humanity. The combined wealth of the world's richest 85 individuals now equals that of the poorest half of the human race — 3.5 billion people.

This figure is so staggering that even the economists who work for this capitalist system are worried. The rich really don't want to give up any of their wealth. But they don't want their system to collapse either. And they are afraid of that happening.

Look at it this way. The wealth in the hands of these 85 people equals \$1.7 trillion, according to Oxfam. They can't begin to spend it all, not even on the most ridiculously lavish things. Most of it is invested in production and commerce that is increasingly efficient, meaning fewer workers are hired to produce more goods and services.

Suppose these 85 billionaires did manage to each spend \$1 billion each year — an amount that is 20,000 times what the median U.S. household earns in a year.

That would come to \$85 billion, which is only 5 percent of their collective wealth of \$1.7 trillion. The other 95 percent would be sitting there, most of it in income-producing property that means they'll be even richer next year — unless the system crashes.

The 3.5 billion people at the bottom of the pile live from day to day. If they could get their hands on even a few hundred dollars, they would spend it

very quickly because they are in need of everything — food, clothing, adequate housing, transportation, medical care and so on. But they don't have it, so they can't buy much of anything.

Capitalist economists know that this irrational situation can't go on forever. If most of the wealth is bottled up in the hands of a few while the majority can't buy more than the barest essentials, then the markets will dry up and the economy sooner or later will grind to a halt.

This is why even financial analysts warn about the growing wealth gap. But the investors are too focused on their bottom line — profits — to listen.

We have to fight hard for higher wages and programs that relieve poverty and unemployment. But as long as capitalism remains in place, any money the workers get will just wind up in the hands of the rich once again, who both exploit our labor and make a profit selling us whatever we buy. The trend toward the rich getting richer and the poor poorer is irreversible — as long as there is capitalism.

This is an argument for seeing beyond capitalism, beyond private property and exploitation, for understanding that every workers' struggle, whether for a higher wage, a pension or an unemployment check, can be a stepping stone to the much bigger struggle: to liberate the tremendous productive wealth that the workers have built and apply it to solving the monumental problems of poverty, unemployment, oppression and the degradation of the environment. □

## Support WW:

# Fighting racism is our top priority

February is Black History Month, when you'll read special articles in Workers World that chronicle the many struggles and sacrifices of enslaved Africans, and the generations that followed them, to throw off their chains in this country.

But Workers World doesn't just commemorate Black history and the struggle to end institutionalized racism in the U.S. one month a year. We write about it all year long.

We did so in December, when we wrote about the legacy of Nelson Mandela and reviewed the arduous struggle to end apartheid in South Africa. During the January observation of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, we connected the current struggle of low-wage workers to win raises and union recognition to that of the Memphis sanitation workers who, with Dr. King's help, were striving to meet similar goals in 1968.

Just as we print Mumia Abu-Jamal's commentaries from prison that are laden with history, we also cover history

in the making, like the current struggle to free Clarence Moses-El, an innocent Black man who has been incarcerated in Colorado since 1987 for a crime he did not commit. And the struggle to free Detroit, the largest African-American-majority city in the U.S., from the tyranny of the banks and the auto conglomerates.

Weaving Black history into the pages of WW every month reveals another purpose. It's a constant reminder of the principle of self-determination: that oppressed people have the right to fight to end all forms of inequality and injustice — by any means necessary.

If you appreciate all the Black history you read about in these pages every month, it's time to join the Workers World Supporter Program. We established it in 1977 so readers could help us publish anti-racist, working-class truth and build the many campaigns needed to make qualitative, revolutionary change.

You can become a member of the Supporter Program by contributing a

## A Brief History of 'Marriage'

Part 30

# Final thoughts

By Bob McCubbin

This series has sought to shed a historical materialist spotlight on the human social/sexual relationship usually referred to as marriage. As they do with so many other social phenomena of importance to humanity, most bourgeois intellectuals doggedly avoid subjecting the institutions of social/sexual relations to historical analysis. In so doing, in their role as servitors of the dominant class, they shamelessly deprive the workers and oppressed of an essential tool for their liberation: the knowledge of the impermanence and transformation of all social phenomena.

