

Occupations point the way for mass labor fightback



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Don Ryan / AP

By THE EDITORS

Socialist Action welcomes the Occupy movement as a hopeful sign that the working-class fightback against the economic crisis, which is decades overdue, may finally be taking off. We salute the bravery and persistence of the Occupations in the face of police repression, media lies, and politician slanders and attempts at cooptation.

As with similar mass encampments in the Arab world and in Europe, Occupy Wall Street (OWS) began with unemployed or super-exploited young workers, and quickly forged ties with virtually the entire labor movement. Formal endorsement has come from almost every major union—even those who are at this very moment giving up concessions to their employers, some grudgingly, some eagerly because of their mistaken belief in the need for “partnership” and “shared sacrifice” in this crisis.

It is just those notions that OWS is blowing apart, and as a result OWS is setting an example for militant workers looking to fight their own battles and to link up with others. As a corollary of its rejection of “shared sacrifice,” OWS insists on its political independence of the Democratic and Republican parties—both of which are imposing drastic cutbacks and giving away trillions to the banks.

The Occupy movement has focused on the banks, on finance capital, partly because the economic crisis appeared to stem from bankers’ theft, corruption, largesse from politicians, and overlending via mortgages to prop up their profits. Most participants are not as yet familiar with the Marxist economic analysis, which *Socialist Action* newspaper has outlined in past issues, tracing these financial trends back to the longer-term crisis of capital,

a crisis of profitability rooted in production of surplus value in manufacturing and service industries.

It is this profitability crisis, an inability to make profits through the core industries of an advanced capitalist economy on a global scale, that created trillions of dollars that could not be invested elsewhere and so was channeled either into financial speculation, or into propping up consumer debt to artificially stimulate the economy.

This distinction is crucial for several reasons. One, to explain why OWS does *not* share common goals with the right-wing populists, who like past fascist movements use demagogic anti-bank rhetoric while denouncing unions and supporting the profit system. Two, because understanding the links between finance and other forms of capital makes clear that it is the economic system which is our enemy, not corrupt individual financiers or even entire banks (much less the Federal Reserve, a favorite hobby-horse of the right wing).

This understanding of the system and its ruling class as a whole is crucial for making alliances with all their victims, from the homeowner threatened with foreclosure to the autoworker toiling away for lower wages in a shop, to the farmworker risking her life every day in tomato fields.

The pro-labor, anti-capitalist consciousness of the overwhelming majority of OWS participants is shown in

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Kathy Willens / AP



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Occupy comes to Taiwan!

By CLIFF ENGLEWOOD

When U.S. House Majority leader Eric Cantor derided the Occupy Wall Street activists as “a growing mob,” he could not have known that the movement’s influence would grow so strong that its impact would be felt even at the other end of the world.

On Oct. 15, as part of an international weekend of protest, a militant demonstration of several hundred was held in a most unlikely place—Taipei, capital of the prosperous island nation of Taiwan. The demonstrators were mostly young and students, but they were joined by others, including young workers and retirees, who have not benefited by the country’s economic growth.

Few would have guessed that any kind of protest would take place in Taiwan. With the unemployment rate less than half that of the United States and a steadily growing economy, Taiwan is increasingly seen as a safe haven for international investors. The country has no socialist or labor party, a weak trade-union movement, and no history of political radicalism. Travelers entering the country with Marxist literature can expect to have their material seized by immigration officials and can expect to face a fine.

Yet, on a rainy Saturday, summoned by a call that originated on Facebook, protesters gathered outside of Taipei 101, a picture postcard symbol of affluent



Chiang Ying-ying / AP

consumerism and ostentatious wealth and the second largest building in the world. It is also the location of the Taiwan Stock Exchange offices.

The rally, officially called to protest the increasing wealth gap in Taiwan, was smaller than similar

protests in European cities, but the protestors were spirited, defiant, and determined. Marchers entered the first floor, shopping mall area of the skyscraper chanting, “No to capitalism! We are the 99 percent!” City police and building security staff tried to keep the demonstrators out, but had to give way.

The *Taipei Times* (Oct. 16, 2011) quoted a high-school student who said, “The economic growth figures may look good on paper, but we are not feeling it because all the money is going into the hands of capitalists. ... I don’t expect instant change to happen, but I hope that this demonstration can at least be a start for change in the future.”

Students from National Taiwan University who publish a magazine, *Socialist*, were enthusiastic about a demonstration that “is directly targeting capitalism and the financial system in the country.”

Organizers of the demonstration emphasized that they were only at the start of building what they anticipated would become an on-going movement. They say they are still working to build consensus on ways to address the increasing disparity of wealth in Taiwanese society.

An editorial in *The China Post*, which reflects the views of the ruling Chinese Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang (KMT), claimed the modest number of protesters was due to “the lingering sense of civility that restrained our youth from being conspicuously rude by going on a public demonstration for whatever cause” (Oct. 20, 2011). The editorial concluded by claiming: “Idealists, those who wish to narrow the gap of the haves and the have-nots, have no role to play in the increasingly capitalistic Taiwan...”

Nonetheless, on the same day, another spark of protest was lit. A group of students and social activists began a 44-hour hunger strike to demand legal reforms to provide debt relief for students and for legislation that would narrow the gap between rich and poor.

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: Oct. 30, 2011

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

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A fury of activity at Occupy Wall Street

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Tony Savino / Socialist Action



(Left) OWS activists join Teamsters protesting lock-out of workers at Sotheby's auction house, Oct. 18.

By MARTY GOODMAN

NEW YORK—Billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg tried to shut down Zuccotti Park early on Oct. 14 but found that the movement's anti-corporate message had struck too deep a nerve with New Yorkers. Under pretext of cleaning the park, located a few short blocks from Wall Street, the mayor planned to have cops remove protesters and destroy the encampment. The mayor's decision to back down left activists feeling ecstatic over their victory.

The AFL-CIO had sent out the alarm the night before to mobilize in solidarity with the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) protesters. Standing with the protesters in Zuccotti Park at 6:30 a.m. were scores of trade-union officials, rank and filers, and union lawyers. "I think that what we saw that morning is a response to the massive outcry of support for the movement," said Donna Lieberman of the N.Y. Civil Liberties Union.

The potential power of the labor movement was visible on Oct. 5, when a union-sponsored OWS support rally was held near City Hall in lower Manhattan. Initiated by the Transport Workers Union Local 100, it attracted some 20,000 demonstrators. Another union-initiated protest filled Times Square on Oct. 15 and attracted thousands as well, despite police provocations and the arrests of dozens of non-violent protesters.

As winter weather begins to set in, Occupy Wall Street has seen a fury of renewed activity (see occupywallst.org). New, but as yet not official, is the OWS Antiwar Subcommittee, which seeks to integrate antiwar awareness with anti-corporate mobilizing. The committee contains diverse views but will sponsor an antiwar "teach-in" in Zuccotti Park.

Blacks, Latinos hit by recession

The reasons for mass support for OWS are not hard to understand. According to a recent report by the U.S. Census Bureau, the median or average income in 2010 was down 6.4% from pre-recession levels and even **lower** than the average worker's buying power back in 1978. Poverty rose to 15.1% in 2010.

Those who have been most brutally hit by the recession are the Hispanic and African American communities, still oppressed by racism. According to the Economic Policy Institute (Sept. 21, 2011), half of all Black families have wealth—homes, cars, etc.—worth under \$2200 in 2009. In contrast, though white household wealth is significantly down, it is, on average, an astounding 44.5 times higher!

A PEW Foundation study in July based on Census Bureau figures revealed that the average Hispanic household's wealth declined by 66% between 2005 and 2009. African American average household wealth declined by 53%; Asians by 54%. White median household wealth fell by 16% over the same period (*The New York Times*, July 26, 2011). — M.G.

"Wall Street = War Street," one sign declared at the Oct. 15 antiwar rally here sponsored by the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), held in conjunction with OWS protests that day.

The Labor Outreach committee in particular has attracted dozens of activists to its meetings. Recently, members of Teamsters Local 808, nicknamed a "Band of Brothers," who are on strike at the Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx, came to a labor outreach meeting. Strikers testified to gross racist treatment by Woodlawn bosses and ongoing retribution against outspoken workers. A solidarity rally is set for Nov. 12 at Woodlawn Cemetery at 1 pm.

Another Labor Outreach project is the campaign against Sotheby's, an elite art auction house on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Sotheby's has locked out art handler members of Teamster Local 814 since Aug. 1. The lockout began after members rejected an insulting contract offer that included a 10% pay cut and no health-care benefits.

OWS has disrupted several high-end Sotheby's auctions and has protested at restaurants owned by Sotheby's boss Danny Meyers. Sotheby's certainly can't cry poverty. Sotheby's CEO, William Ruprecht, has had his salary more than doubled in 2010, and it now stands at an incredible \$60,000 a day!

OWS actions also included going to the homes of the rich in a "millionaires march," which has received wide coverage in the business and mainstream press. The protesters demanded passage of the "millionaires' tax," a minimal tax advocated by unions but rejected by Governor Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat. One business weekly, *Crain's*, said in its Oct. 18 issue, "It's been a rough few weeks for the city's billionaires, bankers and corporate board members."

OWS also joined a march of some 1000 Verizon workers on Oct. 21 in lower Manhattan, ending in Zuccotti Park. Some 45,000 Verizon workers, members of the Communication Workers of America and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, have been without a contract since the unions abandoned their strike and returned to work on Aug. 21. The unions have called Verizon, "The poster child of corporate greed."

The Transport Workers Union Local 100, an OWS supporter, is beginning a contract battle. Its contract expires on Jan. 15, 2012. The 35,000-member city subway and bus workers face straight zero raises, health-care cuts, and possible layoffs. The union has called a demonstration at the opening of contract talks on Nov. 15 at the Sheraton Hotel in midtown Manhattan.

About 200 OWS supporters disrupted an Education Department meeting in Manhattan on Oct. 25, resulting in Bloomberg-appointed Chancellor Dennis Walcott's leaving the room. OWS activists, who include rank-and-file teachers, complained of massive cuts to education. Activists say that it was the first time a Board meeting was shut down.

In an important development, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), the NAACP, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement called for an Oct. 29 march in solidarity with OWS beginning at City Hall. The call, if properly advertised, could have begun to mobilize op-

pressed communities in support of OWS, changing the race and class dynamics as well as perceptions of OWS.

Unfortunately, lackluster promotion by these Democratic Party supporters and constant rain severely limited what could have been a mass protest. Nevertheless, determined protesters marched from City Hall to Zuccotti Park, picking up support, and then proceeded to Borough of Manhattan Community College to demand tuition cuts. About 150 attended.

On Oct. 19 the N.Y. Central Labor Council, a city labor umbrella organization, passed a resolution for a Nov. 5 mass rally on Wall Street backed by a number of labor radicals and others. The motion called for the rich to pay for the crisis; no layoffs, budget, and service cuts; a federal jobs program; and an end to police harassment of OWS protesters. Surprisingly for many, the motion passed unanimously. However, the Nov. 5 rally was derailed by CLC bureaucrats.

The OWS Labor Solidarity Committee put out a national call for actions on Nov. 2 in solidarity with Occupy Oakland; locally there will be a rally at 4 p.m. in Washington Square Park, with a march to Zuccotti Park. In addition, OWS has chosen Nov. 17 to be a day of national solidarity with the goals of the Occupation. Momentum is building, with broad union support, for what promises to be a very large demonstration. ■

Occupy the Hood

The "Occupy the Hood" movement in New York City has spread to the oppressed communities of Brooklyn and the Bronx, although, as yet, there are no actual occupations. One Boston Occupy the Hood activist, Ife Johan Uhuru, put it this way, "I see Occupy Wall Street as putting forth demands, and a lot of times those demands don't speak to the 99% that we all claim to be."

