

After 'withdrawal' from Iraq, U.S. seeks new battlegrounds



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By CHRISTINE MARIE

On Jan. 5, President Obama made a major speech about a coming shift in U.S. military strategy, a strategy that has been described as more “lean” and more “mean.” The fact that the speech coincided with the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq led mainstream commentators to characterize the change primarily as a move from employing large occupation forces in “nation-building” missions to the employment of drone warfare and special operations of the type that killed Osama Bin Laden.

While it is true that the United States, a nation deep in financial crisis and politically weakened by its failure to establish stable and effective client regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan, hopes to do more damage with fewer troops and more Orwellian technology, the new strategy is hardly a decision by the U.S. elite to implement a substantial military drawdown. As *The New York Times* noted in an editorial on Jan. 5, even with the \$500 billion in proposed cuts to the military budget over the next 10 years, the budget will continue to grow to be larger than in the past.

The Times editors also reflected ruling-class impatience with Obama’s election-year emphasis on the reduced deployment of ground forces, and reduction of the Army to 490,000 soldiers. “That sounds reasonable,” they said, “but there must be a clear plan on how to build it up again quickly as needed.”

It is also worth noting that the strategy review that Obama recently reported had come out was commissioned last year, well before the U.S. request to maintain a substantial combat force in Iraq had been squelched by the insecure Maliki client regime. In fact, the “shift” should be more properly understood as a geographic expansion of the number of arenas in which the White House hopes to flex its yet unchallenged military weight.

The direct link between the deepening of the U.S. economic crisis and the expanding geographic spread of projected military deployments is clearer than in



the past. While the White House has to deal with a real deficit in funds available for war, they are at the same time driven by conditions of extreme economic competition to use their military might to gain an edge. In the Middle East, Central Asia, the Asian Pacific, and Africa, the U.S. is determined to meet longstanding ob-

(Left) Lebanese woman shouts anti-U.S. slogans during Dec. 30 march in Beirut to celebrate U.S. troop withdrawal from Iraq.

jectives having to do with the ability to manipulate oil and gas supplies needed by its main economic competitors.

Iran and “the return to Asia”

Reporting of the Pentagon’s strategy shift, for example, focused on the U.S. decision to pay more attention on pressuring Iran and a new threat to intervene in the China Sea. The new sanctions on Iran, which make it more difficult for China and Japan to buy Iranian oil in the normal way, has stirred outrage in the East.

An amendment to the recently signed National Defense Authorization Act actually imposes additional sanctions on any countries or companies that buy Iranian oil and pay for it through Iran’s Central Bank. While this measure will probably not stop many sales in the long run (many such sales will likely be re-routed through new private banks), it is part of the new belligerency aimed directly at China.

U.S. intentions in the Pacific have been in the news since Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, in November 2011, took the side of the Philippines and Vietnam in a dispute with China over claims to the China Sea. Oil reserves in the South China Sea may total as much as 213 billion barrels. China has proposed joint development of the reserves by Asian powers, but the Philippines and Vietnam have rejected this proposal, with U.S. backing, and have awarded contracts to Exxon Mobil and other firms.

Chinese vessels, including at least one military ship, have been testing the maritime boundaries declared by the Philippines. It is understood that the Pentagon’s decision not to reduce its number of aircraft car-

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N. Korea: The passing of Kim Jong II

By **HEATHER BRADFORD**
and **ADAM RITSCHER**

Lesloyd F. Alleyne / Journal Inquirer / AP

The death of Kim Jong II, on Dec. 17, caught the attention and imagination of the capitalist media hucksters. His death, which wasn't reported for two whole days, was in many ways symbolic of his life. It was a life that, through the lens of the Western media, was obscured by secrecy and unflattering portrayals. This distorting lens is designed to sell American workers on U.S. intervention in Korea.

The passing of Kim saw an avalanche of mocking obituaries in the capitalist press. Many of the characterizations, in fact, were down right racist. The U.S. propaganda machine is notorious for villainizing its enemies—particularly when that enemy is not white. This was often seen in the mocking depictions of Kim Jong II, with the frequent unflattering references to his height, supposed sexual deviancy, hairstyle, accent, and clothing. He was presented as a modern day Fu Manchu—an Asian super-villain with the most sinister plans.