It could be considered an unfortunate error that we used the word "brief" in the title of this series, an effort that has ended up amounting to 30 installments. That word choice represented our initial, rough estimation of the typographical space that would be needed to elaborate for the Workers World newspaper readership the prehistory and history of human social/sexual relations as gleaned from both classic and contemporary Marxist writers and other scientific sources.

However, it seemed important as the work progressed to at least call attention to, partially summarize, and partially evaluate the mountain of archeological, anthropological, zoological, ethnographic, historical and sociological material bolstering the view first laid out by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, material that has only become available in the many decades since their monumental achievements. The result has been a series warranting a title that more accurately reflects its length or, more significantly, its approach. We modestly suggest "A Marxist View of the Institution of 'Marriage.'" In the course of the series, refer-

ence has been made to and quotations have been extracted from quite a large number of distinct sources. Basic bibliographic information has been provided for those readers so inclined to pursue further the subjects treated in these materials.

Most importantly, since the series rests both ideologically and substantively on the writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and, in particular, on Engels' "Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," it hopefully need not be stressed that the work of these pioneering communist revolutionaries continues — a century and a half later — to constitute supremely relevant guides to human thought and struggle in the present epoch of dead-end capitalism.

We Marxist revolutionaries are united in our belief that the destructive contradictions imposed on human society, including those that have distorted social/sexual relations ever since the imposition of private property, can only be resolved by its elimination.

In the words of Workers World Party Secretariat member Fred Goldstein in the preface to his recent book, "Capitalism at a Dead End": "There needs to be a serious conversation within the movement about what to replace the present system with. It is the thesis of this work that capitalism has reached a dead end. It is bringing humanity and the environment down. It must be abolished. The starting point for that conversation should be that the new society must be free of class exploitation; must be free of national, sexual and gender oppression; must put an end to war; must be free from all forms of domination and have respect for the planet. Above all, it must use the wealth of society to benefit all of society." (New York: World View Forum, 2012, p. vii) □

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# Syria: U.S. imperialism and diplomacy

By Gene Clancy

The much ballyhooed Geneva II peace talks, which were supposed to bring about peace in Syria, ended on Jan. 31 with no agreement for one very good reason: The U.S. had no intention of seeking any real peace agreement, but was intent on using the forum as a background for propaganda and as a way to deceive and weaken the Syrian government.

No concessions were offered by the imperialists and their allies, while they continued to arm the “rebel” forces both directly and indirectly, through such countries as Saudi Arabia. Indeed, some analysts believe that the U.S. is trying to achieve through diplomacy what it is failing to do on the battlefield.

For example, Patrick Cockburn, writing in the Jan. 31 Independent (Britain), notes, “For negotiations to have any hope of success they must reflect the balance of power on the ground in Syria. ... [Syrian] forces hold 13 out of 14 Syrian provincial capitals and are slowly retaking districts in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo captured by rebels in 2012.”

A strong indication of the lack of seriousness for real peace can be ascertained by looking at a list of the attendees, which included more than 40 countries and organizations from around the world, many of them far removed from the Middle East. Included were all the NATO countries and other stalwart U.S. allies, such as Japan and Australia, and just about every enemy of the Syrian government that could be found.

Pointedly not included was one of Syria’s allies, Iran, though it was at first invited to the talks by the United Nations and then humiliatingly disinvited because of objections from the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. The Jan. 20 New York Times called this move a “fitting prelude” to the conference.

Another indication of the imperialists’ deception can be seen in the tactics used to get the Syrians, as well as China and the Russian Federation, to attend the conference in the first place. The U.S. and others stressed that there were no “preconditions” to the talks, including the role of President Bashar al-Assad

in any future government of Syria.

## Syria demands apology from Kerry

The talks had scarcely begun when Secretary of State John Kerry loudly and insultingly attacked Assad, stating in the Jan. 22 Huffington Post that “there is no way that Syrian President Bashar Assad can be part of a transitional government.”

This was part of a weeklong cacophony of propaganda from the Western media attacking the Syrian regime, complete with pictures of victims and statistics of the civil war, for which total responsibility was unjustly attributed to the Syrian government.

While the propaganda exploited the plight of people in the Old City of Homs, which was being besieged by the government, what was left unreported, according to the Independent, was the fact that the rebels are conducting their own siege of 45,000 people in the towns of Zahraa and Nubl, outside Aleppo. In fact, during the talks relief was sent to Homs, and all who wanted to were permitted to leave.

