

Dems cave to right in debt-ceiling clash

Workers must fight for jobs, human needs

By Fred Goldstein

The resolution of the debt-ceiling crisis shows the growing strength of the right wing in capitalist politics and the bankruptcy of President Barack Obama and the Democratic Party leadership. It also guarantees that the economic crisis of the workers and the people in general will get worse at a time when capitalism is sliding toward a new crisis.

With a jobs crisis raging and the rich piling up more wealth than ever, the settlement projects cutting up to \$2.4 trillion in government spending over the next 10 years, yet does not take one more penny from the millionaires and billionaires in taxes.

The announced highlights of the complicated, two-stage deal are very vague:

- \$917 billion of cuts in government spending over 10 years, beginning Oct. 1. What those cuts are has not been revealed, except for reports that the Pentagon will be cut. But immediate Pentagon cuts will be minimal. What is not reported is that the Pentagon was already planning \$400 billion in cuts.

- Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare are temporarily exempted from this phase of the cuts.
- There are no increases in taxes on the rich and no closing of corporate or individual tax loopholes.
- In return, the debt ceiling will be raised by \$900 billion — \$400 billion now and \$500 billion in September.
- By Nov. 23 a special 12-member commission of six Democrats and six Republicans will recommend up to \$1.5 trillion more in cuts to be made over the next 10 years. If the commission comes up with a plan, it will be voted up or down in Congress, and there will be a \$1.5 trillion increase in the debt ceiling. If it is not passed, there will be only a \$1.2 trillion addition to the debt ceiling.
- Failure to agree triggers automatic spending cuts of \$1.2 trillion, half in military spending, half in domestic spending. Social Security and Medicaid have been exempted but not Medicare.

So far the details of the deal have not been disclosed. Many of the specifics probably have to be worked out. This

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STOP The U.S./NATO Bombing of Libya

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Audience at Riverside Church in New York City listens to Cynthia McKinney, top left, who returned recently from Libya. Read more on page 10.

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NFL Players Association emerges as battered victors

By Dave Zirin

Following is an edited version of an article that first appeared in *The Nation* on July 25. To read the entire article, go to the National Football League Players Association Facebook page.

A sports media consensus on the end of the NFL lockout has already emerged. As Don Banks at Sports Illustrated assessed, thrilled that the golden goose will lay eggs another day, “Neither side got everything they wanted, but good negotiations are like that. Now that this CBA [collective bargaining agreement] fight is almost over, and labor peace seems finally at hand, both the players and the owners have the right to claim success.”

These parroted assessments by focusing on the final score miss the true, overarching story of the longest work stoppage in NFL history: at the opening kickoff, the sides weren’t close to evenly matched. What the NFLPA has done is the equivalent of the Bad News Bears squeaking out a victory against the 1927 New York Yankees. It’s workers, in an age of austerity, beating back the bosses and showing that solidarity is the only way to win.

When the lockout began, NFL’s owners had, in their judgment and, frankly, mine as well, every possible advantage. They had a promise from their television partners of \$4 billion in “lockout insurance” even if the games didn’t air. They had a workforce with a career shelf-life of three to four years, understandably skittish about missing a single paycheck. And most critically, they had what they thought was overwhelming public opinion. After all, in past labor disputes, fans sided against those who “get paid to play a game.” Owners wanted more money and longer seasons and approached negotiations with an arrogance that would shame a Murdoch spawn.

I remember talking to NFLPA executive director DeMaurice Smith at the start of this process and hearing his optimism in the face of these odds, as he spoke of the bravery of workers in Wisconsin and the people of Egypt who he said were inspiring him to fight the good fight. He mentioned the books he was reading like the classic civil rights history, “Parting the Waters: America in the King Years” by Taylor Branch. I remember smiling politely at De Smith and thinking, “This guy is going to get creamed.”

I was very wrong. I didn’t count on Judge David Doty, a Reagan appointee, putting an injunction on that \$4 billion lockout slush fund, taking away the owner’s financial upper hand. I didn’t count on the way that health and safety issues would bond the players together, making defections among the 1,900 players nonexistent. I didn’t count on the way many fans, upset at the lockout and well-educated on the after-effects of the brutality of the sport, would side with the players. I lastly didn’t count on the way that reservoirs of bitterness felt by NFL players and the union would bind them together against NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell and an ownership group that had just lied to them once too often.

They stuck it out, and now the end results of the collective bargaining agreement look quite good for players. We are looking at a ten-year CBA in which minimum salaries will go up 10 percent a year for the life of the agreement. Players get a slightly lower percent of revenues (about 46 percent down from 50 percent), but they will receive 55 percent of future national media revenue, which will mushroom in the years ahead.

Teams also will now have to spend at least 90 percent of the salary cap on actual salaries. In other words, there won’t just be a salary cap; there will be a salary floor. In return, rookies will need to sign four-year contracts that are scaled at a lower rate. The net effect of all of this is that veteran salaries will go up perhaps quite dramatically, and if players can stay healthy beyond that fourth year, they will be very well compensated.

But there’s the rub. If the average career is only 3.4 years, how can players be ensured to stay healthy enough to get the big payday? Here is where I think the NFLPA made the most headway. Not only did they beat back the owner’s dream of an eighteen-game season, they also negotiated a much less arduous off-season regimen. The off-season program will now be five weeks shorter. There will be more days off. Full-contact practices are going to be greatly curtailed. This matters because it will limit not just the wear and tear on players’ bodies, but also concussions and other brain injuries, which are far more likely to happen in repetitive drills than in games.

Also when careers finally do end, players can now be a part of the NFL’s health plan for life. This is a mammoth deal for players who previously were kicked off of all plans five years after retirement. Getting private insurance after playing in the NFL is a nightmare, as your body is a spider web of preexisting conditions. Retirees also will now receive up to a \$1 billion increase in benefits, with \$620 million going to increasing pensions for those who retired before 1993.

Yes, owners received a bigger piece of the pie, and yes, they received their rookie pay scale. Yes, I agree with Brian Frederick, director of the Sports Fans Coalition, who commented today that it’s a problem that “fans were forced to sit on the sidelines during these negotiations, despite the massive public subsidies and antitrust exemptions we grant the league.” This is especially true given the fact that, as SFC reported, “Thirty-one of the 32 NFL stadiums have received direct public subsidies. Ten of those have been publicly financed and at least 19 are 75 percent publicly financed.”

But in the end, this deal — against all odds — is a victory for players, their families, their health and their long-term financial solvency. It’s also an example for workers across the country. There is power in labor and there is power in solidarity. □



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Recall races show potential for mass struggle

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

The Wisconsin AFL-CIO and other labor, community and student organizations are mobilizing for the next recall elections on Aug. 9. They are aiming to oust six union-busting, pro-austerity Republican state senators.

The right-wingers passed a draconian state budget in June, which makes the deepest cuts to schools, health care and communities in Wisconsin history. It raises taxes on seniors and working families by \$70 million, while providing \$300 million in corporate giveaways. African Americans, Latinos/as, women, children and the elderly, already hit hardest by the economic crisis, will be plunged into destitution if these cuts aren't resisted and pushed back.

Thousands of workers and community members are knocking on doors, protesting and joining in actions such as the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO's week-long "Truth Tour." The statewide campaign began at the Teamster Hall in Green Bay on July 16 and will continue through early August.

This mobilization provides a forum for those impacted by Wall Street's austerity measures to speak out. It is also building support for the recall campaigns and increasing solidarity among labor, community and student organizations.

"We are mighty in thought, presence and the work we are doing every day," said Sheila Cochran, secretary-treasurer of the Milwaukee Area Labor Council, on July 26 at the tour's labor council stop. Cochran noted, "They call us special interest. They are right. We do have the special interest of the working people of Wisconsin in mind." (<http://wisafclcio.typepad.com/>)

Mahlon Mitchell, president of the Wisconsin firefighters union, told the crowd, "We have to keep taking it to the streets. Let's keep fighting. Solidarity."

Resistance grows statewide

Protests continue against reactionary Tea-Party-aligned politicians such as Gov. Scott Walker and State Sen. Alberta Darling. Jobs Now, the Service Employees union, Citizen Action and other groups demonstrate frequently at Darling's campaign offices. Activists shout down and

challenge Walker everywhere he appears. The Wisconsin State Fair will be the location of the next protest against Walker on Aug. 4.

A people's mobilization is in the works to confront the Aug. 5-8 neo-fascist, racist Tea Party Express "tour." The Wisconsin Bail Out the People Movement's blog says that the Tea Party's visit to "a region of the country that has been one of the most devastated by the economic crisis of capitalism — must not go unchallenged."



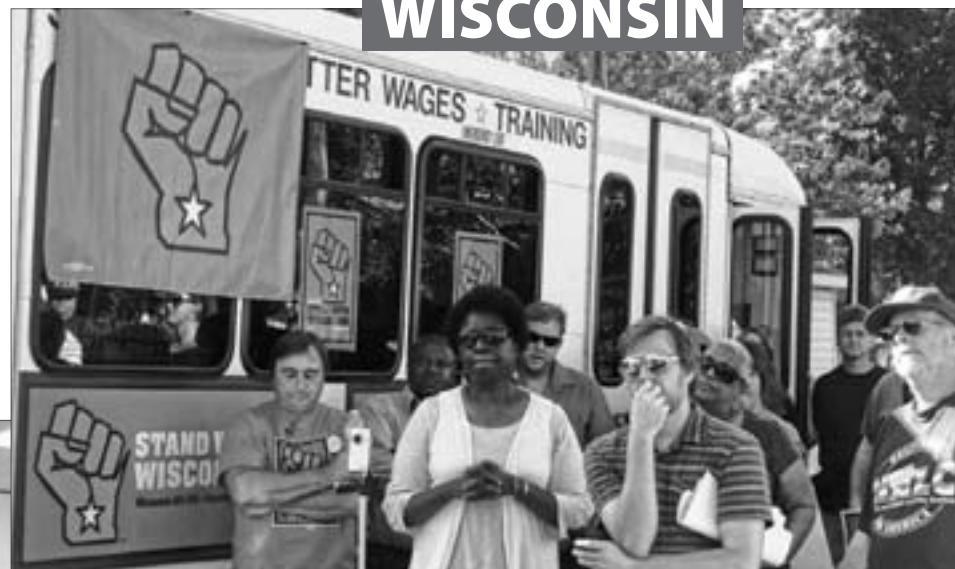
Wisconsin BOPM says that the Tea Party "is attempting to appeal to the popular discontent in the face of the economic crisis and attacks on poor and working people ... [by] budget cuts, layoffs and union-busting attempts by Wall Street. However, they want to fuel that discontent into a reactionary program that scapegoats immigrants, targets people of color and LGBT people, blames unions, attacks safety nets like Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare and opposes women's rights."

The organization calls for "A powerful movement ... that points its fire at the rich and that fights for a massive public jobs program, real national health care, a moratorium on foreclosures, ending the wars, canceling student debt, building schools not prisons and using Pentagon dollars to pay for education, housing, social services and rebuilding the country's infrastructure."

This progressive coalition encourages everyone to join and protest at the Tea Party Express tour locations. (For more information, see <http://wibopm.org>)

'We Will Not Rest'

Other Wisconsin struggles include the fight against attacks on the people's movement. On July 3 the Milwaukee Committee To Stop FBI Repression sponsored



WW PHOTOS: BRYAN G. PFEIFER

Above, at July 26 Wisconsin AFL-CIO 'Truth Tour' stop at the Milwaukee County Labor Council

Left, at July 30, Milwaukee Committee To Stop FBI Repression meeting, Tom Burke, left, Professor Ahmed Mbalia.

a meeting at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee that featured Professor Ahmed Mbalia of Africans On The Move; Tom Burke, national spokesperson for the Committee To Stop FBI Repression; and immigrant rights activist Carlos Montes via Skype from Los Angeles. Speakers told of FBI terrorism against Black and Latino/a communities; resistance of 23 anti-war, immigrant rights and solidarity activists to FBI raids last fall; and Montes' struggles against state repression. (www.stopfbi.net)

That day protesters also rallied at the state Capitol in Madison to demand adequate funding and respect for public education as part of the national Save Our Schools campaign. "Public schools are under attack," said Thomas J. Mertz, Wisconsin education activist. "There is a need for national, state and local action in support of our schools. Wisconsin has been ground zero in this." He called for building the state movement on this crucial issue.

