

A SOCIALIST ACTION

Arizona law spurs immigration protests

See back page.

VOL. 28, NO. 8, AUGUST 2010

WWW.SOCIALISTACTION.ORG

U.S. / CANADA \$1

800 attend national antiwar conference in Albany, N.Y.



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Manpreet Rumana / AFP / Getty Images

A major advance in the fight against imperialist war

BY JEFF MACKLER

The July 23-25 national antiwar conference in Albany, N.Y., was an extraordinary advance in the fight against imperialist war and for social justice. To an extent greater than in any other decision-making conference of recent decades, this was a broad, determined, and united political mobilization against all of the ongoing and threatened U.S. wars, interventions, and occupations. And by the same measure, the conference was the most thorough repudiation of the government's "bail out the banks" antisocial agenda at home.

The United National Antiwar Conference's (UNAC's) open and democratic gathering included representa-

tives of virtually every major national antiwar group in the U.S. as well as hundreds of local, state, and regional antiwar organizations. Equally important was the presence and participation of leading representatives and activists from many of the country's most vital social movements, all of whom aimed to link the fight against U.S. imperialism's wars to the fight for social justice, democratic rights, and civil liberties.

The conference's power, scope, program, and unity were a direct response to the world economic crisis, which has directly affected the lives of tens of millions of Americans and driven the nation's corporate rulers to a series of endless and murderous wars across the globe.

After hours of debate, at times contentious and sharp, the conference unanimously adopted a 24-point Action Program of antiwar activities—culminating in mass demonstrations in New York City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles on April 9, 2011.

The Action Program represents a critical turning point for the U.S. antiwar and other social movements and an important political break from the widely held illusion that the 2008 presidential election would have ushered

(Above) Soldier on patrol, July 28, as U.S. begins a major push in Kandahar province.

in "change we can believe in." It is a harbinger of the powerful movement that will take to the streets in renewed, massive, and repeated mobilizations to demand a fundamental re-ordering of social priorities and an immediate end to all U.S. wars and occupations.

At least 776 antiwar and social justice activists from across the country, and including small delegations from Canada and Latin America, registered to participate. Scores of others flooded the giant auditorium without registering—putting the total attendance at well over 800. With the assistance of the Albany-based Sanctuary Media, 17,000 more witnessed the conference and many of its 30-plus workshops via video-streaming (<http://mediasanctuary.tv/crows/>).

The conference was initiated by the National Assembly to End U.S. Wars and Occupations and sponsored by UNAC, a group representing 31 national antiwar and so-

(continued on page 4)

WikiLeaks confirms U.S. disaster in Afghanistan

By GERRY FOLEY

As the U.S. and its allies in ramp up their long-stalled offensive in Afghanistan's Kandahar province, with the promised objective of sweeping the Taliban out of its base there, deaths of U.S. soldiers have reached the highest levels of the war—a rate of more than two a day. In the meantime, a host of problems plague the U.S.-led war effort.

A Gallup poll published last month stated that 60 percent of U.S. respondents think things are going badly for the United States in the Afghan war. And that was even before the disclosure of a mass of classified documents on WikiLeaks, which has created an international firestorm that does not seem about to die down.

The governments concerned in the WikiLeaks disclosures are trying to minimize the damage with essentially three arguments: (1) The documents are old news, because they come from a period before the



Muhammed Obaid Ormur / AP

Obama regime revised its strategy. (2) They are raw, unconfirmed data, and may represent only rumors. (3) The documents relating to collaboration between

the Pakistani secret service and the Taliban are uncorroborated and relate to an earlier relationship that no longer exists.

These arguments, however, can hardly be effective since the documents describe a situation that is well established and cannot be quickly changed, if at all. The claim that the U.S. is now minimizing civilian casualties is belied by two atrocities as we go to press.

The *New York Times* blog on the Afghan war noted July 31: "2:10 p.m. Civilian Toll in NATO Airstrike Being Investigated."

"In what could be the one of the most serious cases of civilian casualties in nine years of war, top Afghan officials said Monday [July 26] that 52 people had been killed in a remote region of Helmand Province on Friday [July 23] when a rocket slammed into a house where women and children had gathered to take shelter from fight-

(continued on page 6)

INSIDE SOCIALIST ACTION:

Health care — 2

Lynne Stewart re-sentenced — 3

On to April 9! — 5

Economic doldrums continue — 6

Memoirs by two 1960s socialists — 8

Canada news — 9

Film: *Winter's Bone* — 10

Immigrants rights protests — 12

Let's talk about health care in the USA — Big business gets \$ billions while working people suffer

By BRONSON ROZIER

LOUISVILLE, Ky.—A few weeks ago Congress was talking about not keeping up the compensation for Medicare doctors—as they usually do after the budget is voted upon. The corporate media and politicians, Democrat and Republican, say that Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security are insolvent and they need to be “reformed.”

Yeah, like Medicare prescriptions—a billion-dollar give away to the drug companies—and the recent Health Care “reform,” which was a windfall for the insurance companies. What they don't tell us is that income over \$106,000 is not taxed for these programs. If it were, the programs would remain in good shape indefinitely. And if we stopped funding all these useless wars, we could fund real health care for all.

The coming gutting of Medicare and Medicaid will be a social disaster. But social disasters are disasters for individual working and middle-class people. I speak from experience. I and a good friend, Jean, are both disabled. I do better because of the way I had earnings spread out. But Jean's husband's income and her disability amount are below the poverty line. Think of that, this is the richest country in the world, but her disability payments are below the poverty line!

As it is now, even without any cuts the system is horrible. Most doctors that you find are less than competent or so overwhelmed by caseloads that they have no time for patients. One doctor Jean saw for a “comprehensive” exam was in the room with her for 10 minutes—except for the two times he left the room! Many subjects didn't get discussed, and only one was treated. If they prescribe a medication like an antibiotic, they always prescribe the cheapest, which means the oldest and least effective. Even if you know the drug doesn't work.

If you happen to have an illness that causes moderate to severe pain, you might as well forget it. You're

automatically considered a “drug seeker,” and they give you medicines you know won't keep your pain under control.

Now, a psychiatrist (and drug-dependence counselor) is doing her pain management, because she can't find any pain specialists in the medical system who will use medication while searching for other treatments. Any specialist who will do that will not take Medicaid's low payment schedule.

Problems have been extreme—like one doctor saying an implanted pain pump had been approved, stringing her along for months on insufficient medication, while

he hadn't even submitted a request for the pump. Another pain specialist physically restrained Jean from bringing her Medicaid advisor and husband into the room to help her explain the situation.

So unless we want to see a terrible wave of human misery and unnecessary death, we must begin now to renew the fight for a single-payer plan. And a plan, to boot, that the health-care professionals and patients run. No more fat cat corporation managers only concerned with profit—or the government, owned by them—making the decisions, but the people it directly affects controlling it. ■



Support the Leon Trotsky Museum

The Trotsky Museum, in Coyoacán (part of Mexico City), has announced an ambitious expansion program. Plans are to restore and enlarge the museum, including the house and garden where Leon Trotsky spent the last period of his life, and add other facilities for an archive library for research, bookshop, cinema and art space, cafeteria, etc.

On Aug. 20, the International Friends of the Leon

Trotsky Museum will be launched at the Foro Coyoacanense, Hugo Argüelles, Calle Allende No. 36, in Coyoacán. This event will be part of a three-day series of activities, Aug. 19-21, marking the 70th anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky and the 35th anniversary of the opening of the museum.

On Aug. 19 and Aug. 20 (until 2 p.m.), a conference on “Socialism, Democracy and Dissident Movements” will be held in the museum's auditorium. There will be presentations by Mexican and international speakers, including from the U.S.

Finally, on Aug. 21, there will be a laying of a wreath on the tombstones of Leon Trotsky and Natalia Sedova, with a presentation by Trotsky's grandson, Esteban Volkov.

Supporters are urged to donate to the Museum preservation/renovation fund, to join the International Friends of the Leon Trotsky Museum, and to attend the events in Coyoacán. Please send checks, payable to Global Exchange (write “Trotsky Museum” on memo line of your check), to International Friends of the Leon Trotsky Museum, P.O. Box 40009, San Francisco, CA 94140. Info: gall.museo-trotsky@gmail.com. ■

A WORKERS' ACTION PROGRAM TO FIGHT THE CRISIS

We propose an EMERGENCY CONGRESS OF LABOR to discuss and take steps to implement the following demands —

- 1) Bail out the people, not the bankers! Open the account books of the banks to full public inspection. Nationalize the banks to be supervised by workers' committees.
- 2) No foreclosures! No forced evictions! Cancel usurious debt payments, and reduce mortgage payments in proportion to their capitalist-caused decline in value.
- 3) Full employment at union wages! An emergency public works program to employ all jobless workers and youth! Employ people to build what we need — low-cost quality housing, efficient mass transportation, cheap and renewable sources of power, schools, clinics — and to conserve our water, forests, farmland, and open space.
- 4) Immediate and full withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq & Afghanistan! Close all U.S. bases abroad! No money for the military — use funds instead for public works! Convert the war industries to making products for people's needs and to combat global warming.
- 5) Reduce the workweek to 30 hours with no cut in pay, and cut the retirement age to

55. Provide unemployment and retirement payments at the level of union wages and benefits.

- 6) To combat inflation: A sliding scale of wages and pensions that matches the rises in consumer prices. To combat high medical costs: A free, universal, public health-care system.
- 7) Immediate citizenship for all undocumented workers. No job discrimination; equal pay for equal work — regardless of gender, sexual orientation, skin color, or national origin.
- 8) Nationalize manufacturing, big agribusiness, energy, and transportation corporations and place them under the control of elected committees of workers.
- 9) To mobilize support for the demands it adopts, the EMERGENCY CONGRESS should organize ACTION COMMITTEES in every workplace and neighborhood threatened by the crisis. These committees can draw up more concrete demands than the ones outlined above.
- 10) To put all these measures into effect, we need a LABOR PARTY — based on a fighting union movement and all people who are oppressed and exploited. For a workers' government!

SOCIALIST ACTION. Closing news date: Aug. 1, 2010

Editor: Michael Schreiber International Editor: Gerry Foley Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 460501, San Francisco, CA 94146-0501. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. BOX 460501, San Francisco, CA 94146-0501. RATES: For one year (12 issues, 1st-class mail): U.S., Canada, Mexico — \$20. All other countries — \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials. Socialist Action is edited, designed, and laid out entirely by volunteer labor. It is printed by members of Local 583, Allied Printing Trades Council, San Francisco, Calif.

SOCIALIST ACTION

For info about Socialist Action and how to join: Socialist Action National Office, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610, socialistaction@gmail.com, (510) 268-9429

Socialist Action newspaper editorial offices: socialistactionnews@yahoo.com Website: www.socialistaction.org

WHERE TO FIND SOCIALIST ACTION

- ASHLAND, Ore.: damonjure@earthlink.net
- ASHLAND, Wis.: northlandiguana@gmail.com
- BOSTON: bostonsocialistaction@gmail.com (781) 630-0250
- CARRBORO, N.C.: (919) 967-2866, robonica@lycos.com
- CHICAGO: P.O. Box 578428 Chicago, IL 60657, chisocialistaction@yahoo.com
- CONNECTICUT: (860)478-5300
- DULUTH, MINN.: P.O. Box 16853 Duluth, MN 55816, risforrevolution@yahoo.com, www.the-red-raven.blogspot.com
- FLORIDA: socialistaction_tampa@hotmail.com
- KANSAS CITY: kcsa@workernet.org (816) 221-3638
- MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL: (612) 802-1482, socialistaction@visi.com
- NEW YORK CITY: spewnyc@aol.com

- PHILADELPHIA: philly.socialistaction@gmail.com
- PORTLAND, ORE.: (503) 233-1629 gary1917@aol.com
- PROVIDENCE: ADGAGNE@YAHOO.COM, (401) 419-1706
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: P.O. Box 10328, OAKLAND, CA 94510 (415) 255-1080, sfsocialistaction@gmail.com
- SUPERIOR, WIS.: wainosunrise@yahoo.com
- WASHINGTON, DC: christopher.towne@gmail.com (202) 286-5493

SOCIALIST ACTION CANADA

NATIONAL OFFICE
526 Roxton Road, Toronto, Ont. M6G 3R4, (416) 535-8779
www.socialistaction-canada.blogspot.com

Subscribe to Socialist Action

Get Socialist Action newspaper each month by 1st-class mail!

— \$10 for six months — \$20 for 12 months — \$37 for 24 months

Note: We no longer offer subscriptions sent by 2nd-class mail.

Name _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____ E-mail _____

I want to join the Socialist Action Newspaper Supporters Club.
I enclose an extra contribution of: \$100 \$200 Other

Clip and mail to: P.O. Box 460501, San Francisco, CA 94146-0501.
Credit cards: See www.socialistaction.org to subscribe with PayPal.



Federal judge increases sentence for jailed attorney Lynne Stewart

By MARTY GOODMAN

NEW YORK—In a dramatic setback for civil liberties, radical human rights attorney Lynne Stewart had her sentence on “conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism” increased from 28 months to 10 years. The July 15 ruling by Judge John Koeltl of the Federal District Court in Manhattan lengthened his original 2005 sentence of Stewart by over four times!

Lynne Stewart is a 70-year-old grandmother in ill health, who has battled breast cancer and receives chemotherapy. She also has diabetes. Ralph Poynter, lifelong activist and Stewart’s husband, called the ruling “a death sentence.” Former U.S. Attorney Gen. Ramsey Clark called the decision “a travesty, a total injustice.”