An Occupy the Hood speak-out was held in Harlem at St. Mary's church on Oct. 27 in support of OWS. A flyer by the sponsor, "Harlem Fightback Against War at Home and Abroad," read, "Wall Street, the epicenter of international finance capital, began its financial prosperity with slave profiteering firms, JP Morgan, Lehman Brothers, Bank of America and Wachovia Bank. In fact, Wall Street and most of the city's financial district were built on the burial ground of captured Africans forced into genocidal free labor for centuries, a crime against humanity." About 100-150 attended the Harlem gathering.

Speak-out organizer Nellie Bailey told *Socialist Action*, "The political significance of this General Assembly really signals a turn for Harlem not only for those who are fed up with Wall Street but also for those who are fed-up with the politicians of Harlem" (e-mail Harlemfightbackagainstwar@gmail.com).

Two rallies have hit the city's racist "stop and frisk" policies. According to one study, some 85% of those frisked are Black or Hispanic. More than 90% have been found to be doing nothing illegal. One Harlem protest on Oct. 21 was held at the Adam Clayton Powell State Office Building on 125th Street.

OWS supporters marched to a cop precinct, where OWS supporters did civil disobedience. Dozens of activists were arrested, including Princeton Professor Cornell West, protest organizer Carl Dix, local clergy, and others.

— MARTY GOODMAN



(Left) Shiites in Baghdad protested last March in solidarity with people fighting for their rights in Bahrain. The U.S., fearing the Middle East upsurge, has increased its forces in the region.

After Iraq departure, U.S. sends new forces to Africa, Middle East

By CHRISTINE MARIE

On Oct. 30, *The New York Times* announced that in anticipation of the departure of U.S. combat troops from Iraq, the Pentagon is preparing to deploy more than the equivalent number of troops to Kuwait and to dramatically boost the U.S. naval presence in the Gulf region.

According to *The Times*, new basing and military cooperation agreements are rapidly being drafted with the member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council in order to make sure that the U.S. is even more capable than ever of deploying rapid response teams in the broad military zone now made up of Middle East, Central Asia and the North and East of Africa.

The U.S. was recently denied the right to keep 23,000 combat troops in Iraq, who would have been invulnerable to prosecution in 2012 and beyond by the Maliki government, a regime that is quite dependent on the U.S. military presence but under intense political pressure from broad sections of the Iraqi population to oppose a new troop agreement.

"Withdrawal" is something of a misnomer for what will occur, even without addressing the regional buildup just outside Iraq's borders, as the State Department is building a private army of over 5000 to guard the huge U.S. "embassies" planted permanently on Iraqi soil, and thousands of contractors will remain.

The escalation announced on Oct. 30 came directly on the heels of a series of shocking confirmations of the decidedly inhuman character of the supposedly humanitarian U.S.-NATO intervention in Libya. Amnesty International and other international human rights organizations confirmed the sickening roundups and beatings carried out by TNC-led forces against Black migrant workers.

At the same time, the whole world watched as NATO planes bombed Gad-

hafi's hometown Sirte to smoking rubble, displacing and killing an unknown number of civilians.

In the aftermath, the images of more than 50 bodies that showed evidence of being executed by a bullet to the head while handcuffed flashed around the world, revealing that summary execution rather than trial was likely to be modus operandi of the so-called liberators.

The ritual torture, rape, and murder of Gadhafi, followed by the grotesque prolonged and public mutilation of his corpse, made it clear to the world that the emancipatory ethos and vision that have historically accompanied the toppling of dictators was not easily found among

either the troops or the TNC leadership, who refused to even try to be shocked by the events. In the end, many have been forced to admit that the U.S.-NATO intervention had nothing to do with the liberation of the Libyan people and everything to do with securing the military presence of the U.S., NATO, Qatar, and mercenaries on the ground in North Africa.

"Having secured Libya," said *Guardian* writer John Pilger on Oct. 19, "an American invasion of the African continent is underway." Pilger was referencing the announcement by Barack Obama that U.S. combat troops are heading to Uganda to intervene in the civil war there in support of the current regime, and that this

would be the first of a series of special operations deployments to Central Africa. Uganda already receives \$45 million dollars in U.S. military aid to carry out proxy wars for the United States in Central Africa.

According to Pilger, the latest U.S. military intervention is designed to reward Uganda's "president-for-life" Yoweri Museveni for his willingness to intervene against what America describes for public consumption as the "Islamic threat" in Somalia.

These special ops, part of the new 60,000-soldier arm of the U.S. military revealed in *Wikileaks* as destined for deployment in 75 countries, will be joining those operating the new constellation of some 60 drone bases reported upon by the *Washington Post* on Sept. 20. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on Sept. 21 that new drone installations in the Seychelles would be used to increase military activity and assassinations in Somalia and Yemen. The war in Somalia, international law expert Francis Boyle of the University of Illinois-Champaign says, is really all about gas and oil.

The U.S. is also involved in black ops in the Sahara and the Saheel, where according to Jeremy Keenan, author of "The Dark Sahara: America's War on Terror in Africa," the Pentagon fears independence movements may threaten the pro-U.S. rule of Nigeria, a nation which supplies a modest but important 10% of U.S. supplies, or the proposed route of an important new Nigeria to Algeria oil pipeline.

In truth, the U.S. has increased military support to its friends all over the continent, as it perceives a threat in the Chinese economic penetration of Africa and China's access to Africa's massive energy, mineral, and land resources. ■

Building the NATO /G8 protests

The Oct. 15 demonstrations and forums called by the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) to mark the 10th anniversary of the occupation of Afghanistan wonderfully coincided with an internationally called Global Day of Action against austerity and were able, in many cities, to link up with the Occupy Movement. In New York, Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, and San Diego the demonstrations were the largest in many years, swelling to the thousands as youth from the encampments and youth inspired by the encampments joined in large numbers.

UNAC organizers in each city explained to new activists the profound connection between the drive for economic austerity and the U.S. wars abroad. "The U.S.-NATO war on Libya," Chris Gauvreau said at the Oct. 15 march in Hartford, Conn., "was really a war to enforce the rules laid down by the IMF and the World Bank and Wall Street on the peoples of North Africa. In Egypt and Tunisia the masses rose up to protest the austerity measures forced on their economies by the financial institutions of the U.S. and Europe."

While the United States, France, and other rich nations did not feel that they could directly intervene with planes and bombs to keep those revolutionary movements in check, Gauvreau asserted, they saw an opening to put special ops forces on the ground right between those countries, in Libya.

"In truth," Gauvreau said, "NATO is the police force of the 1% abroad." She concluded by urging protesters to consider the meaning of Obama's decision to invite all the generals and planners of NATO to meet at the same time as the financial ministers and heads of the rich G8 countries in Chicago from May 15-22, 2012. "Is there any doubt, that indeed, Wall Street is War Street?," she concluded.

There is clearly a growing understanding of the relationship between the attacks on the economic wellbeing of the 99% and the wars waged by the U.S. and NATO abroad. On Oct. 26, the Occupy Chicago Movement and the Coalition Against the NATO/G8 War & Poverty Agenda (CANG8) marched together, 150 strong, to the offices of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel to demand an end to the mass arrests of the occupiers and permits for the planned marches protesting the NATO/G8 summit.

Northern California organizers also introduced those inspired by the occupations to importance of the NATO/G8 protests by organizing a whirlwind eight-city tour of Jess Sundin, Steve Downs, and UNAC leader Jeff Mackler. Sundin is one of the victims of the FBI/grand-jury witch hunt targeting the Midwest antiwar and solidarity movement, and Downs is the founder of the Muslim civil liberties group called Project SALAM. — VANESSA MORISOT

It's enough!

By ANTARSYA

ANTARSYA is a coalition of anti-capitalist groups in Greece, including supporters of the Fourth International.

The government has crossed all limits. It's not enough that the workers, the unemployed, the young people, pensioners and professionals are plunged into misery—Finance Minister Venizelos went so far as to announce in Parliament that we should also be happy to be "under control!" The PASOK government and the interests of capital that it represents, in absolute harmony with the Troika, felt extremely positive shortly before announcing their slaughter package!

The humiliation is almost perfect. At the same moment as their policy becomes bankrupt, and as working families are driven into bankruptcy, the holy alliance of government, the EU, and the IMF want to make us believe that there is no other way to save the country from bankruptcy. In reality they are the ones who lead us into bankruptcy under the control, and according to the terms of, the banks and multinational companies, the EU, and the Greek industrialists.

There is another path, the path of the anti-capitalist break with the ruling order, in order to impose the interests of working people: by stopping the payments to the bankers and the cancellation of debt, by withdrawing from the euro zone and leaving the EU, by the nationalization of banks, state-owned enterprises and enterprises of strategic

importance under workers' control and without compensation, through a radical redistribution of wealth, by increasing wages, pensions and public spending in order to cover social needs and to create jobs by an adequate capital tax and the redistribution of profits through the cancellation of bank debts for those without vast fortunes, and for the unemployed.

We won't pay your poll taxes! We shall bring about your downfall.

The unified mass political movement will open the way, an uprising of all workers and of the entire population is needed here and now! With unlimited strikes and a nationwide general strike, with occupations as they have already begun in the ministries, with militant demonstrations, and with the democratic coordination of the branches that

started fighting and of the rank-and-file basic trade union units, things can move beyond the bureaucratic leaderships of GSEE (private sector) and ADEDY (public service). Through the united struggle of student occupations and unlimited strikes we can win!

It is time for a popular uprising that will lead to the overthrow of the government of shame, that will unshackle the rule of EU, IMF and capital, and that will seal the defeat of the black bloc of PASOK, ND, and LAOS. All the forces of the Left and the movement involved in the struggles must contribute through their joint action to an unprecedented revolutionary movement.

ANTARSYA fights for the abolition of capitalist barbarism as a whole and is involved with all its forces in the current conflict. ■

Climate change and the need for eco-socialism

Ed Wray / AP



Charlie Riedel / AP



By WAYNE DELUCA

This article is based on a talk given by the author at a forum at Occupy Philadelphia.

We are living in a period of intense ecological crisis. Climate change caused by human activity is at the forefront of this crisis, which extends throughout the natural environment and threatens the very future of humanity as a species.

Global warming caused by industrial production has pushed us to a tipping point beyond which lie untold disasters. We have seen a rise in sea level, melting of glaciers, severe weather, and changes in the composition of the oceans. Our current level of atmospheric carbon dioxide is around 391 parts per million, while 300 or less would actually be sustainable. As temperatures rise we can expect more super-storms, more flooding and droughts, and extreme changes in the oceans that are the cradle of life on earth.

But we know today that our world's ecosystems are interlinked in hundreds of visible and invisible ways. One alarming harbinger of crisis is the growing rate of species extinction. The background rate of extinction is around 5 species per million, but now the rate is up around 100 per million. This is a level only seen in periods of mass extinction. Warming is destroying habitat at an unprecedented rate; many species are dying off as a result, and others are invading new areas. This extinction is only one of many crises that are spiraling out of control.

Humanity faces water crises and shortages on an unprecedented scale. Changes in the flow of rivers as glaciers melt and weather shifts are causing devastating droughts. As climate change intensifies, this problem will become a desperate one for large parts of the earth's population. Water shortages are a pressing reality or a grim future for much of humanity.

Climate scientists such as James Hansen have estimated that we have perhaps 10 years to make a major change before the most drastic effects of climate change will become difficult or impossible to avoid. We are losing precious time for action.