According to the Feb. 1 Alalam, Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallem lashed back, calling on the U.S. to issue an apology for Kerry’s remarks. He also slammed the hypocrisy of the “unjust” international community that imposes sanctions on a war-torn country.

“It is an ‘international community’ that adopts double standards policy, and is mostly dominated by the U.S. ... They dominate the U.N. Security Council and the U.N.”

Muallem questioned how the West could be involved in the Geneva talks and at the same time “impose sanctions on the Syrian people and children?”

Alalam on Feb. 2 reported that Muallem asked European Union Foreign Policy Chief Catherine Ashton to explain how the West can impose a ban on food products, yet at the same time discuss the issue of humanitarian aid shipments.

Meanwhile, more than 200 pro-Syrian demonstrators marched outside the building where the talks were held. Similar demonstrations have occurred around the world in opposition to the unjust U.S. intervention in Syria. □

# South African platinum strike continues

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Feb. 3 — A government mediation team is seeking to resolve the ongoing strike in the platinum industry in the Northwest Province of South Africa. Talks were suspended until Feb. 4 as the world’s leading platinum mine producers remain stifled by strike activity which began Jan. 23.

This strike involves production at the world’s three largest platinum producers — Anglo American Platinum, Impala Platinum Holdings Ltd. and Lonmin PLC. The labor action is reportedly costing the owners \$18 million a day.

Mine owners have threatened to lay off workers if the strike does not come to an end based on the bosses’ terms. Since 2012, there has been a series of strikes and incidents of violence in the platinum mines around Rustenburg, the center of the industry.

The Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration has put forward

a plan to end the strike, but details have not been made public. “The mediated proposal or a variation thereof could form the basis of a final settlement in this dispute,” Nerine Kahn, the director of CCMA, said in an official statement quoted in the Feb. 2 Reuters.

This work stoppage was called by the Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union, which is a breakaway group from the National Mineworkers Union of South Africa (NUM), an affiliate of the Congress of South African Trade Unions. AMCU has taken away tens of thousands of workers from the NUM, particularly in the so-called platinum belt in the Northwest Province.

The overall politics of AMCU are not clear. Some have suggested their opposition to NUM, COSATU and the ruling African National Congress stems from their anti-communist beliefs.

## More layoffs threatened

As a result of the continuing turmoil in

the Northwest mining region, company executives are escalating their previous threats to downsize the workforce. The strike has spread, with the intervention of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the largest union within COSATU, which downed its tools on Feb. 3.

NUMSA has generated controversy in recent months with its criticism of the current leadership of COSATU, going so far as to say that they will not support the ANC in the upcoming elections in April or May. NUMSA is striking against the Anglo American Platinum (Amplats), whose headquarters is now listed in Britain.

According to Bloomberg on Feb. 3, “Anglo American Platinum Ltd. (AMS) will cut as many as 1,400 jobs as a strike that has shrunk output at the biggest producer of the metal by half headed for a third week. The cuts planned for this year follow a loss of 7,438 jobs in 2013 as the Anglo American Plc (AAL) unit known as Amplats merged five mines at its Rusten-

burg complex into three.”

Anglo American CEO Chris Griffith said that between 1,200 and 1,400 workers will be downsized during 2014. “By the end of this year we expect that job will be complete. If there are vacancies across the group, we will be able to reemploy those people.”

AMCU is demanding that monthly wages be doubled for their workers to 12,500 rand (approximately \$1,108 U.S.). The company says that it cannot afford that and offered the workers a raise of 9 percent, which AMCU rejected.

Despite the bosses’ claims of potential financial ruin in light of persistent labor actions, Bloomberg reported that Griffith stated, “Amplats today posted a return to full-year profit helped by rising sales and a slide in the value of the South African rand. It’s on course to achieve a targeted 3.8 billion rand of savings within three years through the Rustenburg restructuring after achieving 1.9 billion rand of savings last year.” □

# U.S./EU imperialists aim to seize Ukraine

Continued from page 9

opposition parties leading the protests in Kiev’s central square represent the interests of Ukraine’s new ruling class. This group of plutocrats managed to seize the socially owned property of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic after 1991. Some of these ruling-class figures and their interests are oriented to the EU and the U.S.; some have interests closer to their counterparts in capitalist Russia.