A motion to appeal was filed by Stewart’s attorneys in July. Stewart has been imprisoned in a lower Manhattan jail since Nov. 19. The sentence stems from Stewart’s fearless defense of the rights of Sheik Omar Rahman, accused of conspiring to blow up New York landmarks. Convicted in 1995, he was sentenced es-

entially to life in prison. Throughout his trial no physical evidence was ever found.

The attack on Stewart will surely impact on the fight for democratic rights, including the struggles against war and racism, for immigrant rights, labor rights, etc. Like Bush, Obama has sought to railroad Stewart with a 15 to 30-year sentence. As a backdrop to two unpopular wars, the Obama administration is targeting Stewart as a warning to those who defend the rights of Muslims and others accused of “terrorism.”

Under legal and political pressure from Washington, a Nov. 17 ruling of the federal Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit voided Stewart’s 2005 sentence as too lenient, calling it “substantially unreasonable.” In an extraordinary decision, it ordered Koeltl to rule again on Stewart’s case. It added that Koeltl must also rule again on the “terrorism enhancement” sections of the Patriot Act and the Clinton-era Anti-Terrorism Act.

Koeltl’s July decision, while praising Lynne’s life-long service to the poor, said Stewart had lied under oath, an offense

he claimed he had not ruled on. (In other words, he had not bowed sufficiently to political pressure.) However, a reading of Koeltl’s 2005 decision shows that he did rule on it.

Koeltl also said Stewart had showed a “lack of remorse,” citing her parting remark to a jail-door rally that she could do 28 months “standing on my head,” a phrase used to calm supporters. (Her remark was prefaced with, “As many of my clients have told me...”) In July, Stewart told the court, “Over the last eight months, prison has diminished me. Daily I confront the prospect of death,” but added, “We will continue to struggle on.”

Lynne was represented by attorney Jill Shellow, who argued the new sentence was “dramatically unreasonable ... overstating the seriousness” of the charges; the first ruling more in keeping with other court rulings on “terrorism enhancement.” In reality, the spineless Koeltl did not have to issue a tougher sentence or a new sentence at all. But, given the corrupt capitalist justice system and docile corporate media, a more vicious sentence was handed down.

After rallying outside, more than 100 Stewart supporters packed the courtroom and adjacent viewing room, erupting in shouts of solidarity and “We love you Lynne!” Many wiped away tears.

In 2000, Stewart publicized a Rahman press release to supporters in Egypt, in violation of a gag act called a Special Administration Measure (SAM). Stewart has said that communicating her client’s message, not an uncommon practice, was part of a “vigorous defense.” No one was

(Above) Lynne Stewart with husband Ralph Poynter at National Assembly antiwar conference in 2008.

(Left) Defense of Lynne Stewart was a central theme for protesters in July 25 march following United National Antiwar Conference, in Albany, N.Y.

injured, but Stewart now says she should have challenged the restriction before violating it.

Stewart’s SAM violation, when brought before then U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno prior to the 9/11 attacks, was passed over. Ramsey Clark, a Rahman case co-council, said his SAM violations were also overlooked. At most, such offenses usually meant the denial of visitation rights, even during the pre 9/11 Bush administration.

But after 9/11, former Attorney General George Ashcroft used Stewart’s violations to connect Stewart to terrorism. Ashcroft himself escaped punishment when he violated similar rules by publicly calling Stewart a “terrorist lawyer.”

Throughout the ordeal the Lynne Stewart Defense Organization has kept the pressure on. A July 8 indoor rally in New York raised \$3000. The evening before Lynne’s hearing, protesters assembled below her prison window, waving as she waved back.

Hearing from supporters is important to Lynne. Please send mail to: Lynne Stewart #53504-054 MCC-NY 150 Park Row, New York, NY 10007. Visit www.lynnestewart.org and www.ralphpoynter@yahoo.com. ■

Extending unemployment compensation has to be just the first step

By JOHN LESLIE

Some of the first victims of the austerity drive in Washington are our friends and neighbors, the unemployed. Unfortunately, the mainstream media has picked up the narrative of some rightist politicians that there really are jobs available—but that the unemployed are “enjoying” their state-paid vacations!

Tom Corbett, Republican candidate for governor of Pennsylvania, said recently, “The jobs are there, but if we keep extending unemployment, people are just going to sit there. ... I’ve literally had construction companies tell me, ‘I can’t get people to come back to work until—they say, “We’ll come back when unemployment runs out.””

Corbett isn’t the only one trying to sell this idea of the “lazy” unemployed. Tea Party Republicans Rand Paul and Sharon Angle have made similar statements. Paul said, “As bad as it sounds, ultimately we do have to sometimes accept a wage that’s less than we had at our previous job in order to get back to work and allow the economy to get started again.”

All of these politicians are ignoring the dire situation that the unemployed, especially the long-term unemployed, face—foreclosures, higher rates of suicide, broken marriages, and higher rates of child and spousal abuse.

The sad truth is that neither capitalist party is doing much to address the problem of unemployment. Although they can bail out big banks and corporations with government funding, they insist that unemployment must be solved by the so-called free market. Without turning up the heat on the politicians, we can expect no concrete action to help working people.

At the very outset of the recession, the economy began to hemorrhage jobs. Right now, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (June report) counts 14.6 million unemployed, or about 9.5% of the workforce. The number of long-term unemployed (often left uncounted in official unemployment-rate statistics) is at 6.8 million. The number of “involuntary” part-time workers (those who want full-time work but can’t find it) is at 8.6 million. The unemployment for Blacks, at 15.4%, is roughly twice that of whites (8.6%), and joblessness amongst Latinos is at 12.4%. This of course does not figure in the large numbers of undocumented workers who have lost jobs in the slump.

The establishment media is reporting only the rosier scenarios of recovery. For instance, a Philadelphia *Inquirer* report of July 21 claims that “to recoup the jobs lost in the recession, the economy would have to create 280,000 jobs a month for the next 5 years.”

Yet taking into account the 160,000 workers who enter the workforce every month, the number of jobs that needs to be created is much higher; 9.6 million new workers (160,000 X 60 months), plus the 14.6 million already unemployed, means 24.2 million new jobs are required over a period of five years. This demonstrates that in excess of 403,000 jobs a month need to be created.

Of course, meeting this goal would only be possible according to the most optimistic estimates of growth. But different scenarios have been posited by the Center for Economic Policy and Research (CEPR). They state that even if job growth attained the rate of the fastest four years of the most recent economic expansion period, the recovery of the

jobs lost in this recession still would not take place until 2021 (www.cepr.net).

The bosses got a bail out; we need one of our own. Working people need to mobilize for the creation of jobs now! We don’t have another decade to wait for the “free market” to come to our rescue. We need to demand the creation of good jobs at good wages as well as other measures, as explained in Socialist Action’s “Workers Action Program to Meet the Economic Crisis” (see a summary of some of the key demands on page 2).

A good start will be the March for Jobs called by the NAACP and the AFL-CIO for Oct. 2. All local unions and labor councils should be mobilizing their members, employed and unemployed, for a massive march on Washington, D.C. ■

Philadelphia forum —

The Struggle for Immigrant Rights and Social Justice

Hear Cristobal Cavazos

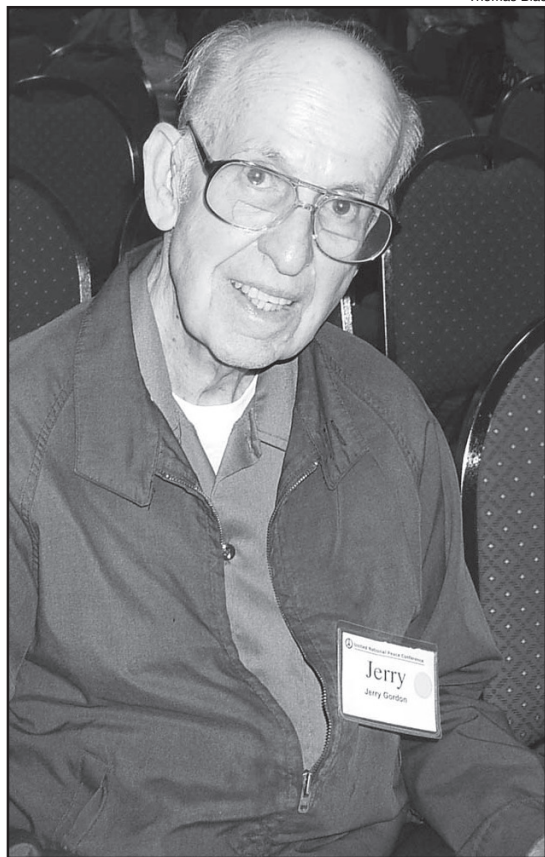
Activist with the Immigrant Solidarity Dupage (Chicago area) and Grassroots Immigrant Justice Network.

Sat., Aug. 14, 3 p.m.

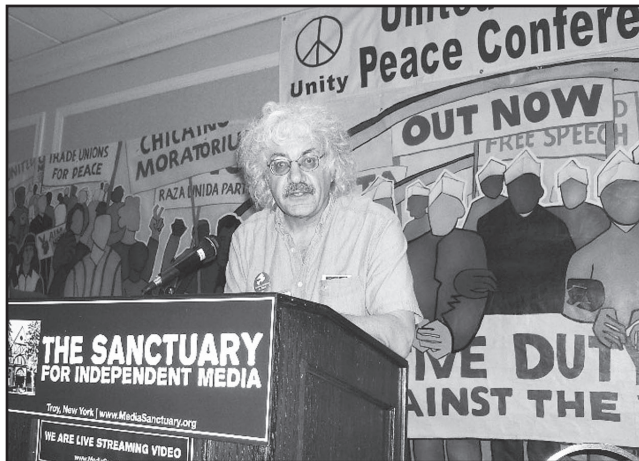
William Way LGBT Center, 1315 Spruce St., Phila.

Sponsored by Socialist Action, philly.socialistaction@gmail.com

... 800 attend United National Antiwar Conference



Thomas Bias



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Thomas Bias



Thomas Bias

(continued from page 1)

cial justice organizations. The conference adhered throughout the proceedings to an open and democratic, “one-person-one-vote” procedure. The central demands that the conference adopted were:

- Immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops, mercenaries, military contractors, and war dollars from Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

- Money for jobs, education, health care, pensions, housing, infrastructure, the environment, and human needs in general—not war.

- End U.S. aid to Israel—military, economic, and diplomatic. End U.S. support for the Israeli occupation of Palestine and the blockade of Gaza.

The third set of demands was incorporated into the Action Program by an overwhelming majority vote, following a long and vigorous debate on the relationship between the antiwar movement and the Palestinian freedom struggle. A comprehensive resolution on Palestine, including support for “boycotts, divestment and sanctions” (BDS) against Israel was also approved at the concluding session, this time by a unanimous vote.

Varying strategies presented

Renowned social activist, linguist, and historian Noam Chomsky keynoted the conference via a 30-minute video telecast that reviewed the machinations and disinformation campaigns surrounding U.S. imperial policy in Iraq and Afghanistan. Chomsky presented grave warnings regarding the dangers of recent U.S. preparations for a war against Iran.

Also keynoting the conference was South Carolina AFL-CIO President Donna Dewitt, who sharply focused her remarks on the need to broaden and unify the movement to include the wide range of constituencies required to build an effective struggle against U.S. intervention and for social justice.

Muralist Mike Alewitz made a stirring dedication speech for the cloth mural draped behind the conference stage—a memorial to the four students at Kent State University (in Ohio) killed by National Guard troops on May 4, 1970, and to the two students murdered by police at Jackson State College (in Mississippi) 10 days later. Alewitz was a young participant in the Kent State antiwar rally that the National Guard fired upon. It had been called in solidarity with nationwide protests against the invasion of Cambodia ordered by President Nixon a few days earlier.

“These young lives,” Alewitz said, “were snuffed out as an example to others to stop the protests. But Nixon had greatly misjudged the mood of the country. Instead of curbing the protests, he pro-

voled a national student strike. For every one of our martyrs, tens of thousands took their place.”

“That spirit lives,” Alewitz declared. He said that the UNAC mural was dedicated to the latest martyrs, “the nine brave activists of the Freedom Flotilla, who said to the world that we will never turn our backs on the Palestinian people.” And the *real* memorial, he concluded, “is sitting before me—the *living* movement.”

Two major Friday and Saturday evening panel discussions, with some 12 speakers each, presented a wide range of strategies and tactics to advance the antiwar movement and to highlight the multitude of issues that the organizers deemed essential to building a broad-based, inclusive, and effective fightback.

Representing the National Assembly, Chris Gauvreau reviewed the essential ingredients of the mass movement that needs to be constructed today. Key to the movement’s success, she concluded, was the construction of a united and democratic political movement that operates independent of the Democratic and Republican parties. (Her speech appears on page 5 in this issue of *Socialist Action*.)

The conference was not without serious debates over critical issues, the most intensely contested of which were the amendments submitted to the Draft Action Program by a recently formed Palestine Solidarity Caucus. This group of 15-20 Palestine solidarity activists began its deliberations via a series of national conference calls and finalized its proposals and tactics at a well-attended conference caucus meeting of about 75 participants.

Two major plenary sessions discussed and debated some 45 wide-ranging amendments and resolutions that had been submitted prior to the conference, as well as others offered at the conference itself. The amendments expanded the scope of the initial nine-point Draft Action Plan, originally presented unanimously by the 31 co-sponsoring organizations, to about 24 distinct actions over the course of the coming nine months.

Aug. 28 & Oct. 2 labor mobilizations

These activities will begin with UNAC supporting the Aug. 28 Detroit and Washington, D.C., labor and civil rights groups’ mobilizations “to create jobs and stop moving money out of education and into wars and prisons.” These actions will also commemorate Martin Luther King Jr.’s historic March on Washington. The Aug. 28 actions are also aimed at countering the reactionary, racist, and provocative Tea Party gathering also slated for Aug. 28 in the nation’s capital.