The cause of ecological devastation today is industrial activity. This is driven onward by the capitalist system, an economic order that demands relentless and unceasing growth. In a world of finite resources and finite ability to absorb the impact of human production, capitalism has a ceaseless demand for more. As Karl Marx put it in his masterpiece, *Capital*, "Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the Prophets!" Capitalism is a machine of unrelenting accumulation and growth.

In the modern era, capitalism has found itself in periodic crises of overproduction, where it has simply produced more than it can sell and finds itself in crisis because of over-abundance of goods. At the same time it faces a decline of its rate of profit, which has fallen as more and more capital has to be poured into modern technology. Desperate to revive its profits, the ruling class attacks more and more openly at the source of its value.

In the 19th century a socialist slogan said that "labor is the source of all value." In his *Critique of the Gotha Program*, Marx corrected this, and said that labor and nature were the sources of value. And just as capital has made an all-out assault on labor to bring itself

The means to contain climate change cannot be left to the chaos of the market. It requires a planned economy, democratically run by the working class.

back to profitability, it has also waged war on nature. We see this in the attempt to draw natural resources out of the earth no matter how devastating, whether it is oil miles beneath the ocean or in tar sands, blowing off the tops of mountains for coal, or fracking—which drills miles beneath the earth and injects a stew of toxic chemicals to break up rock and extract natural gas.

This rapacious demand for more knows no limits, and capital fights any attempt to impose boundaries on it tooth and nail. Denial of climate change is a severe form of this. We can look at the spectroscopic signature of heat escaping earth and see that warming is due directly to atmospheric carbon and other greenhouse gases. The isotopes of carbon entering the atmosphere link it directly to human activity. Denial is a strategy of capital to continue accumulation no matter what.

But even ecologically minded capitalism cannot solve the crisis. Nicholas Stern, an economist who wrote a major review of climate change, cautioned strongly against any attempts to reduce carbon below 550 parts per million. Beneath that level, he said, economic growth would be directly impacted. At 550 ppm, we are essentially left crossing our fingers and hoping that the catastrophe is only moderately devastating. This is capitalism's last best offer—we must choose between economic growth and climate change.

Since the Kyoto Protocol, the mainstream opposition to climate change has focused on cap-and-trade schemes. These are not only inadequate but counterproductive, since at best they create stabilization rather than reduction of carbon output. These schemes are deeply corrupt and have proven ineffective where implemented, and need to be rejected in favor of a cap and a tax on carbon.

Another market solution that has been presented is green consumerism. The market is flooded with "green" products, but over 98% of them make vague, false, or misleading claims about their sustainability. The classic example is the greenwashing cards that hotels leave to let guests opt out of having their sheets washed. This does not save water, but it saves a bit of money for the hotels.

Likewise, natural gas is touted as "cleaner-burning" and buses are refitted to run on it, but the overall process of fracking gives methane a larger carbon footprint than coal. Individual usage counts for at most 30% of energy consumption and is not a realistic target for environmental change. Industrial use is where major change needs to happen.

Capitalism's rapaciousness has a disproportionate effect on the underdeveloped world. It is countries in Africa and generally the global South that face water insecurity, super-storms, and drastic ecosystem

(Left) Activists at 2007 UN conference on climate change, in Bali, Indonesia.

changes. As Hurricane Katrina showed, the poorest in the developed imperialist countries likewise suffer the worst effects of climate change and environmental destruction. Many environmentalists are also much too quick to blame the growing population of underdeveloped countries for environmental devastation, when in fact the poorest people on the planet have tiny carbon footprints. It is industry and not people that needs to be the focus of the environmental movement.

The system is incapable of innovating its way out of ecological crisis. William Stanley Jevons, a 19th century British economist, can be called a "peak coal" theorist. He forecast an end to British capitalism from the depletion of coal, but thought that the industrialists needed to push onward to the end. Yet Jevons, who was no ecologist, made a unique observation: more efficient devices for burning coal—better boilers and engines—did not decrease the actual usage of coal in Britain. Instead, the more efficient the technology, the more coal was burned in absolute terms. This is a reflection of the logic of capitalism: efficiency leads to higher resource usage. There is no way that we can avoid climate catastrophe simply by making capitalism more efficient.

In order to contain climate change and prevent disaster, we need a total overhaul of the energy and transportation infrastructure. Shipping and personal transit need to become radically different, and all energy for human activity needs to come from renewable sources. This would require a massive, worldwide mobilization of resources and people on a scale that is truly unprecedented. Keeping energy use at sustainable levels will be a monumental task, but one that is necessary for our survival.

The changes that need to happen are of the kind that requires a planned economy, democratically run by the working class. The task facing us cannot be left to chance and the chaos of the market, but it also cannot be imposed from above by a bureaucracy. Planning is the only realistic way to restructure the whole infrastructure of society, from top to bottom, in the radical way that is necessary.

When the Soviet Union fell, Cuba faced a sudden need to reduce its energy consumption. It responded by becoming virtually carbon neutral. Energy taxes were increased to rates that discouraged usage. Efficiency was prioritized, with old appliances being phased out in mass numbers. It became the second country in the world in distributed energy generation, which reduces loss along power lines. Cuban agriculture became almost entirely organic, without either gasoline-powered tractors or fertilizers derived from fossil fuels. Harsh necessity made Cuba the most ecological country on the planet.

If we cannot follow in the footsteps of Cuba, if we cannot permanently change our whole energy infrastructure, we face a grim future of water wars, flooding, and super-storms. A century ago, as imperialism pitched the world into war, the great Polish socialist Rosa Luxemburg warned that mankind faced a choice—socialism or barbarism. Today we face the same challenge; if we do not create eco-socialism we face catastrophe. ■

Occupy movement goals: Socialist revolution or capitalist reforms?

BY JEFF MACKLER

At last count 900 U.S. cities have joined the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement. Five hundred other cities and towns on every continent have joined the mushrooming mobilizations in solidarity. With each repressive blow, the movement comes back stronger—more inclusive, more confident, and more clearly focused.

“The Americans are fighting back at last,” cried one European demonstrator, echoing the pride and solidarity felt by people the world over, who understand that they too are the 99 percent—the working masses everywhere who create the wealth and yet are increasingly trampled on by the banking and corporate elite and their ever-distrusted political representatives or dictators.

When New York City’s Mayor Bloomberg threatened to close down the OWS encampment at Zuccotti Park, he was confronted with an unexpected threat from the AFL-CIO and its constituent unions, including the Communication Workers of America. The local union officialdom called on its ranks to “defend” the occupiers. “Defend” is a special word in working-class circles. It signifies a massive mobilization against those agents of a repressive society who would employ force and violence against peaceful protesters demanding fundamental change.

Bloomberg backed down when he and his cohorts judged that removing several hundred youthful occupiers would be quite a different proposition from challenging a mobilization of the organized labor movement.

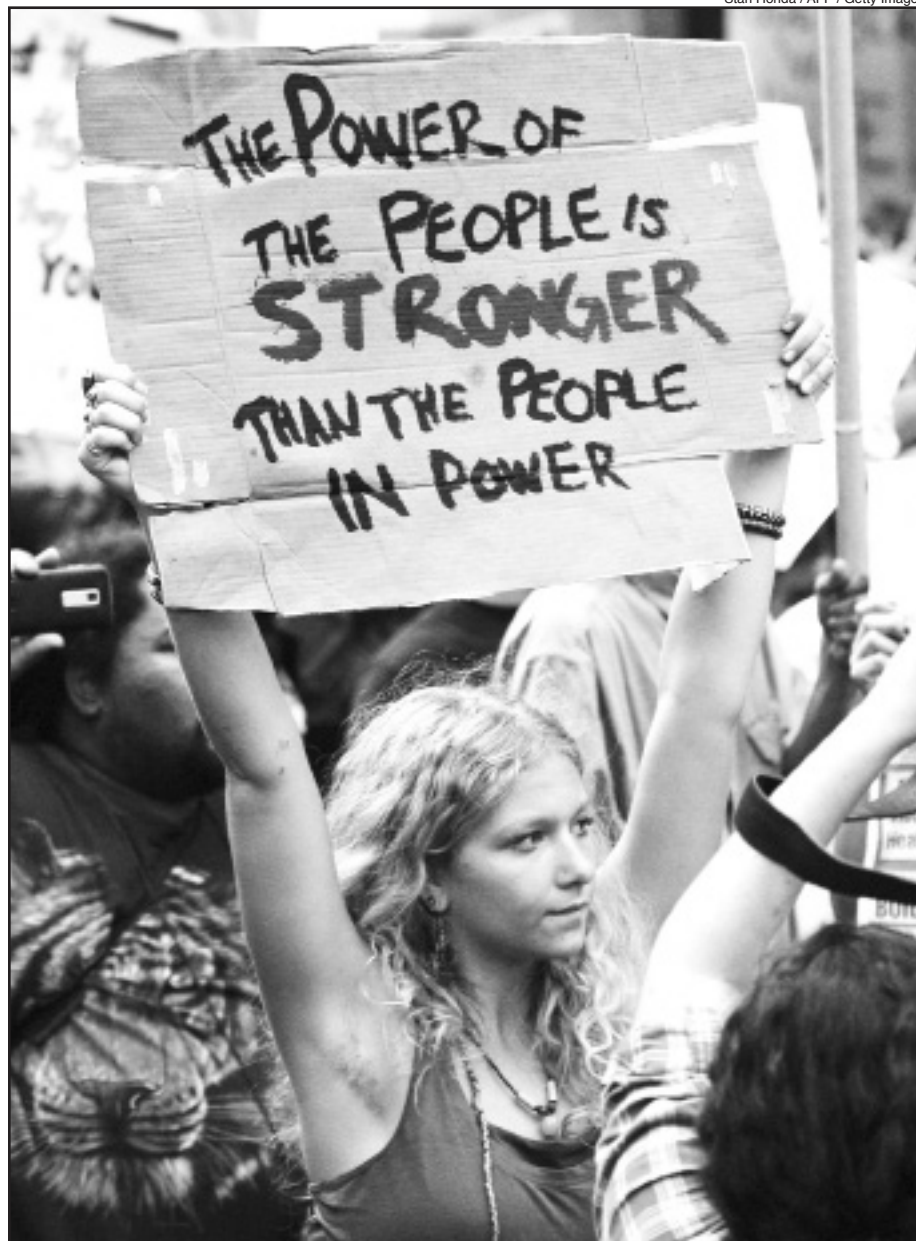
Despite that victory, we can expect that the authorities will attempt to beat back the Occupy movement by repression, if they think they can get away with it. This was seen when, without warning, Oakland’s repressive apparatus was unleashed on Oct. 25, at 4 a.m. About 900 cops fired rubber bullets and beanbag missiles at close range at some 100 occupiers in Oakland’s Frank Ogawa Plaza, adjacent to City Hall. The attack included tear-gas and clubbing the non-violent occupiers.

In the name of sanitation concerns, the police destroyed the encampment, trashing some 100 tents and arresting scores of Oakland’s peaceful protesters. A police-fired missile sent 22-year-old Iraq War veteran Scott Olsen to the hospital with a severe skull fracture.

The next day, the Occupy Oakland General Assembly reclaimed the now renamed Oscar Grant Plaza, with some 2000 supporters mobilizing to protest the police attack.

In response to the attack, 1607 participants debated a resolution calling for an Oakland general strike on Wednesday, Nov. 2. The resolution passed by a 96.9% margin. The resolution stated, “Instead of workers going to work and students going to school, the people will converge on downtown Oakland to shut down the city. ... All banks and corporations should close down for the day or we will march on them. ... The whole world is watching Oakland. Let’s show them what is possible.”