This depiction of Kim underscores a perennial fear of the East as a "yellow peril." The racist villainizing of Kim Jong II will no doubt continue with his son, and apparent heir, Kim Jong Un. At the end of the day, regardless of whether these stories are true or not, they are a distraction from the real issues.

The orientalist portrayals of the Kims is often ex-



Obama sent the aircraft carrier *George Washington* (above) to join war exercises with South Korea on the heels of its clash with N. Korea around Yeonpyeong Island in November 2010.

tended to North Korea and the Korean people themselves. American workers are fed a steady diet of anti-North Korean horror stories, while the capitalist press is careful to never mention the U.S. violations of its agreements with North Korea, or the presence of U.S. nukes in the region. Instead, a considerable degree of fear has been drummed up about North Korean missiles and a possible nuclear attack, both exacerbated by the alleged mental instability of the Kims.

This is reminiscent of the war mongering carried out against Iraq in 2001 and against Iran today. Further-

more, the people of North Korea are often depicted as intimidated, pacified, mindless automatons. This is especially apparent in commentary concerning the authenticity of their mourning. Whether it is authentic or inauthentic is less relevant than the history and context of these expressions of grief.

Lack of history and context also make it hard to imagine why the Korean people would find any comfort in their leadership and state. However, there ample reasons why the people might fear the United States as an aggressor. This fear is exploited by the North Korean state, but U.S. foreign policy has never been sunshine and friendship. The U.S. virtually destroyed the country in the Korean War and has essentially blockaded it economically, diplomatically, and politically since.

There is no denying the fact that North Korea is indeed a brutal Stalinist dictatorship that represses its own people and puts the interest of the ruling bureaucracy and its armed forces above all else. Nevertheless, it is not the job of the United States to police the Korean peninsula. The world's major manufacturer, distributor, and user of weapons of mass destruction—the nuclear, chemical, and biological varieties—has no right to make demands on any nation. It has no right to dictate the internal policy of any country, period.

Only the Korean people themselves should determine their country's policies, and overthrow their governments—both North and South. It is the Korean people alone who can create a just solution to the problems they face, on both sides of the DMZ.

U.S. imperialism does not have the right to intervene, and its bully tactics will never improve the lot of the Korean people. Rather, its policies are geared towards increasing its own power and position in East Asia to the detriment of the working people of the entire region. ■

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!**

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A visit with Mumia Abu-Jamal

By JOHANNA FERNANDEZ

Johanna Fernandez is a professor at Baruch College, a member of Educators for Mumia, and producer of the film, "Justice on Trial: The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Dear Friends:

I visited Mumia yesterday, Dec. 15, in the new prison that houses him, SCI Mahanoy. Even though he has been released from death row, he remains in Administrative Custody while he awaits transfer to general population. Because he is still in Administrative Custody and not yet in general population, visits still take place behind the plexiglass barrier characteristic of the no-contact visits to prisoners on death row.

Mumia boarded a vehicle to SCI Mahanoy in the early morning hours of Dec. 14 at 4 a.m. Despite the dehumanizing character of the heavily armored vehicle that transported him from SCI Greene to SCI Mahanoy, Mumia delighted in the opportunity to see cows, horses, and Pennsylvania's beautiful landscape during the 7-hour ride to Frackville, Pa.

He described the last number of days as a "crazy whirlwind." Last Friday alone, he spent 6 hours packing up books, letters, and other belongings in preparation for what he believed was a move into general population at SCI Greene. But the Department of Corrections had other plans in mind. As you know, that same day, Dec. 9, his call came through at the National Constitution Center [in Philadelphia]. At the prompting of Pam Africa, the last 30 seconds of that call turned into a rousing ovation to Mumia by the 1100 people in attendance. This is what he wrote in a letter about his experience that very same night on Dec. 9, "It's been minutes since I've hung up the phone, and I'm still buzzing from the loving vibes zapping through the phone. It's really electric!"

While in Administrative Custody at Mahanoy, Mumia is technically in "the hole." This means that he has absolutely no human contact; absolutely no belongings in his cell other than a rubber pen, 8 sheets of paper and 8 envelopes (4 of which he has used to write letters to family and friends); he gets only one hour in the yard and one visitor a week; and at night the lights in his small cell are dimmed *only* slightly, and otherwise remain on all day.