The UNAC conference endorsed and voted to build an antiwar contingent in the Oct. 2 national march for jobs in

Washington, D.C., supported by the AFL-CIO and initiated by the NAACP and the SEIU-affiliated Local 1199. The Oct. 2 national mobilization’s inclusion of antiwar themes represents an important opportunity to link labor’s fightback at home with the struggle against the present trillion-dollar corporate war budget aimed at colonial expansion and horrific death and destruction abroad.

A number of conference speakers, including Glen Ford of the *Black Agenda Report*, while expressing support for the Oct. 2 labor mobilization, cautioned that this effort not be turned into a pre-election rally for the Democratic Party. The thunderous applause that greeted Ford’s critique of the policies of the Obama administration was a powerful indication that today’s antiwar and social movements are increasingly looking to independent forms of struggle.

Ford, citing a recent poll, was also critical of the still strong illusions in Obama, especially among Black Americans. Ford talked about the culture of resistance that in past decades made Black people the most dependable antiwar demographic in the U.S. But Obama’s presence, Ford noted, has served as a “narcotic” for the Black population. “Breaking the Obama spell is the must-do task for a renewed movement for social justice and peace,” he added. “There is nothing complicated about it. You simply tell the truth. Obama works for Wall Street and the militarists. That is the truth.”

Similar concerns were expressed by Albany conference immigration-rights activists who pointed with alarm to the Oct. 2 march organizers’ demand for “comprehensive immigration reform,” a term that has come to be associated with President Obama’s support for the notorious anti-immigrant and punitive bill sponsored by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-NY).

The above concerns are certainly legitimate—and especially so in light of labor’s decades-long history of bureaucratic functioning and subordination to the Democratic Party. But the fact that labor and moderate civil rights leaders feel compelled to organize mass protests in the nation’s capital that challenge the government’s war and social policies is new to American politics and reflects the deep disillusionment of the ranks with the status quo of war, racism, and ever deepening attacks on working people.

The decision of the UNAC to actively participate and build the Aug. 28 and Oct. 2 actions and march alongside civil rights and labor activists far outweighs the fact that march officials will undoubtedly use the occasion to advocate support to Obama and his warmongering Democrats while placing the blame for today’s social crises on “obstructionist Republicans.”

Faces at the conference (clockwise):

- Jerry Gordon, UNAC nat. secretary.
- Joe Lombardo, Albany antiwar activist and UNAC conf. organizer.
- Marilyn Levin, New England United activist and co-coordinator National Assembly
- Medea Benjamin, Code Pink.

Few mass actions of this sort meet the “test” of “political purity.” Tens of thousands of antiwar fighters carrying placards like “Jobs and Justice, Not War: Bring the Troops Home Now!” and “End All U.S. Aid to Israel!” while marching alongside their fellow workers and discussing the critical issues of the day would far outweigh the expected deferential remarks of a bankrupt labor “leadership” that has stood silent in the face of the greatest capitalist offensive against workers since the Great Depression.

A broad plan of protest action

The 24-point Action Program included endorsement of an Oct. 7 national day of student-led protests against education cutbacks, demanding “Money for Education, Not for Occupation,” a mid-October week of actions to commemorate the ninth anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan; support to the Nov. 15-19 “Remember Fallujah” week to mark the horrific and virtual leveling of this Iraqi city by U.S. troops; and a national effort to initiate various city council, town, and village antiwar meetings and antiwar voter referenda/ballot initiatives as well as lobbying efforts.

The Action Program also included nationally coordinated teach-ins in mid-March 2011 to mark the eighth year of the Iraq War and to prepare for the culminating April 9 bi-coastal mass demonstrations in New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. A full-scale national effort was approved to begin immediately to gather broad endorsements for the April 9 bi-coastal mobilizations.

Additional actions approved include a week of local antiwar lobbying in April, national speaking tours, and the mounting of “rapid, broad and nationally coordinated protests by antiwar and social justice activists” in the event of a U.S. or Israeli attack on Iran.

The Action Program also called for support to actions to end the Israeli occupation of Palestine, and for protests in the event of U.S.-backed military action by Israel against Palestinians, aid activists attempting to end the blockade of Gaza, or attacks on other countries such as Lebanon, Syria, or Iran.

The program called for solidarity with Iraqi trade-union leaders who are under attack by the puppet Iraqi regime. In fact,

(continued on page 5)

On to April 9!

By CHRISTINE GAUVREAU

Below is the address given to the United National Antiwar Conference in Albany, N.Y., by Christine Gauvreau, speaking on behalf of the National Assembly.

The war in Afghanistan is already the longest war in U.S. history. In Iraq the pain and suffering just go on and on and on. Equally morally repugnant is the vicious propaganda campaign and illegal blockade against Iran. The U.S. flaunts all world opinion and continues to support the brutal Israeli regime: its apartheid walls, dark prisons, criminal blockades, and its nuclear arsenal bristling with weapons aimed at the other nations of the Middle East and South Asia. From Korea to Costa Rica, the U.S. military machine is in deadly motion.

There is only one force on earth that can put this monster back in its cage. That is the force that we saw in motion in 2006 when millions of immigrant workers took to the streets. That is the force we sensed when the Oakland longshoremen let that Israeli ship sit idly in their port. That force is the political mobilization of working people in their millions abroad and here at home. We can't do that today, but everything we can do should be designed to lead us to that place.

So the strategy advocated by the National Assembly can be summed up easily: We privilege united-front mass actions independent of the Democratic and Republican parties.

What does that mean? Let 's take the call for unity.

Almost every single one of us is here in this room because we sense we need unity to get the job done. It is obvious that the 10 U.S. warmakers are united. They do not let tactical differences—about surges or no surges, negotiations or not, warlord A or warlord B—they do not let these tactical differences prevent them from blocking together to keep the war machine humming. Wasn't this totally clear at early this month when, despite the face-saving gesture provided by the Rule, Congress continued to fund the war?

We too must embrace those actions that can unite us. When I look at this room I know that I am looking at the leaders of hundreds of Saturday vigils, hundreds of brown-bag lunches at Congressional offices, hundreds of potlucks and tours, pickets and phone campaigns, hundreds of election campaigns, dozens of courageous acts of individual witness. Every single one of these activities knits the fabric of our movement. Every single one of these activities binds and forges us into an organizing force. But they are not enough!

This year let us use every one of our many campaigns to build toward a giant united action on April 9. Let us use every press conference on "Bringing the War Dol-

lars Home" to begin to build momentum toward a united mass action on April 9. Let us use every city council vote on budget cuts to garner an endorsement for April 9.

Let us use every student demonstration for education not war, every fight against teacher cuts, every tour of Gaza Flotilla survivors, every Honduras solidarity action, every protest of U.S. crimes in Haiti to publicize a mobilization that builds and builds and builds. We can each continue our dearest projects but bring it all together in a common action whose size and diversity will make the antiwar movement visible to those who increasingly need to find it.

Some of you are asking: Does it make sense to talk of mass actions? The call for a march [in Washington, D.C.] for jobs, not war on Oct. 2 is a signal that the time when we can put sizeable numbers of antiwar people into the streets is near. The rally of hundreds of thousands in Arizona to beat back the racist anti-immigrant law about to take effect tells us this is possible.

Did you experience the power of the rally of 200,000 Latino workers in Washington, D.C., last March? The Equality march of 200,000 last spring? The stirring mobilizations of thousands of Arab Americans during the invasion of Gaza? And let us not forget that growing outcry against the preemptive prosecutions of innocent Muslim Americans is challenging the ideology of the War on Terror at its very root. The antiwar movement has been at a low level of mobilization but things are changing. We must have things in place.

This conference, organized on the basis of broad sponsorship and one person/one vote, is the tried and true mechanism for getting demonstrations that the whole movement can buy into. If we can make democratic functioning in large open conferences the norm, we can move away from divisiveness and toward cooperation on regular mass actions. We can begin that process here.

Finally, I want to address the third component of our strategy—political independence. The National Assembly firmly believes that to build a movement strong enough to push back the warmakers, the demonstrations that we call together must be visibly independent of both political parties. We all know that Congress thinks they have us in their pocket. We have to let them know that we are going to fight for what we want—what working people at home and abroad need—no matter what they do. They have to know in their bones that the consequences of their inaction on the war will be the complete alienation of the vast majority from their political system. They have to truly and deeply fear the growth of a movement that can-



(Above) U.S. soldiers near Kandahar, July 28. Bring them home now from Afghanistan!

not be comforted with a meeting with a Congressional aide.

But there is a much more immediate and pressing reason why our united actions must be organized around demands that reflect what we really want. We are organizing in the Great Recession, and that means that politics are extreme and polarized.

The vast majority of the people who are victimized by this war hate all politicians, and especially those in power. They hate whatever regime is in power because their life is in shambles and there is no end to the misery in sight. The jobs are not coming back. Their homes are not coming back. The deportations are not going to end.

If we tie our demonstrations to the defense of the indefensible things going on in Congress, we risk losing the people we need to the other political force that is willing to stand up and just say no to politics as usual. We risk driving at least some of the Anglo victims of this war to the extreme right, to the Tea Party or to whatever radicalized rightist force is willing to stand up say no to parliamentary games.

In that sense, the decision about what next in U.S. politics is really and truly up to us. The stakes are extremely high. But I think that we here in this room can rise to the challenge and be part of the process of real fundamental change. We can and must shape actions that truly speak to all those who have thrown away by their employers and the banks and the politicians. We can and must help them experience their own agency and innate political power in the streets.

So I say, let us forge an agreement on political independence and unity in action right here and right now. Out Now! Money for Jobs Not War! On to April 9! ■

... Antiwar

(continued from page 4)

just days after conference attendees returned home, it was announced that the Iraqi government had raided and closed all offices of the electrical workers' union, underlining the importance of heightened solidarity.

The program urged support to actions aimed at dismantling the Cold War nuclear, biological, radiological, and chemical weapons and delivery systems. It called for solidarity with GIs, veterans, and military families and support for their campaigns and calls for action. And it called for actions against war profiteers, including oil and energy companies, weapons manufacturers, and engineering firms whose contractors are working to insure U.S. economic control of Iraq's and Afghanistan's resources.

The Action Program noted the necessity to link the antiwar movement with mass actions demanding urgent social needs such as jobs, health care, housing, education, and immigrant rights.

A Continuations Committee was approved, consisting of one representative of each of the 31 co-sponsoring conference organizations. This committee was empowered to expand its membership with additional forces in agreement with the conference's adopted program. It is expected that the expansion will result in the broadest unified antiwar effort in decades.

Workshop discussions draw crowds

Two-dozen conference workshops provided critical spaces for movement activ-

ists to discuss and debate many of the movement's most hotly contested subjects. This was the case with a workshop that attracted 120 participants entitled, "The Rise of Right Wing Populism and the Tea Party: Do We Need a Right-Left Coalition?" Code Pink's Medea Benjamin and Kevin Zeese of Voters for Peace argued that the idea had merit in attracting some of the forces who have been inadvertently attracted to right-wing solutions. Chris Gauvreau and Glen Ford rejected such an alliance, arguing that it would only serve to drive away the very forces that are a prerequisite to the antiwar movement's success.

A workshop entitled "Israel and the Palestinian Struggle: Is a Two-State Solution Possible or Desirable?" drew some 80 participants, most of whom rejected a "two-state solution," a far cry from previous conferences where mere mention of a Democratic Secular Palestine was considered anathema to any serious discussion. The panelists detailed the historic conditions that led to the formation of the Zionist Israeli state and its constant expansion as well as the dramatic impact of the murderous blockade and siege of Gaza and the Israeli army killings aboard the flotilla boats carrying humanitarian relief to Gaza.

There was also a workshop featuring Palestinian activists speaking on boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel and other strategies. It was more than evident from the workshop discussions and the overall UNAC deliberations that this conference marked the sea change in politics that has deeply permeated the consciousness of the broad antiwar movement.

The July 23-25 UNAC conference opened

the door wide to a return to the streets of a reinvigorated antiwar movement. Nine months of coordinated actions have been placed on the movement's agenda. The fulfillment of the conference's promise depends now on the capacity of the hitherto divided movement to come together to reach and exceed its immediate potential.

Unity in the antiwar movement, not to mention in the radical and socialist left, has never come easy. Divisions remain deep and profound. But mass-action united-front politics and practice have always proved decisive in bringing together the broadest layers on the basis of widely held principles.

Today these principles boil down to the key slogans, "Bring the troops home now!" "Money for jobs and all associated human needs, not war," and "End to all U.S. aid to Israel!"—chief agency of U.S. and world imperialism in the Middle East. The stakes are high. The future of humanity could well depend on the outcome.

The conference ended with Jerry Gordon, national secretary of both the National Assembly and UNAC, reviewing the accomplishments of the conference and noting the importance of forging a lasting unity in the movement.

Gordon humorously awarded Marilyn Levin of New England United and Joe Lombardo, representing the Albany area peace and justice community, the title of "the conference's Most Valuable Players (MVPs)." Marilyn headed a team that solicited and organized some 128 speakers into various workshops and panel presentations, the effect of which was to provide participants with a well-rounded and broadly representative spectrum

of the movement's political views. Lombardo headed an on-site logistics team of some 40 activists who for several months had meticulously planned and organized almost every aspect of the conference's functioning.

