

Can you hear us now? Verizon strikers fight for all workers

By Kathy Durkin

The heroic 45,000-strong strike against Verizon continues throughout the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions, as workers, including many women, African Americans and Latinos/as, rail against the corporate monolith's fierce anti-union assault.

Picketers walk outside Verizon and Verizon Wireless offices, call centers, phone stores, garages and hundreds of workplaces from coast to coast. The lines are strong and growing. "Workers are being joined on the line by Communication Workers of America members from other companies and members of other unions as the battle continues to get the company to start bargaining seriously," reports the CWA website.

CWA Local 9575 in Camarillo, Calif., which is picketing Verizon Wireless stores, reports widespread support and solidarity for the East Coast strike "from private and public sector union members, community and religious organizations, Verizon wire-

line and wireless customers, and thousands of others." The union says United Postal Service drivers, letter carriers, caterers and trash haulers won't cross picket lines. Passersby are bringing strikers food and water; and customers are asking how to help the strike. In one day, 15,000 people signed petitions demanding the company bargain in good faith.

Verizon insisted on 100 concessions from the workers during contract negotiations, stripping away 50 years of hard-won benefits. The CWA and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, which represent the landline workers, called a strike on Aug. 7 after the contract expired. Strike votes were nearly unanimous.

When negotiations restarted on Aug. 10, Verizon hadn't budged from the demands they made when talks began on June 22. Although proclaiming it must cut wages and benefits and outsource jobs to be "competitive" in a mostly nonunion industry, Verizon, unscathed by the recession, is one of

the top 10 wealthiest U.S. corporations. The company earns \$108 billion a year and \$7 billion in profits. Verizon didn't pay federal taxes last year — and even maneuvered a \$1.3 billion tax rebate!

The corporation seeks even more profits by demanding \$1 billion in concessions — \$20,000 per worker per year — by gutting vital benefits.

Its aim to eliminate a paid holiday on Martin Luther King Jr. Day is also a right-

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AUTOWORKERS Say NO TIERS!

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VICTOR TORO Campaign energized

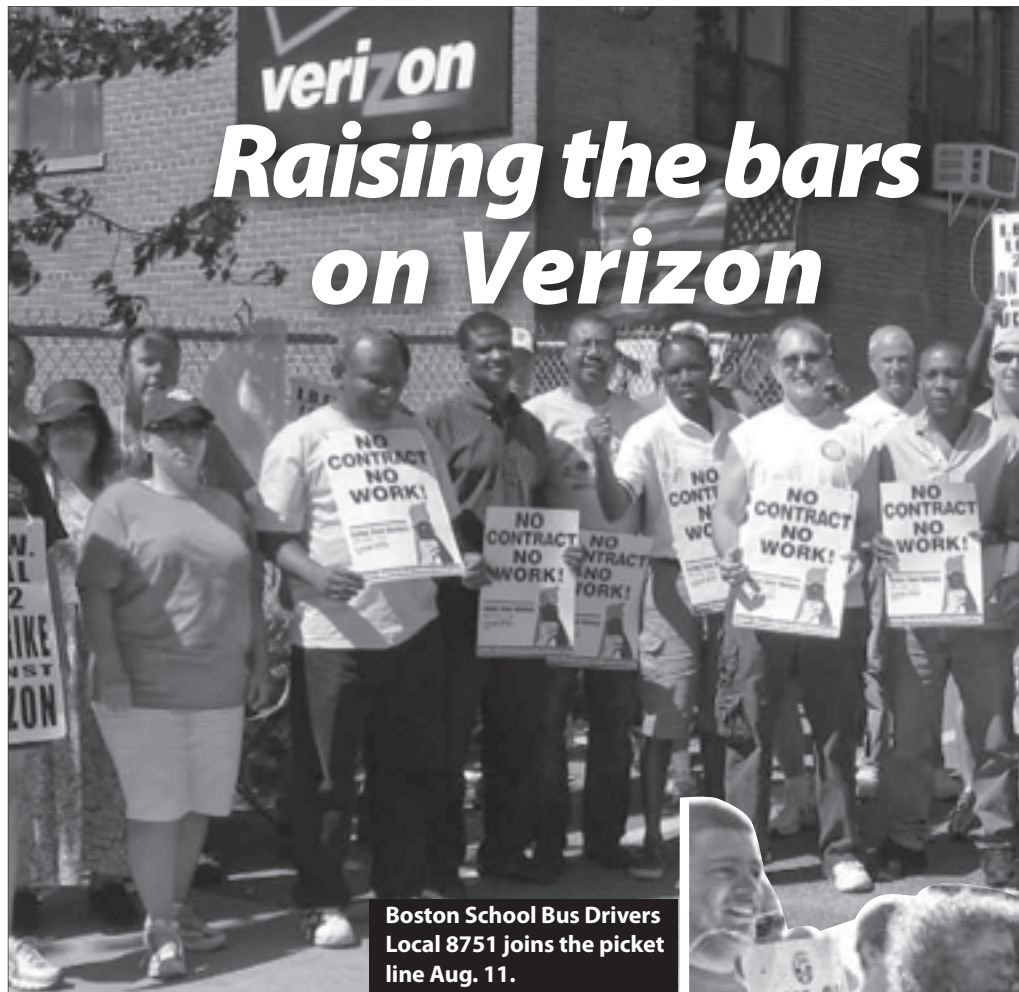
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WISCONSIN

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WW PHOTO: BRYAN G. PFEIFER



Boston School Bus Drivers Local 8751 joins the picket line Aug. 11.

WW PHOTO



CWA strikers and supporters leafleted at the first Philadelphia Eagles football game of the season Aug. 11.

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Harlem protest says: U.S. hands off Africa!

Some thousands of people, many from New York City's African-American community, gathered on Malcolm X Boulevard in Harlem on Aug. 13 to protest the U.S./NATO bombing campaign against the Libyan people. People also raised U.S. attacks on Somalia and interventions against Zimbabwe, Sudan, Ivory Coast and other African countries. Some of the organizing groups were the Nation of Islam, the December 12 Movement, the Freedom Party and many local organizations, most reflecting the Pan-African activist movement. Anti-imperialist organizations

like the International Action Center also supported the event. Workers World Party members distributed thousands of newspapers and leaflets throughout the city to build for the action.

— Report and photo by
John Catalinotto



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McKinney anti-war tour mobilizes movement in 20+ cities

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center, discussed a series of meetings where former U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney has spoken against the U.S./NATO war on Libya. The meetings follow McKinney's visit to the North African country. As of Aug. 13 the tour had grown to 19 U.S. cities and Vancouver, B.C., in Canada. Following are excerpts from an interview with Flounders by Workers World Managing Editor John Catalinotto.

The tour, now about half over, has continued to grow in both number of cities and importance. It has already illustrated some important lessons and experiences in how to mobilize against U.S. wars of aggression while overcoming extremely unfavorable conditions.

These conditions include the level of demonization in the corporate media of the government of Moammar Gadhafi, the apparent diplomatic isolation of Libya and even the time of year, when the universities are not in session and even many movement groups and activists are on a vacation schedule.

Outside of the continued slanders directed at Gadhafi, there is little media coverage of the war and of how the bombing is killing Libyan civilians, when the war's official justification was that the intervention was supposed to protect civilians. What hypocrisy.

There has been an almost total silence in the media as the relentless attack continues. It's gone far beyond a so-called "no-fly zone" to bombing urban centers, killing civilians and destroying the infrastructure. No other country in history except the U.S. has had the capacity to wreak such havoc, using cruise missiles, bunker busters, drones, depleted uranium and dense inert metal explosive bombs, anti-personnel razor shredding bomblets and anti-personnel mines.

The corporate media can demonize the leader of a country targeted by the Pentagon to the point that the consequences of using the most deadly weapons against a totally defenseless population are hidden and dismissed.

On top of this, the working class here in the U.S. is absorbed with the overwhelming problems of the capitalist system in crisis. They don't know what this means for their future. They are filled with apprehension, along with disappointment that the hopes raised by the Barack Obama administration were false ones.

Almost no one is supporting the war. And they are angry that the government is spending money on the war and not on social services. But without lots of news on it, for many people this is not the first thing on their mind.

McKinney confronted the war makers

Despite these difficulties, the movement here has to challenge such a criminal imperialist act of brigandage and piracy. Otherwise, it pulls the whole progressive movement backwards. If it is going to fight on immediate, bread-and-butter issues such as the economy, the movement also has to show that it's willing to stand up against heavy-handed propaganda from the government and the corporate media. This is a measure of its independence from those who rule U.S. society.