On July 12 the Milwaukee Inner City Congregations Allied for Hope, a coalition of churches and other faith-based organizations, held a protest and press conference at the Westlawn Project construction site. Although this site is located in the predominantly African-American

community on Milwaukee's Northside, speakers emphasized that there are many construction projects there, but little effort is made to hire African-American or other people of color.

Rev. Willie Brisco of MICAHA said there is a "state of emergency" in Milwaukee. He referred to the Milwaukee NAACP's June report entitled "Milwaukee Today," which says this city is among the worst in the country regarding segregation, poverty, unemployment and more. He told of the crises for this city's African-American community in unemployment, infant mortality rates, education and incarceration.

Rev. Brisco stressed, "The bottom line is we will not rest on this issue. We will not stop demanding that these unemployment statistics decrease." He called for activists and supporters to help stop these injustices. (Milwaukee Courier, July 16)

The Milwaukee Teachers Education Association just released a membership survey showing the majority rejected opening up their contract to give more concessions to Milwaukee County. MTEA President Bob Peterson told members that he's hopeful "the energy of the protests this past spring in Madison and the enthusiastic involvement of MTEA members in the upcoming recall elections will continue to inspire us in the work ahead." (<http://www.mtea.org>)

To support these struggles and learn more about them, see www.wibailoutpeople.org, www.defendwisconsin.org, www.vdlf.org, wisafclcio.typepad.com, www.wisafclcio.org. □

Don't blame elderly for capitalist debt

By Stephen Millies

"It's the elderly, stupid." That's who Washington Post columnist Robert J. Samuelson is blaming for the \$14.3 trillion U.S. government debt.

That's a big lie. This debt is covered with blood. It includes trillions of dollars spent killing millions of people in U.S. wars and occupations abroad.

The annual U.S. budget for spying is \$80 billion. CIA terrorism has killed thousands of people in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and elsewhere in Asia. A million people were executed following the 1965 CIA-orchestrated Indonesian coup, while thousands died in the Sept. 11, 1973, coup in Chile.

The U.S. spent billions of dollars to spray Vietnam with Agent Orange; 3 million Vietnamese still suffer from dioxin poisoning, says the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign. So do thousands of U.S. veterans.

The Pentagon spent \$5.5 trillion on nuclear weapons by 1998, estimates the Nuclear Weapons Cost Study Committee.

That was part of the 73-year campaign to destroy the Soviet Union. The biggest target of today's \$685 billion Pentagon budget is China.

The national debt increased by another \$5 trillion since 2008 because of the capitalist economic crisis. It wasn't people on Social Security who gave the AIG insurance outfit a \$182 billion bailout.

None of these facts matters to Samuelson. "[I]t's obvious that we need to rewrite the social contract that, over the past half-century, has transformed the federal government's main task into transferring income from workers to retirees," he wrote on July 29.

Who are the retirees? Most of them worked in offices, farms, factories, stores, restaurants, warehouses, construction sites — everywhere that wage labor is exploited.

Today's workers — if they're not killed on or off the job — have a good chance of reaching retirement because of gains won in the class struggle and tremendous medical advances. Their future retirement benefits are a small part of the value

they and the rest of the working class — including the unemployed — produce.

Social Security benefits are meager and should be greatly increased. Ninety percent of the 34.6 million "retired worker beneficiaries" get less than \$1,800 per month, with 13 million receiving below \$1,000 monthly. (www.ssa.gov)

"Disabled worker beneficiaries" are even poorer: 72 percent of the 8.2 million disabled get benefits worth less than \$300 per week.

How can people survive on these small amounts? To get rid of decaying food, many supermarkets give small discounts to seniors. Landlords don't give any breaks. The monthly rent for a small apartment in poor New York City neighborhoods is \$1,100 or more.

Before the checks arrive, elderly New Yorkers bring carts of bottles and cans to stores for redemption. This option isn't even available in many cities.

Work until you drop

It's dishonest to pit workers against re-

tirees, as Samuelson does. It's part of the ruling class campaign to blame elderly people — and those getting food stamps and Medicaid — for the economic crisis.

Samuelson writes for the Washington Post, the biggest mouthpiece of the military-industrial complex. The Economist magazine is demanding a retirement age of 70.

The capitalists want you to work until you drop. Karl Marx explained how the capitalists spent centuries lengthening the workday. He called this process "absolute surplus value" — extending the time a worker has to produce profits. Another way to gauge exploitation is "relative surplus value" — making people work harder and faster, like making nurses take care of more patients or speeding up an assembly line.

It's outrageous to call for increasing the retirement age when millions of young people can't find jobs. Forty-five percent of African Americans aged 16 to 19 and 35.4 percent of Latino/a youth were un-

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WW
Commentary

Workers, parents defend employee protection for school transport

By Sara Catalinotto
New York

Amalgamated Transportation Local 1181-1061 and Teamsters Local 854, representing drivers, escorts and mechanics in the New York City school bus system, are fighting to defend and expand Employee Protection Provisions.

EPPs ensure that when the employer — in this case, the New York City Department of Education, which is controlled by billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg — sets up new contracts for bus routes, it must give priority to current union members and must respect seniority. This process is repeated before each school year, before summer sessions and whenever circumstances require.

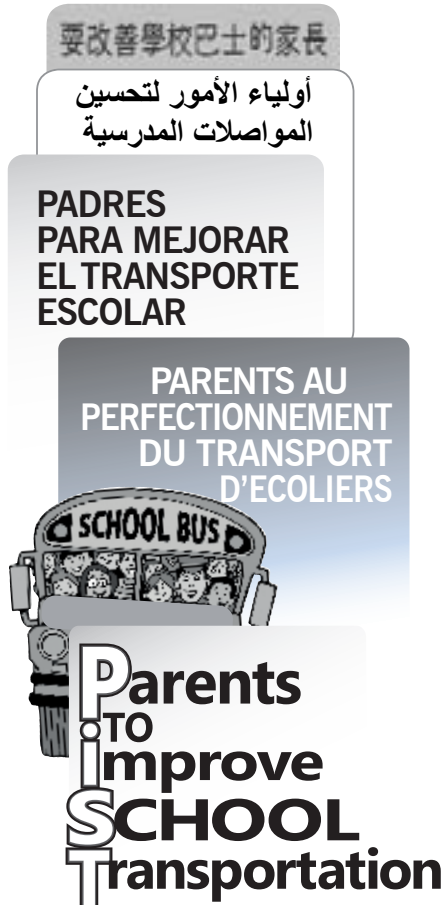
These provisions have been applied to routes transporting kindergarten through 12th grade students since 1979 after a major strike. State bill A3127-A, which is now on New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo's desk, would extend EPPs to routes for toddlers with disabilities who receive early intervention services outside the home and for pre-kindergarteners.

On July 25, ATU and Teamsters members rallied outside a meeting of the bus companies that are bidding on these routes for the coming school year. The gathering was joined by delegations from Transport Workers Local 100, Teamsters Local 210 and Parents to Improve School Transportation. Parents of children who use the school buses and an organizer of school bus workers north of New York City also attended. Unionists distributed flyers to generate a campaign of phone calls to Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott in support of EPPs.

Parents vs. mayor on EPPs

School bus advocates from parent groups such as PIST and Community Education Councils 31 and 75 have written letters urging Cuomo to approve the EPPs bill. The letters emphasize that the youngest, most vulnerable children deserve qualified, trained and experienced drivers and escorts and that decisions should not be made solely on which company is the lowest bidder.

On July 11, Bloomberg sent Cuomo a memo urging him to veto A3127-A so that the NYC Department of Education can exercise "its own business judgment." He cited a court ruling supporting his position. The governor has until



Aug. 3 to take action.

During this spring's struggle over the NYC budget, the mayor publicly tried to undo contractual seniority and job security for teachers. Now he is behind the scenes trying to deprive another workforce — one that is vital to public education, particularly to special education — of the same rights.

Thousands of union bus workers from the Haitian and other working-class communities, and the parents and guardians of the 150,000 children they serve, have a basis for unity in light of recent negative developments in school transportation.

Bus rights needed to save lives, jobs

Since September, when the DOE eliminated all busing of general education seventh and eighth graders in Staten Island, there have been several traffic accidents involving pre-teens walking to school on pedestrian-unfriendly streets. Tragically, the worst fears of the community happened on June 28 when former school bus rider 13-year-old Aniya Williams lost her life in one such accident.

City courts have twice ruled against a class action suit that sought to restore middle-school busing. The Staten Island Advance reported last fall that

Matthew Berlin, director of DOE's Office of Pupil Transportation, testified that public funds should not be used to bus these children "even if it costs a dollar." (silive.com, Sept. 20, 2010) He used maps with an incorrect scale to claim that typical distances to school are not so far.

Outraged Staten Islanders and supporters are pressing for a state law before anyone else gets hurt — A2988-A, renamed Aniya's Law — to guarantee busing through eighth grade in all school districts of a certain size and those with scarce public transportation.

Another nasty outcome of the S.I. busing cutback is that USA United Fleet, a yellow bus company based there, recently declared bankruptcy and laid off 1,100 ATU members.

Further, during summer school, which is mandated for many special needs students, bus workers and children suffer together due to a lack of or inadequate air conditioning on many vehicles. This is even worse on long routes that were designed to "cut costs."

It's important to note that Northeast busing giant Atlantic Express wins a large share of local contract bids but does not have the equipment to keep riders cool, according to a former AE shop steward.

Meanwhile, NY City Council budget crafters, such as Speaker Christine Quinn, boasted about very recent decreases in busing expenses, calling them "efficiencies" and "alternative cuts" to prevent teacher layoffs.

Yet the public schools are bracing for large class sizes in the fall due to other staffing shortages that will lower the quality of education.

A healthier alternative would be to cut the \$15 billion interest payments to the banks and the \$27 million no-bid DOE contracts to Bloomberg's corporate friends, including the reactionary Murdoch News.

Then the city should implement the "School Bus Bill of Rights," which was recently drafted by PIST and ATU 1181-1061 leaders. The solutions proposed here could save and improve the lives, education and jobs of bus riders, bus workers and their families.

For more information and sources, see www.pistnyc.org. To support the EPP, call Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott at 718-935-2000.

The writer is a founder of PIST.

On the Picket Line

By Sue Davis

S.F. Labor Council: 'Hands off social safety net'

The San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution unanimously on July 25 that any agreement raising the debt ceiling not touch the social safety net, including Social Security, Medicaid, Medicare, Pell grants and other socially useful programs. The resolution mandated that members of the SFLC take this urgent message directly to the local office of House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi on July 26. Other points included that "billionaires and corporations pay their fair share of taxes instead of hurting the middle class, working people and folks who are struggling" and that there be "an end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, a reduction in overall military spending and bringing home war dollars to fund our social programs, put people back to work and revitalize the U.S. economy."

35,000 Verizon workers set to strike

The Communication Workers announced July 28 that 91 percent of its 35,000 Verizon workers in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states voted to authorize a strike if the contract expires on Aug. 7. Verizon wants major concessions, claiming a drop in revenue and profits in its phone business and intense competition in television and Internet services. But the workers aren't buying it. They're only too well aware that Verizon earned \$6.9 billion in net income for the first half of this year, with strong growth in the wireless cellphone division and FIOS TV and Internet services. This paragon of corporate greed wants to wipe out more than 60 years of collective bargaining after it made \$19.5 billion in profits last year and paid its top five executives \$258 million over the last four years. Verizon's demands include replacing negotiated wage increases with merit pay, freezing pensions for current workers and instituting 401(k) plans for future workers, allowing contracting out and offshoring of more jobs, slashing sick leave and holidays, and completely gutting health care plans for current and retired workers. (New York Times, July 29) No wonder the workers voted to strike! Stay tuned.

Hyatt housekeepers rally in Texas

Hyatt Hotel housekeepers, who are fighting to join UNITE HERE Local 251 in San Antonio, Texas, were joined by unionized workers and community supporters on July 21 at a rally calling attention to the abuses the women workers suffer on the job. Local 251 stated in its call: "Our injury rates are high, our wages are low, and our immigrant sisters are exploited and cheated by Hyatt's housekeeping subcontractors. Hyatt is hoping we will suffer in silence ... but we are standing up and speaking out. Across North America we are demanding an end to the abuses we suffer on the job. We will no longer suffer in silence. The abuse must end. Hyatt must change." Unionized Hyatt housekeepers in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco have been protesting the chain's high injury rate and unsafe working conditions since 2009.