Contrary to the arguments of the pro-EU groupings, the deal that Yanukovich “postponed” in late November was no boon for Ukraine’s people. It would open Ukraine to EU goods, shutting down much of local production. And it would not give Ukraine EU membership, which would allow Ukrainian workers to work freely in the West. The deal would offer a few loans but insist on the austerity that has suffo-

cated workers in Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland and even more prosperous EU countries.

In short, it would be no more a benefit for Ukraine’s people than the North American Free Trade Agreement was to the Mexican people. Yanukovich was offered a better deal by now-capitalist Russia in December and he accepted it. As of Feb. 3, however, the Russian government has held up the offer, citing the instability in Kiev.

Pro-West groupings unleashed a series of protest demonstrations in Kiev starting Nov. 21. They escalated the protests in January to seizures of government buildings and confrontations between demonstrators armed with Molotov cocktails and the police.

The same Western leaders and media that attack the Kiev government for repressing these armed protests cheered on

police who cleared public squares of the nonviolent Occupy Wall Street movement in the U.S., housing sit-ins in Germany and 15M occupations in Spain.

Western politicians, including U.S. Republican Senator John McCain and Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland, EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and then German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle — representing Chancellor Angela Merkel — all joined the demonstrations at various times. Hundreds of nongovernmental organizations, financed by these imperialists, have been active in the opposition, including the infamous Otpor — first financed by the West to overthrow the Slobodan Milosevic government in Yugoslavia. Otpor later gave advice to Venezuelan anti-Hugo-Chávez right-wingers, among others.

None of the diplomats made the effort to distance themselves from the leader of

the pro-fascist Svoboda Party, Oleg Tiagnibok, and the other groupings that lined up with Nazi imperialism in World War II and that aided genocide in German-occupied Ukraine. These fascists, who are allies of ultra-right European groups like the National Front in France, have played an ever-more-active role in the protests, fighting with police, attacking leftists and, in one instance, toppling a statue of Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin.

Anyone in solidarity with Ukraine’s working class would be dismayed by a victory for the Western imperialists and their boost for the fascists. But leaving the current government in power is only a temporary pause in a protracted crisis. Only a mobilized working class independent of both the government and the opposition, and oriented toward socialism, can bring about a successful resolution to this crisis. □

## El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida

# Porqué \$1,3 millones que GM invierte, crean sólo un puesto de trabajo

Por Fred Goldstein

El 13 de diciembre, la General Motors anunció con gran fanfarria que iba a invertir \$1,3 mil millones de dólares, en su mayoría en Flint, Michigan, para “crear o preservar” 1.000 puestos de trabajo. La compañía no dijo cuántos de los puestos de trabajo se conservarían —cuántas trabajadoras/es se salvarían de los despidos— y cuántos puestos serían nuevos.

### EDITORIAL WW/MO

## Parásitos del planeta

No debería sorprender a ningún trabajador/a que los ricos se están haciendo más ricos, mientras que la mayoría de las personas en todo el mundo están cada vez más pobres. Sin embargo, las últimas estadísticas sobre la concentración mundial de la riqueza en manos de unos pocos no dejan de impresionar.

Un informe titulado “Working for the Few” (Trabajando para pocos), emitido el 20 de enero por Oxfam, una organización en contra de la pobreza con sede en Bretaña, declara que las 85 personas más ricas del mundo poseen un total de 1,7 billones de dólares, lo que equivale a la riqueza acumulada por las 3,5 mil millones de personas más pobres del mundo — la mitad de la población mundial. Además, casi la mitad de la riqueza del planeta — la gigantesca cifra de \$110 billones dólares — es propiedad del 1% más rico.

Artículos en este periódico han declarado que los súper ricos se beneficiaron de la reciente crisis financiera mundial, mientras que las masas de los pueblos del mundo se empobrecieron. Oxfam también toma nota de este hecho y señala que los multimillonarios del mundo obtuvieron el 95 por ciento del crecimiento después de la crisis, una tendencia que dice es especialmente cierta en los Estados Unidos. Workers World/Mundo Obrero ha tomado nota de las gigantescas ganancias corporativas captadas durante “la recuperación sin empleo” en los Estados Unidos y el empobrecimiento de la clase obrera aquí, ya que millones siguen sin empleo o subempleados/as y necesitan cupones de alimentos y otros beneficios sociales para sobrevivir.