Indeed, the whole world was watching the events in Oakland, and solidarity events took place in a number of cities. Occupy Wall Street in New York issued a call for a nationwide show of support on Nov. 2. And a planned march from Tahrir Square to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, included a statement of solidarity with the beleaguered Oak-



Stan Honda / AFP / Getty Images

land protesters. It read in part: “The moment that we find ourselves in is nothing new, as we in Egypt and others have been fighting against systems of repression, disenfranchisement and the unchecked ravages of global capitalism (yes, we said it, capitalism): a system that has made a world that is dangerous and cruel to its inhabitants.”

Most participants understand that the dramatic call for an Oakland general strike, without mass support from the labor movement, will likely not materialize. Nevertheless, it is encouraging that several unions have called on their members to take part. The expected outpouring of working people and youth in solidarity with Occupy Oakland will represent yet another powerful step toward their mobilization in critical class battles to come.

In 1946, as part of the post-World War II strike wave of industrial workers that engulfed the country in the largest multi-million-member labor mobilization in U.S. history, there was indeed a general strike in Oakland, one of the few in the nation’s history. The strike began with the solidarity of local trade unionists who had witnessed the bosses herding scab workers through union picket lines at a department store. But the labor bureaucracy, as today, largely stood aside from what developed, virtually spontaneously, into a 54-hour general strike that closed down the city.

Then as now, there was a giant gap between the desire of labor’s ranks to struggle and the willingness of labor’s blustering misleaders to lead. But once again, the question of labor’s leadership will be posed as rank-and-filers embark on the road to re-capturing their unions from the current crop of pro-capitalist bureaucrats.

In the process, as in 1946, they will

take their struggles into the political arena and contemplate the formation of a mass labor party to compliment labor’s struggle at the point of production with a political fight against the policies of the twin parties of capital.

With each passing day the Occupy movement gathers momentum as it reflects the deep-seated anger at the incursions on the quality of life, standard of living, and basic security of the broad working class and its allies among the oppressed and youth everywhere. This is a movement that in the main rejects the very essence of capitalist functioning worldwide, including its imperial wars and occupations and its outright domination by the billionaire and trillionaire ruling class—the one percent—whose interests are defended without question by the twin capitalist parties that govern in the interests of their corporate and banking overlords.

An October *New York Times* article tells the story well. Entitled, “New Poll Finds A Deep Distrust of Government,” *The Times* poll found that “almost half of the public [a large plurality] thinks that the sentiment at the root of the Occupy Movement generally reflects the views of all Americans.” This stands in sharp contrast to an earlier *Times* poll that found that the reactionary Tea Party’s views reflects the opinion of some 27 percent.

The recent poll found that an astounding “89 percent distrust the government to do the right thing.” The article asserted that “a remarkable sense of pessimism and skepticism was apparent in question after question in the survey, which found that Congressional approval had reached a new low of 9 percent.”

Despite the mass sentiment and impressive and growing mobilizations

against capitalist austerity, however, the official labor movement, as well as the organizations that purport to represent the interests of oppressed nationalities, have yet to exercise their still potent power to challenge and reverse the deepening capitalist offensive.

Today’s labor officialdom, compelled now by rank-and-file pressure to at least posture with a modicum of identification with the Occupy movement, remains, with virtually no exceptions, bound in a deadly alliance with the Democratic Party and the Obama administration. This is despite the fact that the latter has proven to be capitalism’s most fervent representative in imposing a level of austerity and war that the previous Bush administration never dreamed of.

For the ruling-class rich, and their twin political parties in the United States, there is no alternative to saving their degenerating social system other than continued austerity, cutbacks of every sort, imperialist wars of plunder and occupation, catastrophic assaults of the environment and the promotion of racist, sexist, and anti-immigrant hysteria aimed at dividing the working class to pit one sector against another.

Increasing numbers of Occupation activists are learning from bitter experience that the prospect of reforming capitalism is futile and that the system itself, at its roots, must be challenged, defeated, and replaced. In an ongoing process that combines mass actions, political discussion, and debate, socialist solutions are being considered to a degree not seen in a generation or more.

Socialism is a new social order where for the first time in human history the working masses rule in their own name, as opposed to the elite capitalist property owners and the governments they select to advance their own interests at the expense of us all.

This is not the bureaucratic caricature of socialism that existed in the Stalin era and that prevailed in the former USSR and Eastern Europe before it was challenged and overthrown by its victims, but the dynamic, democratic, and revolutionary socialism pioneered by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels—as well as by Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky and other early leaders of the historic 1917 Russian Revolution.

The socialist revolution in Russia was one in which the working-class majority ruled society in their own interests, and through their own institutions, in order to prioritize human needs in every social arena. The revolutionary government was based on the political and economic rule of mass working-class assemblies or councils of workers and the oppressed (“soviets” in the Russian language). This was a deep-going revolution that abolished the capitalist system of private ownership of society’s productive machinery, banks, and resources that had been previously organized to extract the wealth created by the people in the interests of the vast profits of the few.

No ruling-class minority in human history, from the time of the ancient slave societies of the Greeks and Romans thousands of years ago, to the centuries of feudal monarchies, and to today’s capitalist property-owning elite, has ever relinquished its power voluntarily. Socialist revolution, in the only true sense of the term, is the conscious organization and mobilization of the vast

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Are the police on our side?

By STEVE XAVIER

At a recent Occupy Los Angeles demonstration, activist Ron Gochez, speaking about police brutality, made the statement that “police are not part of the 99%.” His remarks were met with jeers from some of the crowd, who tried to shout him down. Later he said, “Although they (cops) might make the money of the 99%, they represent and defend the 1%.” Opposition to his statements reveals dangerous illusions about which side the police are on.

In a leaflet that is being circulated at occupations, “Revolution: a how-to,” by Anonymous, the author advises activists “If you suspect another activist of illegal activity, ask them to stop, if they do not, film them and *show the police to have that activist escorted from the protest*, then share this footage with others to let them know to be aware of the person in question. **TRY TO GET THE COPS ON OUR SIDE**” (my emphasis).

Are we, as activists, in the business of turning people in to the police? Our protests should manage themselves through security monitors who answer to the democratic processes of the movement. The movement can set rules of behavior for the occupation zone, including rules against drug or alcohol abuse, which could also bring the cops down on us.

That said, the mass arrests and harassment of occupations in Oakland, New York, Atlanta, Boston, and other cities should serve as a caution to us all about the true nature of the police.

We are often told that cops are here to

protect and serve—but to protect what and to serve whom? Cops are usually from working-class backgrounds, but it’s a mistake to think that they bring a working-class identity into the job. By becoming police, they become enforcers of the capitalist social order and protectors of capitalist property.

The U.S. has the highest incarceration rate in the world, with over 7 million either in prison, on parole or probation. The so-called criminal justice system is disproportionately aimed at communities of oppressed nationalities, who face systematic harassment (profiling, stop and frisk), brutality, and even murder at the hands of police, often with no consequences for the cops involved.

For example, consider the killing of Oscar Grant, in Oakland, Calif., on New Year’s Day 2009. Grant was shot in the back by BART Officer Johannes Mehserle, sparking protests in the community. Mehserle was later convicted of involuntary manslaughter and sentenced to two years in prison. The case of Askia Sabur, in Philadelphia, who was beaten by cops while waiting for take-out food is still in the courts. Philly cops have targeted Askia’s family and neighborhood for harassment in retaliation for their decision to organize in support of Askia.

The more dramatic case of the Philadelphia police bombing of the MOVE house on May 13, 1985, should be enough to remind us of which side the cops are on. Philly cops fired more than 10,000 rounds of ammo in 90 minutes into 6221 Osage Avenue. Then they dropped a bomb on the house, killing 11 men,



Cops are not just ‘workers in uniform.’ They serve the capitalist state.

women, and children and destroying a whole neighborhood.

Los Angeles activists should be especially cautious regarding illusions in the police. We should remember the 1991 police beating of Rodney King after a traffic stop, and the subsequent urban uprising after police were acquitted by a jury of 10 whites, one Asian and a Latino.

Marxists point out that the state is a product of the irreconcilable nature of the conflicts between the classes. With the emergence of the state, a separate armed force was needed to protect the interests of the ruling class (police, army,

prison guards, etc.).

Cops are not just “workers in uniform” and they are not on our side. In the words of Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky, “The fact that the police was originally recruited in large numbers from among social-democratic workers is absolutely meaningless. Consciousness is determined by environment even in this instance. The worker who becomes a policeman in the service of the capitalist state is a bourgeois cop, not a worker” (from the pamphlet, “Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It”).

Any union member who has been on strike, or any member of an oppressed community, can tell you the truth about cops. As activists, we should never call on the cops to “protect” us from the bosses or from fascist goons. Cops in Germany and Italy facilitated the fascist rise to power. It should be clear to us all that the police are here to protect and serve the 1 percent. ■

... Occupations point way for labor

(continued from page 1)

the applause (and hand “twinkles”) given to every announcement of labor support, and by the huge cheers for Egyptian revolutionary Mohammed Ezzeldin when he denounced capitalism and its markets, and got an especially big cheer for his call for revolution. It is also seen in the numerous points in the New York City General Assembly “Declaration” relating to labor’s needs and to examples of anti-labor policies that the GA denounced.

OWS and other Occupy sites have reacted in general in a positive way to demands of people of color for more inclusion and outreach to their communities and issues. This must be strengthened. The Occupy movement has also forged ties with other movements—antiwar, immigrant rights, antiracism, etc.—welcoming them to hold workshops on site, to raise their special concerns, mobilizing for their activities, and showing solidarity in the face of repression by cops and surveillance by the FBI.

OWS has been criticized from the start for an alleged lack of demands. Some of this criticism comes from those who wish it ill. But some of it comes from genuine concern for the movement. Historically, movements have grown when they place demands on the powers that be that will mobilize large masses, masses who see in the winning of those demands the potential for gains, and see in the defeat of those demands tragic setbacks, all of which inspires them to do all they can for the movement’s success. By the same token, ruling-class resistance to such demands inspires workers to understand the need for getting rid of the system entirely.

OWS, by insisting on an open process, is creating a unique space for discussion of demands and program. Other Occupy sites formulated demands at the start. OWS is also making an important contribution to stimulating a critical discussion in the broad labor movement. This can serve to once again raise the question of which class shall rule society. The popular OWS-initiated statement, “We are the 99%,” raises this question. When the 99%, beginning with a revitalized, democratic and fighting labor movement, takes to the streets to exercise its power, the hopes and aspirations of the OWS movement will have an ally and champion that can shake the world.

To adapt a phrase from the May-June 1968 movement in France, we believe workers will settle for nothing less than the impossible—i.e. what is impossible under this system. They will not rest until there are jobs for *all*; health care, child care, education for *all*; renunciation of *all* consumer, housing, and stu-

dent loan debt; an end to *all* wars by the U.S. and its client regimes.

OWS activists, and workers throughout the world, know that the banks have the money we need to achieve *all* of this. Reformist solutions such as resurrecting Glass-Steagall (i.e., separating commercial from investment banking) will not solve the problem. Nor will tighter regulation of the banks (which Obama has no interest in, in any case). The only solution is a *literal* occupation of Wall Street—taking over the banks, nationalizing them, and opening their books to public inspection and on that basis to control by councils of working people.

Getting to that stage, however, requires a qualitative growth both in breadth and militancy of the workers’ movement. At the moment workers do not appear ready to adopt occupation of their workplaces as a common tactic. In Madison this year we saw the occupation by public sector workers of their state capitol. There were hopes that this would be extended to state capitols throughout the country. But hopes were dashed by pro-Democratic Party union officials who ended the occupation and derailed it into a pointless recall campaign against Republican state legislators.