IKEA workers vote union

On July 27 the workers at IKEA's only North American assembly plant in rural Danville, Va., voted 221 to 69 to be represented by the Machinists union (IAMAW). Besides demanding higher wages, the workers want to end unsafe working conditions, erratic scheduling, and racist harassment and divisiveness. The union will begin negotiating its first contract once the election is certified by the National Labor Relations Board. (Associated Press, July 27)

Don't blame elderly for capitalist debt

Continued from page 3

employed in June, says the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Increasing the retirement age is also obscene because so many workers, often because of racism, still don't make it to retirement. Life expectancy for African-American men was six years less than that for white men in 2007, while white women lived four years longer than African-American women. (2011 Statistical Abstract of the United States, table 102)

Social Security: won by struggle

The capitalist class wanted to strangle Social Security in its cradle. A working-class upsurge in the 1930s, punctuated by a workers' takeover of the

General Motors plants in Flint, Mich., clawed pensions from the wealthy.

The biggest factors to preserve Social Security were the liberation struggles inside the United States. Fannie Lou Hamer, César Chávez, Medgar Evers, Fred Hampton and thousands of others fought against racism and helped millions of whites get retirement and medical benefits.

Elizabeth Ross, a founder of Workers World Party, told this writer how Social Security gave older workers a chance to avoid the poor house.

In a world where at one time 35 percent of human beings lived under the red flag of socialism, the billionaires didn't dare touch Social Security. But since the Soviet Union was overthrown

in 1991, the wealthy and powerful think they can scuttle it.

In 2001 Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill told the Financial Times of London that "able-bodied adults should save enough [regularly] so that they can provide for their own retirement, and, for ... health and medical needs."

In other words, back to Herbert Hoover and "rugged individualism." Instead of depending on Social Security, people should instead invest their precious savings — if they have any — with hedge fund operators like Bernie Madoff.

Capitalists beware! Nobody hates their grandparents. Tens of millions are looking forward to retirement. Don't mess with Social Security! □

Houston's Carl Hampton

Honoring a Black Panther leader

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

"Houston's Black Panther leader Carl Hampton was assassinated by the Houston police 41 years ago today, and we are here at his gravesite to honor Carl and remember his contribution to the fight we are still waging in the Black community for justice and equality. We will never forget Carl," Sensei Benton told the crowd of activists at Golden Gate Cemetery on July 26.

Ayanna Ade called on the elders for permission to begin the memorial celebration. Libations were poured by young community activist Ivory Townsel as people called out names of ancestors who had passed on — Geronimo ji Jaga, Shaka Sankofa, Malcolm X, Fanny Lou Hamer, George Jackson.

Both Ade and Benton spent years in the Black Panther Party in Oakland, Calif., and Houston.

Several people who had known Hampton spoke of his leadership in the work the Panthers did in the Houston community. As tributes were spoken, a saxophone played by Brother Enoch sang soulfully in the quiet, wooded cemetery. Hampton was an accomplished musician as well as a revolutionary activist and played the sax.

Hampton was shot from the roof of St. John's Missionary Baptist Church on the hot night of July 26, 1970, by Houston police as he walked down the street in front of the Panther office. In the ensuing shootout, three others were injured; two of them were later charged with attempted murder of a police officer.

On Dec. 18, Hampton's birthday, the Carl Hampton Memorial Committee will place a ledger stone — with Hampton's picture, information and a large Black Panther image — on the deceased leader's grave. □



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Dems cave to right in debt-ceiling clash

Workers must fight for jobs, human needs

Continued from page 1

is ominous because of the present political situation.

Sharp shift to right in capitalist politics

This struggle has revealed that the relationship of forces in capitalist politics has shifted further to the right. The more mainstream reactionary forces in the ruling class, who have been pushing for cuts in spending on the people, have been in a bloc with the ultra-right Tea Party forces during most of the debt-ceiling struggle.

Wall Street broke with the extremist ideologues of the Tea Party after Obama made huge concessions on cuts in entitlements. However, the Tea Party ideologues refused to accept victory. Instead, they pressed toward default. After the lobbyists of the financial industry were rejected by the extremist forces, the bankers, including JPMorgan Chase CEO James Dimon, went personally to Capitol Hill to talk directly to the politicians.

In the end, Wall Street got its way. The Tea Party forces split in the final vote, with only 66 Republicans holding out against the deal out of 140 or so Tea Party-associated or Tea Party-endorsed members.

The U.S. ruling class suffered a considerable setback over its financial dealings with the world by this display of political instability. Nevertheless, the financiers won tactically in several ways. They avoided default. They got cuts in spending for the masses and the promise of even more spending cuts. And they stopped any new taxes on the rich and the corporations.

There were sharp differences in the Democratic Party during this struggle. President Obama was ready to put Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare on the table during negotiations with Republican House Speaker John Boehner. In the final settlement, House Minority leader Nancy Pelosi, the Congressional Black Caucus, Latino/a members and the Progressive Caucus held out to keep Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare exempt from cuts at the early stage.

But the entire Democratic Party leadership and most of the rank and file accepted the debt-ceiling frenzy and the deficit-cutting fever generated by not only the Republicans but the ruling class as a whole.

The Democratic Party leadership did not demand the hundreds of billions needed for a government jobs program. They did not demand funds to stop hunger in this country, although 50 million

people struggle with so-called "food insufficiency." The Democrats did not demand money to put the millions back in their homes who have been fleeced by mortgage bankers, brokers and wheeling-and-dealing lenders. They did not even demand the extension of emergency unemployment insurance, which is slated to expire this year.

In short, the Democratic Party has promoted the line that the deficit "must be brought under control."

Banks are full of money

But how do you bring the deficit under control?

As the famous bank robber Willie Sutton supposedly said, when asked why he robbed banks: "That's where the money is."

It is in the banks, the hedge funds, the private equity funds, the military-industrial complex, the Pentagon, Big Oil with its tens of billions in profits, and the manufacturing corporations that are sitting on \$2 trillion in cash but won't create jobs. That's where the money is. It is money that belongs to the workers who created all the wealth in the first place. And it should be used for workers' needs.

The Democrats are a capitalist party. That means that at the top they are tied to big capital. It is not for nothing that Obama's chief of staff, William Daley, is from JPMorgan Chase, or that the head of Obama's jobs creation panel is Jeffrey Imelt, CEO of General Electric, which has laid off hundreds of thousands of workers in recent decades and pays no taxes.

The deficit that the bosses and their mouthpieces are crying about is the deficit of the ruling class.

The bankers fear for their interest payments. The military contractors worry about the flow of their profits. The Pentagon worries about keeping its war machine up to date in order to bring death and occupation around the globe. The corporations worry about staying on the government gravy train.

To the ruling class, the Treasury is a source of enrichment for millionaires and billionaires. They want the debt ceiling lifted so that the government can keep handing money out to the wealthy.

Not one word has been said in this entire debate over the debt ceiling regarding the great deficit of the broad masses of people. The workers' deficit is in the day-to-day struggle to survive. The workers and the oppressed have a jobs deficit, a housing deficit, a health care deficit, an

education deficit and, for the tens of millions getting low wages, a paycheck deficit.

The debt-ceiling sellout of the interests of the workers comes at a very dangerous time. Cutting government spending — except for the \$200 billion in annual interest to the bondholders — means more government workers and others who depend upon government spending are bound to be laid off. Government services are bound to be cut back.

So the argument between the Republicans and Democrats was really over just how much suffering to inflict on the people.

Capitalist economy sliding toward crisis

The deal came at the very moment that the government announced a rise in unemployment, a slowdown in economic growth and a drop in manufacturing. Economic growth was up only 1.3 percent in the second quarter, according to the government's Bureau of Economic Analysis. Revised figures also brought first-quarter growth down from 1.8 percent to 0.4 percent.

Furthermore, this capitalist economic slowdown is spreading to Germany, Italy and the entire eurozone.

In other words, the two big-business parties made a deal to cut back spending at precisely the moment when capitalism is sliding toward a deeper crisis and the prospect is for more suffering.

Move to right after collapse of USSR

This lurch to the right by Obama, leading the Democrats, is a continuation of a trend that began with Ronald Reagan in the 1980s but accelerated after the collapse of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. In the absence of a militant working-class movement in the U.S., once the capitalist class in the U.S. did not have to compete with a rival socialist system, the bosses and bankers began to shed all restraints.

This was reflected in the destruction of welfare by President Bill Clinton, who also instituted NAFTA, stepped up the death penalty, authorized the first so-called "anti-terrorism" laws and signed other reactionary measures. Eight years of George W. Bush pushed everything further to the right, with two wars, domestic spying, huge tax cuts for the rich and so on.

The rise of the Tea Party, with tens of millions of dollars in funding and endless publicity in the capitalist media, is a further reflection of this trend. Obama and the Democrats are floating along on this right-wing tide dictated by the giant capitalists who rule this country.

Workers must organize independently as a class

If this debt-ceiling struggle proves anything, it is that the working class must organize independently, as a class fighting for its own interests. The labor leadership has tied organized labor to the capitalist Democratic Party, and the results have been disastrous: 30 million unemployed or underemployed, millions homeless and hungry, with things getting worse by the week.

This is no time for gloom and doom. This is the time for independent working-class political and economic organization. The time for mass mobilization in the streets, for struggle in the workplaces, and for the workers to speak in their own name is now.

We must speak boldly as an exploited and dispossessed class, with our own political program that reflects our own needs as a class in opposition to the greedy, exploiting, profit-seeking capitalist class that lives off our labor.

The struggle must be against the huge deficits caused when capitalists lay us off, kick us out of our homes, lower our wages, and divide us with racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-immigrant prejudice.

We are told we must follow the Democrats; otherwise we will get the Republicans and the right wing. Well, the workers have followed the Democrats and got — the Republicans and the right wing.

No capitalist party will fight our battles for us. We must organize and fight on our own. □

STOP CUTS in food stamps, WIC & funding to food pantries!

New York: Aug. 5 news conference & protest 11 a.m., Federal Building, Worth & Broadway

The food stamp program — SNAP — is under attack. The House of Representatives recently voted to cut \$187 billion from it over 10 years and turned it into block grants to states, not entitlements. If states run out of money, hungry people will be turned away.

During this severe economic crisis, as food prices soar, SNAP and other nutri-

Continued on page 8

IMPERIALISM OUT



WW PHOTOS: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD AND G. DUNKEL

Eyewitness Libya meeting took place at Riverside Church in Harlem, New York July 30. Speakers included left to right: Glen Ford, Black Is Back Coalition; Johnnie Stevens, Workers World Party; Dinae Anderson, Campaign to Stop Food Stamp Cuts; Saleem Muhammad Aktar, American Muslim Alliance; Teresa Gutierrez, May 1 Worker & Immigrant Rights Coalition; Bernard White; Professor Asha Samad, SAFRAD Somali Association for Relief & Development & The Human Rights Center; Cynthia McKinney; Sara Flounders, international Action Center; Minister Akbar Muhammed, Nation of Islam. See article on page 10.

Economic crisis unfolds in Africa

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

As the U.S. Congress and the White House wrap up the political theater surrounding the debate over raising the national debt ceiling, both Europe and Africa are experiencing heightened economic woes that have prompted political struggle. Events in the U.S. have spread concern throughout Europe as Greece, Spain, Portugal, Ireland and Britain carry out major cuts in public sector services, pensions and education.

The impact of the world economic crisis of capitalist overproduction on the African continent has been revealed through protest actions and social instability.

In Somalia the worst drought in six decades has prompted mass migration and further pressure on the Al-Shabab movement, which controls large sections in the center and south of this nation.

U.S. and European corporate and governmental media outlets have claimed that Al-Shabab has barred major humanitarian aid organizations from entering sections of the country where their forces

are dominant. Al-Shabab has responded that the situation involving food deficits in Somalia is being exaggerated in order to open the way for Western intervention there. The country has largely been without an internationally recognized government for two decades.

The Transitional Federal Government is being heavily supported by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), which has at least 8,000 Ugandan and Burundian troops in the capital of Mogadishu. Although there has been tremendous migration into neighboring Kenya from Somalia due to the drought, many people are returning to the capital in search of food and shelter.

In West Africa the pro-Western Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade is seeking to run for office again amid countrywide protest from youth and workers. On July 23 rival demonstrations took place in the capital of Dakar both for and against Wade seeking another term; the opposition says this would violate the constitution.

There were also demonstrations in Senegal last month against power cuts. Offices of the national electricity company were

burned. There are many complaints about poor economic conditions that result in high unemployment, poverty, frequent electricity outages and rising food prices.