Mumia noted that he missed the knock of his next door neighbor on the Row at SCI Greene, Sugarbear, who called for him through a knock on the wall "at least 20 times a day." Mumia noted that as he was being escorted to his cell at Mahanoy, the majority of prisoners he saw in "the hole" were black and he immediately thought of Michelle Alexander's evocative analysis and descriptions of mass black imprisonment nationwide.

Mumia is committed to remaining mindful of the challenges of this new period. He remains strong and hopeful about the possibilities of this next phase of struggle, both in his personal day-to-day life and in



The weekend of Dec. 9-10 saw impressive coordinated rallies, in Philadelphia and Oakland, marking the 30th year of Mumia Abu-Jamal's frame-up trial and incarceration. Both events drew inspiration from the national mobilizations against the execution of innocent death-row inmate Troy Davis and from the decision of Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams to not seek Mumia's execution via a new sentencing hearing, where evidence of Mumia's innocence could be presented for the first time.

Mumia has now been transferred to serve a sentence of life without possibility of parole to SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa., and is expected to be placed in a moderate security facility there soon. Mumia's attorneys have announced the retention of a special investigator to search

for "compelling new evidence not previously litigated" sufficient to compel a new trial to win his freedom.

Speakers at the Laney College rally in Oakland, attended by 200 Mumia supporters, are from left in photo: Crystal Bybee, Kevin Cooper Defense Committee; Ramona Africa, MOVE; Barbara Becnel, Stanley "Tookie" Williams Legacy Network; Jeff Mackler, Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal; Angela Davis (at podium); Daniel Alley, UC Berkeley student activist.

Boots Riley, musician and organizer with Occupy Oakland, and Vanessa Aldrich, Mobilization to Free Mumia, also spoke but are not shown. Michelle Alexander, author, "The New Jim Crow," and Bishop Desmond Tutu from South Africa participated via video presentations.

the movement. He welcomes and is prepared for the change. Below please also note a special note he dictated to OWS. Mumia reiterated that despite his isolation and the alienating character of his transfer to Mahanoy, he feels vibrations of love around him.

We await, impatiently, Mumia's transfer to general population and call on the DA's office to complete the transfer immediately. PLEASE NOTE: The DA's number and address is below.

Let us remind the DA that Mumia should have been in general population since 2001 when Judge Yohn

overturned the death penalty in his case; but the DA's office held him on death row for a decade while it filed losing appeals. By law, Mumia should be in general population, not in "the hole." We demand his immediate transfer.

With love and solidarity,
Johanna Fernandez

Seth Williams, Philadelphia DA, Three South Penn Square, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3499. Phone (215) 686-8000. www.phila.gov/districtattorney/contact.

Indiana YSA in the news

The Horizon, a student-produced newspaper at Indiana University Southeast, in New Albany, Ind., reported on a recent forum sponsored by the campus Youth for Socialist Action (YSA) chapter.

The writer, Steve Nichols, noted, "For now, the YSA is a study group. However, Christian Litsey, English sophomore and one of the founding members of YSA, said their main focus is to educate people on the theories of Marxism with the hope to come together and form a cohesive disciplined youth organization that can help lead the working-class revolution. ...

"[Socialists] want a true equality for all people,' Litsey said. 'It's not everyone making the same. Equality is everybody getting what they need.'

"The YSA also stands for full liberation of workers and oppressed people, opposition to any discrimination based on gender or sexual orientation and jobs for all by ad-



YSA member Christian Litsey

vocating a labor party based on the unions."

During the forum, Levi Groenewold, history sophomore and YSA

member, explained why the YSA is trying to build a revolutionary socialist youth organization:

"You can go out and take some kind of direct action—standing up against the capitalist system—but because you don't have a plan or an organized method of resistance, it's just kind of doomed to just be a heroless act,' Groenewold said. 'At the same time, if you have a revolutionary theory, such as Marxism, and you don't implement it, then there is really no point to that theory, and you won't be able to change society for the better unless you have action.'