We can be sure that the Democratic Party and its friends among union officials will try the same against OWS. The latter for now is so strong that officials are forced to say over and over, “we are not trying to coopt you, we are here to support you.” But as the 2012 elections draw nearer, these same officials will move into action to coopt and if need be derail the Occupy movement—not to mention to stifle rank-and-file efforts to employ union power to challenge the bosses. Only an empowered membership can stop these officials from betrayal. And that is why ties forged while supporting existing union struggles (in New York, for instance, for Teamsters at Sotheby’s, laid-off AFSCME school aides, etc.) are so crucial.

A phrase commonly heard at OWS General Assemblies is “Occupy Everything!” It stems from the understanding that the movement can only succeed if it is extended not only to centrally located encampments in other cities, but to hundreds of workplaces and neighborhoods in each city. This ambitious strategic conception comes from a widely shared, if abstract, sense that a new form of society needs to be forged and that mass action of the working class itself is critical to this objective.

It is too early to say how far the occupations will spread and how concrete their program will become before the inevitable attempt by the rulers to use police repression to end it. But in Europe and the Arab



(Above) Occupy Grand Rapids, Mich.

world we have seen successive waves of mass occupations and general strikes, so the ending of one wave does not mean the end of the movement.

However, workers and youth in each country, and globally, need to assimilate collectively the lessons of these successive waves: What sparks them, why they last (or don’t), what demands will help revive, expand and unify them, and what it would take to turn a movement into a revolution.

To assess all the concerns raised above—i.e., the strategic and tactical considerations weighing on the spread of the movement and its potential program—a revolutionary party is essential. Not, as some who are leery of parties mistakenly think, to dictate to the movement. Quite the contrary. A revolutionary party worthy of the name is the repository of the memory, and current experience, of movements past and present; a collection of its most militant and selfless fighters, a distillation of its people and ideas, which grows precisely by deepening its many ties to an expanding movement, and on that basis proposing alternatives for the movement’s direction at each turn.

Socialist Action aims to build just such a party—and we see participation of our members in the Occupy movement as an essential task of party building. Only a party rooted in genuinely mass movements and in the working-class-based organizations at their heart can become the kind of party capable of leading the masses to power. Build the Occupation movement! Take the movement into every workplace and neighborhood! ■



SlutWalks blame *system* that fosters anti-women violence

By CHRISTINE MARIE

On Oct. 1 nearly 3000 women marched and rallied at Union Square in New York City to protest rape culture, violence against women, and sexual shaming. It was a well-built, well-organized, and militant demonstration, inspired by the SlutWalks that have occurred in scores of cities around the country and the globe.

The marchers were youthful, multinational, driven by personal experience with the “new sexism,” and fueled by an outrage born of two recent New York City rape cases. In the first, hotel worker Nafissatou Diallo was denied even a trial of the former head of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. In the second, police officers Franklin Matta and Kenneth Moro were acquitted of the repeated rape of a woman they had been called to help, even though forensics and cameras established their guilt.

“NYPD, we know you! You’re racist, sexist, and rapists, too!” chanted the marchers as they wound around the city streets. Others carried signs and banners that said, “Blame the System, Not the Victim!” This focus on the police and the system registered the possibility that an effective movement may be in birth against violence against women—a movement that is sophisticated enough to craft demands and an organizing culture that is attractive to millions of women, including those in communities wracked by the school to prison pipeline and mass incarceration.

Since its beginnings in Toronto in early 2011, when a police officer insulted a group of campus women by suggesting that if they wanted to be safe from rape, “they should quit dressing like sluts,” the SlutWalk brand has been controversial. Initial organizers were eager to divest the word of its power to shame the victims of violent sexual attacks.

In addition to protesting a culture that seems to promote rape and shame sexually active women, some of the early organizers announced that they would call their action a SlutWalk and attempt to subversively

reclaim the word for their own liberation.

The marches became a media sensation, and women eager to protest violence against women and sexual shaming came together in city after city. But protests were raised about this strategy; many organizers agreed but were worried about losing the enthusiasm and momentum that had been generated by the SlutWalk phenomenon. So the general rule has been to keep the name and attempt to address in the rallies and marches all the issues and concerns raised about the general approach.

For example, in New York City, while some young women chose to embrace the slut word and don sexualized costumes to mock the virgin/whore dichotomy so persistent in U.S. culture, others stood quietly, dressed in sweats or business suits, with signs that read, “This is what I was wearing when I was raped.” The incongruity in tone was jarring but expressive of the real diversity in the movement, as it now exists. Many are wondering if it can grow even further in the direction of the “multi-national, multi-gender, multi-ethnic” ideal that New York City organizers are striving for.

Just before the New York march, *Black Women’s Blueprint* published a sisterly open letter to the NYC SlutWalk in the *Huffington Post* and on other sites, saying that Black women could never join a march to reclaim the slut word. On the other hand, they reached out to the New York organizers and expressed their eagerness to join together to discuss a “more critical and sustainable plan” for a movement that says no to violence against women.

NYC SlutWalk organizers responded in kind, announcing at the rally the first of a series of meetings with the *Black Women’s Blueprint* and any other activists who wanted to discuss the kind of movement that is necessary. In an online report-back of that meeting, NYC SlutWalk said that it was “honest, intense, challenging, occasionally painful, and very needed.” Further meetings are planned. ■

Systematic use of rape against Black women

On Oct. 30, *Women’s ENews* ran an excerpt from author Jaclyn Friedman, who explains that in this society, racialized women are expected to be always sexually available. The image of the virgin is always an ethereal white girl. Black girls are stereotyped as “wild and animalistic.”

The system of slavery, which allowed white men to rape Black female slaves with impunity, and the system of Jim Crow segregation, which relied on a culture of ritual sexual violence against Black women, each relied on this stereotype to rationalize a lot of criminal behavior.

According to Danielle L. McGuire, author of “At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power,” the Jim Crow South promulgated the racist notion that it was not really possible for a white man to “rape” a Black woman since Black women were so promiscuous that rape became a meaningless concept.

McGuire’s text documents the ways and incredible numbers in which Black teens and adult women in the Jim Crow South were snatched off the street as they walked to the store, dragged out of their homes by pickup truckloads of white men with shotguns, “hired” to babysit and then sexually violated; hired as domestics and expected to service the man of the house. Yet not one white man was convicted of rape for most of this historical period because it was treated as justifiable.

All Black women were seen in white society as Jezebels, sluts, and whores. Thus, the strategy of “reclaiming” the word “slut” as a means to reclaiming a free sexuality for Black women is just not a viable strategy for a truly effective and long-lived multinational and working-class movement against sexual violence.

It is not an abstract problem that can be argued to a new conclusion but a concrete and historically contingent reality that is not going to disappear.

Much of this horror was actually lived by the mothers and grandmothers of contemporary Black women and is part of their living memory. The example set by the meetings between NYC SlutWalk organizers and *Black Women’s Blueprint* could not, therefore, be more important for the future of a militant women’s movement.

Everyone who aspires to play a part in the building a new feminist movement should read “At the Dark End of the Street.” The author has documented the long history of Black women’s activism, the centrality of the struggle against the rape of Black women in the life of Civil Rights icon Rosa Parks, and the centrality of the organization that she and other Black women built out of their own struggles against sexual violence—the Montgomery Improvement Association—to the later bus boycott and other fights.

With this knowledge and the collaboration of those who remain tied personally to the historic use of rape as a means of social control, a new independent women’s movement will be unstoppable.

— CHRISTINE MARIE

15-0: A day of global indignation

By ESTHER VIVAS and JOSEP MARIA ANTENTAS

The day of Oct. 15 (15-0) was the first coordinated global response to the crisis and saw the emergence of a new international movement. With the revolutions of North Africa as the initial impetus, through an effect of emulation and imitation, the protest reached the periphery of Europe. The Mediterranean world has thus stood at the epicenter of this new wave of social opposition, at a time where we enter a second phase of the crisis, which has as its focal point the crisis in the euro zone.

Gradually, the rebellion of the indignant has been taking a real international dimension, beyond actions of sympathy and solidarity. First there was the Greek protest movement, prior to the Spanish and the revolts of the Arab world, which integrated the symbolism and the methods of 15 M [the movement of occupations of plazas in Spanish cities, which began May 15] and inserted its logic in the emerging international dynamics. Later, there has undoubtedly been

the start of the protest in United States, still at an early stage, the most important variable for the time being, whose fate will be crucial to the overall development of the movement.

Oct. 15, 2011, was the most important global protest since the big day of global mobilization on Feb. 15, 2003, against the war in Iraq. Of much more modest dimensions, it nonetheless expresses a deeper social dynamic than the historic event against the war which was simultaneously the peak and the end of the upward phase of the international cycle of anti-globalization process that exploded in November 1999 during the Summit of World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, and that had been gestating since the January 1994 Zapatista uprising.

“The world has two superpowers: the United States and world public opinion” wrote *The New York Times* after Feb. 15. Since then, however, the international coordination of protests has languished and instruments launched by the anti-globalization movement like the World Social Forum have lost strength, cen-

trality, and practical usefulness. The current context is very different from that in which the anti-globalization movement emerged at the end of the previous century. This cycle occurs in a systemic crisis of historic dimensions and therefore the depth of the social movement in course and its social roots is undoubtedly greater. The vitality of Oct. 15 in the Spanish state again surprised both domestic and foreign opinion, thus refuting some impressionistic analyses on the crisis in the 15-M movement that had proliferated in recent weeks. We are not dealing with an episodic phenomenon or a temporary one, but the beginning of a new wave of opposition that expresses a deep groundswell that will not evaporate.

The very nature of global capitalism and the magnitude of the contemporary crisis impel the internationalization of social protest. The slogan “United for global change” expresses well this new “internationalism of indignation” that emanates from 15-0, whose challenge is to trigger a global movement to bring about another way out of the current civilizational crisis.

In contrast to the period of anti-globalization, the interrelationship between the different spatial levels

(continued on page 11)

By BARRY WEISLEDER

Montreal MP Thomas Mulcair, a former Quebec Liberal cabinet minister who takes pride in his role in early “free trade” negotiations, brings a decidedly pro-capitalist, anti-Quebec self-determination perspective to the New Democratic Party leadership race. When Mulcair announced his candidacy, he had the backing of 15 MPs, soon likely 30, but few supporters outside of the ranks of strongly pro-federalist Quebecers.

British Columbia MP Nathan Cullen, another leadership contender, advocates a “non-compete agreement” with the Liberal and Green parties. While the stated aim is to unite anti-Conservative votes in the next federal election, such a move, welcomed by the pro-Liberal media as a step towards merger, would destroy the NDP as a party independent of the business class. And it would drown generations of working-class social gains.

Ottawa MP Paul Dewar promises that as NDP Leader he would give city governments more say—even a seat at federal-provincial ministers’ meetings. Dewar, until recently NDP foreign affairs critic in Parliament, defended the bombing of Libya by Canadian Forces. He supports the Canada-UN occupation of Haiti, opposed the Canadian Boat to Gaza, and rejects boycott, sanctions, and divestment towards the Zionist apartheid state.

Among other candidates for NDP Leader, Northern

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

NDP Leader race crowded, on the right

Quebec MP Romeo Saganash, a Cree leader, has yet to detail his policy positions. Nova Scotia pharmacist Martin Singh extols the virtues of entrepreneurship.