A national strike was narrowly averted in the West African state of Nigeria, the continent's most populous, when the Nigerian Labor Congress and the Trade Union Congress reached agreement with the federal government to raise the minimum wage. Although Nigeria is a large oil-producing state, its workers have not benefitted from the revenue generated by petroleum exports.

Unrest and labor activity: From Malawi to South Africa

The Southern African nation of Malawi has been the center of unrest since the week of July 18. On July 25 the Associated Press reported, "Malawian activists who helped organize last week's protests threatened [July 25] to hold more demonstrations unless the president addresses their grievances."

Rafiq Hajat, a protest leader, said that President Bingu wa Mutharika should meet the people's demands by Aug. 16. Demonstrators are focusing on rising food and fuel prices, worsening shortages of foreign exchange and allegations of corruption by government officials, including the president. Activists have presented Mutharika with a petition listing their pressing agenda of economic and political reforms.

Nineteen people have died as a result of the unrest in three cities. President Mutharika firmly opposes the demonstrations, as he reshuffles the military leadership.

Although the military no longer maintains a strong presence in the cities, police are patrolling the streets where shops and businesses were looted and burned.

South Africa has the largest economy on the continent and has the most organized working class. A series of strikes have erupted over the last few weeks in broad sectors of the industrial laborforce, involving workers in fuel, paper and —

chemical companies who want higher wages.

On July 24, 150,000 coal miners walked off their jobs at 20 companies in South Africa. The National Union of Mineworkers, the country's biggest union, along with the United Association of South Africa and Solidarity are demanding wage increases from 12 percent to 14 percent. UASA workers at Xstrata Plc may join the other striking miners by July 28 if their wage demands are not met.

Due to the strike, Anglo American Plc's thermal coal mining production has ground to a halt. Hulisani Rasivhaga, speaking for the corporation, said that production has "stopped completely at all our operations. We have kept essential services running, such as water monitoring and ventilation." (Bloomberg, July 25)

Anglo American produced 59 million metric tons of thermal coal during 2010 in South Africa, while Xstrata produced 17.7 tons. South Africa is the fifth largest thermal coal exporter in the world; 66 million tons were shipped out in 2009.

That's why this strike is so important to South Africa and the whole world.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has pledged its total support to the miners. COSATU states, "These are workers who risk their lives every day, working for long hours in the heat and dust, often in unhealthy and dangerous conditions, to extract the mineral wealth on which our economy is built. Yet they are paid miserably low wages that in no way reflect the contribution their labor makes to the wealth of the country."

"Their employers meanwhile enjoy a lavish lifestyle, with fat salaries and bonuses, created by the sweat and toil of the workers. The NUM is absolutely right to demand a living wage for their workers, especially with the latest increases in the cost of food and electricity. ... The federation calls upon the employers urgently to bring a new offer to the table, but should they fail to do so, they can be sure that their striking workers enjoy the support of the entire trade union movement." (www.cosatu.org) □

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KEYNOTE ADDRESS **HON. MINISTER LOUIS FARRAKHAN**

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* Father Miguel d'Escoto (former Foreign Minister of Nicaragua & President of UN 63rd General Assembly)

Nation of Islam, December 12th Movement, World African Diaspora Union, Freedom Party, All African People's Revolutionary Party, National Black United Front, City Councilman Charles Barron, Dr. Leonard Jeffries - WADU, New Black Panther Party, Patrice Lumumba Coalition, Operation Power, International Action Center, CENOTAP, WISOMMM, People's Organization for Progress, ANSWER, Clement Payne Movement, Global African Congress, People's Empowerment Party, Coltrane Chimurenga, American Iranian Friendship Committee, Universal African People's Organization, List still in formation...

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TOP OF AFRICA

As Ramadan begins

U.S.-NATO continues inhumane bombing of Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Muslim countries and communities internationally began the celebration of the holy month of Ramadan on Aug. 1. Inside the North African state of Libya where the majority of the population is Islamic, the month began in the immediate aftermath of a series of NATO bombing raids on the capital of Tripoli.

In normal times, Ramadan, a 30-day period of fasting, prayer and the avoidance of conflict, is characterized with the slowing down of economic and other activity. However, this year Libya will continue to be put in a position of defending its sovereignty, which has been under attack since the U.S./NATO war started on March 19.

A whole month prior to March 19, a Western-backed armed rebellion was carried out against the central government in Tripoli from the opposition stronghold of Benghazi in the east. The opposition was driven out of the areas they had invaded in most of the east and west by the second week in March as the Gadhafi government was set to retake Benghazi.

It was at this point that the U.S./NATO forces began to bomb the oil-producing state under the guise of implementing United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973, which was ostensibly designed to protect civilians through the imposition of a “no-fly zone.” Nonetheless, the bombing of Libya has since been thoroughly documented as a grave crime against humanity.

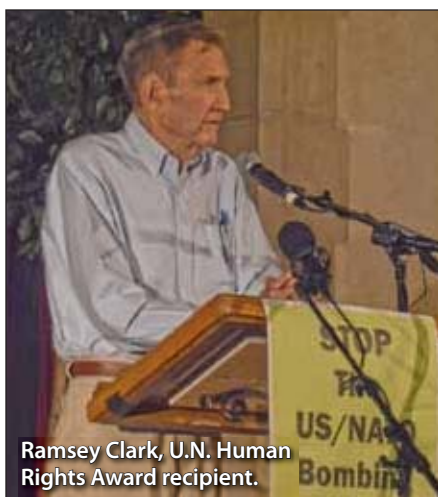
The North African state of Libya has the largest known oil reserves on the African continent. Under the government led by Muammar Gadhafi since a revolution in 1969, the country has risen from one of Africa’s poorest to maintaining the highest standard of living among all countries on the continent. In addition to oil the country has substantial natural gas resources, and its geographical position is strategically located on the Mediterranean, which serves as a waterway to other nations in Africa, the Middle East, Southern Europe and Asia.

Since March 19, U.S./NATO forces have struck government buildings, civilian neighborhoods, hospitals, schools, communication satellites, ships and ports. The son and three grandchildren of Gadhafi were killed in one of the airstrikes on a civilian compound in Tripoli.

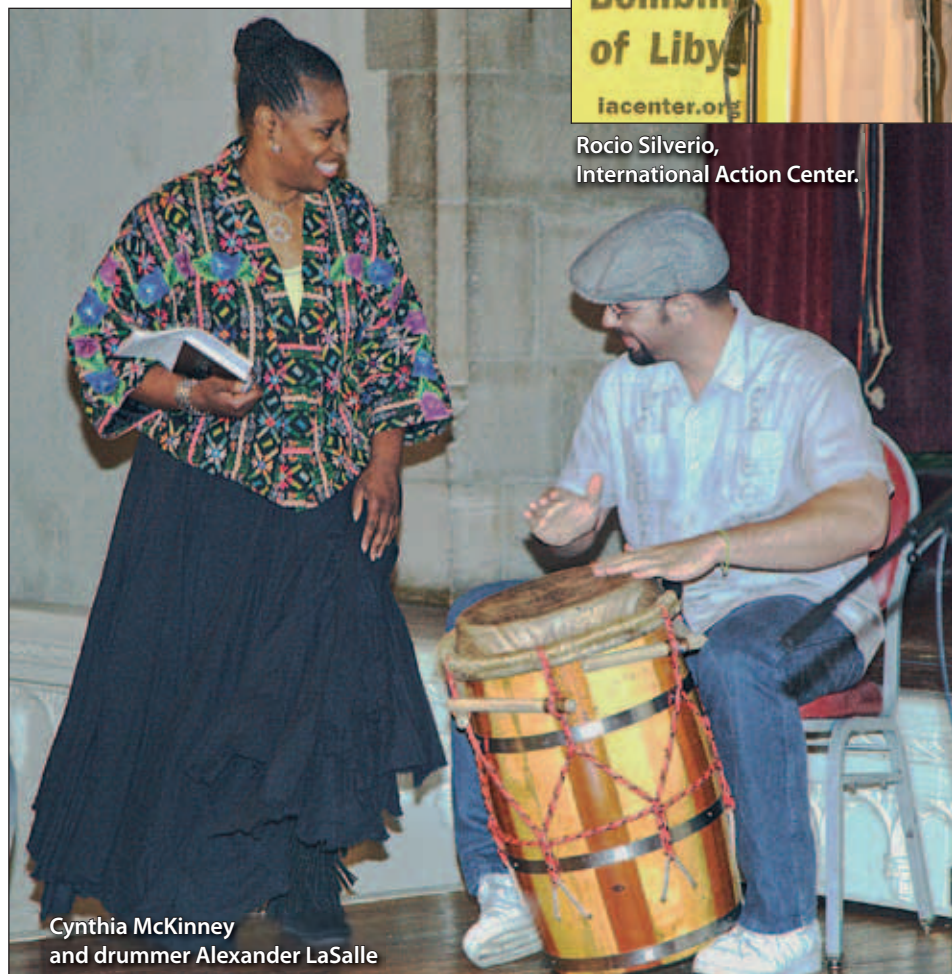
NATO headquarters in Brussels has for several weeks been weighing the political impact of continuing the bombing of a majority Muslim country during Ramadan. The fact that this is even considered is a clear indication of the miscalculation of the West in regard to its capacity to defeat the Libyan people since the war began.



Khalifa Elderbak, Libyan student



Ramsey Clark, U.N. Human Rights Award recipient.



Cynthia McKinney and drummer Alexander LaSalle



Rocio Silverio, International Action Center.

According to the Tripoli Post, “The NATO alliance thought it could finish [the war] off before the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, in time for a new government to take shape. They failed and this month could become a perilous black hole threatening to undermine their whole campaign.” (Aug. 1)

Despite numerous attempts by the African Union to broker a ceasefire inside Libya, the U.S./NATO alliance and its ally, the Transitional National Council — also known as the Interim National Council — have categorically rejected a peace deal. The A.U. since March 11 has called for an immediate ceasefire, the beginning of negotiations, and the initiation of a process of national reconciliation, while the opposition forces and the imperialists have demanded regime-change.

Referring to the U.S./NATO military forces, the Tripoli Post stresses, “In the end they appear to have decided not to let up, and by virtue of the July 31 bombings they have decided to continue their aerial attacks on the Libyan regime in a war, that, when it sparked off on February 17, was predicted to last a few weeks. It has now dragged on to become a much lengthier campaign.”

This failure on the part of the U.S./NATO alliance has prompted a new round of bombings to terrorize the Libyan civilian population. In late July the imperialist military forces bombed Tripoli International Airport, a component of the Great Man-Made River, and a peaceful march calling for national unity in the west of the country.

This peaceful gathering, which marched from Al-Sabaa, was attacked in Gwaleesh by TNC forces with NATO air support. It was reported that Belgian FN rifles were used as well as anti-aircraft weapons.

Three activists were killed in the ambush, and 70 were injured. During the course of the shooting volunteers in support of the Libyan patriots from Al-Sabaa intervened in defense of the unity march,

resulting in the deaths of 75 in the opposition forces. Following this event NATO attacked Al-Sabaa in retaliation.

Divisions among NATO & opposition forces

On July 28 one of the leaders of the TNC military wing was killed by assassins, along with at least two of his assistants. The obviously planned killing of Abdel Fatah Younis has starkly exposed the obvious divisions within the ranks of the rebels.

Younis had defected from the Libyan government in late February and was later said to be leading the war against Tripoli. He became an immediate rival of Khalifa Hifter, who had resided in Virginia at the behest of the Central Intelligence Agency since the early 1980s. When the rebellion erupted in the east of the country, Hifter was flown back to Libya and proclaimed the leader of the opposition-armed wing.

Whether the assassination of Younis was the result of a factional dispute within the TNC remains to be seen. The former Minister of Interior for the Libyan government had been summoned back to Tripoli for consultation when he was murdered.

In the aftermath of the killing, the corporate media began to report the arrest of others who the opposition said were loyal to the Gadhafi government.

Most available evidence suggests that deep divisions are occurring within the Western-backed TNC in the aftermath of the Contact Group meeting of imperialist states and their allies in Turkey in mid-July which recognized the Benghazi-based armed opposition as the sole legitimate representatives of the Libyan people.