¿Qué pueden hacer las/os activistas políticos mientras luchan junto a las/os trabajadoras/es y oprimidos en nuestras ciudades en este período? Nos unimos a todas/os quienes exijan impuestos corporativos más altos, más programas del gobierno incluyendo seguro por desempleo y cupones de alimentos, salarios más altos, derechos de negociación colectiva y otros derechos económicos y beneficios sociales para la mayoría del pueblo.

Sin embargo, decimos que la lucha tiene que ir más allá y golpear con fuerza al sistema capitalista. La desigualdad económica y social es inherente a este

Dándole a GM un margen de confianza, vamos a decir que todos los 1.000 son puestos de trabajo nuevos. Si calculamos, encontraremos que cada trabajo agregado toma una inversión de \$1,3 millones. Si sólo resultaran 500 puestos nuevos, eso requeriría una inversión de \$2,6 millones por cada uno.

De hecho, la GM dice que ha invertido \$10.1 mil millones en operaciones desde que salió de la bancarrota en el 2009 y

sistema, con raíces en la propiedad privada de los medios de producción.

La explotación de la clase trabajadora multinacional por los patronos también es intrínseca al capitalismo. Como la meta de toda producción es conseguir ganancias y llenar los bolsillos de los patronos, a las/os trabajadoras/es se les paga solo una fracción del valor que producen. La labor de la clase trabajadora ha creado toda la riqueza de los capitalistas. Los propietarios no han creado nada.

Mientras los capitalistas acumulan más riqueza a partir de la explotación y súper explotación de su fuerza de trabajo, reinvierten el dinero, compran empresas y se expanden, siempre en busca de aumentar sus riquezas sobre las espaldas de quienes lo producen todo.

De hecho, en su feroz guerra contra la clase trabajadora aquí y en todo el mundo, los patronos de las empresas están tratando de destruir los sindicatos y reducir los salarios, mientras luchan contra la subida del sueldo mínimo, buscando siempre la mano de obra más barata por el mundo para maximizar las ganancias y aumentar aún más su riqueza.

No importa cuánta riqueza acumule la clase capitalista, la riqueza no se filtrará a las/os trabajadoras/es. De hecho, como lo demuestra el estudio de la Oxfam, la fenomenal riqueza concentrada en manos de unos pocos, no ha ayudado a la mayoría de los pueblos del mundo. Aún más, han perdido terreno. El desempleo, el hambre, la falta de vivienda y otros indicadores inhumanos del capitalismo están en aumento por todo el mundo.

WW/MO quiere deshacerse de este sistema de explotación. Decimos que es la hora de levantar el nivel de la lucha y apuntar contra el capitalismo con el fin de acabar con la desigualdad, la injusticia, la opresión y el empobrecimiento para siempre.

Solo el socialismo puede llevar a la sociedad hacia adelante, cuando los medios de producción sean transferidos desde la propiedad de unos pocos a las manos colectivas de la clase trabajadora multinacional. Entonces, todos los frutos de nuestro trabajo se utilizarían para el bien de la humanidad — para la vivienda, el cuidado de salud, la educación, la alimentación nutritiva y todo lo demás. □

que esto ha “creado o mantenido” 26.500 puestos de trabajo — o \$380.000 por puesto de trabajo.

A este ritmo de contratación, los cientos de miles de trabajadoras/es de la industria automotriz y otras/os trabajadoras/es despedidos durante la crisis económica en Michigan tienen poco que celebrar. La masa de trabajadoras/es de Detroit, que se enfrentan a la destrucción de su ciudad y a severas tasas de pobreza y desempleo, puede tener poco consuelo con el anuncio de los multimillonarios de la GM que afirman que “se han creado o conservado” 1.000 puestos de trabajo.

Con el gobernador Rick “derecho a trabajar por menos” Snyder en la tarima junto a funcionarios del sindicato de Trabajadoras Automotrices Unidos (UAW), la GM anunció que invertiría \$600 millones en un nuevo taller de pintura en la planta de montaje de Flint. También destinó \$493 millones para una nueva transmisión de 10 velocidades en la planta de Romulus Powertrain. Y también \$121 millones para un nuevo “centro de optimización de la logística” en la planta de Detroit-Hamtramck.