Cynthia McKinney put herself at risk by going to Libya. She gave the movement an opportunity to focus on this issue.

And groups in each city took up the challenge. In each city the most resolute anti-war groups, including the International Action Center, often joined with or supported Pan-African organizations that reached out to all sorts of local committees. In the end, meetings of 250 to 500 people have heard McKinney and others condemn the attack.

In every city, those initiating this community "teach-in" reached out consciously and discussed the issues with a wider circle of the Black movement — especially the Pan-African movement, those who have long focused on Africa.

The most important role for anti-imperialist forces to play is first to provide clarity among their own ranks and then to reach out and win over others who might have at first been confused about Libya. The movement here is incredibly diverse. Each of the meetings here was quite different from the others. But they all reflected the movement in the cities where they took place.

In Atlanta, there was an outpouring of Black forces. In Minneapolis, it was the people facing grand jury investigations and the Women Against Military Madness. In Albany, N.Y., the United National Antiwar Coalition; in Los Angeles, a section of the mostly immigrant workers' movement from south of the border; in Boston, the school bus drivers and the Haitian community played a role.

At Riverside Church in New York, the Rev. Robert B. Coleman of the Riverside Church Prison Ministries wel-

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Campaign ratchets up defense of Victor Toro

By Teresa Gutierrez

The next phase of the campaign to stop the deportation of Victor Toro, a 69-year-old Chilean activist and revolutionary, is being launched.

Diana Crowder, coordinator of the campaign, stated that the Victor Toro Defense Committee has been meeting frequently to lay out new and exciting plans to re-energize the movement for Toro. Toro's defense team has had a new boost with the addition of the City University of New York School of Law's Immigrant Refugee Rights Clinic, which has taken on Toro's case as legal representative.

Toro was arrested by U.S. border patrol agents on July 5, 2007, while on an Amtrak train in Rochester, N.Y. The Committee states that he was racially profiled, asked for papers and detained.

Toro and his spouse, Nieves Ayress, are both longtime freedom fighters. In Chile, Toro was instrumental in struggles for basic survival in his community, including the fight for water and housing. Ayress is a longtime activist for women's and Indigenous rights.

They both organized and fought against the U.S.-backed dictator, Augusto Pinochet, in the 1970s, and were forced to leave Chile as a result of brutal torture and a wave of repression against the political movement. Tens of thousands of Chileans were massacred at the time.

But Ayress and Toro never gave up fighting for the rights of the workers and oppressed. They are founders of La Peña del Bronx and active organizers in the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights. You will see both at demonstrations on every single struggle, whether it is against U.S. wars abroad or support for Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Cuban Five and other political prisoners.

Toro and his family, along with his supporters and legal team, have carried out an aggressive legal and political challenge to demand political asylum. However, in March Judge Sarah Burr denied Toro's request for asylum. He now faces possible deportation at any time.

This denial is a blow to the struggle for justice not only for Toro, but for all the undocumented and documented immigrants for whom he has fought so hard.

The evidence presented, along with Toro's testimony, was of such magnitude that no objective judge could have denied the petition for asylum presented by the Chilean former political prisoner. The Defense Committee is demanding that Toro be allowed to remain in the U.S., since deportation back to Chile would uproot him from his family and community in



Victor Toro

the Bronx. In addition, he faces repression and even the danger of being killed if he is returned to Chile, as the repressive apparatus from the Pinochet era still looms there in the shadows.

Judge Burr concluded that Toro took too long in presenting his application for political asylum and that the political conditions in Chile have sufficiently changed so that Toro can return to Chile without problems. This conclusion completely ignores the testimony presented by Toro and his defense team.

Toro's legal team had expressed concern that an accusation of terrorism by the prosecution, though unfounded, would not allow for the case to be judged justly and objectively. Lawyers for the Department of Homeland Security had introduced the idea that Toro was linked to terrorism or was a terrorist himself. Burr's decision shows that the Committee's concerns were valid.

How can the denial of Toro's political asylum request be justified — especially for a man whose political and social work represent the very essence of what political asylum should be for? How can they ignore the persecution and suffering felt

by Toro during the military dictatorship of Pinochet, a dictatorship that was financed by the U.S.? How can the risk he faced as a target of Operation Condor — the infamous and bloody campaign of political repression in the 1970s devised by the U.S. for Latin America — be minimized?

How you can help

The Victor Toro Defense Committee is urging progressives, immigrant rights and labor activists, anti-war organizers and all people of conscience to demand no deportation of Victor Toro. Letters asking for support are being written to various members of Congress, especially the New York state representatives.

A postcard is being drafted by the Committee to send to U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder as well as Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano. An online petition is also being worked on and will be ready to go soon.

Supporters can also help by getting union members, faith-based leaders, anti-war organizations and others to sign on to support Toro remaining in the U.S. Toro, Ayress, his lawyer and other members of the Committee are available for press interviews or to speak at events to help get the word out.

For a copy of the petition, brochure, or postcard or to get involved with the work, please visit www.may1.info or call 718-292-6137. □

Struggle for Cuban 5 continues

Gerardo Hernández denied habeas corpus documents, info

By Cheryl LaBash

The deadline for the habeas corpus appeal for Cuban Five hero Gerardo Hernández is imminent, yet the U.S. government continues to withhold essential information and access to the legal documents required for his extraordinary appeal, according to Cuba's National Assembly of Peoples Power.

"We have to demand American authorities to deliver the information they are hiding about their plot with so-called 'journalists' from Miami who slandered

the Cuban Five and provoked and threatened members of the jury, despite protests by the judge herself," a statement by the parliament reads.

The Cuban parliament urged the U.S. government to disclose satellite images, hidden for 15 years, that can reveal the true location of the Feb. 24, 1996, incident that Hernández was prosecuted for. On that day, three aircraft piloted by members of Brothers to the Rescue — a counterrevolutionary terrorist group based in Miami — violated Cuban airspace; subsequently, two of them were shot down. (www.anti-terroristas.cu)

When, on April 25, U.S. prosecutor Carolyn Heck Miller told the Miami federal court to deny Hernández' appeal for this hearing, the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 asked, "What does the prosecution fear from letting Gerardo exercise his right to present his arguments to the court and request alleged evidence against him?"

The answer is that the Cuban Five are innocent heroes who are recognized the world over for preventing horrific terror

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

See cities and upcoming dates listed below, part of a national 20-city-tour that began on July 7. Organized by International Action Center and others in coordination with many anti-war and community organizations.

(Full listing at www.IACenter.org)

Aug. 19	Friday	St. Louis
Aug. 21	Sunday	Pittsburgh
Aug. 22	Monday	Cleveland
Aug. 25	Thursday	Baltimore
Aug. 26	Friday	Philadelphia
Aug. 27	Saturday	Detroit
Aug. 28	Sunday	Denver



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Fernando González Llort and Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez.

attacks on Cuba. Their story was shaped by so-called Miami "journalists," who received a quarter million dollars from the U.S. government to demonize Hernández and his four comrades in their coverage leading up to and during the trial — thus creating bias and influencing the jury. (theCuban5.org) Evidence of these contracts and payments was only discovered years later and is part of the grounds for new hearings — particularly in the case of Hernández, who was sentenced to two life-terms-plus-15 years' imprisonment and is denied any visitation from his spouse, Adriana Pérez.

Correcting the false narrative became and remains the major challenge for supporters. The Cuban Five monitored the perpetrators of violent attacks against Cuba and against supporters of the Cuban revolution even inside the U.S. The new Saul Landau video, "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up," reviews the bloody history of U.S.-based terrorism aimed at destroying Cuba's independent socialist road.

In a July 26 interview on KPDK radio in Los Angeles, Landau pointed out, "When the U.S. wasn't actually sponsoring the terrorist acts against Cuba, it was looking the other way and allowing the Cuban exiles to carry them out. So either they were directly partnered with the CIA or encouraged informally, passively by the U.S. authorities. There is a scene in the film where we find in the archives a quote from then President [Dwight] Eisenhower. When he is told by the Secretary of State at the time, Christian Herter — this is back in 1959 — that Cuban exiles are using Florida sites to take off and bomb Cuba, and the Cubans are complaining,

Eisenhower's response is, 'Well why don't the Cubans just shoot the planes down?'"

Yet the 1996 shutdown of two of the three Brothers to the Rescue planes that had violated Cuban airspace was used to ram legislation through the U.S. Congress. These new measures tightened the brutal U.S. economic blockade of Cuba and inflicted an inhuman and totally unjustified double life sentence on Hernández, who was vilified as a leader of the shutdown.