Claims of widespread support for the opposition have been refuted in recent months with the performance of the Libyan military against the rebel forces and the mass demonstrations that have brought millions of people into the streets in defense of the Tripoli government. A British Guardian article states, “The [government] controls around 20 percent more territory

than it did in the immediate aftermath of the uprising on February 17.” (July 29)

In this same article Richard Seymour surmises, “If the Gadhafi regime is now more in control of Libya than before, then this completely undermines the simplistic view put out by the supporters of the war — and unfortunately by some elements of the resistance — that the situation was simply one of a hated tyrant hanging on through mercenary violence.”

At the same time as the divisions within the opposition are becoming more pronounced, NATO forces have been losing participants with the announced halt of air raids by Norway on Aug. 1 and the scaling back of participation by the former colonial power of Italy. The British military has stepped up its operations to fill the gap in the bombings by deploying four additional Tornado fighter planes that will carry on the air operations along with the U. S., France, Canada, Belgium, Denmark and Italy.

Alexis Crow, a security analyst for Chatham House in Britain, told the French Press Agency that the war against Libya is “turning into a complete shambles. The single greatest problem for the operation as a whole is this inability to match goals and means and match tactics with strategy.” (newsinfo.inquirer.net, July 30)

A CBS News poll several weeks ago reported that 60 percent of people in the U.S. oppose the war against Libya. This is significant despite the biased reporting by the major news networks that limit coverage and distort actual developments inside the country.

Mass meetings held around the U.S., spearheaded by former Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, have emphasized the need to divert the hundreds of billions of dollars spent on war every year to address human needs. Money is sorely needed to provide jobs to tens of millions of workers, to maintain people in their homes, and to offer universal healthcare, public services and quality education. □

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LOS ANGELES

Meeting celebrates socialist Cuba on 26th of July

By Michael Martínez
Los Angeles

Guests from all over Los Angeles and Southern California began to arrive early on the evening of July 26 to celebrate and demonstrate their solidarity with socialist Cuba. The occasion was the anniversary of the guerilla assault, led by Fidel Castro, on the Moncada garrison in 1953, which paved the way for the triumph of the Revolution in 1959. July 26 is a national holiday in socialist Cuba.

Many lent a hand with the set-up for the outdoor party, popping up the canopies, setting up tables and carrying the heavy trays and pots of the Cuban dinner prepared by Cuban hosts. Isabela Manzanares, a young, new Workers World Party supporter in Los Angeles, volunteered her entire morning. She helped the hosts prepare for the party, then bartended and greeted each guest with a Cuban beverage.

Authentic rice, black beans, roast pork, sweet plantains and yucca were served to the rhythm and flows of Cuban salsa,

mambo and guaguancó, giving the party a real Cuban flavor.

Speakers hail solidarity with Cuba

The night's program began with a talk by Aracely Espinosa, a Cuban member of WWP and life-long revolutionary, who spoke about the history of the July 26th Movement and how it paved the path to victory for socialism. John Parker, West Coast coordinator of the International Action Center, enlightened the audience with a history of Cuba's solidarity with the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S. and Africa.

Nicaraguan community leader Carlos Escorcía of ALBA-USA gave a talk on the historic relationship of the Cuban Revolution to the Nicaraguan Revolution. Shouts of "Viva Cuba" and "Viva Nicaragua" came from the crowd.

Daniel Montes, a Mexican organizer of Union del Barrio, reminded the audience that Mexico was the only country in the Western Hemisphere that never broke relations with the island after the Revolution. Not only was it the original meeting

place of Castro and legendary hero Ernesto Che Guevara, it was also the starting point from which the Cuban revolutionaries began their journey aboard the ship, the Granma. Shouts of "Viva Mexico" came from the crowd.

Service Employees union Latino Caucus leader Rosie Martinez reminded the listeners of the importance of the Cuban Revolution to trade unionists and workers in the United States. She recounted her trip to Cuba in the 1970s with the Venceremos Brigade and how it changed her life forever. She said, "For a long time I've wanted to celebrate days such as this in Los Angeles with compañeros. Thanks to the Cuban Workers World comrades, today that day is a reality."

Lawrence Reyes, a former Young Lord and also a leader of SEIU's Latino Caucus, talked about the long history and solidarity shared by Cuba and Puerto Rico, describing them as "two wings of the same bird." Among the many struggles shared by both island nations he pointed out how Cuba, yearly without fail, demands freedom for Puerto Rico in the United Nations.

Celebration attendees were honored to have Carlos Montes, a Chicano militant and Freedom Road Socialist Organization member, at the event. He recounted how the Cuban Revolution inspired the Chicano Liberation Movement for self-determination and how it still inspires him today to never give up fighting for socialism.

Erica García of the Southern California Immigration Coalition and Ron Gochez of Union del Barrio closed the program with shouts of "Viva Fidel! Viva Cuba socialista!" and "Long live revolutionary Cuba!"

In Cuba the July 26 Movement brought together revolutionaries from all walks of life in the struggle against imperialism and for a socialist program. Although the initial action failed, the July 26 Movement rallied the Cuban people to call for the release of the imprisoned revolutionaries and later to join them upon their return to the island.

The July 26 event in Los Angeles was held in that spirit of unity, and it will help pave the way for victories to come in the future. □

DREAM students win in Texas

By Gloria Rubac
Houston

Texas DREAM students — advocates and activists for the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors Act — won a major victory on July 25 as Marlon Arboleda, a University of Houston student, turned himself in to Immigration and Customs Enforcement authorities and came out with a deferred action on deportation. When Arboleda and his attorney emerged less than an hour later, shouts of joy filled the air.

The sidewalk in front of the Immigration Processing Center in north Houston was filled with young DREAM students and their supporters, who cheered upon hearing the good news. Earlier in July Arboleda's brother, Mauro Arboleda, was detained by ICE agents as he left his home to tutor a student, despite having a valid driver's license. Mauro eventually got deferred action on his deportation and was told his brother had to turn himself in to be considered for deferred action.

Mauro and Marlon Arboleda (top photo) came to the United States in 2004 to escape violence in Colombia. After being denied an asylum petition in 2007, the brothers lived a vulnerable life knowing that, at any time, they could be deported to a country they fear.

Mauro graduated in May from the University of Houston and plans to enter graduate school. An honor student, Marlon is a junior in mechanical engineering. Upon graduation, he plans to work with renewable energies and green technologies.

"This victory today raised awareness over the importance of passing the DREAM Act to ensure that good students such as the Arboleda brothers do not have to go through the same hardship. Students from Houston and across Texas were at the ICE office to support Marlon," said Cesar Espinosa, director of Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en Lucha.

FIEL sponsored the action along with United We Dream, in association with Texas Dream Alliance, the National Hispanic Professional Organization, and doz-

ens of local Houston activists.

Both of the Arboleda brothers thanked their supporters profusely and declared the struggle would continue until the DREAM Act is passed by Congress. □

WW PHOTOS: GLORIA RUBAC



Blockade challengers return



WW PHOTO: ELLIE DORRITIE

Raising their fists in triumph, the 42nd Venceremos Brigade travel-ban challengers marched across the Peace Bridge from Fort Erie, Ontario, into Buffalo, N.Y., in

open defiance of the U.S. blockade of Cuba.

They chanted, "We are the Brigade, the Venceremos Brigade!" and "In Cuban solidarity to end the blockade." In support

of the Cuban Five, who are U.S. political prisoners, they chanted, "Free the Cuban Five! We yell it out with pride!"

As the brigade returned to the United States, Pastors for Peace travel challengers were also returning from Cuba, crossing the border from Mexico into Texas. The two groups met in Havana to honor the legacy of Rev. Lucius Walker, who led the Pastors for Peace Caravan from its founding in 1991 until his death last September.

After a two-week work and study program in Cuba, the challengers came back bursting with determination to pass on their understanding of what Cuba's struggle means to the world's oppressed. They reaffirmed their commitment to work for freedom for the Cuban Five, who are serving long prison terms for trying to prevent terrorist acts against Cuba by Florida-based right-wing Cuban exile organizations.

— Report and photo by Ellie Dorrítie

Stop cuts in food stamps, WIC & funding to food pantries!

Continued from page 5

tion programs are sorely needed. More than 45 million people in the U.S. receive food stamps. In New York City, 1.7 million people rely on SNAP; one-third of them live in the Bronx.

The Solidarity Center in New York initiated the Food Is a Right Campaign to organize against these drastic cutbacks. Brigades are going to local communities to circulate petitions in protest.

The Food Is a Right Campaign invites organizations to get involved — to attend this press conference and to bring signs, pots and pans; to join in and circulate petitions; and to go to food stamp centers, grocery stores and other locations to put up informational fliers.

For information, email Foodisarightbrigade@gmail.com or call 212-633-6646.

Dominican Republic today

Interview with Narciso Isa Conde

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

Narciso Isa Conde is a Marxist political analyst, writer and veteran of the struggles against the Trujillo dictatorship and the U.S. invasion of the Dominican Republic in 1965. During the 1965 April Revolution, he represented the Communist Party in the political command of that revolution led by Coronel Francisco Caamaño. His long political career includes political imprisonment, persecution and exile during the government of Joaquín Balaguer. Isa Conde is now a leader of the Caamañoista Movement (MC) and part of the collective presidency of the Continental Bolivarian Movement.

Isa Conde spoke with Workers World's Berta Joubert-Ceci about the socio-economic and political framework of the 24-hour work stoppage that paralyzed commerce and traffic in the Dominican Republic on July 11. The action was called by the Alternative Social Forum, which includes about 50 organizations. The action was a response to the acute disaster produced by the worldwide capitalist economic crisis and the so-called corrective measures being taken by the Dominican government. The following is from Isa Conde's responses.

Overview of the situation in the D.R.

In the Dominican Republic we are suffering the consequences of the neoliberal impositions for the last several decades. The International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the U.S.A. have intervened in this country at all levels. The U.S.A. exerts its control through economic and financial mechanisms.

All aspects of the national life are touched. Even the recent constitution approved last January was enacted to fulfill that neoliberal strategy. It is a privatizing constitution that concentrates power in the hands of the president and negates collective social rights.

Between 35 to 40 percent of the national budget is committed to paying external debt. The government has resolved the very serious fiscal deficits by taking on more debt, which will very seriously jeopardize the national economy in the future. We can expect years of still more economic and social deterioration.

Besides, the D.R. has suffered the consequence of a privatization process that touched everything that was part of the national heritage from Trujillo's tyranny. The concentration of economic power in Trujillo, which was expressed by the State Sugar Council, the Corporation of Industrial Enterprises and the Dominican Electricity Corporation, has been privatized with terrible consequences. The sugar sector has been completely dismantled. Now the enormous land wealth that the SSC accumulated is being sold very cheaply. There was tremendous robbery around this as neoliberalism combined with corruption.

We also have the [bourgeois] political parties' establishment [partidocracia] that has been formed around the practices of embezzlement, corruption, appropriation of state resources and the country's natural wealth, trafficking of influences, etc. An elite of these parties has established a two-party system, a kind of institutionalized bipolar dictatorship, with the Dominican Liberation Party (PLD) on the one hand, profoundly turned to the right — this was [former President] Juan Bosch's party — and the Dominican Revolu-

tionary Party (PRD), the one of [former Afro-Dominican candidate for President] Peña Gomez, also equally turned to the right, corrupted, neoliberalized. I'm talking about the leadership of these parties, who have converted their rank-and-file members into political clients.

They also join in a partnership with different oligarchic groups, with new economic groups and also, in terms of process by which they turn with total openness to foreign capital, to transnational corporations.

There is a process of plunder in the framework of a model of accumulation that now puts great emphasis on the appropriation of the mining wealth of the country by major mining consortiums. Especially significant is the case of Barrick Gold and Unigold that are behind the large deposits of gold here and in Haiti's border area.

But there are many territorial concessions along the coast of the country masked as mining concessions. It is estimated that 60 percent of the beach-accessible coastline of the country has been granted special mining concessions without any mining being done. This indicates a mechanism to evade some regulations regarding what are called forest reserves, or protected areas. They evade them through the mining concessions.

Now the Dominican state, with the measures of a neoliberal character like what they call the flexibility of labor in the free-trade agreements with the U.S.A. and Central America, called the RD-CAFTA, has seriously reduced the possibilities of expanding domestic production. Domestic producers have been co-opted.

On the other hand, they have created an extremely impoverished society. Certainly 60 percent of the population will be living in conditions of poverty. Official figures present 16 percent unemployment, but that is based on a misleading calculation. That refers to absolute unemployment, while 53 percent of the population is in what is called the marginal economy, temporary, unstable work with no security. Therefore, real unemployment is around 25 to 30 percent.