On Oct. 28, Toronto MP and former Canadian Auto Workers negotiator Peggy Nash declared her candidacy. Her platform, in the words of *Toronto Star* columnist Thomas Walkom, “is straight-up NDP orthodoxy”: “address social inequality ... and boost corporate taxes to pay for it.” The only point of differentiation is Nash’s praise for the Occupy movement.

That brings us to the never-elected-to-public-office Brian Topp, touted as the front-runner. He enjoys the backing of the Steelworkers’ Union and party icons Ed Broadbent and Roy Romanow. Lately, Topp called for higher taxes on corporate profits and big income earners.

But he is a very unlikely candidate of the left. Topp rescued the party establishment from embarrassing defeat at the federal NDP convention in Vancouver in June when he moved to refer back to the executive its

proposal to delete the word “socialist” from the party constitution preamble. Post-convention, the preamble disappeared from the federal party website—a sleazy move typical of the backroom politics associated with Topp and company.

Sadly, leftist B.C. MPs Libby Davies and Peter Julian opted out of the race. Bizarrely, Davies subsequently endorsed Topp, the man who as federal campaign director presided over the party’s steady shift to the right. The dearth of meaningful choices for NDP Leader poses a serious challenge to the NDP and to the anti-capitalist left: either raise the thousands of dollars needed to run a socialist candidate for Leader, or find other ways to fight for a Workers’ Agenda in the only mass, labour-based political party in North America.

The global Occupy movement, a whole generation of concerned environmentalists, and millions of the victims of war and capitalist economic crisis cry out for a socialist alternative inside the mainstream of the workers’ movement, where it matters most. ■

Oct. 15 – Canada out of Afghanistan!

TORONTO—Despite high winds and cold showers, scores of antiwar activists took to the streets on Saturday, Oct. 15, to demand an end to the 10-year-long war of occupation in Afghanistan. A coalition of 11 organizations united behind the slogan “Canada Out of Afghanistan Now!”

The protest began with a rally of about 70 people at the corner of Yonge Street and Dundas at 1 p.m. Earlier, Dundas Square “security” personnel and Toronto police tried to shoo away the first arrivals, but organizers stood their ground, distributed event flyers, and provided a platform for representatives of the sponsoring groups.

Magdalena Diaz chaired the rally, and introduced the speakers, who included: Nicolas Lopez of Barrio Nuevo; Azeem of the Canada South Asian Solidarity Association; Tom Reid of the International Bolshevik Tendency; Steve Da Silva of the International League of People’s Struggle-Canada; Elizabeth Byce for the NDP Socialist Caucus; Ming and Chanda for the Proletarian Revolutionary Action Committee; Socialist Action / Ligue pour



(Left) UNAC Co-chair Joe Lombardo addresses Oct. 15 antiwar rally in Toronto.

action. Chants of “Money for Jobs, Not for War,” “Money for Schools, Not for War,” along with the main slogan, echoed through the downtown intersections. In the park, hundreds welcomed the marchers and joined an impromptu speak-out featuring antiwar coalition leaders.

The Oct. 15 antiwar protest was a somewhat bold, and certainly worthwhile initiative. It was undertaken by the sponsoring organizations chiefly because the Toronto Coalition to Stop the War and the Canadian Peace Alliance declined to do so, despite being asked repeatedly over a five-week period.

It is no mean feat for a range of ideologically and ethnically diverse bodies to cooperate openly and respectfully, and to carry out a modest but successful action

l’Action socialiste Federal Secretary Barry Weisleder; and Joe Lombardo, co-chair of the United National Anti-War Coalition (UNAC) in the United States.

Participants then took to the street, travelling down a car traffic lane southbound on Yonge Street until police directed the parade onto the sidewalk. By the time the march reached King Street, and proceeded eastward to St. James Park, where over 2000 people gathered for the Occupy Toronto encampment, over 150 people had joined the antiwar

of the Toronto Oct. 15 type, with most of the organizing taking place in the short span of one week. The experience augurs well for future such endeavors.

One week later, over 1500 supporters of Occupy Toronto marched to City Hall under grey skies. On Saturday, Oct. 22, the parade made its way along King St., Bay St., to City Hall Square, and following speeches, returned to St. James Park, just east of the financial headquarters of Canadian capitalism. A number of social justice movements, and half a dozen leftist groups, carried signs and banners. They were joined by scores of union activists. The core of the march consisted of the 200 or so denizens of the park encampment, and hundreds of regular visitors to the Occupy Toronto site.

Socialist Action members carried a banner bearing the slogan, “Nationalize the banks, steel and auto, under workers’ control!” We sold over 50 copies of SA newspaper. Dozens of people walked in the SA contingent, and chanted with us: “Cutbacks? No thanks. Nationalize the banks!” “Money for schools, not for war!” and “Hey, hey, ho, ho, (mayor) Rob Ford’s got to go!”

— BARRY WEISLEDER

OPSEU threatens to split Ontario labour

By JULIUS ARSCOTT

The last thing the labour movement needs at this time is division. Yet this is exactly what is happening due to a dispute between officers of the Ontario Federation of Labour, including OFL President Sid Ryan, and some affiliated unions including the Ontario Public Service Employees Union and its president, Warren “Smokey” Thomas.

The dispute may result in the withdrawal of Canada’s largest provincial public service union, the 125,000-strong OPSEU, from the OFL. The OPSEU Executive Board decided to suspend payment of its dues to the OFL and to recommend that the union vote at its April 2012 convention to disaffiliate.

Reasons given for this split include faults in the OFL Constitution that undermine proper representation in

the labour body, along with claims that it is difficult to negotiate internal issues with Sid Ryan. Ryan was acclaimed to the OFL top job in Fall 2009.

Non-payment of dues has already led to OPSEU being denied delegation status to the Nov. 21-25 OFL convention. The decision to withhold dues was made minus any consultation with the OPSEU membership. It contravenes the union’s constitution, which states that OPSEU is responsible for paying its dues to labour bodies to which it is affiliated, and that any decision to disaffiliate can be made only at an OPSEU convention.

OPSEU’s withdrawal from the house of labour in Ontario will result in serious damage to the labour movement in Ontario, which is already under fierce attack by the employers and the state.

Working-class solidarity and unity in action is now urgently needed. Sadly, instead of proposing a pro-

gramme for militant action, the bureaucrats are dissing one another. However, opposition to the split is emerging. Socialists and other labour activists in OPSEU are campaigning against the unprincipled decision by OPSEU’s EBMs.

The Greater Toronto Area Council, which encompasses dozens of OPSEU locals in Toronto, passed a motion on Oct. 19 asking the Executive Board to rescind its decision, and to resume paying dues to the OFL. GTAC also asks that OPSEU’s president immediately meet with Sid Ryan to resolve the issues in dispute.

Activists know that this bureaucratic spat is occurring at a very bad time, and that our leadership should not descend to the level of personal attacks, even character assassination, in dealing with disputes amongst affiliates. It is a poisonous distraction from the bosses’ drive to squeeze workers’ wages, benefits and pensions. Workers deserve much better than this from our labour leadership. ■

Proposed mega-quarry to face tougher review

By ERIC KUPKA

A month before facing voters in the Oct. 6 Ontario provincial election, the governing Liberals decided to require a more stringent approval process for a controversial proposal to dig a massive quarry in a sensitive environmental area near Toronto.

As reported in the July 2011 edition of *Socialist Action*, the proposed 2300-acre aggregate quarry in Melancthon, Ontario, was originally slated for the relatively

lax approval process of the Ministry of Natural Resources. This soft-gloves treatment sparked widespread criticism and protests. Ultimately, the government relented. It announced on Sept. 1 that the project would be subjected to a comprehensive environmental assessment under the province’s environment protection legislation—a process that could take months or years.

However, this development does not mean that the quarry project has been scrapped. In fact, the project’s proponent,

the U.S. hedge-fund-backed Highland Companies, has been aggressively buying up farmland and cutting down vegetation. According to “Melancthon quarry unites diverse communities,” an article by Meg Borthwick, posted on www.rabble.ca on Sept. 23, this has the convenient effect of deterring protected bird species from nesting on the proposed site and potentially stalling the project.

Activists and the local community continue to galvanize opposition to the quarry. The “Foodstock” festival, presented by

the Canadian Chefs’ Congress on Oct. 16, drew 28,000 people, including such notables as the musical group Barenaked Ladies and renowned chef Jamie Kennedy. They attended a festival of food, music, and speeches to generate support and raise funds for the campaign against the quarry project.

Socialists demand a thorough and transparent environmental assessment of the proposed Melancthon quarry, with full input from the local community, environmental groups and First Nations’ peoples. We stand with all Ontarians who will be impacted, and those who have already been affected. ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

"Hell and Back Again," a documentary film directed by Danfung Dennis, in English and Pashto.

October 2011 marked the 10th anniversary of the so-called war in Afghanistan. Obama states that 30,000 out of 100,000 troops will be home by the end of 2012. But his new head of operations there, Gen. John Allen, told reporter Scott Pelly on "60 Minutes" a few weeks ago that, in effect, 70,000 U.S. troops would be in Afghanistan indefinitely.

Director Danfung Dennis's film, "Hell and Back Again," is as close as one can get to experiencing combat without actually being there. It's another powerful film illustrating the effects of war, though Dennis purports to present it not as an antiwar film. Yet watching it, how can one not view it in that light?

In 2009, Dennis, who has seen combat himself, was imbedded with the U.S. Marines' Echo Company. He filmed in full combat gear with mostly hand-held cameras. Helicopters dropped them off behind enemy lines in Afghanistan's Helmand River Valley. Prior to this, he filmed a briefing by a commander who brayed the usual military rhetoric.

The U.S. troops invaded land that has been inhabited without much change for centuries. Dennis pans over homes of adobe and wood; light brown earth, roads, and buildings contrast with abundant green orchards and lush gardens. Around this bucolic setting we hear gunfire. Marines, hunkered down in rutted roads and gullies, shoot back at the unseen Taliban. Shots come from every direction. Some soldiers crouch and run, shouting, "Don't shoot me!" to their buddies.

Dennis's cinéma vérité camera work is shaky, some shots unfocused, cuts

'Hell' in the Afghan war



are quick; scenes are zoomed in on and out, while all the while men are running, swearing, shouting instructions. A Marine gets shot in the chest; medics treat him. A helicopter lands; bleeding, he is rushed to it—no stretcher board here. He dies.

Sgt. Nathan Harris from a suburb in North Carolina heads Echo Company. A Marine for over 10 years, he joined at 18 because he "wanted to kill people," which pleased his recruiter. Now, at 29, and wounded, he says he's matured. Harris was shot in the hip by heavy gunfire. The film documents his slow recovery, and his adjustment to home life and his wife, Ashley. Interspersed with these scenes, to illustrate Harris's PTSD flashbacks, Dennis uses footage shot during battles and in the village. When he zooms in on some Marines' faces under cumbersome helmets, you are struck by their freckled, young faces; their eyes registering confusion and fear.

After his recovery, Harris is sent home from the hospital with a dozen vials of medication in a zip-lock bag, a wheelchair, and crutches. His overbooked sur-

geon and outpatient physician appear to do double duty treating his mental state. He describes symptoms; they prescribe more drugs.

Everything freaks him out as Ashley drives through a shopping mall. He'd rather be back in Afghanistan where life is simple, he says. Ashley, a slim blonde, tells the filmmaker that Harris is not the same man he was when they married.

Harris mostly appears fine, like a Travolta in his "Grease" days, yet will suddenly double over, hold his head, feeling sick. He is often sick, confused and paranoid—and in constant pain. His hearing is bad, he flies into uncontrollable rages, and he jokes about suicide. There are scenes of him cradling his two handguns, talking into the camera about loving his guns and sleeping with them.