Gordon noted the important role of the conference's four co-chairs—Jim Lafferty, executive director, Los Angeles National Lawyers Guild; Michael McPhearson, co-chair United for Peace and Justice and past executive director of Veterans for Peace; Kathy Black, national co-convenor, US Labor Against the War and leader of the Philadelphia-area Coalition of Labor Union Women; and this writer, national co-coordinator of the National Assembly.

Special mention was also given to the conference's broadly representative presiding committee—Kathy Kelly, Center for Creative Nonviolence; Michael Eisenscher, national coordinator, USLAW; Blanca Misse, UC Berkeley student leader and central organizer of the March 4 statewide anti-budget-cuts strike; Mary Nichols-Rhodes, Ohio state coordinator of Progressive Democrats of America; and Marilyn Levin, co-national coordinator, National Assembly.

Gordon concluded with a statement of his personal appreciation for the collaboration, advice, and meticulous attention to detail of USLAW's Michael Eisenscher in a wide range of endeavors critical to the conference's functioning.

Following Gordon's remarks, conference participant Adam Shils from Chicago rose for a special point to unanimously affirm the key role of Jerry Gordon in the conference's success. The meeting ended with a standing ovation for Gordon's leadership and tireless efforts and for the unity he had so effectively fostered. ■

Continuing economic slowdown shows an irrational system at work



BY ANDREW POLLACK

Reports on the economy's health in recent weeks have displayed heightened fears of a continued slide into depression (labeled in the media a "double-dip recession.") Naturally, mainstream commentators on these events put them down to greed, inadequate policy, unfair competition, etc. But in fact they illustrated the inescapable contradictions of an irrational system that inevitably produces such catastrophes.

On July 15, AP reported that manufacturing activity was slowing after having helped drive the early stages of the alleged recovery. Factory output fell in June for the sharpest monthly drop in a year. At the same time, prices remained stagnant, moving a normally "hawkish" Fed official (i.e. one who likes to hike interest rates to cut inflation in order to benefit investors) to warn of the growing risk that deflation would reinforce the downward slide. Retail sales have been slowing since April, and are expected to remain slow through the back-to-school and Christmas seasons.

Like other mainstream accounts of the slowdown, AP stressed the mutually-reinforcing interaction of negative economic indicators: declining consumer confidence leads to slower sales, which slow production, which means no hiring, which means less money for consumers to spend, and on and on.

The bad news culminated in late-July announcements that in the second quarter GDP rose only 2.4%, with universal predictions that the rest of the year would be equally slow if not slower—rates woefully inadequate to bring young newcomers to the job market, much less re-employ the millions who lost their jobs. What's more, new figures showed that for all of 2009 the economy contracted by 2.6%, compared to the previously estimated 2.4% decline.

Once again, the housing sector was a key source of concern. Home sales are deteriorating, inventories piling up and builders scaling back construction plans. *The Wall Street Journal* noted housing's place in the vicious circle: "While the housing downturn dragged the economy into a recession nearly three years ago, now it is the economy that is pulling down housing. Without sustained job growth, the housing market likely won't improve. That in turn will ricochet across manufacturing, retail and other trades heavily dependent on home building and consumer spending."

Singing the same tune, the *Washington Post* quoted economist Robert Johnson: "We're right on the cusp between simply decelerating and actually falling into a double dip. We have households still trying to be cautious and improve their savings, and if they cut back further, it will create a feedback loop that drives us back down." (The *Post* and other media also admitted that the slightly brighter first-quarter results had largely been based on businesses restocking inventories, which had fallen further and faster than consumer spending—and those inventories are now restocked and will provide no further stimulus.)

Another manifestation of the system's irrationality is a revived bond market, which is dancing its way toward a cliff and threatening to drag the world's economies down with it. *The Wall Street Journal* reported,

Working people need to begin to discuss the long-term struggle to replace this hopeless economic system.

"Over the next two years, banks around the world must come up with trillions of dollars to cover recent short-term borrowing. The IMF and other agencies overseeing banks worry that the need to find cash for that refinancing will leave businesses and consumers without access to credit to finance purchases..."

"The financing crunch has its origins in a worldwide trend for banks to borrow money for shorter periods—a practice which contributed to the near-collapse of the world financial system in late 2008 when short-term financing dried up. Government guarantees extended in response to the crisis also inadvertently encouraged short-term lending. ... One way banks have avoided paying off the newly-acquired debt is by reducing their lending and their need for new financing—which is exactly what some economists feared."

Yet as they waltz us toward the abyss, bond issuers and their corporate borrowers are reveling in the short-term gains available. The July 12 *New York Times* reported that "the global corporate-bond boom is gathering steam as companies rush to take advantage of some of the lowest borrowing costs in history."

"This month has been the busiest July on record for sales by U.S. companies with junk-credit ratings. Asia's debt market is on pace for a record year, and European companies are also raising money apace."

The reason for this rush into bonds? "The Federal Reserve has short-term interest rates near zero, investors are leery of stocks, and the economic outlook is too sluggish to spark a robust stock boom but not so bad that it causes companies to default."

Many companies are simply borrowing to refinance old debt and leaving what's left on their balance sheets, bracing for the possibility of fresh crises or leaner growth ahead. "They're not looking to invest or to take on assets to try and build their business," said Justin D'Ercole of Barclays Capital. In sum, months of Fed policy designed to reinvigorate the economy is simply fueling short-term bond returns for lack of profitable investment opportunities—all the while setting up a catastrophic puncturing of the bond bubble.

Media astonishment at the lack of investment of growing stashes of cash grew last month. Thus the *Washington Post* on July 15 noted that "nonfinancial companies are sitting on \$1.8 trillion in cash, roughly one-quarter more than at the beginning of the recession ... leading many to wonder: If corporations are sitting on so much money, why aren't they hiring more workers?" Nearly 60% of chief financial officers said in a survey they won't bring their employment back to pre-recession levels until 2012 or later—despite

Left) Wall St. brokers react to stock market's dive last May. Many in ruling-class financial circles have strong doubts that the economy can soon recover.

predicting a 12% rise in earnings and a 9% boost in capital spending over the next year.

And even more tax breaks won't make an impact, said the head of River Twice Research: "CEOs don't like taking risks. ... There's not a whole lot that you could do to entice companies to hire. You could cut taxes, but they're not going to hire just because they have the extra cash, because they already have the extra cash." This is actually part of a trend going back decades: between 1980 and 2006, the average cash-to-assets ratio for U.S. industrial firms more than doubled.

Robert Reich, secretary of labor under Clinton, noted that while "big businesses have recovered almost 90% of what they lost" since the bubble burst, what investment is happening is in labor-saving technologies. Ford, for instance, reported a \$2.6 billion second-quarter profit, and is more than two-thirds of the way to equaling its record 1999 profits. But due to labor-saving technologies, Ford now has half as many employees as a decade ago.

Such a "commitment to keeping capacity in check" keeps investors happy. In fact, says Reich, Wall Street is advising investors "to sell the stocks of companies that talk openly of expanding capacity." Despite stagnant consumer spending, "business spending on equipment and software continued to surge, increasing by 21.9% in the second quarter, compared with a 20.4% rise in the first three months."

Such investment in equipment for heightened productivity so as to make the same profits with fewer workers is a traditional tool for increasing or restoring the rate of profit, whether in business cycles, in recessions or in depressions. But the rate at which productivity must be increased to dig the economy out of a depression must be on a scale only found in a new technological revolution, which is nowhere on the horizon. The exception to this is if such productivity leaps are combined with other savage attacks on workers—wars, slashing social programs, restricting workers' rights—all of which look increasingly likely.

While profits soar and jobs continue to disappear, Obama's response is to ask Big Business what else he can do to ease their lives. *The Wall Street Journal* reported that he asked business leaders "to identify specific regulations that they believe are obstacles to job-creating private investment." The heads of the Business Roundtable and Chamber of Commerce praised Obama's overtures as "constructive," while insisting he move quicker to translate them into policy.

They need have no fears on that score. "We're trying to incentivize and bring private capital in from the sidelines," said White House economic adviser Jared Bernstein. "Ultimately, it's the purview of the private sector to create the job growth that's going to lift us."

The same dilemma of short-term profiteering heightening long-term systemic instability is being played out in world trade. In an article headlined, "World economic recovery driven by global imbalances," the *Washington Post* reported, "The downturn that began two years ago was supposed to shake up the global economy ... ending an era in which Americans consumed too much and saved and exported too little. But the recovery is being driven by a return to the very global imbalances that were a major cause of the crisis. Americans' savings rates have fallen over the past year, imports are rising faster than exports, and countries around the world are again turning to Americans to be the consumers of last resort."

"That's partly because countries around the world view those old ways, while dangerous over the long term, as the quickest option to power out of the deep economic decline. ... World leaders trying to grapple with these issues face a clash between what is best for the world economy in the long run and the immediate interests of their respective countries. The risk: that the seeds of the next crisis are already in the ground."

This fall workers will have several opportunities to mobilize in the face of this crisis—the Aug. 28 anti-racist rally and the Oct. 2 march for jobs, peace, and justice in Washington, D.C., and in the early October nationwide antiwar actions. While formulating demands that meet our needs (and not what union officials tell us their Democratic "friends" will accept), we also need to begin a discussion about how fighting for those needs fits into the longer-term struggle to get rid of a system so hopelessly mired in the contradictions outlined here. ■

... Afghanistan

(continued from page 1)

ing between NATO troops and militants, Richard A. O'Connell Jr. and Taimoor Shah report. Maj. Michael Johnson, a spokesman for ISAF, said that an assessment team was in the area investigating the incident. If confirmed, the incident would be the worst civilian casualty toll since a NATO airstrike in Kunduz called in by German forces in September 2009."

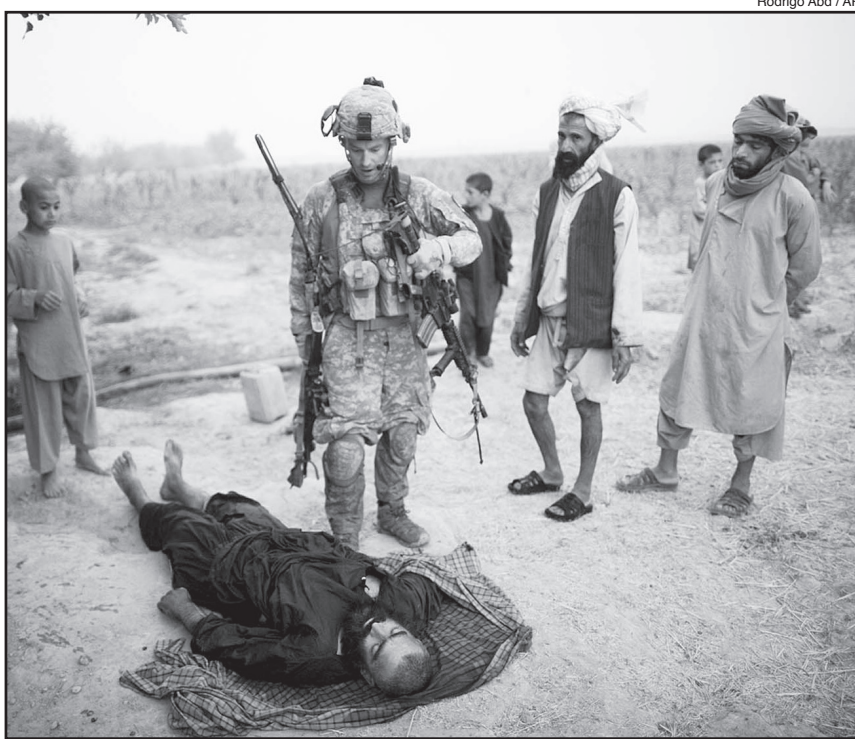
German planes bombed oil tankers in Kunduz that had been hijacked and swarmed over by local people seeking fuel. Many victims were torn to pieces. So, it is saying something if the press is comparing the Helmand bombing to Kunduz!

Then on July 30, following Friday prayers in Kabul, a car carrying U.S. mercenaries collided with a car carrying six Afghan civilians, four of whom were killed. The British *Guardian* reported July 31: "The Afghan capital is on high alert after rioting sparked by the death of four civilians when a US embassy vehicle crashed into their car. There are fears of a repeat of the city-wide riots that struck Kabul in 2006. Police fired shots into the air in a bid to disperse an angry mob that torched two embassy vehicles and threw stones at police and Nato soldiers who rushed to the scene near the centre of Kabul's diplomatic quarter."

It was U.S. mercenaries from Dyncorps who were involved in the July 30 Kabul crash. These mercenaries are more hated by the local people than the U.S. troops, who at least have some discipline and some accountability. In fact, the Kabul incident was reminiscent of the mass lynching of Blackwater mercenaries in Falluja that led to the most brutal repressive operation conducted by U.S. forces in Iraq.

A report in the Aug. 1 *Washington Post*, quoting an eyewitness to the event, indicated that the feeling of the people in Kabul was similar to that of the crowd in Falluja: "We poor people are not just here to be killed," said an elderly woman named Rabia ... "If the police hadn't taken the Americans away, the people would have torn them to pieces. If I had the chance to do that, I would do the same thing."

The *Post* quoted a participant in an Aug. 1 protest



(Left) U.S. soldier inspects body of man killed July 28 by U.S. forces, who said he was a Taliban member. Local people protested he was a farmer.

march: "Many times NATO troops and these cars have killed our innocent people. They never care whether we are Afghans or animals," said Samia, a 26-year-old activist from Kabul who took part in the demonstration.

"Samia said she did not want the Taliban to return to power in Afghanistan, but that NATO has only aggravated the situation over the past decade and fed a parasitic and dependent Afghan government."

These very recent incidents confirm the picture given in the documents disclosed by WikiLeaks that the occupation forces have been killing a lot of innocent civilians and thereby fueling a growing hatred among the population. They make even more damning the WikiLeaks documents evidence that the occupation forces have been deliberately covering up the civilian casualties.