All the basic services are damaged. On health, the Dominican Republic ranks among the bottom; I think it is surpassed only by Haiti, also in the field of education. Now with the appearance of cholera, the entire health system is flooded, lacking the capacity to respond.

There is privatization of Social Security under which the so-called RS — private intermediaries administering the health system — keep most of the money, along with the banks that manage pensions. There are about 130 billion [Dominican pesos] in the hands of private banks from the workers' pensions, and the banks operate with that capital.

The same thing happened with the Occupational Hazard Administration, which recently tried to pull a scam by using about 10 billion pesos of those funds. Protests by the people stopped it. The yellow trade union leadership, the state and the employers had wanted to divide the booty among themselves, alleging that it was not being used at the moment.

In this context, with all the fundamental services deteriorated, the case of the privatization of the electrical system, the national energy system, has indeed been catastrophic, because the Dominican state has had to multiply the subsidy by 16 times what it was when the state owned the system.

The rate paid for power has risen significantly; the officials claim that it is because fuel costs have risen. Fuel is really a source of revenue for the government. More than half of the price of fuel in the D.R. is taxes that the government keeps. The tax system has been increasingly modified toward taxes on consumption rather than taxes on property or income.

And all this has resulted in the impoverishment of the people and theft of the natural resources of the country. The resources have been appropriated by a powerful small sector. In these conditions social tensions have grown, and this is what explains the reaction of the Dominican people to the call to strike.

All the conditions are given and even more — there is a degree of outrage, a degree of discontent that at some point can even grow and explode in multiple ways.

The problem is a problem of the political system, of the neoliberal model, of capitalism in crisis. The responses given to the crisis of capitalism are the ones that work on behalf of global capitalism. And that is why all are to the detriment of the working population, of the most disadvantaged sectors. They try to accentuate all oppressions, not only class oppression, but also the oppressions of gender, racism, youth versus old, and anti-Haitian sentiment in order to super-exploit Haitian men and women.

A two-party system

The PLD is the same thing as the PRD. They are both wedded to the neoliberal policies, to the same dependent capitalism, and on the issue of corruption they are complicit in the system of impunity. Both dominate the system which is very undemocratic, very exclusive. Between the two, they control practically all institutions of the country. In the electoral system, the ruling PLD now dominates, but it shares control with the PRD.

The national police are criminal, discredited, a Mafia organization. The anti-drugs national leadership is the same. It is mixed in all the shady businesses. The armed forces are also infiltrated and associated with different aspects of the drug trade. There is widespread corruption.

Transnational corporations exploit gold

Barrick Gold presents itself as a company based in Canada, but the Bush family has a lot of power in it and the most powerful economic groups from Chile linked to [former criminal dictator] Pinochet as well. Barrick is the most aggressive mining company worldwide on the subject of gold, cobalt and titanium, a highly criminal enterprise located in the center of the country.

Unigold is virtually a subsidiary of BG. The contract with this company is an extremely onerous, embarrassing one that the legislators approved without reading it. It was an agreement between Fernández and the political leader of the PRD at the time.

Gold is always associated with other strategic minerals. That is what these companies are looking at. Unigold is established at the border with Haiti, and that site is Haitian and Dominican at the same time. Unigold has strong border control with the army that is occupying Haiti.

U.S. presence

The U.S. military has also intervened here, recently carrying out an operation. [The Pentagon program] "Beyond the Horizon" deployed U.S. troops in Mao, in the province of Valverde in the northwest.

They stayed for almost four months, doing reconnaissance work. They talk about building schools, some bridges, but the reality is that their presence is linked to the mining issue, to exploring the terrain.

The U.S. military go from province to province exploring, also for strategic purposes which have to do with future plans of occupying the island. They have already occupied Haiti, so the threat against us is permanent. The country is an area of strategic military rearguard for the United States, and the island also has potential in the field of gold and other minerals.

Role of Dominicans in the U.S.

There is a very active group of Dominicans living in the U.S. who are following the situation here through the various media and through ongoing communication with their families. This Diaspora is very supportive of the internal and national struggles, and it expressed its solidarity with the strike in many ways.

Caamañoista Movement's political proposal

These conditions are capitalism's answer to its systemic, structural crisis of major dimensions, perhaps the largest in its history. It is a response that impoverishes even more of these societies in order to save capital. It is in this context that the major social tensions happen in the Dominican Republic, and that is why it is a system that deserves much more than a one-day strike. It requires a process of continuous mobilization.

Seventy percent of Dominican society strongly rejects the government. A recent Central American survey puts Leonel Fernández among the most unpopular presidents right now in Central America and the Caribbean. He is even less popular than [Honduran President Pepe] Lobo.

Naturally, this favors the PRD in terms of electoral competition, but there is a large part of society that does not want either of the two, but does not have a political channel to express it in a consistent and forceful manner. That is the great challenge of this period. To build that alternative transformative force able to awaken hope and win the confidence of the large part of society who want a change in direction for the country.

Although generally all the discontent or much of the discontent is aimed against the government of the day, we are really committed to increasing awareness, to deepening our reflection.

And instead of PRD or LDP governments, both looking to alliances with the old Balaguerismo [repressive style and figures tied to ex-president Joaquín Balaguer], now largely discredited, very disorganized and polluted, but contaminated with authoritarianism, there is a need to discard this in favor of the power of the people, a government of the people that can rise from the grass-roots insurgency in the country.

The failure of those in power to respond to these popular demands shows that the crucial issue in the country is the question of power. We are working intensively toward rebellion, to generalize the rebellion through multiple forms — civil disobedience, expression of social outrage, stoppages, strikes — in short, to use all possible modalities to point in the direction of taking power.

What the progressive movement in the U.S. can do

It is very important to expose the reality of the Dominican Republic and clarify

Continued on page 10

Workers World Party speaker says:

'The war on Libya is against all of Africa'

Johnnie Stevens of Workers World Party gave the following talk at the July 30 meeting in New York's Riverside Church protesting the war against Libya.

Attacking Libya is attacking Africa!

The war against Libya is a colonial war against all of Africa!

I want to ask you all to come out on Sat., Aug. 13, to march in Harlem against the attacks on Libya and Zimbabwe and against the economic cuts of teachers and workers. Who's all coming out for the march in Harlem, please stand up.

(The audience stood up.)

Our party's first demonstration was in 1959 at Rockefeller Center in defense of Congo. This great country in the center of Africa was then still a colony of Belgium. Less than two years later, the CIA and Belgian colonialists tortured and murdered Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba on Jan. 17, 1961. President Eisenhower ordered Lumumba's assassination.

The U.S., France, Britain and Italy are trying to recolonize Libya today, just like they recolonized Congo 50 years ago.

Back then the colonialists used a traitor named Moise Tshombe to seize mineral-rich Katanga province. Today the Libyan traitors have seized Benghazi.

The Rockefellers had a major stake in the Belgian mining giant Union Minière that exploited Congo's incredible mineral wealth, particularly in Katanga province.

Everybody knows the current war against Libya is a bloody oil war. Libya has the greatest petroleum reserves of any country in Africa.

Big Oil ordered the bombs that have been dropped on the children of Libya. And the Rockefeller dynasty is still the biggest family among all the oil billionaires. These pigs have been exploiting Africa for a century.

It was David Rockefeller — then the chair of Chase Manhattan Bank — who saved South Africa's apartheid regime from bankruptcy following the Sharpeville massacre in 1960.

Libya is a former Italian colony. Hundreds of thousands of Libyans were killed by the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, who was finally strung up by Italian workers.

Mussolini invaded Ethiopia. Just like oppressed people stood with Ethiopia in 1935, so do we stand with Libya today against imperialist assault.

These imperialists lie when they claim they're for "democracy" in Libya. Who elected the so-called rebels in Libya? Nobody!

These rebels in Libya are no different than the Confederate rebels, Jefferson Davis and Stonewall Jackson. The Libyan rebels have lynched Black African



Johnnie Stevens

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

workers. Racist murals attacking Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi can be seen in the rebel capital of Benghazi.

The great ally and servant of Big Oil — the military-industrial complex — has also made big bucks from attacking Libya. Hundreds of cruise missiles have been fired at Libya, and now the stockpile has to be replaced. That's plenty of good business for Boeing, Lockheed and the rest of the merchants of death.

Each of these cruise missiles cost at least \$1.4 million. That's enough money to hire 20 teachers. Yet billionaire Mayor Bloomberg has cut thousands of teacher jobs in New York City.

The military-industrial complex is also making thousands of drones that are killing people from Pakistan and Afghanistan to Libya. Drones are being used to hunt Gadhafi.

And they're going to be used by the cops right here in the U.S. — if they aren't being used already. J. Edgar Hoover and Cointelpro would have loved to use drones to hunt the Panthers and Sister Angela Davis.

But as Dr. Huey P. Newton said, the power of the people is greater than the man's technology. The people united will defeat the drones.

The war against Libya is a racist war. It's accompanied by increased racism inside the United States.

The former head of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn, is a rapist pig. We stand with Nafissatou Diallo, the survivor of Strauss-Kahn's rape. The media, like the vile New York Post, have smeared this brave hotel worker, who is an immigrant from Guinea.

Strauss-Kahn must be punished for raping Nafissatou Diallo. As the former head of the IMF, Strauss-Kahn must be punished for raping poor countries, from Asia to Africa to Latin America.

Libya — the real Libya of working people who resist the continual U.S./NATO bombing — is not alone. The countries of the world's "South" have said no to the war against Libya. The president of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Hugo Chávez Frías, has led the way in defending Libya. All of us here are wishing a speedy recovery to President Chávez!

The African Union has also denounced the war against Libya. But the capitalist media has ignored this real news. They're too busy demonizing African leaders like Gadhafi and Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe.

Zimbabwe is also on imperialism's hit list. Mugabe has given farms to thousands of Africans whose land was stolen by colonialists. This is what should have happened in the United States following the Civil War.

Get out of Libya! Hands off Zimbabwe! Forward to a united socialist Africa! □

At McKinney rally in New York

Anti-war & Black activists unite against Libya war

By Deirdre Griswold
New York

The destructive bombing attacks on Libya by the Pentagon and NATO are highly unpopular in the United States, although you wouldn't know it from corporate media coverage.

Proof of this could be seen in a 15-city speaking tour, sponsored by the International Action Center, in which former Congressperson Cynthia McKinney is reporting on her June fact-finding trip to Libya with the Dignity delegation. McKinney has attracted large audiences in cities across the country.

New York on July 30 was no exception. McKinney spoke to a standing-room crowd here at historic Riverside Church in a room that seated more than 400.

The meeting was well attended by activists from various anti-war organizations. It also attracted an equal number of community organizers and leaders from nearby Harlem.

When she was in Congress, McKinney represented a largely African-American district in Georgia. She and other speakers characterized the attack on Libya as a "racist war" that is part of an imperialist strategy to recolonize Africa.

In her talk, McKinney put the war against Libya in the context of the continuing brutality in the U.S. against people of color, despite the election of a Black president. She called out the names of half a dozen innocent young Black men who have recently been gunned down by police, from San Francisco to New York.

Sharing the podium with McKinney were prominent fighters for justice in the New York metropolitan area, including Larry Hamm of the People's Organization for Progress in Newark, N.J. Two days earlier, McKinney had spoken to another standing-room-only meeting in Newark organized by POP. Later, the Newark City Council gave McKinney an award for telling truth to power.

Minister Akbar Muhammed, International Representative of the Nation of Islam, who visited Libya with the Dignity delegation, stressed at the New York meeting the importance of the developing alliance among African-American forces, the anti-imperi-

Join Cynthia McKenna to hear her: Report from Libya on the Impact of the U.S. /NATO War in Africa

See the cities and upcoming dates listed below in a national 17 city-tour beginning on July 7 organized by International Action Center and others in coordination with many anti-war and community organizations.

(Full listing with time, and place and coordinators at www.IACenter.org)

Aug. 6 Saturday **Roxbury, MA** 4 p.m.
St. Katherine Drexel Church, 175 Ruggles St.

Aug. 7 Sunday **Los Angeles, CA** 2 p.m.
SEIU Local 721 Auditorium, 500 S Virgil Ave

Aug. 9 Tuesday **Vancouver, Canada** 7 p.m.
Vancouver Heritage Hall, 3102 Main St.