In an Aug. 12 message, the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban 5 said: "It is time that Gerardo Hernández and his four compañeros are freed. Even if just for humanitarian reasons, after 15 years of unjust imprisonment, it is time that the Five be freed. We do not expect something different from U.S. courts, but we believe that the U.S. government should make the right decision to allow the return of the Five to their families.

"[President Barack] Obama can use his executive powers outlined in the U.S. Constitution to liberate the Five. It's time for him to listen to international demands and end this injustice."

The Committee urges, "Please send telegrams, faxes and e-mail to the White House and all U.S. embassies based in your country demanding an end to the illegal and arbitrary treatment against Gerardo Hernández Nordelo."

To send an e-mail message, visit www.whitehouse.gov/contact
Phone: 1 + 202-456-1111
Fax: 1 + 202-456-2461
Address: President Barack Obama
The White House, 1600 Penn. Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500 □

McKinney anti-war tour

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came the broad spectrum of organizations present. At three of the meetings, a Libyan studying in the U.S. told of how the war harmed his family. The meeting in Vancouver strengthened the anti-imperialist forces in Western Canada. Nearly all the meetings linked the endless funds earmarked for war to the disaster that poor and working people are facing.

The mass reaction to McKinney at the meetings has been strongest and most favorable when she focuses on Libya, tells the story and combats the demonization and war propaganda — which always seeps down, even into the progressive and anti-war movement — we have to rally forces and explain the consequences of the war.

In many of the cities where McKinney spoke, there was extensive local media coverage; the only national coverage, however, was from the right-wing O'Reilly Factor, which blasted McKinney for making the trip and speaking out. That's what the tour had to answer. □

WISCONSIN

Recall sparked labor-community coalition

By Bryan G. Pfeifer
Milwaukee

The largest recall campaign in U.S. history has shown the potential political strength of a progressive coalition of labor unions, women, high school and college students, immigrant communities, African-American and Latino/a communities, recipients of social welfare programs and their advocates, farmers and others.

Hundreds of thousands of poor and working people mobilized to recall those members of the Wisconsin Senate who had voted for an anti-union bill eliminating collective bargaining for state workers and voted for draconian cuts in the 2011-13 state budget, the worst in the state's history. This assault on workers and their unions had ignited huge demonstrations and even the takeover of the state Capitol earlier this year.

By knocking on doors, making phone calls, and mobilizing at cultural events, festivals, protests and other locations, coalition activists were able to gather 180,000 signatures on petitions that temporarily forced six Republican state senators out of

their seats, pending new elections. It was a big defeat for Gov. Scott Walker and the right-wing offensive in this state.

What followed, however, shows the limitations of electoral campaigns when confined to the two-party system. The recall movement then backed a slate of Democratic Party candidates for the empty seats. In elections on Aug. 9, two Democrats won seats that had been held by Republicans. The other four Republicans were returned to office.

Stephanie Bloomingdale, secretary-treasurer of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, said of the results: "[We are] fighting back and we are starting to win. In Wisconsin, we don't give up easily. This fight is not over. We will fight [Wisconsin Gov.] Scott Walker's radical agenda." (wisafclio.typepad.com/)

Two more recall elections will take place Aug. 16. This time two Democratic senators facing recall will be challenged by two Republicans, one of whom is a right-wing Tea Party member.

Gilbert Johnson, president of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 82 at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, has been

a steadfast participant in the people's uprising in Wisconsin, including the recall process. He said the recall process has been challenging but the Wisconsin AFL-CIO and other labor-affiliated and community organizations such as Voces de la Frontera and Planned Parenthood are playing a decisive role in training and mobilization. Throughout the recall process, a major focus of labor, community and student organizations has also been fighting right-wing attempts to disenfranchise voters.

Ed Childs, a leader of the Bail Out the People Movement and Chief Steward of UNITE-HERE Local 26 in Boston, is in Wisconsin participating in the people's uprising. Childs was also in Wisconsin in March.

"The people's uprising in Wisconsin, which includes the recall campaign, has produced a tremendous working-class coalition that is pitted against Wall Street, led by the Koch Brothers, the Bradley Foundation and their servants, Gov. Scott Walker, the Tea Party and others. It is a battle of the titans."

Added Childs, "Despite the progressive

character of the recall campaign, where hundreds of thousands of poor and working people participated, the major problem was that no representatives of the working-class movement in Wisconsin were candidates. At this time in Wisconsin an independent candidate from the labor-community-student movement would gather enthusiastic support from the workers and oppressed communities and bring new energy to the struggle against the right wing and the corporations behind them."

Childs and Larry Hales, a leader of the Bail Out the People Movement in New York City, are now visiting and organizing in Wisconsin. A BOPM delegation will be meeting with poor and working people throughout Wisconsin the week of Aug. 14, with stops in Madison, Eau Claire, Green Bay, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Sheboygan and other locations. For information on the BOPM Wisconsin tour, visit wibailoutpeople.org.

For more information and how to support the people's uprising in Wisconsin, visit defendwisconsin.org, www.wisafclio.org, wisafclio.typepad.com and vdlf.org on the web. □

Can you hear us now? Verizon strikers fight for all workers

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wing jab at the Civil Rights Movement.

Workers say Verizon seeks to eliminate "middle-class" jobs and force them to accept rollbacks in wages and benefits to pre-union levels, similar to the paltry benefits of non-union employees in the wireless division — where Verizon has viciously fought union drives. Seeing the threat of Wal-Mart-type conditions, with no benefits or job security, workers were forced to strike since they had nothing to lose. They had to fight back.

Corporate war on unions

Corporations and their governmental representatives are waging a war on unions and their members. The collusion between the state and corporations has been seen in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and New Jersey, where governors and state legislators passed laws undermining public sector unions and collective bargaining rights.

Now Verizon, a private corporation, is getting help from its class allies in state and city administrations, as it tries to do the same thing. Clearly, the state is a tool of the super-rich corporate owners; it's not a neutral body. It's anti-union. The courts and the police are antagonistic to the working class and will suppress their struggles to protect the interests of business owners and their property — unless a monumental workers' struggle pushes them back.

The police, despite having their own unions, invariably act as agents for big business and put down workers' struggles, even if their own families are on picket lines.

Verizon quickly got court injunctions in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Delaware to undermine the picket lines and restrict strike activity. The New York injunction restricts pickets to six to 50 people in front of Verizon facilities or worksites. Mass picketing must be at least 25 feet from an entrance.

New York City billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg helped Verizon by assigning police to intimidate strikers and ensure that truckloads of management strikebreakers, many from out of state, get into their facilities. This is done at the expense of taxpayers — mostly workers — who pay cops'

salaries. It hasn't cost Verizon a nickel.

However, the strikers are using creative tactics and organizing mobile pickets that move quickly to protest strikebreakers wherever they turn up. Text messaging and Twitter facilitate rapid communication among squads. This is strengthening the strike.

Strike solidarity growing

In the face of corporate-state collusion, what is key is the strength of the labor movement and the unity between public and private sector unions — and community support. That unity and class solidarity are developing.

Supporters are honking car horns, cheering and clapping at picket sites. Customers are turning away. Passersby are thanking picketers outside Verizon Wireless stores. There is a lot of public sympathy due to the vicious assault on the workers.

Additionally, members of many unions are joining picket lines, bolstering strikers' morale, as labor leaders call for their members to support the strike. The 1.4 million-member Teamsters union told its UPS drivers not to cross picket lines to de-

liver to Verizon stores. They aren't.

New York state AFL-CIO President Dennis Hughes calls for statewide union support and asks members to join picket lines. So has Civil Service Employees Association/American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees President Danny Donohue. Hughes stresses, "We are ONE — together we will stand with our CWA and IBEW brothers and sisters fighting for a fair contract." Donohue explained the importance of solidarity in "these difficult times." (www.csealocal1000.org)

AFSCME District Council 37 is providing space in its nearby headquarters for strikers picketing a main New York City site so they can rest during breaks.

Teamsters, New York State United Teachers and CSEA/AFSCME members have rallied with Long Island, N.Y., picketers. Service Employees Local 32BJ joined CWA and IBEW strikers, other labor and community activists and clergy at a vigil opposing Verizon Chairperson Ivan Seidenberg.

Progressive educators, parents and community activists and unions have joined with CWA to object to New York City Department of Education awarding

a \$120 million contract to Verizon.

In Boston, the Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers Local 8751 and community supporters are walking picket lines with IBEW Local 2222.

The AFL-CIO NOW blog cites the Missouri AFL-CIO: "The fight for Verizon workers is the fight for all of us," in a statement publicizing a statewide rally in Creve Coeur, Mo.