One of the most damaging revelations in the WikiLeaks documents is the extent of the covert war that U.S. special forces are waging in Afghanistan and Pakistan, essentially a program of assassination and kidnapping. This aspect was especially noted in commentary by the German newsweekly, *Der Spiegel*, one of the three journals to which the documents were sent.

The revelations were embarrassing to the German government, since *Der Spiegel* noted that a German elite unit had developed a special alliance with an elite U.S. unit specializing in such activities. This murder campaign is in flagrant violation of national and international laws. And in general, European states are more sensitive to violations of international law, since they recognize the authority of the World Court, which the U.S. does not.

However, *The New York Times* reported July 31: "Faced with that reality [the failure of its proclaimed strategy to 'win the allegiance' of the Afghan people], and the pressure of a self-imposed deadline to begin withdrawing troops by July 2011, the Obama administration is starting to count more heavily on the strategy of hunting down insurgents."

That is, the answer of the administration to the failure of its policies is to increase assassinations. But this can only lead to deepening the hatred of the local peoples for foreign forces who murder their compatriots with impunity.

One theme in the leaked documents most commented on in the big-business press has been support of the Taliban by the Pakistani secret service and by one or another agency of Iran.

Pakistani press and politicians have denounced claims that elements of their secret service are implicated with the Taliban by noting that Pakistani armed forces have been waging a war against radical Islamists in their own country. They also point out that Pakistan has had to pay great costs in terms of the lives of soldiers, material expenses for the war, and the mass displacement of population in territories where the Pakistani Taliban has held sway.

It is true that that the Pakistani Taliban overreached by taking control of the Swat valley, an area not so far from the political center of the country, which provoked a major military response from the Pakistani military. Pakistan's critics in the West do not deny this but argue that the Pakistani authorities are still either playing a double game or else do not totally control their secret services—which have been playing the card of Islamist fanaticism for decades.

However, what the Western critics, in particular the American ones, fail to consider is that Pakistan has its own interests in Afghanistan and they do not coincide entirely with the American ones. The documents confirm assessments that the U.S. is losing the war in Afghanistan, and at some point Pakistan is likely to have to come to some accommodation with a Taliban regime in all or part of the country.

The Pushtun nationality, on which the Taliban is based, overlaps into Pakistan and constitutes an important component of the Pakistani population. In the past, sentiment for a united and independent Pushtunistan, embracing both the Pushtun population in Afghanistan and Pakistan, has been a serious threat to the Pakistani state. The Pakistani authorities undoubtedly prefer Islamism to Pushtun nationalism and would tend to use the former as a counterweight against the latter. And that would mean offering some support to the Taliban in Afghanistan.

It is also evident, and hardly surprising, that the U.S. war in Afghanistan is very unpopular in Pakistan. And the Pakistan government's alliance with the U.S. and complicity with their covert and illegal war against the Taliban inside the Pakistani borders is correspondingly hated. In these circumstances, it would hardly be surprising if the Taliban got some sort of support from parts of the political-military structure in Pakistan.

The leaked documents also allege Iranian support for the Taliban. If there is truth to that claim, Iran is playing a double game as complicated as the one attributed to Pakistan. The Taliban and allied Islamist groups in Pakistan have a record of attacking the Shiite sect, on which the Iranian regime is based, including atrocious bombings of Shiite mosques and neighborhoods. And Iran allows the U.S. to move logistical support for its forces through Iranian territory.

But again, Iran has its own interests in its home area, which conflict in many respects with those of the United States. It is not impossible that Iran's government or Revolutionary Guards might offer some token of Islamic solidarity to the Taliban, especially when powerful political forces in the United States are threatening a war against Iran. The U.S. is obviously trying to negotiate with the Iranians to maintain their de facto support against the Taliban.

An important reason for U.S. authorities to minimize or cover up a double game played by Iran and Pakistan could be that this would be an indication of the possibilities for an expanding regional war that could far

(continued on page 9)

UNAC promotes solidarity with political prisoners



(Left) Socialist Action members joined UNAC's antiwar and antiracist march in Albany, N.Y., July 25.

mosque, where two years ago an FBI raid seized two Muslim worshippers without any evidence of wrongdoing. Typical of the times, the government, citing "national security" concerns, found no incriminating evidence and has to this day refused to specify charges against these alleged terrorists.

The mosque's imam welcomed the demonstrators to a rally, where the daughter of one of the Albany detainees as well as a family member of the similarly detained Fort Dix Five from the Philadelphia area recounted their terrifying experiences at the hands of government witch hunters.

Ralph Poynter, husband of imprisoned civil-liberties attorney Lynne Stewart and leader of her defense committee, and Code Pink's Medea Benjamin also addressed the crowd of some 250 conference and community activists.

The luncheon session at the UNAC conference also featured talks by representatives of the defense committees of innocent political prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal and Lynne Stewart as well as Guantanamo detainee representative and Center for Constitutional Rights attorney, Pardiss Kebriaei. Ralph Poynter read a powerful statement to the conference from Lynne Stewart, whose original 28-month sentence on frame-up charges of "conspiracy to aid and abet terrorism" was a week earlier increased in a vindictive Federal District Court re-sentencing hearing to 10 years in prison.

This writer, speaking as the West Coast coordinator of the Lynne Stewart Defense Committee and as a national co-coordinator of the National Assembly, announced that the National Assembly had decided to retain the imprisoned Stewart on its Administrative Committee despite her 10-year jail sentence. Also featured was a pre-recorded antiwar address to the conference from Mumia Abu-Jamal, on death row in Pennsylvania. Chants of "Free Mumia!" and "Free Lynne Stewart!" rocked the jam-packed rally. ■

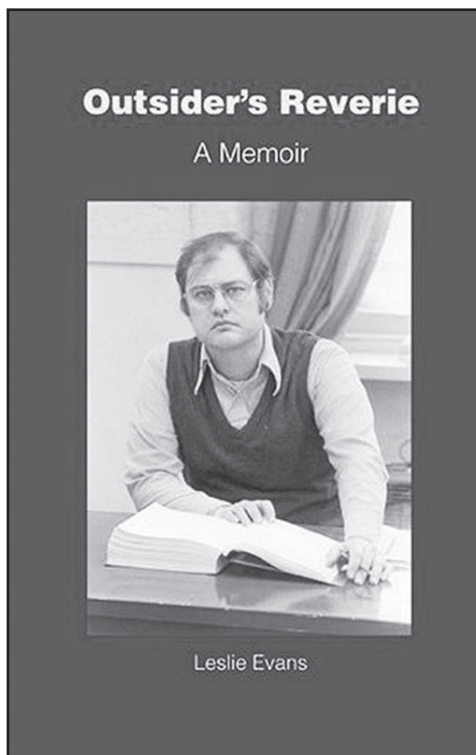
By JEFF MACKLER

A special Saturday, July 24, box-lunch session allowed the Albany UNAC antiwar conference time to counter the government's broadside attacks on civil liberties and to express the antiwar movement's active solidarity with the Arab and Muslim communities. The victims of the government's post-9/11 "anti-terrorism" raids, mass incarcerations, and "pre-emptive persecutions" were properly seen as key components of the new antiwar movement.

Leaders of Project Salam (Support and Legal Advocacy for Muslims), a national organization formed to defend Arab and Muslim victims of government persecution and a co-sponsor of the conference, were joined by representatives of CAIR (Council on American Islamic Relations), as well as friends and family members of Arab and Muslim political prisoners who have been incarcerated under false charges. This critical issue was prominently featured throughout the event—from plenary sessions and workshops to the one-mile march that concluded the conference.

Conference participants were joined by local Muslim community activists in a display of solidarity that began at the Crowne Plaza Hotel conference site and proceeded to a brief rally at the New York State Capitol Building. From there the march continued along a route through Black and Muslim communities and concluded at the Masjid-As Salaam (House of Peace)

Memoirs by two socialist leaders of the 1960s-70s



(Left) Peter Camejo; (right) Les Evans.

By JOE AUCIELLO

Peter Camejo, "North Star: A Memoir," (Haymarket Books, 2010), 340pp., \$18

Leslie Evans, "Outsider's Reveries," (Boryana Books, 2010), 488pp., \$18.95

These two memoirs span the authors' entire lives, but most readers will find the meatiest sections of the books take up Camejo's and Evans' years as political activists. They were contemporaries and central figures for approximately two decades in the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), so their lives frequently intersect, more often than is apparent in their texts. Evans, in fact, assisted in the completion of Camejo's memoir, since the author did not live to finish or fully edit his manuscript.

This is not all they had in common. Eventually, though not agreeing completely with each other, they both recognized fundamental flaws with the change in program that SWP leaders initiated in the early 1980s. Both made their criticisms known and wrote substantive analyses to explain what went awry in the SWP.

As might have been anticipated, as a result of speaking up, they became *personas non grata* and were cruelly, foolishly, pushed out of the organization they had done so much to build and to which they were loyal.

In the years after they were flung out of the SWP, Camejo and Evans further changed their own disparate positions. Each one was centrally involved in the creation of either left-reformist or socialist organizations, with Evans serving for a short time in the leadership of Socialist Action. Eventually, their political trajectory increasingly evolved away from Marxism.

The result is that these books deserve to be read more for their authors' experiences and less for the political conclusions they draw from these experiences.

With some exceptions, Camejo and Evans interacted with and affected the SWP in different ways. Camejo is best remembered as an extraordinarily gifted public speaker, honing his natural skills by studying and perfecting the art of communicating with groups of people, large and small. Fred Halstead's book, "Out Now!" includes a fine account of Camejo in full flight at a mass antiwar demonstration in Boston.

Evans, on the other hand, was less well known but just as essential, functioning more behind the scenes as a staff writer for *Intercontinental Press*, editor and writer for *International Socialist Review*, and editor of books by and about significant leaders in the world Trotskyist movement. His writings on China in the 1970s served as the basis for a book, "China After Mao," brought out by the SWP's Pathfinder Press, a publisher known more for its reprints than original material.

Camejo was also capable of scholarly work and produced a small volume on American history: "Racism, Revolution, Reaction, 1861-1877: The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction." He also wrote several widely distributed pamphlets on numerous topics. Still, it's a fair guess that more people heard Camejo than read him, especially as an SWP candidate for U.S. Senate and the presidency, which gave him the chance to shine as a speaker.

In terms of public speaking, the SWP provided no ready-made models that Camejo could adopt. The party's central leader, James P. Cannon, delivered powerful and inspirational speeches in a declamatory style of thundering oratory. That more formal approach was out of date by the time Camejo reached his political maturity, and it did not suit him. If a speech by Cannon

These books deserve to be read more for their authors' experiences and less for the political conclusions they draw from these experiences.

called to mind the strength and gravity of a Beethoven symphony, a speech by Camejo recalled the lightening quick, staccato sound of a Charlie Parker solo.

In an informative section of "North Star," Camejo discusses the art of public speaking, explaining how he "read" an audience and found the words, phrases, and examples that would best connect with them. Like another gifted contemporary, Malcolm X, listeners felt that Camejo could understand and express their innermost thoughts and feelings. As a speaker, Camejo led his audience by following them, using their responses to help determine his delivery.

Sometimes Camejo would make an effective point by seemingly outlandish suggestions that, on reflection, made sense. In 1976, while Camejo was running for president on the SWP ticket, he referred to the federal protection provided for Gerald Ford to shield him from threats of violence. Why not, Camejo asked, provide the same level of protection and send federal troops to cities where Black youth were threatened by white racists for the crime of attending school?

Les Evans was also an effective speaker but in more of the professorial style characteristic of Noam Chomsky. During a socialist educational conference in Boston (1973 or 1974), Evans was verbally attacked from the floor by a member of another socialist organization. The young critic denounced the SWP's role in the antiwar movement, claiming it followed policies of the popular front and sought alliance with the class enemy. This approach contrasted with the united front as Trotsky had taught.

"Well, I'm glad you raised that point," Evans replied quietly, almost conversationally, "because I just finished editing Trotsky's writings on Spain, where he has a great deal to say about the popular front as opposed to the united front." And, in the tone of a disappointed but not despairing professor, hoping somehow to enlighten a dull student, Evans piled fact upon fact and dismantled the argument of his overly excited, callow, and ultimately humbled questioner. At the same time, Evans educated his listeners.

These differing aspects of personality are quite apparent in each memoir. Camejo is the more engaging and exciting storyteller, partly because his life put him at the center of some vivid experiences. For instance, his account of a political skirmish on Berkeley's Telegraph Avenue in the 1960s—a tale too good to spoil by summary—is alone worth the price of the book.

Evans' work, by comparison, is less flashy—he has, after all, spent much of his life at a desk—but anyone looking for the nitty-gritty of SWP history will find his book is chock full of revealing detail. He seems to be blessed by an encyclopedia for a memory. For thumbnail sketches of SWP leaders (and rank-and-file members), for a sense of what an SWP branch meeting was like, for an understanding of how the national office was run (regrettably, like most offices), and for a fair-minded account that explains the cause of the 1980s factional purge of SWP minorities, turn to Evans.

Errors do appear, especially in "North Star." Most readers will not notice or much mind that the Fred who works with Camejo in Nicaragua during the early

years of its revolution is Murphy, not Feldman. A more serious failing is Camejo's account of the Simon Bolivar Brigade, an outfit that used the authority of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) to carry out its own political mischief in Nicaragua.