"Bronson Rozier, organizer for Socialist Action in Southern Indiana and Northern Kentucky, has been an active member of the socialist movement for 47 years. Rozier said he attended the forum to support his comrades. 'In a socialist society, there will be some differences, but it won't be like this, where 2 percent of the country owns 80 percent of the wealth,' Rozier said. 'It's going to be the [working-class] majority that is in control of it all.' ■

Letter from Mumia

Mumia's Message to Occupy Wall Street, as dictated while in Administrative Custody at SCI Mahanoy in Frackville, Pa.

Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011

My Friends of OWS,

My message will have to be brief. But let not this brevity take from it, its strength.

You are the central movement of the hour. You're raising questions that are in the hearts of millions. Your motto, "We are the 99%," has been heard, heeded, and responded to by millions. You can be certain that the 1% have heard you clearest of all.

Your work, however, is just beginning. You must deepen, strengthen, and further your work until it truly reaches the 99%, almost all of us: workers, black folk, Latinos and Latinas, LGBTs, immigrants, Asians, artists, all of us, for we are integral parts of the 99%. I salute you and hope fervently that you will grow beyond number.

Though I speak to you today by proxy, I'm confident that you will hear my voice soon.

Love, fun and music,
Mumia Abu-Jamal



Obama signs bill allowing indefinite detention of U.S. policy opponents

By LUANA ALBERT

The kind of repression that can be expected to increase exponentially as a result of the new indefinite-detention rider to the National Defense Authorization Act was illustrated just a week before Obama signed it on New Year's Eve. On Dec. 20, a Boston jury convicted the pharmacist Dr. Tarek Mehanna of material support to terrorism based on the fact that he translated and disseminated a document titled "39 Ways to Serve and Participate in Jihad," a document that prosecutors failed to recognize as composed in great measure of lines from the Koran.

Mehanna was first targeted for prosecution when, as a young pharmacy student, he refused the FBI's request that he act as an informer for them. His first arrest was orchestrated on the basis that he had made a false statement in an interview forced on him by the FBI, a charge that the government could never prove. He was released and later arrested for what the Massachusetts ACLU characterized as a political speech—that is, speech that should have been protected in the United States.

Despite the unjust character of the government case against Mehanna, his family and friends, as well as the broad civil liberties community, will likely know in which prison he may be found and be able to appeal his conviction. However, under the new indefinite-detention provisions codified in the NDAA, the government will be able to disappear someone like Mehanna and hold them indefinitely without trial or any kind of due process.

Combined with already existing government practice that allows the interpretation of political speech in opposition to U.S. foreign policy to be considered "material support to terrorism" and the mandate to "preemptively prosecute" those who express such opposition, the passage of the NDAA indefinite-detention provision marks a dramatic escalation of U.S. repressive policies.

The deliberate and well-documented debate in Congress about whether or not this provision would apply to U.S. citizens, a debate that ended with a majority affirming its applicability to *everyone*, has given the government tools for a new level of domestic repression.

Both the ACLU and Human Rights Watch

have noted that this is the first time that the U.S. has clearly legally enshrined indefinite detention since the Internal Security Act of 1950, a McCarthy-era law mostly overturned in 1971, authorized the imprisonment of Communists or "subversives" without full trials or due process.

One of the most shameful elements of the reaction to the NDAA within the broad antiwar and social justice movements has been the effort by a layer of Obama supporters to downplay the significance of the indefinite-detention provision. Some argue, in a perverse replay of a decade of inattention to the defense of the Muslim American victims of FBI entrapment and confinement in CMUs, that it really does not apply to U.S. citizens. Others have insisted that it only codifies what is already being done under the Bush era 2001 Authorization to Use Military Force (AUMF).

Activists who find this political stance toward the NDAA inexplicable should remember that due to their support for President Roosevelt's war effort in the 1940s, both the Communist Party USA and the National Lawyer's Guild ended up supporting FDR's executive order for

Japanese internment. "Lesser evilism" in electoral politics has, in the past, led to a serious weakening of the fight to defend working-class political action.