This strike is critical. "If we let Verizon succeed, major corporations will be using it as a model for destroying the bargaining rights and living standards for all union members," said CWA Local 9575 President Lisa Shafer. (cwa-union.org, Aug. 11)

IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill said, "What we are seeing as this strike unfolds is the fruit of 30 years of unremitting class warfare waged by corporate America and their political allies. Solidarity is our foremost — indeed our only — weapon to fight back against those who would condemn us to a life of subservience." (www.ibew.org, Aug. 13)

To get involved, sign petitions and find picket line locations, see www.cwa-union.org and www.ibew.org. □

Call centers:

A new front in the class struggle

By Caleb T. Maupin

Across the world, as capitalism adjusts to its newly strengthened ability to force workers to accept wages lower than ever, "call centers" are a growing area of employment.

This growing industry involves workers who receive or make phone calls. They either sell products or deal with customer complaints and concerns.

The lowest paid call center employees in the world are in Somalia, according to the CIA World Factbook. The political situation allowing these extremely low wages for Somali telephone workers has been enforced with U.S. bombs and cruise missiles.

India is also the site of a growing number of call centers, as are Bangladesh, the Philippines and many other impoverished

countries throughout the world.

But call centers are also numerous and big in the imperialist countries. In Britain, 3.5 percent of the entire workforce is made up of call center workers. The BBC has even referred to call centers as "the factories of the 21st century." (March 10)

In the U.S., hundreds of thousands if not millions of young people are finding themselves not standing on an assembly line, but sitting in front of a computer screen wearing a headset. In exchange for this dull and often highly stressful labor, they are collecting much lower wages than unionized factory workers did two earlier generations.

Call center workers often depend on commissions to receive anything higher than minimum wage, and in some cases they are forbidden from contesting the

amount of commission they receive, even if statistically their results merit higher wages according to the company's own regulations. Many call center workers are college graduates.

The tasks of call center workers can be very difficult. Their jobs can involve making "cold calls" to people, randomly asking them to buy a product or make a donation. A worker's commission can depend on her or his ability to convince someone, who calls in to make a complaint, to instead upgrade their cable TV or buy a new product from the company they are complaining to.

A foreperson or "manager" often walks up and down the aisles of call centers, watching workers' every move and driving them to produce better results with

Continued on page 5

Angry autoworkers speak out, demand equal pay

By Martha Grevatt

A decade ago the phrase “low-wage United Auto Workers member” would have sounded like an oxymoron. It would have been hard to imagine a scenario of two autoworkers working side by side, doing the same job and the same amount of work, with one making half the wage of the other.

Now the injustice is all too real. Two-tier and multitier pay scales have spread like a virus, contaminating the vast majority of contracts between the UAW and General Motors, Ford, Chrysler and unionized parts suppliers. Thousands and thousands of autoworkers are busting their backs making vehicles for the Detroit Three at \$14 to \$16.50 an hour, while parts companies are paying much less.

At a Detroit church, where the rank-and-file Autoworkers Caravan held a forum Aug. 13 on “Making the Case for Equal Pay,” their anger nearly blew the roof off.

“This is economic terrorism,” stated Bill Woodside, a truck driver for Chrysler Transport who is paid half what his fellow drivers with higher seniority make. “Tell these guys” — the companies and the UAW officials who are going along with two-tier — “how you’re losing your house.”

Mark Harris and Frank Hines work north of Detroit for parts supplier Inter-

national Automotive Components, at a plant that had been part of Lear Corporation. Harris is a first-tier worker, Hines is second tier, but the largest number of workers at their plant are third tier, with their pay starting at \$9.61 an hour. Others are “fourth tier” — temporary workers with no benefits. “Solidarity is gone, but we are trying to rebuild it,” Harris stated. Regardless of tier or pay rate, Harris remarked, in the UAW “you still pay two-hours-pay union dues — you deserve equal representation.”

Several workers from GM’s Lake Orion plant voiced their outrage. A secret deal at that plant with the UAW allowed the company to recall 40 percent of laid off workers at half of their former pay. Drew William explained how much of the work in the plant is subcontracted to companies paying union members as little as \$7.61 an hour. Caravan spokesperson Nick Waun described how he was forced to transfer from Lake Orion, Mich., to Lordstown, Ohio, to keep his traditional rate of pay.

Clyde Walker, a seven-year Chrysler employee, worked several years at first-tier pay, but as a “TPT” — temporary part-time worker. To become permanent, he and many others had to sign a paper agreeing to \$13-an-hour pay cuts. Not agreeing would mean losing even their precarious employment as a TPT.

First-tier workers, including skilled trades people not affected by two-tier pay, spoke strongly in solidarity with their lower-paid sisters and brothers and blasted the “divide and conquer” aspect of unequal pay schemes.

“Management is going to divide,” stated Chrysler engineer Rosendo Delgado. Using not only tiered pay but nationality, immigration status and other measures, companies will “pit one worker against another to compete for the lowest possible wage.” Recently hired engineers in product development make half of Delgado’s salary.

“We are putting the company and union on notice,” exclaimed Ford worker Debi Muncy. “I stand up as a first-tier worker and say this is wrong.” Workers at Muncy’s plant and another Michigan Ford plant wear differently colored uniforms for different pay rates.

As workers described struggling to keep up with bills, including their mortgages, Debbie Johnson delivered a solidarity message from the Moratorium Now! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs.

Altogether, more than two dozen workers from 16 different UAW locals gave testimony on the hardships and divisions created by lower-tier wages. Reports on a survey the Caravan conducted showed nearly unanimous sentiment that “union

negotiators should make getting ‘equal pay for equal work’ a top priority” and that “union members should vote ‘no’ on any contract with a tiered wage structure.”

Workers took stacks of educational leaflets and “no on tiers” stickers to build the campaign in the plants to reject any contract without pay equity.

One goal of the forum — to put the crisis in the public eye — was definitely accomplished. Articles on rank-and-file opposition to unequal pay appeared in the Detroit News, the Detroit Free Press, the suburban Oakland Press and even the Wall Street Journal.

The proliferation of two-tier contracts, not only in auto but in most sectors of the unionized economy, is the product of more than 30 years of accommodation to capitalist demands for lower wages in order to maximize profits. The cycle that began in 1981 with the breaking of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization came full circle in 2009, with massive wage and benefit concessions made by the UAW.

Still, the end of a cycle is not the end of the line. Wisconsin workers and students are part a new cycle of resistance. Workers on the assembly lines agree that it’s time to fight back.

Martha Grevatt is a 24-year UAW Chrysler worker. E-mail: mgrevatt@workers.org

Starvation threatened

Widespread hunger proves capitalist system’s failure

By Heather Cottin

The world’s agribusinesses have raised the prices of basic foods so precipitously in the last few years that vast numbers of poor people are threatened with death by starvation.

The majority of people on earth are poor. The vast majority of these poor people live in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and they spend 60 percent to 80 percent of their incomes on food.

When the world economic crisis began in the financial and housing arenas in 2008, the banks were not the only ones making out like bandits. The executives managing the world’s largest food corporations engineered windfall profits for the owners.

Since 2010, despite record crops and sufficient surpluses, the food companies have been raising prices of basic food-stuffs, causing a holocaust of hunger on the planet.

The majority of the world press is silent on the daily death toll. The U.S. corporate

media obsessed over one woman, Casey Anthony, and millions questioned the verdict when she was found not guilty of killing her child. But every day the same media ignore the 22,000 children who die of preventable hunger and malnutrition.

These child deaths are the result of premeditated mass murder, and their killers sit on the boards of the banks and corporations that run the global food business. Food companies are growing more profitable biofuels instead of food. Capitalists are speculating in food futures, pushing farmers off their land. International Monetary Fund structural adjustment programs eliminate crop subsidies that might keep millions of farmers on their land producing.

“The world produces enough food to feed everyone. World agriculture produces 17 percent more calories per person today than it did 30 years ago, despite a 70 percent population increase. This is enough to provide everyone in the world with at least 2,720 calories per person per day. The principal problem is that many people in the world do not have sufficient land

to grow, or income to purchase, enough food.” (2011 World Hunger and Poverty Facts and Statistics, Hunger Notes)

The people orchestrating the hunger crisis cynically refer to Thomas Malthus, a late 18th, early 19th century reactionary economist/philosopher who wrote, “The power of population is indefinitely greater than the power in the earth to produce subsistence for man.” This was false even while Malthus lived. Farming in the U.S. produced huge food surpluses during Malthus’ time, with surpluses increasing afterwards.