Dennis vividly captures the villagers' outrage when they trudge back to their village after being evacuated out of harms' way of the firefights between the U.S. and the Taliban. In their absence, the filmmaker had shot scenes of Marines kicking down doors and ransacking homes, tossing boxes of household

items on the floor. Later, one scene shows a village elder lifting colorful silk quilts from the floor, folding them, and laying them on shelves.

Wide-eyed children watch as robed, turbaned Afghan men and covered women complain to the troops through an interpreter of the damage not only to structures, but livestock. The answer? We'll hold an *ashura* to meet with your tribal elder. We will pay; just send us a report, an estimate. The contrast between the troops and the villagers is striking. The children seem to see the Marines in their desert camouflage and helmets, cradling firearms, as robots or creatures from another planet.

The elder complains about being caught in the middle between the U.S. troops and the Taliban. He is told that the Marines came to bring peace and democracy. The elder says that they just want to farm and live peacefully as before the Americans came. "Now," the elder says, "We have no pharmacy, no doctors, and no schools!" He is assured that the Marines will give them medication, but no hashish, or opium—just aspirin and antibiotics. Yet the persistent question the villagers pose is: "When are you leaving?"

Multiply Harris's condition by the 56,562 (and counting) U.S. troops physically wounded in both Afghanistan and Iraq since 2001. Also, consider those suffering no obvious physical wounds, but PTSD. After counting the statistics, and seeing such a powerful and realistic film as "Hell and Back Again," one might feel for a moment like crying out in despair. But the reasonable conclusion is that we must redouble our efforts to end the eternal deadly conflicts perpetrated by the U.S. ■

Civil Wars: An inside look at the labor bureaucracy

By DAVID BERNT

In the early 1990s a new crop of labor leaders ascended to leadership of some of the largest unions in the United States and the AFL-CIO hierarchy. Many of these new leaders were products of the 1960s radicalization, former student radicals who moved to staff positions in trade unions.

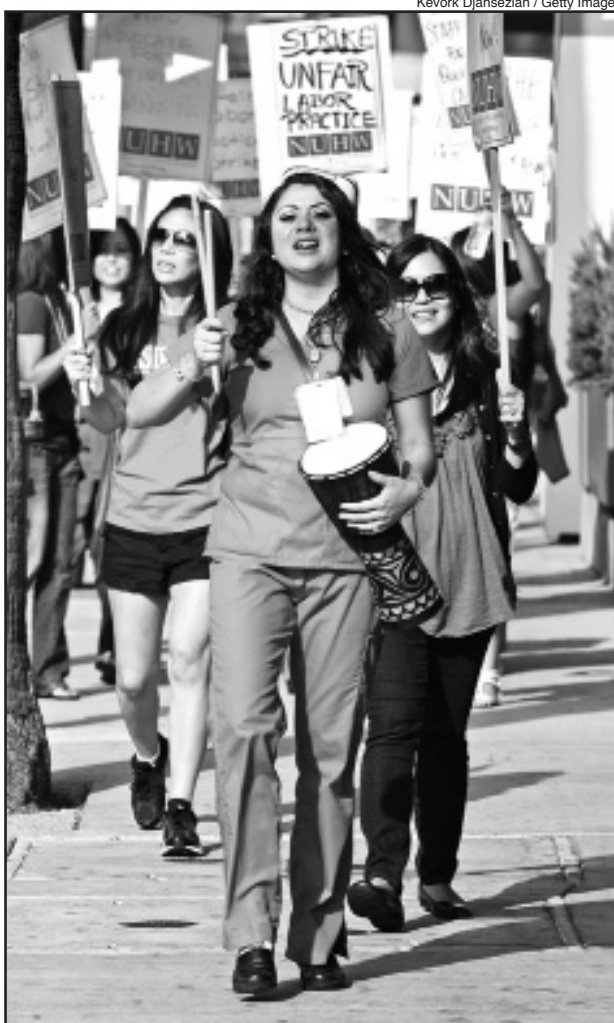
Coming off the heels of some militant labor struggles, such as the Pittston coal mine strike and the Decatur, Ill., war zone battles, many in the labor movement hoped that a new era of labor militancy was on the horizon. While the AFL-CIO did reverse some formerly reactionary political positions, most notably changing the union federation's backward position on immigration, no general rise of labor militancy ever emerged.

Steve Early's latest book, "The Civil Wars in U.S. Labor: Birth of a New Workers' Movement or Death Throes of the Old?" discusses this period of organized labor and the impact the new leaders have had on the labor movement. Early focuses on the second largest union in the United States, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and its former president, Andy Stern. No other union reflects the changes made by the new labor leaders more than SEIU and its polarizing leader Stern.

Under Stern's stewardship, SEIU put a massive amount of resources into new member organizing, targeting public sector, building services, and health-care workers. But despite the resources invested, SEIU leaders became frustrated with a series of organizing losses. The rigged NLRB election process made success rates in new worker organizing low, as employers took advantage of weak NLRB enforcement by intimidating workers through illegal terminations of union supporters and other strong-arm tactics.

Early describes how Stern concluded that the only way to realize SEIU's goals for achieving union density was through circumventing NLRB elections by convincing employers into card check agreements. These agreements came at a price, as SEIU had to agree to limited contracts that often barely increased wages and working conditions. This led to conflicts with other unions organizing workers in the same sectors, most notably the California Nurses Association, who often challenged SEIU's efforts to organize nurses under neutrality agreements that involved inferior contracts.

Countless millions have been spent by SEIU and other unions in fighting each other over the past decade. Early



(Left) NUHW nurses stage a walkout at Kaiser Permanente in Los Angeles, Sept. 21, as part of a statewide strike. The NUHW was formed by expelled leaders of the SEIU in California.

shows how this culminated in a major internal labor battle within SEIU. When leaders of the California health-care local United Healthcare West (UHW) opposed concessions negotiated with hospitals by the international, the local was placed in trusteeship. The expelled leadership went on to form a new union, the National Union of Health Care Workers (NUHW), which challenged SEIU at the union's major bargaining units in California.

Early provides extensive detail of the players and issues involved in all of these inter-union conflicts. The corruption and despicable actions of SEIU leaders and their armies of staffers are exposed. The real value of the book, however, is not the detailed explanations of the

civil wars of labor, important as that information is. The real value lies in Steve Early's explanation of competing visions of what labor union are supposed to be.

Early shows how Stern, and other labor leaders as well, have sought to transform unions into staff driven, top-down, undemocratic institutions that in their extreme versions are little more than issue-advocacy and lobbying organizations. In contrast, relying on his 27 years of experience as an international representative in the Communication Workers of America, Early explains the importance of having rank-and-file involvement in union activity.

Early provides examples of how shop-floor activity and member participation in a union's operation are critical to successfully constructing a union that can fight for workers' interests. He contrasts that with SEIU's efforts under Stern: "The Stern/SEIU model (with some honorable local union exceptions) abhors rank and file initiative, shop floor militancy, and democratic decision-making by workers themselves. In the name of 'building power for workers,' it embraces labor-management cooperation (from a position of weakness), bureaucratic consolidation, and top-down control."

The most vivid account of this is Early's description of the ultimately unsuccessful attempt of SEIU to replace shop-floor representation with 1-800 call centers. Stern wanted to move union staffers from representing workers on the shop floor to political organizing, largely working to elect and lobby politicians. To replace them Stern developed national call centers to which workers could phone in grievances. Millions of dollars later, SEIU was forced to junk the call centers after complaints from members and local officers that they were completely useless for solving members' issues.

"Civil Wars" provides a detailed account of the internal conflicts of the labor bureaucrats during the 2000s, and shows why despite massive resources spent by major unions, labor continues to lose members and fails to organize new ones. Steve Early also provides a different vision of how unions should be run—with rank-and-file participation and democracy. Trade-union activists, and anyone else interested in building a workers' movement, would be well served by reading this book. ■

By LISA LUINENBURG

Following in the footsteps of states like Arizona, Georgia, Utah, and Indiana, Alabama has become the fifth state to pass harsh anti-immigrant laws within the last year. HB 56, also known as the Beason-Hammon Alabama Taxpayer and Citizen Protection Act, was passed into law on June 9. However, Alabama is the first state where some of the worst provisions of this legislation have actually gone into effect.

HB 56 is a law modeled after Arizona's notorious SB 1070, which sparked a nationwide resistance and economic boycott in 2010, costing the Arizona tourist industry an estimated \$100 million. Before HB 56 was scheduled to take effect on Sept. 1, the Department of Justice issued a challenge to the law, which has been widely recognized as the harshest state immigration law on the books.

On Sept. 28, U.S. District Judge Sharon Lovelace Blackburn returned her ruling on the controversial law. Judge Blackburn blocked certain parts of HB 56, including a provision that would have made it illegal for undocumented immigrants to enroll in state colleges and universities, provisions that criminalized day laborers' and undocumented immigrants' attempts to look for and get work, and a provision that would have made it illegal to give a ride to or harbor an undocumented person.

However, Judge Blackburn also upheld some of the worst sections of HB 56, arguing that states have the right to enact their own immigration laws covering areas overlooked by federal law, an unusual decision. Blackburn refused to enjoin one of the harshest parts of the law, a provision that gives police and other law enforcement agents the power to detain and question anyone whom they have a "reasonable suspicion" may be undocumented.

This is the first time that such a provision, which is widely acknowledged to promote the use of racial profiling among police officers and other agents, has been allowed to stand. Blackburn also let stand provisions of the law that require all K-12 schools in Alabama to track the immigration status of their students, and that make any business contract entered into with an undocumented person null and void.

"Today is a dark day for Alabama," Mary Bauer, the Southern Poverty Law Center's legal director, said in a statement. "This decision not only places Alabama on the wrong side of history but also demonstrates that the rights and freedoms so fundamental to our nation and its history can be manipulated by hate and political agendas—at least for a time."

Laws such as SB 1070 and HB 56 are part of a wider philosophy known as "attrition through enforcement." This strategy was the brainchild of the Center for Immigration Studies (CIS), which claims to be an impartial research organization but which is actually associated with FAIR, the oldest and largest anti-immigrant organization in the United States. FAIR and its associates are often quoted in the mainstream press. Its directors often testify in Congress, and its ideas have often been accepted by politicians on both sides of the aisle.

"Attrition through enforcement" is essentially the idea that the immigrant population is largely made up of dangerous drug smugglers and criminals who are here to "steal" Americans' jobs. They pose a "security risk" to our nation and must be dealt with accordingly. This idea serves to foster a feeling of anti-immigrant xenophobia in the general population and has often been used to justify the use of extremely harsh mea-

Alabama passes harsh law restricting immigrant rights

Tamika Moore / Birmingham News / AP



(Above) NAACP-sponsored community forum on HB56, held in Birmingham, Ala., on Oct. 13.

asures against undocumented immigrants.

Laws such as HB 56 and SB 1070 and ICE Access programs such as Secure Communities are meant to make life so difficult for immigrants that they live in a constant state of fear. This makes it easier for employers to control and exploit an already vulnerable immigrant workforce, and it makes it even harder for immigrant workers to stand up for their rights. In this light, it is interesting to note that Judge Blackburn chose to enjoin the provisions of HB 56 that would have made it illegal for undocumented immigrants to look for or accept work.

Since HB 56 has gone into effect, there have been reports of large numbers of immigrants pulling their children out of school or leaving the state; with no one to harvest them, crops have been rotting in the fields. According to one report, 50 Alabama farmers recently met with three legislators to beg them to make emergency changes to the law, citing the fact that they could lose millions of dollars worth of crops if there is no one to pick them. Meanwhile, the fear in the immigrant community continues to grow and spread in the weeks following its enactment.