In response to efforts that obfuscate the real political intent of the NDAA provision, the civil libertarian and commentator Glenn Greenwald wrote, "Three Myths About the NDAA." He explained that supporters of Obama could claim that U.S. citizens are exempted because there are two sections of the provision, and the language about "citizens" is "purposely muddled." In Section 1021, there is a disclaimer that states that U.S. citizens or others captured or arrested in the United States rather than abroad cannot be held indefinitely by the U.S. military. The next section, Section 1022, however, only exempts accused U.S. citizens from the *mandatory* military detention.

"It does not," Greenwald pointed out, "exempt U.S. citizens from the presidential power of military detention: only from the *requirement* of military detention." This distinction was the result of a demand by the White House that the president retain his powers and that they not be handed over completely to the military.

The Obama administration also demanded an explicit expansion of the powers that they claimed they had been granted in the 2001 AUMF. The Bush-era AUMF named those whom the president had determined "planned, authorized, committed, or aided the terrorist attacks that occurred on Sept. 11, 2001." The NDAA, on the other hand, adds as a target a person who "substantially supports" such groups "and/or associated forces."

This language could give the government a license to detain people who carry out solidarity work with groups working in opposition to U.S. foreign-policy aims. Already, a number of antiwar activists in the Midwest have been threatened with having to give testimony to a grand jury convened to investigate "terrorism" because they sent aid to child-care centers in Gaza or publically explained the plight of peasants living in FARC-controlled sections of Colombia.

The NDAA indefinite-detention provisions must be opposed with all the strength the broad movements for social change can muster. The Muslim Peace Coalition, in collaboration with the Bill of Rights Defense Committee, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), and many others, have begun assembling a national coalition that can implement a three-month campaign to build grassroots opposition.

The coalition will soon make available the tools for activists to seek support for a repeal campaign to bar associations, academics, 1000 members of the clergy, unions, and city and town councils around the United States. To become involved in this effort, contact UNAC via www.unacpeace.org. ■

... U.S. seeks new battlegrounds

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riers has to do with the perceived need to boost naval presence in the Straits of Hormuz and the Pacific simultaneously.

The "War on Terror" in Africa

The U.S. government's desire to use its military might to have leverage over energy flows is now also manifesting itself in a more visible way on the African continent. Obama's declaration that he was sending combat troops to Central Africa alerted the antiwar movement that the U.S. efforts to secure Somalia, which is strategically located on the shipping lanes adjacent to the Horn of Africa, was beginning again in earnest. The proxy war there, which has recently involved the invasion of Somalia by Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia, is being disguised as part of a so-called War on Terror in Africa.

The U.S. is training Nigerian troops with the supposed goal of subduing a fundamentalist Islamist group called Boko Haram. A December report by a subcommittee of the U.S. House Committee on Homeland Security claims that Boko Haram is a link between a group called Al Qaeda of the Islamic Maghreb in Niger and the group called Al Shabaab in Somalia and, naturally, an "emerging threat" to the U.S.

In truth, progressive scholars of African studies have been casting doubt on the U.S. characterizations of these groups for years. Jeremy Keenan, a professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, has documented the way in which the U.S. colluded with the Algerian secret military intelligence services to actually orchestrate a series of hostage takings and terrorist attacks that, over time, connected Algeria, the Sahel, and Nigeria as nations in need of an imperialist military presence.

According to Keenan, northern Nigeria lies on a path that will carry the central section of a proposed Trans-Saharan

gas pipeline from Nigeria to Algeria. In addition to Nigeria's high quality crude oil, the region contains oil, bauxite, uranium, and other strategic resources important to the U.S., the EU, and China.

Imperialist intervention has spurred corruption and the increasing impoverishment of the majority, with the highest inequality manifested in the Muslim north of Nigeria. The youth that today make up Boko Haram, according to Caroline Ifeka of the Department of Anthropology of University College London, began organizing as part of an anti-corruption movement that demanded more of the patronage pie for those at the bottom.

Iraq and oil

The desire of the U.S. to throw its military weight around in Asia and Africa, and against Iran, has not in fact translated to a lack of attention to securing gains made in Iraq and Afghanistan. While U.S. has, at least temporarily, withdrawn combat troops to the borders of Iraq and abandoned the five large military bases in Iraq that it once

characterized as "enduring," it has left behind both a central client regime and regional client regimes whose political futures are based on the successful foreign exploitation of Iraqi oil.