Aug 13 Saturday **Millions March in Harlem**
See ad on page 6 for more information

Aug. 14 Sunday **Rocky Mount, NC** 3 p.m.
Booker T. Washington Theater, 170 E. Thomas St.

Aug. 14 Sunday **Durham, NC** 7 p.m.
St Joseph's AME Church, 2521 Fayetteville St.

Aug. 19 Friday **St. Louis**

Aug. 20 Saturday **Pittsburgh, PA**

Aug. 27 Saturday **Detroit, MI** 4 p.m.
U Mich. 3662 Woodward Ave., & M.L King Blvd

alist left and Muslims in opposing U.S. aggression in Africa and the Middle East.

The coalition of forces sponsoring the New York meeting and others showed that the active anti-war movement, especially those groups affiliated with the United National Antiwar Coalition and the Answer Coalition, had recognized the imperialist, predatory character of a war that the Obama administration claimed was to "protect civilians."

Large crowds in Atlanta, other cities

A week earlier, McKinney had spoken before another large crowd in Atlanta in her home state. There, too, turnout was massive from the Black community, whose youth are constantly besieged by recruiters for the armed forces — often seen as the only alternative to nonexistent jobs and education for those in the U.S. who suffer racist oppression.

Ramsey Clark and Sara Flounders, of the International Action Center who spoke at both these meetings, stressed the responsibility of anti-war forces in the United States to stand up against the Pentagon and the corporate-military-industrial complex, especially at a time when the public treasury is being looted to pay for ever more frequent and costly aggression against poor countries.

Khalifa Elderbak, a young Libyan studying in the U.S., told the New York audience he was astounded by the media lies about what was happening in his country. He described how, seeing on the news that his home town had been bombed by the Gadhafi government of Libya, he called dozens of relatives and friends back home, only to be told that the

story was totally false.

The New York program also featured speakers who raised issues of unemployment, hunger and homelessness, which are endemic in communities of color. High school student Dinae Anderson spoke eloquently about the hunger already gripping poor

areas. She informed about a campaign in New York to restore and expand food stamps under the slogan "Feed the hungry, not the Pentagon."

Johnnie Stevens, speaking for Workers World Party, got a warm response as he urged participation in an Aug. 13 protest in Harlem against imperialist intervention in Africa. He then recapitulated decades of deadly U.S. imperialist intervention in Africa, from the assassination of Congo's independence leader, Patrice Lumumba, to today's build-up of U.S. forces on the continent. He compared the "rebels" in Libya to the "rebels" in the U.S. Civil War who tried to perpetuate the enslavement of African people.

Glen Ford, of the Black Is Back Coalition, analyzed the role of President Barack Obama in carrying out the program of the financiers and warmongers. He reminded the audience that Obama, even while campaigning on the slogan of change, had said two weeks before his election that he would be a compromiser, and he certainly has kept that promise.

Teresa Gutierrez of the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, Rocio Silverio of the IAC and Professor Asha Samad co-chaired the rally, which opened with a welcome from the Rev. Robert B. Coleman of the Riverside Church Prison Ministries. □



Narciso Isa Conde

Continued from page 9

that it is not only a subject of Fernández and the LDP as the ruling party, but that the problem is the system. That we are against an institutionalized dictatorship with two poles, the PLD and the PRD. Also showing solidarity with our struggle, mobilizing against the symbols of Dominican power in the U.S.A. like the consulates, embassy and representatives of the dominant forces here, is very important to us. □

Don't listen to U.S. media lies

The truth behind China's train tragedy

By Stephen Millies

A terrible train wreck occurred July 23 in China's Zhejiang province near Wenzhou, about 220 miles south of Shanghai. Thirty-nine people were killed and 200 injured as a moving train crashed into a stalled train. Passenger cars were thrown off a viaduct.

People around the world were saddened by the loss of life in China's train disaster. Many Chinese are upset over this tragedy and are wondering how it could have happened. The railroad line opened in 2009.

Unlike President George W. Bush, who let Black and poor people drown and starve in New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao went to the scene and comforted survivors in hospitals. Some railroad officials have already been fired as an investigation into the wreck continues.

What is known so far is that lightning apparently knocked out the overhead power line, forcing one train to stop. The lightning strike also changed the stop signal so the following train was allowed to proceed. Because of this malfunctioning signal, the engineer had no idea there was a stalled train ahead.

Railroad signal technology has developed over the last 160 years, yet signal failures still occasionally occur.

In the late 1980s this writer was working in an Amtrak signal tower in New Jersey. A commuter train was crossing over in front of an Amtrak train near Philadelphia despite a "clear" signal allowing the Amtrak

train to proceed. Fortunately, the Amtrak engineer saw the other train in time and was able to stop the Amtrak train.

Behind China's rail growth

Socialist China's answer to the capitalist economic crisis has been to build railroads, dozens of subways and plenty of new housing. What a contrast to capitalist decay in the United States where just in New York City alone, St. Vincent's, St. John's, Cabrini and Sydenham hospitals have closed.

From about 400 miles of high-speed railroad lines in 2008, China now has over 5,000 miles. China's latest five-year plan calls for almost 19,000 more miles of railroad, not all of it high speed, at the cost of over \$400 billion.

On June 30 China opened an 832-mile high-speed line linking Beijing and Shanghai. Every day 90 trains are scheduled to go each way, with the fastest ones making the trip in less than five hours.

Going over frozen tundra and high mountains, the railroad line linking Tibet Province with the rest of China is an engineering marvel. Most Tibetans had been serfs under the Dalai Lama until they were freed by the People's Liberation Army in 1959.

Meanwhile, at least 60,000 miles of railroad lines in the United States were abandoned. Since 1947, 1.2 million railroad jobs have been abolished.

Healthy debate, media lies

There's a big debate in China over building the high-speed rail system. Some

wonder if tickets will be too expensive for workers and peasants, or if dangerous shortcuts might be taken because of the rapid construction.

In the last 30 years, though the socialist state still controls much of the Chinese economy, capitalists have been allowed to flourish. Are some of these crooks bribing officials for railroad contracts?

Relatives of those killed in the crash have demonstrated and demanded compensation.

None of this activity is counterrevolutionary. Members of the 80-million-strong Communist Party are joining this healthy debate and asking tough questions.

The defamation campaign of the worldwide capitalist media is completely different. The media harp on the fact that the famous Japanese bullet trains have never killed anybody. That is good for capitalist Japan.

German capitalists are also known for having a good railroad system. This reputation didn't prevent 101 people from being killed in a train crash near the village of Eschede on June 3, 1998.

This was the highest number of people ever killed in a high-speed train wreck. Yet as the China Daily noted on Aug. 1, this Eschede disaster is missing from big-business-owned media accounts.

The real capitalist attitude was expressed by a blogger on businessinsider.com, who advised investors, "If one is so keen to profit on tragedy, buy Chinese airlines stocks." The Washington Post on July 27 lectured China about its rail sys-

tem and wrote that it cannot be a model for the U.S.

Chinese workers don't need the Washington Post to tell them how to build railroads. Chinese labor was indispensable for the first U.S. transcontinental railroad crossing California's Sierra Nevada Mountains. In return, Chinese Americans got racism and death, such as the lynching of at least 18 Chinese in Los Angeles in 1871.

Where were these Post editorial writers when nine people died in a train crash on the Washington Metro in the nation's capital on June 22, 2009?

Completely preventable train accidents have occurred near Washington, D.C. Sixteen people were killed in the Chase, Md., disaster on Jan. 4, 1987. Eleven people — including eight youths who had just graduated from a Job Corps camp — were killed in a crash outside Silver Spring, Md., on Feb. 16, 1996.

While engineers were blamed for these disasters, both these tragedies never would have occurred if necessary safety equipment hadn't been removed.

Behind the corporate-owned media bashing of China is a fear of Chinese competition in technology and construction. U.S., European and Japanese capitalists don't want People's China to develop its own high-speed rail technology and signal systems.

But China will not be stopped from moving forward.

The writer is a member of Local 1402, Transportation Communications International Union/IAM.

Cholera rages in Haiti, homeless displaced— new president chooses repression

By G. Dunkel

The desperate situation of the Haitian people has given rise to political tensions in the country's Parliament and anger among the people against the U.S.-backed regime. The only effective aid for combating the cholera epidemic has come from socialist Cuba.

Parliament rejected Haitian President Michel Martelly's first choice for prime minister. He then picked Bernard Gousse, who was dismissed as justice minister seven years ago under U.S. pressure because he was "so repressive, uncontrollable and ineffective," according to WikiLeaks revelations as reported in *Haiti-Liberté*. (July

28-Aug. 2) Gousse also faces significant opposition in Parliament.

On July 25, in an incident still being investigated, Member of Parliament Donald Polyte was shot and killed by one of his bodyguards. On the same day, MP Romain Masset was greeted with rocks and bottles when he tried to visit his hometown. His mother's house was burned down, and Masset escaped with minor damages.

On July 24 Martelly was greeted with rocks and bottles when he visited a suburb of Cap-Haitien, Haiti's second largest city. The cops arrested about 30 people.

With the coming of the rainy season, cholera has struck widely in Haiti, espe-

cially in the north. Thousands of people are falling sick, many of them dying. In Port de Paix, the hospitals are so full they have had to turn away desperately sick people. (HLLN news feed, July 29)

The Lancet medical journal says that the extent of the cholera epidemic has been undercounted. (March 16)

In a country with adequate sanitation, clean water, available rehydration supplies and ample antibiotics, cholera would not pose a serious threat. However, there are no public sanitation facilities in all of Haiti — just open channels. Less than half the people had access to potable water before the quake. After the quake, the supply for the 630,000 people living in displaced persons camps is haphazard.

Cuba leads the way in cholera epidemic

Both the United States and Cuba have responded to the cholera epidemic. The differences are readily apparent.

A State Department fact sheet issued in January says that the U.S. has supplied \$41 million to the Haitian government's efforts and helped set up a coordinating center in Port au Prince. As normal for projects run through the U.S. Agency for International Development, however, most of that \$41 million was spent in the U.S. for supplies delivered.

Cuba, which has had a significant medical presence in Haiti for 12 years, reinforced its aid after the earthquake and increased it again after the cholera epidemic began last year. About 1,300 Cuban medical personnel are now in Haiti.

Health authorities from Cuba, Haiti and the Dominican Republic exchanged experiences at a conference in Santo Domingo in late April. UNICEF and the Pan American

Health Organization praised the approach of the Cuban medical brigade in Haiti. They said that Cuba had taken a "major step" forward in infectious disease treatment.

Lorenzo Sommariba, head of Cuba's Medical Brigade, said the Cuban teams had engaged in "active research." They visited 292,875 houses, contacted 1.4 million people, brought 5,342 patients to assistance centers and instructed more than 3 million Haitians on the prevention and treatment of cholera. (Cuba International, no. 379)

Housing is in crisis

While cholera is killing a thousand people a month, all levels of the Haitian government are trying to force people out of the camps with ripped tents and jerry-rigged huts that still shelter more than 600,000 people who were made homeless in the aftermath of the Jan. 12, 2010, earthquake.

At its height, more than 1 million people were in these camps, which are scattered all over Port-au-Prince and the surrounding areas devastated by the earthquake. Some who had lived in the camps left to get shelter with family members in rural Haiti, where it is hard to earn a living. Others moved back to their old neighborhoods to live in tottering buildings that haven't yet collapsed.

The government uses the force of bulldozers, front-loaders and police to scrape away the tents and huts. Bri Kouri Nouvèl Gaye reports that the cops attacked Camp Django in Delmas, a suburb of Port-au-Prince, and beat up protesters. About 250 families lived in the camp. They were offered 5,000 gourdes (\$125) to leave, but got no other help, no leads on new housing or schools for their children. (www.defend.ht)

FIST launches in Detroit

By Derek Thacker
Detroit

The founding meeting of the new Detroit chapter of Fight Imperialism, Stand Together — FIST — was held on July 22.

Detroit has not had an active branch of the militant youth organization for about a year. But since late 2010, new youth have begun taking an interest in activism and have gravitated to work with the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice, the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shutoffs, and Workers World Party.

Some of these youth moved to form a new FIST branch in Detroit in order to combat the effects of imperialism at home and abroad. The attendance was excellent at the initial meeting and the discussions were meaningful. Introductions were con-

ducted, and the revolutionary program of FIST was introduced and reviewed.