Camejo's memory misled him when he said this group had the blessing of the Fourth International. In fact, the Fourth International, in its Nicaraguan delegation, which included Camejo, and in its authoritative meetings, unambiguously condemned the Brigade. Most of Camejo's editors, unfamiliar with the details of this period of his life, missed the mistake, though it's surprising that Les Evans didn't note it. His own book is seems largely free of such errors, though George Shriver remembers a rather harrowing experience in New York City differently from Evans' account—but such is the nature of memory.

Even if, by the time these books came to be written, Camejo and Evans were at a remove from their younger and more revolutionary-minded selves, it may be useful to

raise a question about what their experiences have to offer for revolutionary socialists today.

From this perspective, "North Star" is the more disappointing of the two memoirs. Having been thrown out of the SWP, Camejo increasingly left behind the world of revolutionary socialism. He saw it as a political project doomed to doctrinaire sectarianism that, because of its own inherent limitations, could never amount to much.

Given this stance, Camejo has relatively little interest in those years of his life. He does, though, dwell on the more positive and invigorating experiences, like his campaign for president in 1976. He has little to say about his complicated and controversial expulsion from the SWP. It seems likely that he simply did not want to revisit those dismal times.

Also, Camejo devotes a mere 10 pages to his extensive work relating to the Fourth International, the world organization that included the sister groups of the SWP. In his duties, Camejo visited Europe, South and Central America, and met with fellow revolutionists (including notable figures like Hugo Blanco), wrote documents, and represented the SWP at world congresses of the Fourth International. The result of his late-life disillusion is that Camejo does not give himself the full credit he has justly earned.

Still, for all the criticisms that could be made of these two memoirs, when taken together, some key points do emerge. Even if these lessons are not new, they are no less significant. What stands out first is an organization's need for effective communicators: speakers, writers, editors, people who know how to connect with a variety of audience.

Evans recalls an atmosphere in the SWP that held that writing for a socialist newspaper was quite easy, almost an incidental activity—whereas selling the newspaper was the more difficult and worthy effort. Readers of "Outsider's Reveries" would do well to contrast this shallow point of view with the advice SWP veteran Joseph Hansen gave to a young Les Evans about the care and skill involved in writing.

Effective communicators are also constantly looking for new, different, or unanticipated opportunities to be heard. Peter Camejo, running in 1970 for Senate in Massachusetts, must have made life miserable for Ted Kennedy. Whenever Kennedy was late for a campaign rally, as he often was, Camejo would appear out of the crowd, bullhorn in hand, launching into a speech and challenging the senator to debate him. By the time Kennedy arrived, he often faced a crowd that was more skeptical and hostile than he had anticipated.

Some painful and costly lessons to be drawn from these books, often by negative example, involve the functioning of a revolutionary organization. In the past 30 years, the SWP has shriveled into a tiny sect around the cult figure of its national secretary, Jack Barnes. Most of the "leadership team" that had supported him, with a few exceptions, eventually reached a point past endurance and consequently left or were kicked out. None of this had to happen.

Even with a relative downturn in the class struggle during the 1980s, years of ascendancy for Reagan and Thatcher, no outcome was fated or preordained. Decisions were crucial. The right policies would have held the organization together and even have allowed for some growth, given the political tasks and opportunities of those years.

Instead, SWP leaders around Barnes followed an increasingly bizarre sectarian course, alleging that they were acting in accordance with Lenin's policies, and

(continued on page 9)

(continued from page 8)

declaring the false and unattainable perspective of some political unification with the Communist Party of Cuba. Wrong decisions were costly in terms of time, effort, and membership, especially in the disappearance of disillusioned members who resigned in droves.

Both Camejo and Evans show that most of the SWP leaders, directed by Barnes, insulated themselves from fact and opinion that they did not wish to hear, and even canceled a scheduled SWP convention in 1983. Without a means of changing direction and absent a leadership with the courage to recognize a mistake and the integrity to initiate a correction, errors inevitably deepened and worsened. It was a downward spiral.

A clear tolerance for differences of opinion—which does not preclude a majority from affirming its position and having that perspective carried out in practice—can ultimately strengthen an organization by clarifying potential errors that may have been made by any party grouping, majority or minority.

As a result of the Barnes leadership's discarding of the SWP's historic program and its failure to meet new issues in a thoughtful and collective way, the Socialist Workers Party has declined to a shadow of its former self. How did Camejo and Evans react to this debacle, and what, now, do they offer in its place? The answer to these questions leads, unfortunately, to the weakest portions of the books.

Les Evans seems simply to have been ground down by political losses, organizational battles, disappointment with the meager combativity of the working class, and the difficult effort to sustain small socialist groups. In the course of decades, these take a toll.

One clear sign of Evans' rejection of his political past was an article he wrote on the difficulty of reconciling socialism and the market. He presented this economic question as a kind of irresolvable problem that essentially suggested the overall futility of the socialist project. The article had unavoidable personal implications. If, indeed, such a forecast were true, then to withdraw from revolutionary politics would bring no blame; resignation would be merely the sensible course.

An objection could be made that this comment is overly psychological. Perhaps so. But a younger Les Evans may well have responded differently than his older self did. Years ago, Evans would most likely have considered a question of socialist theory as a challenge to resolve, and he would have applied himself to the task with the same determination that led him to learn Chinese. The older Evans found a respectable way to quit a political life that he no longer wanted to live.

Peter Camejo remained a political activist and a public figure throughout his life, but his political trajectory was a gradual shift from a revolutionary perspective to a reformist one. Yet, at the same time, it is likely that Camejo believed he was being consistent and true to his convictions, that he was even more revolutionary than those on the left who criticized him.

When the SWP forced out Camejo, and later, other minority groups and individuals, he was compelled to search for a contrast to the sterile, self-defeating sectarianism to which the SWP had sunk. Camejo saw no way out but a break with the past. He did not believe that the SWP leaders had departed from the party's revolutionary heritage, which was the position of the expelled members (including Les Evans) who formed Socialist Action.

Instead, Camejo was convinced that the Leninist and Trotskyist tradition itself was flawed and provided no basis for political re-birth and growth. Starting over along the same road would only lead, eventually, to another dead end. A new SWP-type of organization, Camejo felt, would merely duplicate the failings of the old one. This conviction—ultimately shown to be false—guided his political activities until the end of his life.



(Above) National convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, youth group allied to the SWP, in 1969.

Camejo's study of the Cuban revolution and his firsthand observation of the Nicaraguan Revolution in 1979 convinced him that the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) provided irrefutable evidence of a model vanguard organization that could succeed in its revolutionary tasks.

Rather than building some tightly knit group like the SWP, forever quarreling over fine points of doctrine, Camejo believed that the Sandinista experience demonstrated in practice the superiority of a loosely-based coalition with a broadly defined program. He expected that this kind of formation would be more successful than the Leninist and/or Trotskyist organizations.

The problem was to transplant the FSLN experience onto the less fertile soil of the United States. Camejo directed his considerable talent and ingenuity to this task, yet despite his efforts, he never did succeed. The essential reason is clear: The theory itself was flawed.

The failure could have been, and was, predicted. Past experience pointed to no other conclusion. In a 1967 pamphlet, SWP founder James P. Cannon wrote, "The history of American communism since its inception in 1919 has been a record of struggle for the right kind of party. All the other problems have been related to this central issue." That "record of struggle" suggested that Camejo's organizational innovations were not at all new but closely resembled past initiatives that never came to fruition. Same efforts yielded same results.

In 1983 Camejo co-founded the short-lived North Star Network, a group made up of ex-SWPers, ex-Maoists, and others. The magazine they published lasted a few years. Soon after, Camejo was involved with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Coalition. It was around this time that Camejo would say, "If we are going to make a mistake, then let's make it with the masses, not separate and apart from them."

Camejo's guiding idea, one that he often expressed as a leader of the SWP, was to engage the masses in political struggle at their own level of consciousness. There was no need to use off-putting names, slogans, or demands out of some misguided allegiance to a revolutionary tradition. Political practice counted more than political labels. Through their own political activity, the masses would learn, and their understanding would deepen and become more revolutionary.

But Camejo did not merely drop controversial words like "socialism;" he went further and dropped the idea, or the program, of socialism. This shift brought him increasingly and permanently into the camp of reformism, and he staked out a position on the left-wing side

of reform politics.

Camejo's alignment with the Green Party eventually led to his role as their gubernatorial candidate in California. His speeches ridiculed any faith or hope in the Democratic Party, and he spoke brilliantly in favor of popular measures that would better the lives of the average person. But while Camejo would, for example, dissect and condemn corporate greed, neither he nor the Green Party platform called for the overthrow of the corporate system and the state that existed to support and nurture it.

As a candidate, Camejo became the kind of figure that, decades before, he had so powerfully and convincingly criticized, that is, someone who opposes capitalism's excesses but who doesn't oppose capitalism itself.

Of course, Camejo let it be known that he was a "watermelon: green on the outside and red on the inside." Perhaps such a declaration quieted his conscience. But, in public, it was the green side that he expressed. Camejo's performance in the governor's race led him to become the vice-presidential candidate on Ralph Nader's independent campaign for president.

Yet, none of this activity, which brought Camejo into contact with thousands, amounted to any lasting growth in political organizations. Nader himself did not want to build any structure beyond his campaigns.

The Greens, instead of enlarging their ranks, underwent factional battles as vicious and divisive as any found on the U.S. left. They ultimately split, primarily on the programmatic decision of what stance to take and apply to the Democratic Party. The result was a decimation of the Green movement.

Thus, after two decades of political organizing and campaigning, Camejo was left with little to show for his years of effort. No one could fault his enthusiasm and determination; the fault lay in the theory. Camejo never succeeded in creating a better alternative to the tradition represented today by Socialist Action.

Yet, without disregarding such criticisms, readers would benefit by coming to grips with "North Star: A Memoir" and "Outsider's Reverie." These are serious works by thoughtful people, and they deserve critical study. There are important lessons to be learned from their experiences, even when those lessons conflict with the authors' intent. These memoirs suggest what course to avoid and what course should be followed and developed in today's political realities. ■

... Afghanistan

(continued from page 7)

surpass the scope of the present Afghan war. Exposing such intrigue would highlight the fact that this region is a vast powder keg that could pose an insuperable challenge to U.S. power.

The biggest impact of the leaked documents is precisely the evidence they offer that the U.S. is losing the war; a fact that has also impressed the Russians, who like the Iranians have been offering discreet support for the U.S. war on the Taliban. And this reality has not changed since 2009, the date of the latest documents leaked, as the now evident failure of the Marja offensive and the long postponement of the Kandahar offensive show.

U.S. officials and commentators friendly to the U.S. government claim that the furor created by the WikiLeaks disclosures have not changed the opinion of the authorities and politicians about the Afghan war.

That is not entirely true. In Germany, the parliamentary opposition is calling for the withdrawal of German forces, which represent a considerable component of the

occupation. German withdrawal would follow the Dutch withdrawal, and increase pressure on Britain, where the war is very unpopular. Most decisive will be the impact of these disclosures on public opinion in the U.S. They are certain to increase opposition to the war and occupation, which will eventually make it more difficult for the big-business politicians to sustain the war.

The WikiLeaks documents have come on the heels of a series of scandals that have discredited the U.S. operation. These include disclosures of the corruption of the U.S. effort through the use of mercenary outfits that funnel U.S. funds to the Taliban as protection money and their interlocking with corrupt officials linked to Karzai.

A major editorial writer in *The New York Times* of July 31, Frank Rich, announced that it is time "To Kiss this War Good By." He noted: "Obama was right to say that the leaked documents 'don't reveal any issues that haven't already informed our public debate in Afghanistan,' but that doesn't mean the debate was resolved in favor of his policy.

"Americans know that our counterinsurgency partner, Hamid Karzai, is untrustworthy. They know that the terrorists out to attack us are more likely to be found in Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia than Afghanistan. And they

are starting to focus on the morbid reality, highlighted in the logs, of the de facto money-laundering scheme that siphons American taxpayers' money through the Pakistan government to the Taliban, who then disperse it to kill Americans."

The most egregious failure of the Obama regime to keep its promises of change has been its total refusal to reverse the ruin of the American society and economy created by a 30-year offensive of the right wing, notably the privatization of social services and of the military. The country continues to lose blood and treasure in disastrous imperialist adventures, while its basic infrastructure continues to run down.

This sad state of affairs demonstrates that the neocon offensive was not a policy of only a part of the ruling class, but of the ruling class as a whole. It is not going to be changed by any politician or political party controlled by any faction of big business. It will only be changed when working people organize politically and socially in their own interest and take their own fate in their hands. Given the now general discrediting of the occupation of Afghanistan, the obvious place to start is by mobilizing in the streets to demand an immediate end to this disastrous war. ■

Cancel F-15 jet fighters!

By BARRY WEISLEDER

In a summer of abnormally high temperatures, a season hot with federal scandals (the census form dispute, the G20 policing issues, the ongoing Afghan prisoner torture cover-up) a big controversy concerns the Harper government's plan to purchase 65 new F-35 jet fighters from Lockheed Martin. Buying these "flying cadillacs" would make the acquisition of the CF-18 fighter jets by the Trudeau government, and the EH-101 helicopter procurement by Brian Mulroney (subsequently reversed by Jean Chretien), look prudent by comparison—though all are a horrendous waste.

The price tag for the F-35s is \$9 billion, plus \$7 billion in maintenance over a 20 year period—without competing bids. That happens to be four times what the government is spending in its infrastructure stimulus fund. That fund was designed to cushion the blows of the economic crash and the ongoing global recession. Now federal spending is being curbed, in compliance with the G20 Summit prescription. It's called 'recovery through austerity'. (Kind of reminiscent of "Arbeit macht frei", minus the 'arbeit'.)