In 2011, according to *USA Today*, U.S. companies reached deals worth \$8.1 billion, and spokespeople compared Iraq, sectarian bombings notwithstanding, as an oasis of stability compared to Egypt and other neighboring countries. The failure of the coalition government to reach agreement on an oil law—i.e., an agreement among Iraqi elites about the division of the spoils of this war—has not really inhibited U.S. companies from profiting and from rewarding regional collaborators.

The New York Times reported in 2011 that U.S. firms like Halliburton and Baker Hughes were awarded at least \$150 billion in oil services contracts. In December, Exxon was in the news because the Iraqi central government was threatening to revoke its substantial oil service contracts in the south of the country since the oil company had

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By LISA LUINENBERG

On Dec. 15, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Immigration Customs and Enforcement announced they would be canceling Maricopa County's 287(g) agreement and restricting the Arizona county's access to the Secure Communities program. This decision was based on findings by the U.S. Department of Justice that the sheriff's office had been engaging in unconstitutional discrimination and racial profiling against immigrants (particularly Latinos). In a separate decision on Dec. 23, U.S. District Court Judge G. Murray Snow enjoined Sheriff Joe Arpaio and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office from "detaining any person based only on knowledge or reasonable belief, without more, that the person is unlawfully present within the United States," effectively halting their enforcement of federal immigration law.

Arpaio, who styles himself as "America's toughest sheriff," has long been notorious for his unbelievably harsh treatment of prisoners, and especially Latino immigrants. Arpaio's discriminatory practices include forcing prisoners to endure temperatures of up to 145 degrees in the notorious "tent city," re-initiating the use of chain gangs, humiliating prisoners by forcing them to parade through the streets in pink underwear, and organizing all-volunteer citizen posses to help him enforce the law (including an armed citizens posse in November of 2010 to help his deputies conduct an immigration sweep to round up undocumented immigrants).

As a result of his actions and policies, Sheriff Arpaio has been accused of or has come under investigation for racial profiling, violating the constitutional rights of prisoners in medical and other related care issues, abuse of power, misuse of funds, and election law violation.

According to the *Arizona Republic*, the U.S. Department of Justice recently culminated a three-year investigation by sending a 22-page letter to Maricopa County Attorney Bill Montgomery, in which it stated that the following civil rights violations were found:

"Hispanics were routinely targeted for traffic stops without reasonable cause, and subsequently charged with immigration-related crimes. Legal residents were sometimes treated as if they were illegal immigrants and even jailed.

"Latino inmates with poor or no English proficiency were frequently punished for not understanding English, were required to fill out forms in a language they did not understand or were denied critical services available to English-speaking inmates.

"Community activists and critics who spoke out against the Sheriff's Office's treatment of Hispanics were themselves targeted for retaliation.

"The Justice Department also found that the Sheriff's Office did not adequately train or supervise its personnel to avoid civil rights violations and, in fact, permitted the specialized units to engage in unconstitutional behavior."

Julianne Hing, Colorline.com's immigration reporter, stated, "For folks who are at all familiar with Sheriff Arpaio's nasty tactics, none of the DOJ's revelations are actually brand new. He engages in racial profiling, condones excessive force from his officers, and retaliates harshly against anyone who speaks out against him. He ignores actual, serious crime to hunt down undocumented immigrants. This is his brand." Hing added, "The federal government contracted Arpaio, with programs like 287(g) to use his police officers to enforce immigration law. Now they're chasing after him to rein him in."

In the letter, the DOJ also issued an ultimatum to Sheriff Arpaio: either come to a voluntary (and court enforceable) agreement to stop discriminating against immigrants, or face a federal lawsuit under provisions of the Civil Rights Act. In a press conference held the following day, Arpaio defended his actions, stating, "We are going to cooperate the best we

U.S. Justice Dept. charges Arizona sheriff with discrimination against immigrants

Pat Shannahan / Arizona Republic / AP



(Above) March to Arizona capitol by immigrants' rights supporters to protest SB 1070 in May 2010.

can. And if they are not happy, I guess they can carry out their threat and go to federal court." Arpaio has until Jan. 4 to make his decision.