These surpluses could have saved the one-fourth of the Irish population that died in the so-called “Irish Potato famine” of 1845-1852. In the first year of the famine, British colonial policy blocked U.S. surplus grain imports to Ireland, allowing the Irish to starve.

The British used the potato blight to force peasants off the land, turning their land over to the British landlords, leaving the Irish landless and destitute. There was plenty of Irish wheat, meat and dairy produce, much of which was being exported to England — but the Irish peasants had no money for food. One million died. One million emigrated.

Capitalist history repeats itself. Years of war in Somalia — provoked by imperialist intervention — have forced productive farmers off their land. Millions of Somalis are too poor to buy food. Millions are migrating. Millions are dying.

Rich companies grabbing farmland in Africa leave rural populations without land or jobs and make the continent’s hunger problems even more severe. (Reuters, July 26)

Food prices kill

For about 44 million people in the world the rise in food prices means a de-

scend into extreme poverty and hunger. (USA Today, March 18) Poor nutrition plays a role in at least half of the 10.9 million child deaths each year. Malnourished mothers give birth to malnourished babies. About 70 percent of malnourished children live in Asia, 26 percent in Africa and 4 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. (Hunger Notes 2011 World Hunger and Poverty Facts).

Corporations and speculators artificially raise food prices at the cost of human lives. In 2008 the world’s capitalist economic downturn was accompanied by a huge rise in food prices that starved millions. Now, according U.N. Food and Agricultural Organization charts, food prices are up 30 percent above 2008 levels.

In October 2010 the FAO said that 925 million people were undernourished. The world price of cereals, humanity’s main source of nourishment, rose 71 percent from June 2010 to June 2011. (FAO Food Price Index July 7).

Agribusiness makes “obscene profits” and this has been true since the Rockefeller family organized “the global food chain along the same monopoly model they used for oil” after World War II. (William Engdahl, Financial Sense, June 30) Hunger is a part of capital’s war on the poor, the number one risk to health worldwide. (World Food Programme, 2011)

“People die from hunger while the banks make a killing from betting on food,” says Deborah Doane, director of World Development Movement in London. (British Observer, Jan. 23)

Driven only by profit, capitalism is indifferent to human need. The current experience with hunger is proving the failure of the capitalist system to feed humanity. Replacing capitalism is thus a question of survival. □

threats and scolding.

Some call centers require their workers to purchase headsets, uniforms and necessary tools for doing the job from the company itself. It is also very difficult to get full-time employment at a call center. Often workers cannot get enough hours to make ends meet.

Efforts to unionize call center workers in the U.S. have begun. In 2010, the Communication Workers of America announced that unionizing call center workers was a top priority. (Search “improving call center jobs” at www.cwa-union.org/news)

Many of the Verizon workers along the East Coast of the U.S. who are now striking for better wages normally work in Verizon’s

call centers, answering the phone when complaints about Verizon land lines are made, or changes in service are required.

In the lead-up to strike, Verizon workers held joint “stand ups,” in which they refused to sit down for brief periods, standing at their desks in solidarity. They also wore bright red — the colors of their union — to work.

It is clear that as capitalism seeks to thrust a “low wage” future on the workers of the U.S., the struggle of call center workers against the harshness of this new field will intensify.

Maupin, a Workers World Party organizer, has worked in several different call centers.

EDITORIAL

Revisiting the Berlin Wall

On Aug. 13, the corporate media in imperialist Germany used the 50th anniversary of the Berlin Wall to propagandize against communism and the German Democratic Republic.

The GDR had built the wall at a time when Germany and Berlin were divided between a capitalist West and a socialist East. After Hitler's defeat in World War II — largely at the hands of the Soviet Union, which also suffered the greatest casualties from Nazi aggression — the U.S. had poured billions of dollars into West Germany to rebuild capitalism there. West Berlin, where many of the capitalist elite were concentrated, was much richer than East Berlin. Nevertheless, the socialist East offered free education and health care to everyone. The wall was built largely to stem an exodus to the West, known as the “brain drain,” of skilled people educated at the expense of the workers' state.

There are many in the united Germany of today who are not celebrating the fall of the wall and the GDR. Their voices were heard on Aug. 13 when the non-affiliated Marxist German daily newspaper, *Junge Welt*, ran a front-page article along with a historical photo of army troops of the GDR defending the Brandenburg Gate, one of the entry points between West and East. The headline read, “At this time, all we can say is: Thank you.”

The article went on to give examples of what the GDR had achieved during the 28 years of the wall — much of which was lost once the socialist state was overthrown and the GDR swallowed by West Germany.

The article thanked the GDR for “28 years of peace in Europe” and “28 years



without any German soldiers participating in wars.” The united Germany, as a member of NATO, now has armed forces in Afghanistan, parts of the former Yugoslavia and Sudan, as well as off the coasts of the Horn of Africa and Lebanon.

It also thanked the GDR for 28 years without unemployment, homelessness and soup kitchens and for providing education, child care and health care for all “without a consultation fee or two-tier health care.”

Reflecting popular anger at German capital, it thanked the GDR for “28 years without hedge funds and private equity parasites.”

Germany today, like the rest of the capitalist world, is cutting social programs while unemployment grows, especially in the east where workers used to be guaranteed work under socialism. In the land of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, many now know from bitter experience that capitalism can never bring a better life to the majority of the people.

Translation from Junge Welt by WW managing editor John Catalinotto.

Following rebellion British gov't steps up repression

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

By Aug. 15, some 2,800 people in Britain had been detained in connection with an Aug. 6 through Aug. 9 rebellion there. Police used photographs and news reports to target people in coordinated home invasions and arrests. Courts were kept in operation through the night in several cities so that people could be charged and imprisoned for various alleged crimes.

The four-day rebellion swept through various regions of England in response to police brutality and the worsening economic crisis facing the country. The spark was lit in Tottenham, North London, after police actions resulted in the death of 29-year-old African-Caribbean Mark Duggan. By the third night of the disturbances Black and other working-class youth had risen up in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Bristol, Nottingham and other cities.

On Aug. 15, allheadlinenews.com reported that some 1,300 people had been charged. Furthering the repressive measures, Work and Pension Secretary Iain Duncan Smith has warned that those convicted would lose their welfare benefits, like unemployment, disability and housing, even if they do not get a custodial sentence. (Aug. 15)

London Mayor Boris Johnson has requested that the government permit the courts to send youth aged 11 to 15 to pupil referral units — alternative schools that some teachers consider to be dumping grounds for youth. Meanwhile, the city of Manchester reportedly prevented those suspected of involvement from entering 400 downtown stores. People who have family members charged with participating in the rebellion are already being evicted from social housing.

The rebellion proved to be an extreme embarrassment to London's Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition government, which has imposed austerity measures on youth and the working class through increased layoffs, cutbacks in social spending and the raising of educational costs.

Creating even more embarrassment for the political elite, many of the leading ministers in the government, including Prime Minister David Cameron, were on holiday when the cities erupted. They were forced to return to London after images of the “shopping for free” and the burning of businesses and police cars were shown across the world. Law enforcement agencies were completely overwhelmed by the sheer mass anger, generated by years of pent-up frustrations stemming from an unjust, racist class society.

Cameron was compelled to convene an emergency session of the British Parliament on Aug. 11. Rather than acknowledge the deep social and racial cleavages that have historically plagued British society, the prime minister denounced the people involved in the rebellions, who were predominantly Black and working class but also included more affluent sectors of the population. He backed his words by placing 16,000 cops on London streets and thousands more in other cities. Mass arrests took place even after calm was restored on Aug. 11.

Racist, class-biased response

Cameron's address to Parliament dismissed any link between the outbreaks of demonstrations and rebellion and the social conditions inside the country. Cameron said: “It is criminality pure and simple. And there is absolutely no excuse for it.” Cameron has pledged to wage what he calls an all-out war on “gangs.”

With racist undertones, Cameron assert-

ed: “This is not about poverty. It's about culture. A culture that glorifies violence, shows disrespect to authority, and says everything about rights but nothing about responsibilities.” He stressed that “we will not let any phony concerns about human rights get in the way of the publication of these pictures and the arrest of these individuals. We need to fight back and a fightback is underway.”

In efforts to clamp down on the unrest throughout the country, the British government is looking for assistance from the United States. Cameron has requested the consultation of the so-called “supercop,” Bill Bratton, who is known for conducting massive law-enforcement sweeps as police chief in New York and Los Angeles.

Cameron has said that the police models used in Los Angeles during the 1990s and in Boston since would be examined for application in Britain. These statements have increased existing tensions between the government and the police over the handling of the rebellion.