For Canada's rulers and their military apparatus the new jets are integral to playing a role in ongoing foreign wars of intervention. What about the present war in Afghanistan? Its economic price tag, according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer's report, will reach up to \$18.1 billion by 2011—excluding the cost of diplomatic efforts, danger pay for soldiers, and military equipment bought under accelerated procurement.

This places the financial cost to Canadian taxpayers for

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

Money for human need needs, not war!

the 'mission' extension past February 2009 at up to \$6.8 billion. The \$10 billion Ottawa expends every year on the military could otherwise make post-secondary education free and it could eradicate student debt. It could house the homeless, eliminate child poverty, and provide free public transit in the largest urban areas. Given a choice, what do you think most people would prefer?

In the eight years the Canadian state has been part of the imperialist occupation of the mineral-rich country, home to a potential gas pipeline route, over 27,000 Canadians have been deployed, and 151 have died. This is the most of any Canadian intervention since the Korean War, the highest in Afghanistan for foreign troops, proportionately greater than U.S. and U.K. fatalities there. More than 400 have been injured by improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mines, rocket attacks, and direct combat. At least 1000 have suffered severe psychological trauma.

More than one in five Canadian soldiers and police officers who spend time in Afghanistan leave the force with

psychiatric problems, a number that has rapidly risen in the last 24 months. And this is to say nothing about the devastation caused to Afghanistan and its people. Nearly 8000 Afghan civilians have died from insurgent and foreign military action, 50 to 60 per cent killed directly by NATO forces. In addition, up to 20,000 Afghan civilians died as a consequence of displacement, starvation, disease, exposure, lack of medical treatment, crime, and lawlessness resulting from the war.

Currently, Canadian Forces are so stretched that many of its soldiers have done four and five tours of duty in Kandahar. Canadian Generals are now begging for a one-year hiatus to follow the 2011 announced withdrawal date. But the hiatus will not be forthcoming because the ruling Conservatives, pushed by the opposition Liberal Party, are looking for excuses to extend the 'mission'.

What is the alternative? The antiwar movement has to get back into the streets to force the government to stick to the 2011 evacuation plan, if not exit sooner, and immediately cancel the purchase of the F-35 jet fighters. ■

Smash G20 agenda! Demand Labour enquiry into repression!

The mass movement for an independent, full-spectrum, public enquiry into G20 Summit policing continues. About 3000 rallied at Queen's Park on Saturday, July 10. Then they marched and held a rally beside the CBC building, right across from the Metro Convention Centre, scene of the G20 elite gabfest two weeks earlier. On July 17 up to a thousand gathered again in front of the Ontario legislature. Many mocked the behaviour that prompted police to arrest 1070 people.

Proof of the still-mounting public pressure for government and police accountability, and the dropping of all charges, are the four enquiries reluctantly launched. Unfortunately, none of them is full, open, and independent. The Toronto Police Services Board, which includes the police chief alongside appointed city councillors and civilians, will operate within narrow and establishment-controlled confines. (Toronto City Council voted *unanimously* on July 7 to "commend the outstanding work" of Chief Bill Blair and his force. Rather than stand up against this outrage, cowardly social democratic councillors abstained or were absent.)

The Ontario Ombudsman Andre Marin promises an enquiry, but only into the additional police powers secretly granted by the Ontario Liberal Cabinet prior to the G20 Summit. The Toronto Police and Ontario Provincial Police are con-

ducting their own investigations—need we say more? And Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty have both rejected calls for a public inquiry.

Our view is that the labour organizations that endorsed the "July 10 Day of Action for Civil Liberties", including the Canadian Labour Congress, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Canadian Union of Public Employees, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, Steelworkers' Toronto Area Council, and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council, should initiate a truly *full, open, and independent enquiry*. It should be designed to get to the bottom of the wasteful expenditures on 'security' and the arbitrary and excessive use of force by police, as well as to expose the anti-human, eco-cidal agenda of the G20 political and corporate elites.

The crowd that coursed through Toronto's downtown on July 10, under brilliant sunshine, was lively, boisterous—and yearning for truth and accountability. Thousands chanted, "Whose streets? Our streets!", "This is what democracy looks like", "No more police over-time. No more police state." Ten individuals carried giant white letters to spell out "G20 ENQUIRY". Huge walking puppets caricatured Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Hundreds of protesters sat down at the intersection of Queen and Spadina.

There, on June 27, police *kettled* 300 innocent people during a two-hour driving rainstorm, arresting scores of them—just to show who's boss.

Notwithstanding bitter recollections of police-state tactics, let's not forget the global capitalist agenda that is the reason for all the G20-related deceit and repression. The richest countries' bosses promised to cut their budgetary deficits in half by 2013, and to cap their cumulative debt as a proportion of GDP by 2016. If attempted, without taxing big corporations and the super-rich, such actions would choke off jobs, services and investment in production. They would plunge economies into crisis, and billions into misery—which is to say nothing of the consequences of worsening pollution, climate change, and ongoing brutal wars of occupation.

The only way for humanity to change course, to avoid deeper catastrophes, is for the working class, in each country, to *expropriate industry and plan the economy democratically, and ecologically*. Instead of cutting vital services, increasing the age of retirement, slashing pensions, freezing wages, reducing supports for farmers, and hiking sales taxes, socialists say: Tax big business and the rich. Nationalize the banks. Rescind the war budget.

Dozens joined the Socialist Action contingent during the two-hour walk-a-thon on July 10. SA youths and sup-

porters carried their own handmade signs that read: Resign Chief BLiar! For a FULL, independent, public enquiry! Repeal the Public Works Protection Act! Smash G20 agenda of Social Cuts! Money for Jobs and Education, not war and police repression! Fight for Socialism!

The NDP Socialist Caucus marched too with its banner held high. Supporters distributed copies of the SC tabloid "Turn Left". Its headline proclaims, "Time to put Capitalism on trial".

What a contrast to the many NDP politicians and labour leaders who wrung their hands over petty property damage for a fortnight, and now merely echo the cry for civil liberties and police accountability. Still, it is good that Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath backed the call for a full, open public enquiry at the July 10 gathering. Likewise, federal New Democrats are pushing for the House of Commons committee on public safety and national security to hold public hearings on a wide range of issues.

What's next? Continue to build the mass movement for civil liberties. Challenge Labour and the NDP to fight the neo-liberal agenda of social cuts, privatization and environmental abuse, as well as state attacks on human rights. This struggle is far from over.

Alone, one cannot do very much. But united, we can move mountains. Together we can win a world fit for humanity, in harmony with nature. — B.W.

Ontario unions reject wage-freeze plan

Public sector unions in Canada's most populous province reject Ontario Finance Minister Dwight Duncan's call for a two-year wage freeze. The question remains: what will workers and their unions do to stop Duncan and the Liberal government at Queen's Park from imposing a freeze, along with cuts to public services?

Duncan insists that reducing the province's \$19.7 billion deficit is a priority. Since salaries account for 55 per cent of all government programme spending, for him the target seems obvious—the very same point he made in his March 25 budget. But the facts he ignored then, still remain. CUPE Ontario president Fred Hahn hit the mark when he asked how the government "can square the circle of giving a corporate tax cut that will equal \$4.6 billion out of the economy" and then tell workers to accept less pay. And what about the bail-out money Ontario gave to manufacturers and resource firms since the 2008 crash, to say nothing about sky-high CEO salaries funded by the province, and the permanent tax holiday enjoyed by speculators and the rich?

OPSEU President Smokey Thomas set the right tone in a message to his 125,000 members on July 20 when he wrote, "Do not assume that you must accept zeros. Do not assume you can only bargain "non-monetary" items.

... We negotiate strong contracts when our members are ready to back their bargaining teams."

Thomas went on to address the economic crisis: "OPSEU members did nothing to create the economic meltdown that caused the provincial deficit. It is absolutely unfair to single out people to pay for that deficit just because they happen to be public employees. It is even more unfair that rich individuals will not pay one penny extra towards the deficit ... profitable corporations are getting massive tax breaks. Based on their expected profits of \$20 billion in 2010, Canada's Big Six banks will see their Ontario corporate income taxes fall by at least \$200 million this year alone. ... If you accept a wage cut, the money you give up won't go to save public services. It will pay for tax cuts for the banks. ... We will not hesitate to take whatever action is necessary to get what is fair and to get what OPSEU members need."

Ontario Federation of Labour President Sid Ryan called the proposed wage freeze "a horrible idea", but the tone he set for fighting it was, at best, confused. "We're not even close" to discussing any sort of general strike or other job action, he told the *Toronto Star*. It would have been better for Ryan to echo the pledge of Smokey Thomas, "to take whatever action is necessary",

or just to keep quiet. Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath's comment was less than helpful too when she said it is important to ensure that Bay Street shares the same pain as Main Street. Shifting the pain, rather than sharing it, is what working people really need.

Doing 'whatever is necessary' will definitely require extensive political education and massive job action. No one union, not even the entire public sector on its own, can win alone. There are lessons to absorb from the private sector, including where unions don't cave, but fight back. Despite a valiant, year-long strike by 3100 United Steelworkers against Brazilian mining giant Vale SA, workers gave concessions on pensions for new hires.

The traditional bonus tied to the price of nickel is also reduced in a five-year deal that does contain wage improvements. Clearly, it would have been much worse had the miners not struck. But the point is that Labour as a whole should have actively joined the fight—instead of postponing the day of reckoning and further weakening the movement.

United, mass job action against the Duncan wage freeze, against the social and environmental cuts, against military expenditures, against the G20 austerity agenda is urgently needed. That is the concept that should be on the table everywhere in time for Labour Day, Sept. 6, 2010. ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

WINTER'S BONE: EVIL IN THE OZARKS

Writer/Director Debra Granik and co-writer Anne Rossellini have created a moody, intense film from the eponymous novel, "Winter's Bone," by Daniel Woodrell. A 17-year-old girl, Ree Dolly (a superb Jennifer Lawrence), has dropped out of school to take on the job of raising her younger siblings: a wise 12-year-old boy, Sonny (Isaiah Stone) and Ashlee, a sweet, seven-year-old (Ashlee Thompson).

Their mother, Connie (Valerie Richards), is non compos mentis, the result of her husband's drug dealings. He has gone missing for over a week. Early in the film we learn that if Ree's father fails to show for a court date, they could lose their property, which he had put up for bond.

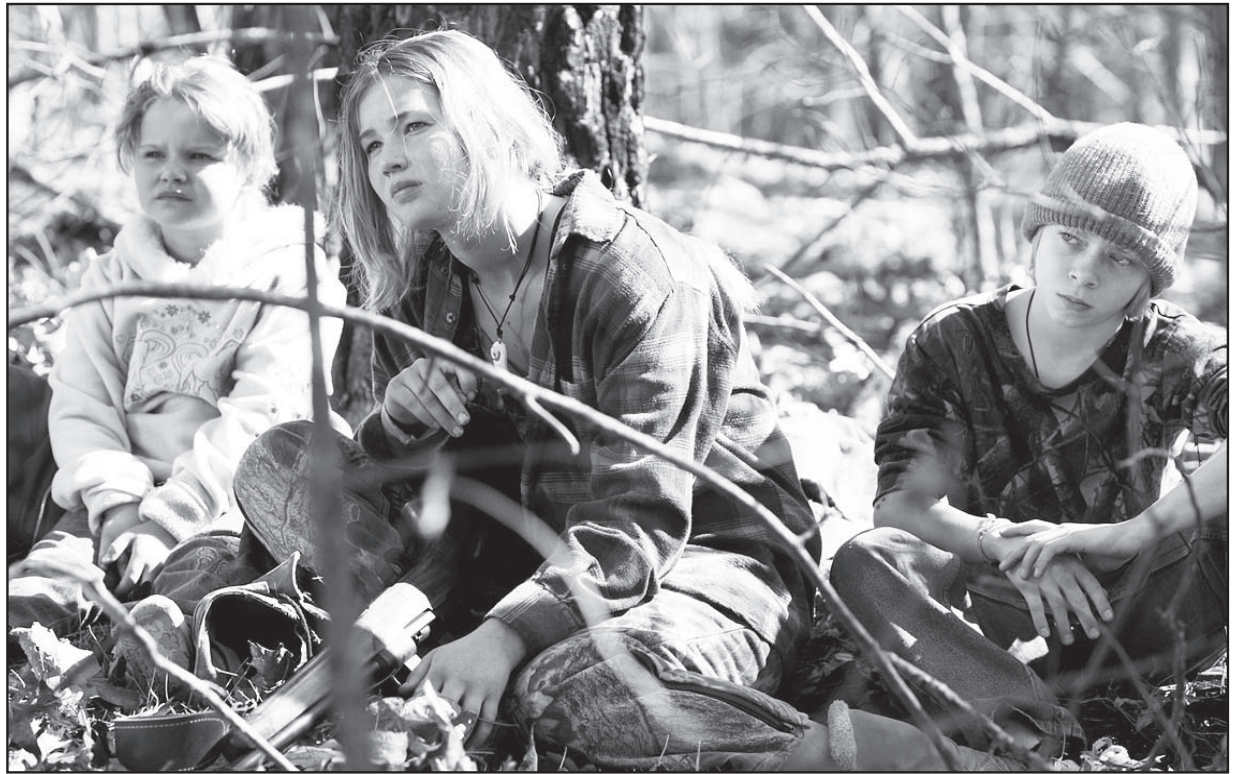
The family lives in the Missouri out-back in a faux log cabin home little bigger than a double-wide trailer, in a community of meth-cooking druggies, where the law is suspect. This is Ozark country, an area of few jobs because of the decline of traditional industries such as mining, sawmills, and ranching. It's an area ruled by tough men backed up by their seemingly submissive (don't be fooled) women. The only option for young people is either to sell the drugs cooked up by their elders or join the Army.