Since HB 56 took effect, a coalition of civil rights groups including the ACLU, the National Immigration Law Center, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and the Hispanic Interest Coalition of Alabama filed an emergency request with the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to block some of the harshest provisions of the law from going into effect.

On Oct. 14, the appeals court granted an emergency stay of two of the most severe provisions of the law. At least temporarily, public schools in the state will not be allowed to track the immigration status of their

students, and it will no longer be considered a crime for a person not to be carrying proof of their immigration status with them. However, with provisions such as the one allowing law enforcement agents to question people regarding their status still in effect, many predict that it is likely that this issue will eventually reach the Supreme Court.

HB 56 is only the tip of the iceberg, and it is clear that more states will soon follow suit with similar laws. With a philosophy like "attrition through enforcement" in play, more than a legal injunction is needed to stop this most recent wave of anti-immigrant legislation. However, local community organizing groups like the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice, Alabama Dreamers for the Future, and many different local churches have observed an increasing outpouring of regional and national support for the movement against HB 56 in Alabama.

"What's happening is a continuing growth of the civil rights movement," said Scott Douglas, director of the Greater Birmingham Ministries. "Back then [during the heyday of the civil rights movement] it was people in the black church [who were] involved, and the white church was silent. This time, there are black churches, brown churches and white churches saying 'not in our names.'"

While no official boycott of Alabama or similar long-term organizing strategy has yet been announced, it is this kind of solidarity across artificially constructed borders and racial lines that will eventually help defeat HB 56 and other anti-immigrant laws. ■

... 15-0

(continued from page 8)

of action, the local, the national and international, is now much stronger. The link between the local and global, the concrete and general is very direct and clear. With the echoes of demonstrations in the Arab world, 15-M broke out as a protest in the Spanish State with demonstrations in several cities. It quickly dispersed geographically to an endless number of neighborhoods and districts of the big cities. The neighborhood assemblies that emerged strengthened the feeling of being part of a general movement. Its activity localized global claims and goals of the movement and globalized specific problems. There is a return ticket from the neighborhood to 15-0 and vice-versa.

Since its outbreak the movement has resulted in our country

in a strong process of re-politicization of society and a revival of interest in collective affairs. The indignant tide has not yet achieved enough consistency to provoke a change of course and paradigm, but it has resulted in an unprecedented challenge to a very sickly neoliberalism of ailing legitimacy, which attempts to socialize the cost of the crisis, something which until a few months ago seemed incontrovertible.

The route that runs from 15-M to 15-0 has sent a message of hope in collective ability to influence the grim course of humanity. Indignation is not in vain; it is precisely, as the philosopher Daniel Bensaïd said, "the opposite of habit and resignation." ■

*Esther Vivas and Josep Maria Antentas are editorial board members of the magazine **Viento Sur**, published in the Spanish state.*

... Socialism

(continued from page 6)

majority to challenge the rulers for power. To envision such a massive social transformation is impossible without the direct involvement of working people acting as a conscious class alternative to the present reactionary and minority social order.

It is no coincidence that the Egyptian people's removal of the hated Hosni Mubarak dictatorship, beginning with the massive assemblies at Tahrir Square, served to inspire the original OWS activists in the U.S. But Mubarak's forced departure was only the beginning of an ongoing revolutionary process. Egyptian capitalism, however discredited, remains in place and along with it a military regime that still rules with terror and has failed in virtually every respect to substantially change the lives of the Egyptian people.

The dictatorship of capital also remains in Tunisia and ever more so in Libya, where U.S./NATO military forces exchanged their previously favored Gadhafi dictatorship with another, even more intimately tied to imperialism. None of the deep social problems plaguing those countries will be solved short of a social-

ist revolution.

History has demonstrated that the construction of a mass revolutionary socialist party, rooted in the struggles of the masses everywhere and dedicated to the total re-organization of society to establish working-class power, is a prerequisite to any successful challenge to the capitalist order.

In the United States, Socialist Action strives to be part of the critical process of building such a revolutionary socialist party. Socialist Action's "Workers' Action Program to Fight the Crisis" (see page 2 for an abbreviated version) is aimed at mobilizing millions around specific and realistic demands to challenge the capitalist offensive and, in time, the capitalist order itself.

Revolution is no abstract or unattainable perspective. It lives and grows in the unity and clarity of purpose of those who are driven by the system itself to become the system's grave-diggers.

From its extremely modest beginnings, the Occupy movement has fundamentally altered the political dialogue in the U.S. It has opened the door wider than in any time in recent memory for the kinds of discussion, debate, and actions that are essential to coalescing the mass forces to put this rapidly degenerating capitalist beast out of business forever. ■

Supreme Court rejects Mumia death penalty



(Left) March on U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, S. Africa, in 1995 demanded "Free Mumia!"

BY JEFF MACKLER

The U.S. Supreme Court on Oct. 11 rejected the fourth effort in 30 years by Philadelphia prosecutors to execute innocent death-row political prisoner, award-winning journalist, and murder frame-up victim Mumia Abu-Jamal.

In refusing to hear an appeal by the Philadelphia District Attorney's office, the High Court essentially affirmed that the sentencing instructions given to the jury at Mumia's 1982 trial, presided over by "hanging judge" Albert Sabo, violated the U.S. Constitution and its own decisions rendered in the 1988 case of *Mills v. Maryland*. In essence, the Court upheld the same rulings twice decided by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and once by the Federal District Court.

In all of these matters, prosecutors sought to substantiate Judge Sabo's flawed and contorted instructions to the jury, in which he stated that they had to be unanimous with regard to each and every mitigating circumstance in order to consider any that would be sufficient to overcome the imposition of the death penalty. The Supreme Court's 1988 *Mills* decision had held that a jury could discuss any mitigating circumstance as being sufficient to negate the death penalty, even if only a single juror had raised it for consideration.

Mumia was represented in the proceedings by the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund and by professor and attorney Judith Ritter of Widener Law School.

While the decision ends the immediate threat of execution, the door is still open for Mumia's murder. But to pursue the death penalty for the fifth time, the state of Pennsylvania must now conduct a new sentencing hearing with a new jury that is limited to determining whether to impose a sentence of life in prison without

THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES: FREE MUMIA ABU-JAMAL!

possibility of parole or execution by lethal injection. Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams and the Fraternal Order of Police, despite massive evidence to the contrary, continue to insist that Mumia shot Police Officer Daniel Faulkner on Dec. 9, 1981.

As we go to press, however, it appears that Philadelphia and state officials, and the slain police officer's widow, Maureen Faulkner, are not prone to continue their efforts to execute Mumia. But this is less due to any deference to Mumia's innocence than it is to their well-merited fear that the sentencing hearing allows for the introduction of massive evidence of innocence originally barred from consideration by Judge Sabo.

According to sworn testimony by a court stenographer, Sabo was overheard saying in the presence of another judge before entering the courtroom, "Yeah, and I'm going to help 'em fry the n****r."

Should a new sentencing jury be selected, it would technically be barred from reversing the original jury's 1982 guilty verdict. But the presentation of evidence of innocence previously barred might be of such magnitude as to compel a new judge to revisit the case and consider a new trial. Similarly, an incensed jury, in addition to rejecting a prosecution demand for Mumia's execution, might itself, and contrary to its limited mission, indicate its contempt for the original verdict and

thus open the door even wider to a new trial. Prosecutors now have 180 days from Oct. 11 to decide whether to pursue this new sentencing hearing—and risk potential damage to the legal system's very credibility—or whether to let the matter of execution drop and accept a sentence of life imprisonment.

Philadelphia's and Pennsylvania's hate-filled officials are likely to avoid making a final decision until the 180-period is exhausted, thus keeping Mumia in the tiny death-row cell in which he has been barred from any human contact for 30 years. After this final insult, Mumia must be returned to the general prison population, thus ending his cruel and racist isolation.

Meanwhile, Mumia's struggle for freedom is far from ended. His attorney's have announced the hiring of a professional investigator to assemble a team to search for new evidence sufficient to demand a new trial. To meet the legal standard for such a trial the new evidence must be "compelling and not previously litigated," as well as evidence that could not have been "previously discovered through due diligence." Mumia's legal team is highly motivated to meet these difficult standards. If they are successful they will file for yet another Post Conviction Relief Act hearing to resume the struggle for Mumia's freedom.

Finally, an ongoing legal effort remains in progress and is currently pending before Pennsylvania courts. This concerns the facts revealed in a report of the National Academy of Sciences that the state's original ballistics evidence submitted at Mumia's 1982 trial was fundamentally flawed—if not falsified by police officials. If the courts agree, the possibility remains that this might be considered sufficient to re-open the case, assuming that the same racist criminal "justice" system that has ruled against Mumia on spurious grounds for decades has a change of heart—an unlikely variant.

Yet, Mumia's supporters in the U.S. and across the globe remain dedicated to his freedom and fully understand that the continuing legal battle must be supplemented by the continued building of broad, national, and ongoing mass mobilizations and political battles demanding Mumia's freedom. A coalition of several longstanding Mumia solidarity groups, initiated by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, is planning a mass rally in his defense on Friday, Dec. 9, marking the 30th anniversary of his incarceration.

The event will take place in Philadelphia's National Constitution Center at 7:30 p.m. Featured speakers include Cornell West, Ramona Africa, Arundhati Roy, and Michelle Alexander (via video), Mark Lamont Hill, Pam Africa, Immortal Technique, Vijay Prashad, Amina Baraka, Christina Swarns (Mumia co-counsel), and Martina Correia (sister of Troy Davis). Contact free-mumia.com for further information.

A solidarity rally in San Francisco with Ramona Africa and others, sponsored by the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, is set for Sunday, 2 p.m., Dec. 11, at 518 Valencia Street, (510) 268-9429. Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! End the Racist Death Penalty! ■

The Occupation

By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

In Lower Manhattan's Zuccotti Park (renamed "Liberty Square" by the demonstrators), the cast of thousands swell in rebellion against the betrayals by the banks, Wall Street's relentless greed, the plague of joblessness and the craven servility of the political class—both Republicans and Democrats—to their moneyed masters.

In short, the central focus of their protest is capitalism—greed writ large, especially since the economic tumble of Fall 2008.

Begun mostly by unemployed youth, it has drawn the presence and support of public workers, urban youth, students, teachers, and a considerable number of gray hairs. That's because social discontent is so widespread that it is spreading like wildfire: Wall Street, and then, days later, Boston, Baltimore, Philadelphia,



Los Angeles, and beyond. Demonstrations springing up like mushrooms after a storm, in protest to the crony capitalism brought to us by the professional sell-outs called politicians.

And (speaking of), like vampires at a blood bank, politicians are descending on Wall St., to try to suck the life out of a movement that could threaten their monopoly on power. For, the politicians' only inter-

est in this protest is to exploit it, to weaken it, while they continue to serve the very bosses the protestors oppose. You can count the number of politicians who truly oppose Wall St. on one hand—and still have a few fingers left.

Perhaps America's greatest white revolutionary, abolitionist John Brown, had little regard for politicians. He told his family: "A professional politician ... you never could trust; for even if he had convictions, he was always ready to sacrifice his principles for his advantage."

Think about that. Now think about every politician you know. See?

This is People's Power, sparked, in part by the mass protests in Cairo and Wisconsin. Other sparks were the Troy Davis injustice, the assault on several demonstrators by New York cops, the repression on the poor and working class by the political class, and discontent with the long, wasted years at mindless wars abroad.

This is people's power. May it remain so.

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