The Metropolitan Police in Britain have faced tremendous pressure ever since members were accused of selling information to the tabloid press owned by Rupert Murdoch. The police commissioner and his deputy were forced to resign several weeks ago amid revelations of corruption.

Several police officials took exception to Cameron's criticism of the police for not utilizing proper tactics to curb and suppress the disturbances. Former British senior officer Brian Paddick stated that Bratton's invitation “adds insult to injury at Scotland Yard. Bratton's style of policing would probably not have stood up against the European Convention on Human Rights, which may be one of the reasons why some on the right wing of UK politics want to abandon the law.” (CNN.com, Aug. 15)

The emphasis on heavy-handed police tactics and blaming the victims of state policy and the economic crisis for the social ills of capitalist society has created a sharpened racist atmosphere within British public opinion.

The British Broadcasting Corp. coverage of the rebellions has fostered increased hostility toward Black, Asian and working-class communities. On the BBC's News Night program, London-based historian David Starkey used racist and class-biased slurs to denigrate the social character of millions of people in England.

Starkey indicated that he had been reading British politician Enoch Powell's 1968 “Rivers of Blood” anti-immigration speech, in which Powell predicted civil war in England if more Caribbean people were allowed to enter the country. He said, “What happened is that substantial sections of the Chavs [classist derogatory term for working-class people without social skills and perceived to be without ambition] that you wrote about have become black. The whites have become black.” (NewsDay.co.zw, Aug. 15)

On another BBC program, longtime African-Caribbean activist and writer Darcus Howe was insulted by network presenter Fiona Armstrong. During an Aug. 9 interview Armstrong asked Howe: “You are not a stranger to riots yourself I understand, are you? You have taken part in them yourself.” (Telegraph, Aug. 10)

Howe responded saying: “I have never taken part in a single riot. I've been part of demonstrations that ended up in a conflict. You just sound idiotic — have some respect.” The government-controlled news service was later forced to apologize as a result of public outcry.

Forces throughout the international community have expressed solidarity with

Protest hits London's mass arrests

NEW YORK

During a torrential downpour, some 20 people gathered outside the British Consulate-General in Manhattan on Aug. 15 to protest Prime Minister David Cameron's mass arrests of youths. The multinational, multigenerational protesters, including students from England and France, chanted: “From London to New York, youth need jobs, not jails!”

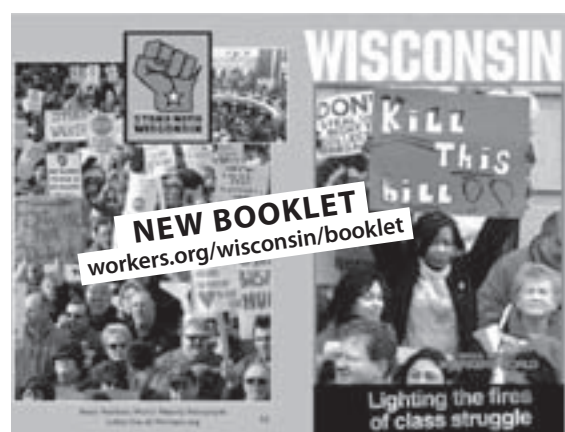
More than 2,000 people — half below age 16 — have been arrested since the four-night rebellion that shook London and other cities. The youth uprising followed the killing of a young Black father of three, Mark Duggan, by police in the Tottenham area of London on Aug. 4. Daily police raids are continuing against suspected “rioters.”

“We know who the real criminals are,” said Larry Holmes of the Bail Out the People Movement, which called the protest. “Cameron's government, the banks and corporations in London and



Wall Street who profit from cutbacks, racism and war — they should be on trial, not the young people who already face a grim future of unemployment. What happened in London could happen here next.”

—Report & photo by Greg Butterfield



WISCONSIN

Wisconsin workers & students united in February against a legislative bill designed to eliminate collective bargaining rights. Their struggle set the stage for labor in the U.S. and captured international attention.

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As Palestinians gain int'l support

Israel & U.S. tighten military, political repression

By Deirdre Griswold

Almost daily for many years, Israeli soldiers have clashed with Palestinian protesters somewhere in the land claimed by the Israeli state. Now the tempo of struggle is rising once again.

The revolutionary upsurge of the masses in Egypt had loosened the Mubarak regime's tight control over the Sinai region, which borders the Gaza strip. Gaza is densely packed with Palestinian refugees, who have resisted Israeli rule and been repeatedly attacked by its armed forces. Israel has imposed a blockade on Gaza ever since the people there four years ago elected the resistance organization Hamas as their local government.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's fall coincided with a pullback of Egypt's military from the Sinai region, giving the people of Gaza some relief. But on Aug. 12 the Egyptian military moved "tanks and thousands of military troops in cooperation with Israel into the Sinai Peninsula in an attempt to regain control of the area. ...

"The apparent aim of the operation is to help Israel stop the movement of provisions from Egypt to Gaza through underground tunnels. Israel claims that these

tunnels have been used to smuggle weapons into Gaza and that smuggling has been on the increase since Mubarak's downfall.

"These underground tunnels are often used to provide essential medical, building and food supplies to the 1.5 million Gazans who are under siege in the tiny area of land.

"The Israel government had to first approve the troop movement by the Egyptians as any military advance into the region without coordination would be in direct breach of the 1978 Camp David Accords." (Palestine News Network, Aug. 14)

The U.S. was Mubarak's biggest prop. It has armed Israel to the teeth against the oppressed Arab and Muslim peoples of the region. This development shows the U.S. imperialists have successfully maneuvered to keep the same reactionary military forces in power to oppress the Egyptian and Palestinian people, even while they allow popular anger to be somewhat appeased by the ongoing trial of the deposed dictator.

While this military move was happening, the U.S. government cut off almost \$100 million in aid supposed to help the people of Gaza in areas like health, education and infrastructure. Hamas had tried

to negotiate an agreement with the U.S. Agency for International Development for an independent audit of the U.S.-funded nongovernmental organizations involved in the project. The USAID, which has long been exposed as a conduit for CIA covert operations under the guise of humanitarian assistance, used this request by Hamas as an excuse to cut off the aid.

The Palestinian Authority is preparing to introduce a resolution to the U.N. General Assembly in September that would recognize its right to U.N. membership representing Palestine as an independent state. Knowing that a majority of the world's nations would be friendly to such a resolution if it were ever to be formally presented, the Israeli regime is speeding up its building of Jewish-only settlements on land it occupied during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

It is telling that it was Israeli "defense" minister, Ehud Barack, not a minister for development or housing, who approved the construction of 227 new homes in Ariel settlement on the West Bank, announced on Aug. 15. This comes on top of news that Tel Aviv would build 900 new housing units in Har Homa settlement and 1,600 in Ramat Shlomo, both in East Jerusalem. All these settlements are on

land seized by Israel in 1967 and are illegal under international law.

On Aug. 2 the U.S. Congress passed a draconian budget that cuts social services in order to continue to pay the banks and bondholders hundreds of billions of dollars of interest on the national debt. Now an unprecedented 81 members of the House of Representatives are on their way to Israel while Congress is in recess. They will be wined and dined in what is a massive junket and lobbying effort to make sure that Democrats and Republicans alike line up behind the Zionist regime.

U.S. imperialism has long had a strategic partnership with Israel that advances the interests of finance capital and the military-industrial complex in an area of the world where U.S.-armed dictatorships in oil-rich lands are increasingly under pressure from the impoverished and disenfranchised masses of people.

The right of the Palestinian people to exercise self-determination, including the right of the millions now living in the diaspora to return to their homeland, has been consistently blocked first and foremost by Washington. This is why support for Palestine must be a cutting-edge issue for all progressives in the U.S. □

NATO kills 85 civilians in Western Libya

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

The U.S./NATO forces now waging war against the North African oil-producing state of Libya committed one of their worst atrocities on Aug. 8, killing 85 people while bombing Majar in Libya's west. Located near Zlitan, Majar was shown on Libyan state television after the attacks killed children, women and men.

News reports showed burned bodies of young children, and children receiving treatment for serious wounds in the local hospital.

In response to this massacre, the Libyan government declared three days of national mourning. NATO forces admitted that their jets had bombed the town on three different occasions the night before, but claimed the locations struck were military targets.

This attack on Majar followed the same pattern that has been in force since March 19. Then, the U.S. and NATO military fighter jets and warships began to bomb Libya under the guise of implementing a

so-called "no-fly zone," which was mandated by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973. During the time since a Western-backed rebellion began in Benghazi on Feb. 17, hundreds of thousands of Libyans and guest workers living in Libya have fled across the borders.