Desperate, Ree tries to enlist for the \$40,000 sign-up bonus so they can keep the house, but the Army recruiter (a measured, sincere Russell Schalk) convinces her that her job is to take care of her siblings.

It's early winter, the trees are bare, everything is brown and gray. It looks cold, really cold. What warmth there is in the loving relationship between Ree, her mute mom, and her siblings; Ree takes them to school and rustles up their meager meals.

But money is evident: there are some nice ranches, well-fed livestock, a harvest ready for market, and nifty four-wheel drives and pick-ups—money made off the men in Ree's extended family who appear to do nothing but sit around and do drugs, an activity to which Ree is totally averse.

Ree sets out to find her father but hits formidable roadblocks at every turn. Friends and relatives give her no information, not even her dad's brother, Teardrop



(a standout, nuanced performance by John Hawkes). She is violently turned away, doors slammed in her face. The one person who it is hinted knows all is a feared elderly patriarch, Thumb Milton (Ronnie Hall), who dresses like a biker without a bike. Ree is warned of the consequences by Merab (a perfectly cast Dale Dickey) if she confronts him.

But what will happen to them if they lose the house? You sense a conspiracy of silence and an undercurrent of absolute evil. In one scene, a determined Ree suffers greatly at the hands of Merab and her tough, hard-bitten female accomplices.

Parts of the film are harrowing and nightmarish, as

in the scene where Ree, with Merab, searches out her father in a swamp.

In all, "Winter's Bone" is completely fulfilling, engaging the audience on every level with entirely believable characters without a note of falsity, pandering, or exploitation. One unforgettable scene is of a group of musicians, playing and singing traditional mountain folk tunes in someone's living room; an old, white-haired, comfortably plump woman (Marideth Sisco) sings in a clear, rich voice.

There's a non-intrusive score of original music by Dickon Hinchcliff. The film was shot by cinematographer Michael McDonough around Branson, Mo. ■

(continued from page 12)

their own countries and come to the U.S. looking for work." (An estimated 6 million maize-growers in Mexico were driven from their family farms and ejidos, or cooperatives, because NAFTA allowed giant U.S. agribusiness corporations, subsidized by the U.S. government, to flood the Mexican market with low-price corn, and local growers were unable to compete.)

"The road to a real and positive change in immigration policy will be a long one," said Isabel Garcia in conclusion. "We must continue our struggle!"

The next morning, on July 29, Isabel Garcia was interviewed on the independent radio and TV news hour "Democracy Now," hosted by Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez. Goodman brought up the July 28 *New York Times* news story on the increased number of deaths of migrants trying to cross through the Arizona desert. Just in the past month of July, 58 human remains of migrants were discovered in the inhospitable, sparsely populated scrub-brush mountains and flatlands of the Arizona-Sonora high desert region.

An estimated 5000 such deaths have occurred since 1994, when NAFTA was implemented and the current militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border began. Amy Goodman and Juan Gonzalez both observed that the number of known migrant deaths in July is roughly the equivalent of the number of Western occupation troops killed in Afghanistan that month.

In her "Democracy Now" interview, Isabel Garcia also placed the right emphasis on the importance and effectiveness of mass mobilization of people in the streets.

"I think that the Obama administration, the courts, and everybody are political beings. They know what's going on. They know that there's massive political pressure, economic pressure, including massive historic mobilizations that have occurred in the state of Arizona. National, international people have come in. So I think most definitely there has been an impact on everybody involved, as we all know that massive, you know, real major social change results after there is mass mobilization in the streets and massive

... Arizona immigration protests



(Above) Los Angeles AFL-CIO members march in Phoenix, July 29.

engagement by the population, and that really guides politicians, guides other entities within our system to do the right thing. And so, yes, I believe that the protests have had a definite impact on everything that we are seeing...."

During the late afternoon of July 29 (when this writer was no longer present) some of the demonstrators in front of the State Building, who still numbered around 500, occupied the intersection, through which a major artery passes in downtown Tucson. The police allowed the blocking of the intersection to go on for about an hour as rush hour traffic began around 5 pm, but then the protesters' presence in the intersection was declared an "illegal assembly" and most were forced back onto the sidewalk, pushed by bicycle police. In the process it was reported that 13 protesters were arrested.

Participants in the Ya Basta campaign will be meeting the first week of August to discuss next steps.

In Phoenix on July 29 the turnout was only about 1000, by the estimate of a trade-union friend who traveled with a caravan of 13 buses from Los Angeles. The AFL-CIO County Federation in LA organized these buses, bringing more than

500 people to Phoenix—an eight-hour drive due east.

The relatively low numbers in Phoenix contrasted sharply with the 100,000 or more who came out on May 29, two months earlier. The July 29 demonstration came on a weekday—which would generally limit participation—whereas the earlier one was on a Saturday.

Another cause of the lower turnout on July 29 might have been the mistaken but understandable feeling that the court injunction had removed the urgency of the problem.

And another factor might have been that the actions in Phoenix mainly centered on civil disobedience, something that only the most committed would want to be involved in. It's likely that in most cases, the thousands of families who came out on May 29 for a massive, legal, peaceful demonstration could not afford to risk being arrested on July 29.

Accounts of the Phoenix actions, where more than 80 arrests occurred, may be found on the July 30 edition of "Democracy Now" on the internet at <democra-

cynow.org> and on the website <altoarizona.com>.

SB 1070 protests took place all around the U.S. and internationally (see the accompanying article by Lisa Luinenburg.) Of particular interest was the demonstration in New York City on July 29, where hundreds marched across the Brooklyn Bridge in solidarity with the resistance in Arizona. Among the organizers of that demonstration was Monami Maulik, the leader of a South Asian immigrant group called Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM). On the previous weekend Monami had chaired the immigration workshop at the United National Antiwar Conference in Albany, N.Y.

She was quoted as follows on "Democracy Now" on July 29: "Whatever happens in Arizona, those same anti-immigrant policies find their way up all throughout the United States. For the last 10 years, Arizona has been a testing ground for the harshest anti-immigrant policies. And so, for example, the governor of New York State has already signed on to the Secure Communities program in New York, which has not yet gone into effect, but will, and when it does, it will funnel thousands more into deportation.

"Just across the river [in New Jersey], the governor has signed on to the 287(g) program, authorizing police officers to arrest people based on immigration status. So, we feel that Arizona, maybe that law is not happening here, but there are many other harsh anti-immigrant deportation provisions that our communities are feeling right here in New York City and nearby areas."

Participants in the immigration workshop at the Albany conference agreed that they should take part in the Oct. 2 March on Washington called by the NAACP, AFL-CIO, and the New York Hospital Workers SEIU Local 1199. But while participating they would raise the demand for a real debate on immigration, looking at the root causes and changing foreign policies like NAFTA that force people to migrate. And they would reject the enforcement-only policies advocated by the Obama administration and figures like Sen. Schumer of New York, which focus on "national security" and militarization. ■

Protests mount against Arizona immigration law



Julius Arscott / Socialist Action

By **GEORGE SHRIVER**

TUCSON, Ariz.—The Ya Basta/Enough campaign, a coalition of about 20 groups in the Tucson area, “communities uniting to resist” Arizona’s racial-profiling law, SB 1070, held a 24-hour vigil in front of the State Building in downtown Tucson. The vigil began at 4 p.m. on July 28, the day before the law was supposed to go into effect, and lasted until after 5 p.m. on Thursday, July 29.

Many people came and went during the 24 hours, but the total of all who participated probably came to more than 2000, with a high point of about 500 in the morning and afternoon of July 29, including about 50 day laborers who normally seek work in a “safe space” at the South Side Presbyterian Church.

During a speak-out and open-mike session at the vigil in the early evening of July 28, Isabel Garcia, co-chair of the Derechos Humanos organization, a key component of the Ya Basta coalition, made some comments about the court ruling by federal judge Susan Bolton. The ruling, embodied in a nearly 40-page document, was issued just a few hours earlier on July 28 and temporarily enjoined the state of Arizona from implementing key aspects of this racist law.

“Win or lose, we had to be here,” Isabel Garcia explained. “We have been announcing this protest for a month preceding July 29, and although this is some kind of victory, it is only temporary. There will be further court proceedings and appeals, and our fight is far from over, so we had to be here to voice our determination to resist this racist law and everything that led up to it.”

Analyzing the ruling, Isabel Garcia continued: “The ruling says that the state of Arizona cannot enact or implement immigration law. The federal government has jurisdiction in that area. The state of Arizona has tried to preempt authority that is exclusively federal.

“The ruling also says that you cannot create a police state for



Lisa Luinenberg / Socialist Action

Although a judge blocked key parts of SB 1070, much work remains in the fight for immigrant rights.

people of color. Without using the phrase ‘racial profiling,’ the judge made clear that people of color would be unreasonably subjected to harassment if the law were implemented. The ruling also says that there cannot be criminalization of people without documents, and you cannot criminalize someone for soliciting or offering work.”

However, Isabel Garcia explained further, not all aspects of the judge’s ruling are in favor of immigrant rights. “The judge did not issue an injunction against the part of the law that threatens arrest for those who, in the process of seeking work, ‘interfere with traffic.’ The judge also left in place the part of the law that makes it a *criminal misdemeanor* to ‘transport or harbor’ an undocumented immigrant.”

(Top) Albany, N.Y., march on July 25, following the United National Antiwar Conference.

(Below) St. Paul, Minn., rally against SB 1070 on July 29.

The judge did specify that she enjoined Arizona from implementing SB 1070 because there would be “irreparable damage” to those who did not at all times carry with them proof of legal residence.

In summing up, Isabel Garcia stressed once again: “Our work is not over. We have a huge job ahead of us to educate the large numbers of the ignorant public on immigration issues. It is time for a real dialogue on these issues. We cannot accept the Obama and Schumer positions. In his July 1 speech on immigration, Obama lectured immigrants for supposedly not following the rules.

“But immigrants *have* been ‘following the rules’—of the labor market. For a century or more this country has invited low-wage foreign workers to come and work jobs that others would not, such as fruit and vegetable picking and work in slaughterhouses. We should be grateful to the immigrants who have enriched this country with their labor.”

Isabel Garcia also emphasized, “We have to stop the so-called ‘free trade’ agreements whose result is to force people to leave

(continued on page 11)

July 29 actions hit climate of fear created by SB 1070

By **LISA LUINENBERG**

On April 23, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer signed SB 1070 into law. Since then, the measure has become notorious for provisions that require immigrants to carry documents with them at all times, authorize police officers to arrest persons suspected of being undocumented immigrants, and make it illegal for day laborers to seek work.

Immigrant rights groups across the country have also decried SB 1070 for promoting the use of racial profiling by police officers and for creating an increasing climate of fear in the immigrant community.

SB 1070 has sparked an uprising in the immigrant rights movement, with organizations across the country responding to the call for a nationwide boycott of Arizona-based companies.

Just before SB 1070 was scheduled to take effect in Arizona at 12:01 a.m. on July 29, U.S. District Judge Susan Bolton issued an injunction blocking the most controversial parts of the bill. The federal government, civil rights groups, and two police officers—one in Tucson and one in Phoenix—had sued the state of Arizona on grounds of racial profiling and superseding federal jurisdiction over immigration law. Despite the partial injunction, immigrant-rights organizations across the country went ahead with protests that had been planned for July 28 and 29.

In California, hundreds protested in Oakland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. In Jackson, Miss., protesters organized by the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA) gathered inside the state capitol. About 400 people demonstrated in Chicago and 100 in Philadelphia. Several hundred joined a rally and march in New York City, holding signs stating, “Ningun Ser Humano Es Illegal” and “La Lucha Sigue!” From Mexico City and Guadalajara to Louisville and Duluth, many cities held events protesting SB 1070.

Many protesters emphasized the connection of SB 1070 with other Obama administration policies. In San Francisco, Renée Saucedo, an attorney with La Raza Centro Legal, stated: “It’s no coincidence that Arizona has this outrageous law [SB 1070] because all the proposals from Washington on immigration reform encourage the same criminalization, racial profiling, and discrimination. Immigrant communities are demanding an end to these policies and laws, including Secure Communities and E-Verify. We deserve a new direction from Washington, with real change, including legalization and workers’ rights.”

In St. Paul, organizers from the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee (MIRAc) and the BAM! Boycott Arizona-Minnesota Campaign organized a protest of hundreds outside the state capitol building. Speakers included MIRAc organizers, as well as Javier Morrillo, president of SEIU Local 26. The speakers outlined similar programs already in effect, such as 287(g) and Secure Communities, and emphasized the need to stop the epidemic of hatred and racism from spreading even further.

HF 3830, an SB 1070 copycat bill, has already been introduced in the Minnesota legislature by Rep. Steve Drazkowski. Minnesota is one of over a dozen states considering passage of similar laws. As part of the St. Paul protest, actors dressed up as biohazard workers in orange jumpsuits and face masks cordoned off the steps of the state capitol with “caution” tape, declaring the state quarantined from the epidemic of anti-immigrant laws sweeping the country.

They then removed the jumpsuits to reveal shirts reading, “Ningun ser humano es ilegal/No human being is illegal.” When organizers asked protesters to show their “papers,” participants raised up copies of the U.S. Constitution.

BAM! activists won a recent victory in the Arizona boycott, when they pressured the owner of an Arizona-based Jimmy John’s sandwich franchise in Minneapolis to sign a statement denouncing SB 1070 and supporting a fair and humane immigration reform. They plan to continue resisting SB 1070 and other similar laws already in effect in Minnesota.

On July 29, protesters across the country showed that they would not back down from the struggle for immigrant rights, despite the partial injunction of SB 1070. ■