Los talleres de pintura en la industria automotriz están altamente automatizados. La GM sin duda, va a poner el equipo más moderno en la planta de transmisión. Y el centro de optimización de la logística se centra en la reducción de puestos de trabajo en la cadena de suministro. Esto en cuanto a la creación de empleos.

Esta situación con la GM ilustra que la nueva era de la alta tecnología ha hecho que la inversión sea tan costosa que la creación de nuevos puestos de trabajo se ha convertido en una tarea monumentalmente difícil bajo el sistema de ganancias capitalista.

### Desempleo masivo irreversible

Esto es algo que Karl Marx señaló hace más de 150 años, cuando analizó el sistema capitalista y sus leyes de desarrollo. Marx explicó que a medida que se desarrolla el sistema capitalista, la lucha por ganancias entre los capitalistas les hace competir unos contra otros. En esta competencia, cada uno trata de introducir una tecnología que reduce el número de trabajadoras/es para producir más productos y servicios en menos tiempo.

Esta ley ha sido confirmada por los acontecimientos de los últimos 60 años. La revista Business Week Bloomberg, la voz de los multimillonarios, publicó un artículo en su edición del 27 de enero crudamente titulado “Los empleos de fábrica se han ido. Sobrepónganse”. El artículo mostró que la producción manufacturera en los EE.UU. se ha más que triplicado desde 1953. En ese tiempo había 16 millones de trabajadores de manufactura. En el 2012, sólo había 12 millones. Así que la producción aumentó en un 300 por ciento mientras que el empleo se redujo en un 25 por ciento. La productividad en la fabricación o la producción por trabajador por hora, subió un 189 por ciento sólo entre 1980 y 2012.

La carrera científico-tecnológica

de los patronos — que obliga a un menor número de trabajadoras/es a ser más productivos y aumenta la producción para que la empresa pueda captar más parte del mercado de sus rivales — ha llegado a la etapa en la que el desempleo masivo y el subempleo permanente se han hecho irreversibles.

Lo que sucede en la GM sucede en toda la industria automotriz, en la industria manufacturera y en toda la economía capitalista en general.

Tanto la GM, como la Ford, la Chrysler, la General Electric, Caterpillar, IBM, Walmart, McDonald's y otros gigantes corporativos que dominan el sistema, no pueden invertir lo suficiente para emplear a las decenas de millones de desempleadas/os y subempleadas/os.

Esta es la era del capitalismo de bajos salarios. Los bajos salarios se están imponiendo a través de todo el sistema capitalista. Las trabajadoras/es de las compañías de comida chatarra, de las gigantescas tiendas por departamentos, de los aeropuertos, las/os conserjes, trabajadoras/es de hogares de la tercera edad, del cuidado de salud en el hogar, guardias de seguridad y decenas de millones de otras/os, trabajan por un salario de supervivencia. Incluso las/os nuevos trabajadores que serán contratados en la GM, van a ganar \$13,50 ó \$14,50 por hora — menos de \$30.000 al año.

Las necesidades del capital son obtener ganancias. Los patronos van a contratar solo la cantidad suficiente de trabajadoras/es es para satisfacer sus necesidades de ganancia. El capital es tan productivo ahora que si se ampliara su producción, rápidamente crearía muchos más bienes que lo que las masas de la clase obrera podrían comprar. Así que los patronos retienen la inversión, lo que significa abstenerse en la contratación de trabajadoras/es o recurrir al despido de trabajadoras/es donde se vea que eso va a “crear o conservar” sus ganancias.

En su obra fundamental “El trabajo asalariado y el capital”, Marx escribió acerca de este proceso de usar la tecnología en contra de las/os trabajadoras/es en la guerra por ganancias.

“Esta guerra tiene la particularidad de que sus batallas se ganan menos por el reclutamiento que por el despido del ejército laboral. Los generales, los capitalistas, compiten entre sí en cuanto a quién puede licenciar la mayor cantidad de soldados de la industria”.

Así que cuando los patronos tratan de presumir sobre “la creación o la preservación” de unos pocos puestos de trabajo aquí o allá, las/os trabajadoras/es deben recordarse de la cantidad de puestos de trabajo que los patronos han destruido y

cuántas/os trabajadoras/es han sido sumidas a la pobreza y al empleo de bajos salarios que les consignan a una vida de sufrimiento e inseguridad permanente.

Goldstein es el autor del libro, “El capitalismo en un callejón sin salida”.