Over this six-month period — despite U.S./NATO efforts to build up those fighting the Libyan government as a credible force — the opposition Transitional National Council has remained deeply divided and incapable of launching a serious military campaign against the capital, Tripoli. These rebel forces have openly called for and applauded the U.S./NATO bombing of their own country.

Just recently the putative leader of the TNC's military was killed in an obviously planned assassination when he was summoned to return to the rebel stronghold of Benghazi. Journalists have reported clashes among the rebels themselves in full view of the international media.

Canadian journalist on fact-finding mission
Scott Taylor, a journalist from Canada,

whose government is serving as the titular head of the NATO bombing campaign in Libya, recently visited the country on a fact-finding mission. His assessment is that the claims of rebel advances in the West of the country have been largely fabrications promoted through the corporate media.

This reporter pointed out: "For more than five months now NATO planes have supported the rebels, and NATO warships have enforced a one-sided embargo against Gadhafi's forces. And all foreign-held financial assets have been frozen, making it virtually impossible for Libya to purchase any war materiel, or even basic necessities such as fuel." (The Chronicle Herald, Aug. 15)

Nonetheless, the writer continues, "Despite all these measures, the ragtag collection of fractious units that compose the rebels have been unable to make any serious tactical headway against Gadhafi loyalists — let alone topple the leader."

Taylor stressed that during his trip to the capital of Tripoli during the first full week of August, he witnessed firsthand how the Libyan government has solidified its control over the city and most of the western region of the country. He says that foreign diplomats confirmed the stability of the capital and that Moammar Gadhafi's approval rating has soared to 85 percent.

The existing shortages inside the country are blamed on the NATO forces that are bombing Libya. Leaflets dropped on the city periodically by the imperialist forces are often poorly written and most Libyans find the messages quite amusing to read.

In a speech delivered over Libyan television on Aug. 15, Gadhafi said: "NATO will eventually be defeated in Libya with the willingness of the people to resist and liberate their land. The Libyan people will behave as they did during their 1 September Revolution," pointing out that the continuous bombing during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan will further anger the general population, turning it even more against the West.

Gadhafi continued, "The only solution

remaining for the agents of colonialism is the use of deception and psychological warfare following the failure of their various kinds of war with all types of weapons." (Afrique en Ligne, Aug. 15)

As the Libyan leader was addressing the country, there were simultaneous reports that NATO was bombing Tripoli and the suburbs of Zaouia and Sorman. On the same day video footage was released by the British Ministry of Defense showing crews from the Royal Air Force Marham base in preparation for the long-range bombing of Libya. (edp24.co.uk, Aug. 15)

One such video showed a number of Tornado GR4 jets being loaded with Storm Shadow missiles at the Norfolk base just prior to leaving for another bombing mission over Libya. In another video the fighter jets are shown bombing what is described as a Libyan frigate in the harbor at Tripoli.

Rallies oppose U.S.-NATO war on Libya

On Aug. 13, a rally was held in Harlem to protest the ongoing war in Libya and the Western sanctions leveled for a number of years against the Southern African nation of Zimbabwe.

A national speaking tour featuring former U.S. Congressperson Cynthia McKinney has reached more than 20 cities from coast to coast. McKinney, recently returned from a fact-finding trip to Libya, has exposed the multitude of falsehoods about the actual situation taking place in the country and the region.

McKinney is scheduled to speak in Pittsburgh on Aug. 21 and Cleveland on Aug. 22. In Detroit on Aug. 27, the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War Injustice, along with other organizations such as the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the Green Party, Workers World Party, the Freedom Road Socialist Organization, the Michigan Welfare Rights Organization and the New Marcus Garvey Movement will host a public speakout against the U.S./NATO war on Libya at the U-M Detroit Center beginning at 4 p.m. □

British gov't repression

Continued from page 6

the rebellion. In Tehran, Iran, hundreds of Iranian students protested outside the British embassy on Aug. 14 against what they called the "savage aggression" used by the police.

The Iranian students chanted, "Death to England!" "Where are your human rights?" and "Protesters, we will support you!" The students were denied a meeting with the British ambassador to Iran.

In Libya, leader Moammar Gaddafi, who is fighting to defend the North African government against U.S., British and French military assaults, called upon Cameron to resign. Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe condemned the hypocrisy of the British government, urging London to "put out its fires first and to leave us alone."

The Bail Out the People Movement issued a national call for demonstrations in defense of those being arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. On Aug. 15 a picket line was held outside the British Consulate in New York.

A BOPM statement points out that "[Cameron's] government of bailouts for the rich and cutbacks for the poor has done so much to create an environment ripe for rebellion. Cameron and other establishment politicians are whipping up a lynch-mob atmosphere against rebel youths.

"In conditions of deepening poverty, joblessness and racist repression, it is inevitable that people will rise up. What happened in London could happen tomorrow in New York, Los Angeles or any other U.S. city." □

Sacudidas financieras señalan crisis capitalista más profunda

Trabajadores/as deben organizarse para luchar por trabajos

Por Fred Goldstein

El descenso de categoría del crédito del gobierno estadounidense y los giros en la bolsa de valores auguran más recortes presupuestarios, otra caída económica y más desempleo y sufrimiento, a menos que haya una resistencia masiva.

Ahora es el momento de luchar por trabajos, de detener los despidos y las ejecuciones hipotecarias, de defender el Seguro Social y otros derechos sociales bajo ataque y de rechazar los intentos de los patronos por descargar la profundización de la crisis del sistema de ganancias sobre las espaldas de los/as trabajadores/as.

La degradación de los bonos del Tesoro de AAA a AA + por la agencia de crédito Standard & Poor fue un mensaje de una sección de los banqueros y tenedores de bonos diciendo que quieren profundos recortes en el Seguro Social, Medicare y Medicaid.

La descalificación tenía muy poco que ver con la solvencia inmediata del gobierno estadounidense. Se trataba de recortes presupuestarios. Fue un mensaje a los partidos políticos de que Wall Street no está satisfecho con el acuerdo del techo de la deuda que prometió sólo 2,1 billones (millón de millones) de dólares en recortes y en su opinión, era muy débil respecto a los recortes de las ayudas sociales. El mensaje era principalmente para el Partido Demócrata, pero tal vez también para el Partido del Té por ser tan rígido tácticamente, que no pudo aprovechar las concesiones de Obama sobre los derechos sociales.

S&P descalifica todo sobre recortes de ayudas sociales

Todas las agencias de calificación dependen del pago de sus servicios por los bancos. La agencia de calificación S&P anunció hace meses que quería el recorte de al menos 4 billones de dólares en el déficit, y que los recortes en los derechos sociales eran la clave para lograr ese objetivo. El portavoz republicano de la Cámara de Representantes John Boehner y el presidente Barack Obama precisamente estaban trabajando en ese acuerdo que fue impedido por la ultra derecha y el Partido de Té.

S&P dejó eso claro. En su declaración explicando su acción al gobierno, escribió que el descenso de categoría fue debido a su "pesimismo" sobre la perspectiva de reducciones más profundas.

Dijeron que bajaban la calificación de la deuda de los EE.UU. a largo plazo porque creen que la "prolongada controversia sobre la ampliación del límite legal de la deuda" indica que "el avance a corto plazo sobre la contención del crecimiento del gasto público, especialmente sobre las ayudas sociales", será polémico. Dijo que lo que el Congreso y la administración acordaron "no llega a la cantidad que creemos que es necesaria" para lograr estabilidad financiera en la próxima década.

Más explícitamente, se quejaban de que "el plan prevé sólo cambios de política menor en Medicare y pocos cambios en otros derechos sociales", cuya "contención" consideran "clave para la sostenibilidad fiscal a largo plazo".

Subrayando que el descenso de categoría fue un ataque político contra los derechos sociales, la declaración decía que "consideramos que los atributos del crédito monetario del gobierno federal ... , que constituyen la base para la clasificación de la deuda soberana, quedan sin cambios sustanciales".

En otras palabras, los financieros detrás de S&P están preocupados porque si el gobierno sigue financiando las necesidades del pueblo, puede que no haya suficiente dinero en el futuro para pagar los intereses a los millonarios y multimillonarios banqueros y tenedores de bonos.