Detroit FIST is honored to be given its own office by Workers World Party, which has entrusted the upper floor of its building to the youth activists. They are currently organizing and renovating the space for organizational meetings, classes, social activities, cultural events, game nights, projects and more. From here the group will plan for activist work ranging from anti-war demonstrations to fighting against the capitalist crisis at home by combating home foreclosures and cuts to public services.

The group invites all youth activists in Detroit interested in taking part in the anti-imperialist, pro-working-class struggle to join us. Detroit FIST is eagerly seeking new members and can be contacted at 586-744-2797 or 779-423-4545. □

‘Crisis’ del techo de la deuda producida por Wall Street Políticos roban a trabajadores, protegen a ricos

Por Fred Goldstein

Se llegue o no a un acuerdo en Washington sobre cómo elevar el techo de la deuda y evitar un incumplimiento por el gobierno, los/as trabajadores/as y los/as oprimidos/as no tienen ninguna voz independiente en el debate. El proceso no les da otra opción que aceptar el resultado de la venenosa guerra política en el establecimiento capitalista.

Varios factores han hecho que la guerra política sobre la ampliación del techo de la deuda entre los dos partidos corporativos sea especialmente turbulenta. En primer lugar, está la próxima elección presidencial del 2012 y la lucha por el control del gobierno federal y su presupuesto de \$4 billones (millón millones).

Agravando esta guerra está la aparición del sector del Partido del Té dentro del Partido Republicano que ha llevado la política de las negociaciones cada vez más a la derecha.

Por último, la lucha se lleva a cabo en el contexto de la crisis económica capitalista.

El problema de fondo del déficit es el masivo gasto de emergencia por el gobierno de billones de dólares para el rescate de bancos y empresas destinados a evitar una crisis del capitalismo mundial. En el corto plazo sin embargo, la crisis del techo de la deuda está políticamente impulsada por la ultraderecha.

La lucha comenzó cuando los republicanos se negaron a llegar a un acuerdo para elevar el techo de la deuda a menos que el gobierno de Obama accediera reducir el déficit federal cortando los programas públicos del Seguro Social, Medicare, Medicaid y otros gastos sociales que benefician a las grandes masas. El gobierno de Obama accedió recortar masivamente los programas básicos, pero no lo suficiente para satisfacer a la derecha.

Los republicanos también quieren bloquear cualquier aumento en los impuestos a los ricos. Obama quiere que paguen una pequeña parte de los gastos.

En esta lucha por los términos de elevar el techo de la deuda, los/as trabajadores/as deben elegir una de las diferentes opciones planteadas por las facciones de los partidos de las grandes empresas.

La lucha por el techo de la deuda es sobre cómo proteger a los ricos

La riña por elevar el techo de la deuda pública es al final una lucha sobre dos cosas: 1) la forma de garantizar el pago continuado del gobierno de miles de millones de dólares a los ricos y avaros tenedores de bonos y 2) cuántos billones de dólares se pueden tomar de los programas que por derecho le pertenecen a los/as trabajadores/as y al pueblo oprimido como el Seguro Social, Medicare, Medicaid y otros beneficios.

La atmósfera de crisis generada por todos los órganos de propaganda de las grandes empresas — redes de televisión, televisión por cable, periódicos, revistas, blogs, etc. — es un reflejo de la ansiedad de banqueros, tenedores de bonos, compañías de seguros, hedge funds y otros inversionistas sobre la posibilidad de un impago con todas sus implicaciones.

Una y otra vez se escucha la demanda de un acuerdo que aumente el tope de la deuda, evitar el incumplimiento y mantener la “plena fe y el crédito del gobierno

de EE.UU.”. En la práctica esto significa que se mantenga la seguridad de que los tenedores de bonos no pierdan ni un pago del principal o intereses en sus inversiones en bonos del gobierno de los EE.UU.

Esta es la “crisis” futura que la Casa Blanca, los/as líderes del Congreso de los grandes partidos empresariales, y todos los expertos de la burguesía, independientemente de su opinión sobre lo que se debe hacer, dicen que se debe evitar.

Pero ya hay una crisis — una crisis de la clase obrera desde hace cuatro años. No sólo tiene que ser evitada, sino que tiene que ser revertida.

La verdadera crisis: empleos, vivienda, cuidado de la salud, hambre

Los/as trabajadores/as y los oprimidos deben liberarse de estos argumentos adaptados a los intereses de los/as capitalistas ricos/as. Desde el punto de vista de la clase obrera, la crisis del techo de la deuda no debe ser sobre pagar a los ricos y recortar los programas que son derechos del pueblo trabajador.

¿Por qué no aumentar el techo de la deuda para crear un programa masivo de trabajos para lograr empleos para todos/as? Si el gobierno va a pedir más dinero prestado, que ponga a trabajar a los/as 30 millones de trabajadores/as desempleados/as o subempleados/as. Mejor aún, no aumenten el techo de la deuda y mejor creen puestos de trabajo con los fondos que de lo contrario irían a los bancos y tenedores de bonos.

¿Por qué debe preocuparse nuestra clase, la clase obrera y los/as explotados/as por un millonario o multimillonario que no reciba un pago de interés cuando a 50 millones de personas en este país les falta alimentos? ¿Por qué deben preocuparse los/as trabajadores/as de que algunos/as millonarios/as no puedan pagar los gastos para mantener sus mansiones cuando ya millones están sin hogar y a millones más les esperan ejecuciones hipotecarias?

De hecho, la justicia exige que las ganancias de los banqueros y otros financieros sean utilizadas para ayudar a las 47 millones de personas que dependen de cupones de alimentos. Se debe utilizar para dar atención médica a las 50 millones de personas que no la tienen porque los servicios de salud han sido entregados a las compañías de seguros y los monopolios farmacéuticos con fines de lucro.

El Partido del Té y la crisis

Una pregunta debe ser respondida en la crisis actual. ¿Cómo es posible que aunque los principales financieros de Wall Street y el establecimiento político hayan estado pidiendo una solución a este problema durante varias semanas, se haya llegado tan cerca del impago? Ya está la posibilidad de degradar la calificación crediticia del gobierno estadounidense en la agenda, independientemente de si hay o no impago.

Una respuesta es que los/as republicanos/as harían cualquier cosa por sabotear que la administración Obama gane la Casa Blanca en 2012. Pero irónicamente, un impago amenazaría a los mismos banqueros y tenedores de bonos que definen las metas en el Partido Republicano.

El portavoz de la cámara de representantes John Boehner respondía a Wall Street cuando la semana pasada entró en negociaciones secretas con el Presidente Barack Obama para llegar a un “gran acu-

erdo”. Wall Street había estado satisfecho hasta entonces con utilizar la lucha como un ariete contra Medicare, Medicaid, Seguro Social y otros programas básicos. Pero al acercarse la fecha límite del 2 de agosto, el capital financiero estaba ansioso por una solución.

Los elementos fundamentales que acordaron Obama y Boehner incluyen \$250 miles de millones en recortes de Medicare y un aumento paulatino en la edad de elegibilidad de 65 a 67. Obama acordó recortar \$110 mil millones a Medicaid y otros programas de salud, mientras que Boehner quería \$150 mil millones. Otros programas nacionales iban a ser cortados entre \$200 a \$214 mil millones. Se ajustaría la fórmula del aumento por costo vida del Seguro Social, lo que reduciría los pagos.

Cuando ambas partes estaban acercándose, se filtró la noticia de las negociaciones y Boehner fue obligado a abandonar las negociaciones y denunciarlas. Desde entonces, su posición se volvió más y más a la derecha, hasta la intransigencia. El ala liberal del Partido Demócrata también se rebeló contra los recortes, pero Obama se mantuvo leal a su trato con Boehner.

Para entender el fracaso de las negociaciones es importante recordar que de los/as 290 republicanos/as en la cámara, al menos 141 están respaldados/as por el Express del Partido del Té o “Freedom Works” (La Libertad Funciona), una organización afín al Partido del Té, o son parte del Caucus del Partido del Té del Congreso.

Estas fuerzas han sido criticadas en los medios de comunicación capitalista como “infantiles” y “locos”. Pero estas caracterizaciones ocultan un punto político importante sobre la política capitalista estadounidense.

Estas fuerzas surgieron en el 2008 en la lucha contra una reunión pública celebrada sobre el tema de salud. Un movimiento “popular” ficticio denominado Movimiento del “Astroturf”, fue organizado y financiado por multimillonarios de derecha como los hermanos Koch, la Fundación Bradley, la Fundación Olin y otros que están en guerra con la clase política en ambos partidos y con la principal corriente de la clase dominante en Wall Street.

Estas son las fuerzas que le escapieron al representante afro-americano John Lewis y a miembros homosexuales del Congreso en las escaleras del Capitolio durante la campaña electoral de 2008. También llegaron con armas a las reuniones públicas que se organizaron para defender la reforma de salud. Estas son las fuerzas que confrontaron a Arlen Specter, republicano conservador, en una reunión en Pensilvania y le hicieron callar a gritos. Eventualmente, ellos lo quitaron de la política burguesa aunque era un miembro reaccionario del establecimiento.

Las fuerzas del Partido del Té están financiadas por estos multimillonarios a través de anuncios de campaña, organización y personal, y fueron llevadas a puestos políticos en las elecciones del 2010 por el ala ultra-derechista de la clase dominante. Los hermanos Koch están pagando las cuentas del gobernador Scott Walker en Wisconsin para destruir los sindicatos del sector público. Los ideólogos del Partido del Té reflejan la ideología de sus benefactores. Para esta derecha extrema, que está fuera del establecimiento político, el impago no es un peligro.

Cuando Martin Bashir de MSNBC entrevistó a Judson Phillips, fundador de la Nación del Partido del Té el 25 de julio, Phillips dejó escapar la estrategia del Partido del Té sobre el incumplimiento. Dijo que no era la primera opción. Que para el 2 de agosto el gobierno federal podría evitar el incumplimiento al pagar su servicio de deuda a los banqueros y tenedores de bonos pero dejando de “malgastar” en programas de ayuda social.

En otras palabras, al empujar el estancamiento hasta el final, una estrategia de los multimillonarios ultra-derechistas del Partido del Té es forzar al gobierno a escoger entre el impago y el pagar Seguro Social, Medicare, Medicaid y otros beneficios.

Aunque éste escenario sea dudoso, revela no obstante lo que están pensando los ultraderechistas. Y éste es el porqué la política de los partidos de la clase dominante están funcionando con propósitos contrarios a los intereses más amplios de la clase dominante en conjunto. Desechar a miembros del Partido del Té como “locos” en este debate es ocultar su papel como instrumento del ala ultra-derechista de la clase dominante. Sea cual sea su condición clínica, son una expresión directa de las fuerzas de la clase dominante. Y eso es lo que es importante para la clase trabajadora.

La crisis económica global

Finalmente, sea cual fuera el resultado de este conflicto, no erradicará la crisis fundamental del sistema capitalista. Como representantes de las clases dominantes europeas, Ángela Merkel de Alemania y Nicolás Sarkozy de Francia junto a otros países de la zona euro, acaban de llegar a un acuerdo para rescatar la clase dominante de Grecia y también establecer un súper fondo para rescatar gobiernos y bancos que en el futuro estarían en peligro de impago en Europa.

Esto señala una perspectiva de crisis a largo plazo impuesta por el crecimiento lento o el declive actual en muchos de los países capitalistas allí — incluyendo ahora Italia y España, la tercera y cuarta economías más grandes de la zona del euro.

En EE.UU. las proyecciones de crecimiento están siendo reducidas por los “expertos”. El desempleo aumenta. Los despidos aumentan. Los gobiernos estatales y locales están disminuyendo como también los servicios sociales y educativos. Las agencias de calificación de bonos han dicho que hasta 7.000 municipios pueden tener sus calificaciones degradadas lo que significa que tendrán que pagar más intereses a los bancos e inversionistas.

El verdadero impago es el incumplimiento del capitalismo hacia la sociedad en conjunto. Está destruyendo el medio ambiente, minando la salud y el bienestar de toda la población, promulgando racismo, sexismo, y opresión de lesbianas/gays/bisexuales/transsexuales, y el odio contra inmigrantes y musulmanes. Está esparciendo guerra, intervención y ocupación por todas partes del mundo a costo de billones de dólares.

El tiempo ha llegado para abrir una lucha contra un sistema que pone las ganancias de millonarios y multimillonarios por encima de todo, como puede verse en la batalla actual del techo de la deuda. La lucha anticapitalista debe ponerse en la agenda de los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as como la única manera de salir de la crisis actual. □