Lucha del techo de la deuda — guerra política del ala derecha

La crisis del techo de la deuda era puramente de naturaleza política. Las fuerzas ultraconservadoras del Partido del Té y las fuerzas conservadoras de derecha más tradicionales del Partido Republicano han conformado un bloque que libra una guerra política tratando de reducir, si no destruir, el Seguro Social, el Medicare y el Medicaid, y para socavar al presidente Obama. Como en cualquier guerra, la derecha se apoderó de un punto de ventaja, el requisito legislativo de que el Congreso tiene que aprobar el techo de la deuda del gobierno. Mantuvieron los derechos sociales como rehenes, amenazando con obligar al gobierno al incumplimiento del pago hasta la hora cerca del límite.

El descenso de categoría por Standard & Poor fue un acto de pura venganza porque el acuerdo sobre el techo de la deuda no cortó lo suficientemente profundo. S&P incluyó una amenaza de degradación futura si los políticos no cortan más.

Caída de bolsa de valores y miedo a "doble descenso"

La caída subsiguiente del mercado de valores, aunque afectada por la baja de categoría, fue fundamentalmente una reacción a la amenaza de un "doble descenso" o una nueva recesión en la economía capitalista.

El crecimiento desacelerado de la economía estadounidense — una tasa de crecimiento de sólo 0,8 por ciento en el primer semestre de este año, significa que el desempleo ha aumentado, a pesar de las estadísticas oficiales del Gobierno que declaran que el desempleo disminuyó en el mes de julio de 9,2 por ciento a 9,1 por ciento.

Todo el mundo sabe que esto es una subestimación enorme del desempleo real. Hay por lo menos 30 millones de trabajadores/as desempleados/as, sub-empleados/as o que se han salido totalmente de la fuerza laboral.

El recorte del presupuesto del gobierno para los gastos de servicios, ayudas sociales, proyectos públicos y otros, sólo promete agravar la crisis económica en los EE.UU.

En Europa, el mismo proceso está cobrando impulso. Grecia, Portugal e Irlanda ya han sido rescatadas por el Banco Central Europeo y el FMI. Ahora Italia y España, economías mucho más grandes, están en crisis. Los 90 bancos más grandes de Europa mantienen 425 mil millones de dólares sólo en bonos del gobierno italiano. Bancos estadounidenses tienen 14,3 mil millones de dólares.

Los banqueros de Europa exigen recortes presupuestarios gigantescos de los países endeudados como precio del rescate. Esto arrastrará aún más las ya desaceleradas economías de Europa.

Rescate de bancos, austeridad agrava crisis económica

Los capitalistas y sus políticos están en una contradicción que no tiene ninguna salida. Debido a la crisis económica se han reducido los ingresos del gobierno y el pago de los intereses a los banqueros peligra. Los gobiernos están interviniendo

para garantizar los pagos a los banqueros.

Pero para garantizar los intereses de los banqueros, los gobiernos tienen que cortar sus gastos. El recorte de gastos para el pueblo significa que los/as trabajadores/as tienen menos dinero en sus bolsillos y esto profundiza la crisis económica.

Para garantizar su botín a los bancos, la crisis económica debe agravarse mediante medidas de austeridad. Eso es lo que estaba detrás de la lucha del techo de la deuda. Eso es lo que está detrás de la crisis de deuda europea. La única manera de salir de este círculo vicioso es luchar contra los bancos y tenedores de bonos y anteponer los puestos de trabajo y los intereses de los/as trabajadores/as.

Los nuevos despidos que pueden venir a raíz de una nueva crisis capitalista podrían traer un colapso. Una crisis financiera en Europa que se extienda a los Estados Unidos podría desencadenar una crisis mundial. Todos estos cálculos fueron parte de la salvaje venta de acciones en las bolsas de valores.

De estancamiento capitalista a recesión

La clase trabajadora debe tomar estas señales de advertencia seriamente.

Durante los últimos dos años de la llamada "recuperación", el sistema capitalista ha permanecido en un estado de estancamiento. Se ha sostenido por los rescates gubernamentales masivos de los bancos y por los gastos del gobierno en general. Esa es la base de la crisis de la deuda, no sólo en Estados Unidos sino en Europa y Japón. Si bien no hubo mayor recesión, la economía capitalista solo pudo crecer a velocidad de caracol. Mientras las corporaciones han ido acumulando ganancias, no se hizo mel-la en el desempleo masivo.

Ahora el sistema de ganancias está en peligro de ir del estancamiento, hacia una recesión. Los patronos/as han invertido en alta tecnología eliminadora de trabajos. Han acelerado el ritmo del trabajo, obligando a laborar cada segundo que se esté en el puesto de trabajo, han cortado sus horas — haciéndoles trabajar a tiempo parcial o como trabajadores/as temporeros/as. La producción sube, pero con menos trabajadores/as.

Ahora la economía se está acercando al mismo nivel del producto interno bruto que había antes de la crisis, pero con 10 millones menos de trabajadores/as. Esto significa que menos trabajadores/as están produciendo más productos y servicios en menor tiempo por sueldos cada vez más bajos. Todo eso para aumentar las ganancias. El sistema de ganancias en sí está en crisis. Y a los/as trabajadores/as se les está pidiendo sufrir. No hay forma de salir de esta contradicción basada en el sistema capitalista de ganancias.

Pedir a los capitalistas crear empleos cuando no necesitan más trabajadores/as, es una ilusión. La única manera de crear puestos de trabajo ahora es que el gobierno lance un programa masivo de empleos. Lo cual es exactamente lo que el gobierno rehúsa hacer, debido a la obsesión del establecimiento capitalista por recortar gastos y déficits.

Necesidad de una lucha masiva por empleos

Los comentaristas capitalistas de todo tipo están horrorizados ante la perspectiva de una nueva crisis que surge en una situación donde ya existe un desempleo

masivo de larga duración. La demanda por un programa de empleos está empezando a cobrar ímpetu aún de voces burguesas — desde el comentarista Paul Krugman en el NY Times hasta Chris Matthews, el anfitrión del programa de noticias de MSNBC, y muchos más.

El presidente Obama ha estado virtualmente callado sobre un programa real de empleos que pueda comenzar a poner a trabajar a millones de trabajadores/as. Y ahora hay la amenaza de una mayor crisis de desempleo.

El liderazgo del AFL-CIO está empezando a moverse sobre esta cuestión y ha convocado manifestaciones alrededor del país a comienzos de octubre. Otras fuerzas están uniéndose al llamado.

Éste es un paso positivo, aunque retrasado. Sin embargo, la clase trabajadora, la comunidad, los/as estudiantes y todos/as los/as que necesitan empleos y estén afectados/as por el desempleo, directa o indirectamente, necesitan montar un movimiento militante para luchar contra esta crisis económica.

El mensaje de lucha debe ser llevado a los sitios de empleo, centros comunitarios, viviendas públicas, iglesias y en las esquinas de las calles en los barrios de la clase trabajadora, entre todas razas y nacionalidades, para construir un movimiento de lucha. Las alcaldías, los gobiernos estatales y el federal, así como también las corporaciones, deben sentir la presión y la cólera del pueblo.

Los capitalistas están sentados sobre millones de millones de dólares en moneda efectiva. Pero no abren puestos de trabajo, están bajando los sueldos y se están preparando para despedir más trabajadores/as si la desaceleración económica se convierte en contracción a gran escala. Los bancos están recibiendo cientos de miles de millones de dólares en pagos de intereses del gobierno a todos los niveles. El Pentágono y las corporaciones militares están recibiendo billones de dólares para pagar por tres guerras.

Esos fondos deberían ser usados para pagar programas de empleos y necesidades sociales, no para enriquecer más a los que ya son súper-ricos.

Los/as luchadores/as socialistas, militantes sindicalistas, activistas comunitarios/as, organizadores/as progresistas y radicales deben unirse como una cuestión de urgencia, para construir un movimiento nacional de lucha para combatir la crisis.

En los años 30 los Consejos de Desempleo organizaron a trabajadores/as e inquilinos/as bajo la consigna "¡No mueran de hambre, luchen"! Tenían un programa para empleos e ingresos. El movimiento actual necesita una perspectiva semejante de lucha y la decisión de organizar a nivel comunitario para luchar.

Es necesario que el movimiento gane victorias al nivel que sea posible. El programa puede incluir la lucha por empleos, sobre todo en medio de la peor crisis capitalista desde los años 30. Pero también puede incluir la defensa de los sindicatos, la negociación colectiva y los derechos de los/as trabajadores/as indocumentados/as; puede luchar por la alimentación, por cupones de alimento y viviendas; puede oponerse a las ejecuciones hipotecarias y desalojos, a los recortes presupuestarios y a los cierres de escuelas. En otras palabras, puede defender los intereses de los/as trabajadores/as y oprimidos/as dondequiera que estén bajo ataque. □