The limitation of Sheriff Joe Arpaio's discriminatory actions and the elimination of Maricopa County's participation in the 287(g) and Secure Communities programs must be celebrated as a victory in the struggle for immigrant rights; 287(g) is a federally funded program that authorizes local police officers to act as immigration agents. The fact that police officers are able to question people regarding their immigration status has long been shown to encourage racial profiling, and in places like Maricopa County, discrimination has run rampant.

The Obama administration and ICE have recently pushed the increasing implementation of other ICE enforcement programs, such as Secure Communities, across the country. Secure Communities is a national fingerprint database used to check the immigration status of anyone booked into jail. Despite evidence of racial profiling and increasing resistance from counties, cities, and states where the program is being implemented, the Obama administration has vowed to implement the program nationwide by 2013.

Programs like 287(g) and Secure Communities are part of a wider strategy known as "attrition through enforcement." It is clear that the United States economy is heavily dependant on the cheap labor of the super-exploited undocumented immigrant population. It is estimated that if all undocumented immigrants in the United States were deported, economic activity in the U.S. would decrease by over \$500 billion, while GDP would fall by an additional \$245 billion.

The tactic of "attrition through enforcement" was originally the brainchild of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, or FAIR, the largest anti-immigrant hate group in the United States. It was designed to make life so difficult and absolutely unbearable for undocumented immigrants that they will be

too afraid to speak out for their rights, to fight against injustice, or to struggle to make working conditions and life in general better for themselves and their communities.

"Attrition through enforcement" has recently given rise to extremely discriminatory anti-immigrant laws such as SB 1070 in Arizona, or copycat laws like HB 87 in Georgia, and HB 56, recently passed in Alabama. In these states, so many fearful immigrants left the state that crops began to rot in the fields for lack of anyone to harvest them, while parents pulled their children out of school.

A coalition of organizations, led by the National Immigrant Law Center and the ACLU filed a lawsuit against HB 56. Their complaint stated, "HB 56 is reminiscent of the worst aspects of Alabama's history in its pervasive and systematic targeting of a class of persons through punitive state laws that seek to render every aspect of daily life more difficult and less equal." In fact, according to a report from the bipartisan National Conference of State Legislatures, in the first half of 2011 alone, lawmakers from all 50 states introduced a record-breaking 1592 bills and resolutions dealing with immigration.

Despite these massive attacks on undocumented immigrant workers, the immense immigrant uprisings in 2006 and the nationwide protests against SB 1070 in 2010 show that immigrants do have the capacity to rise up and take their fate in their own hands. And while the recent federal decision against the discriminatory practices of Sheriff Joe Arpaio is a step in the right direction, it is clear that this is only a small victory in the greater struggle for immigrant rights. What remains now is to continue to struggle for justice for immigrants in all communities across the United States. ■

(continued from page 4)

gone around Baghdad to sign six major deals with the regional government of Kurdistan.

It is unclear if the immediate upswing in bombings that occurred as soon as U.S. troops crossed into Kuwait will substantially change the fortunes of foreign oil profiteers. Observers from afar cannot yet even know how the U.S. intends to play the Shia/Sunni/Kurd divisions that they have carefully nurtured since the early days of the occupation. It is clear that they are prepared to patrol the Kurdistan oil fields, however.

The news of the U.S. withdrawal of combat troops from Iraq was accompanied by reports of a new U.S.-Turkey deal that would allow the U.S. military to

fly drones out of the Incirlik air base on the Turkish-Iraqi border. That the Maliki regime has also agreed to these incursions indicates that there are also special agreements on U.S. special operations inside Iraq as well.

Drones and special ops, along with the 16,000 State Department "personnel" (one half of whom are mercenaries) attached to the embassy—with a five-year budget of \$30 billion—and the continuing displacement and immiseration of the Iraqi people by the U.S. client regime suggest that the withdrawal of U.S. combat troops, however welcome, is not likely to open up political space for the working people of Iraq. Instead, they are facing, at best, life under a regime dedicated to the enrichment of foreign oil

firms and their local enablers, and one that is more fearful of and brutal toward the masses of Iraqis than ever before.

The withdrawal of U.S. combat troops from Iraq, seen in context, provides no rest for the antiwar movement. While the U.S. has been forced to shift course in its search for military solutions to its economic problems, it has not thrown in the towel in the Middle East or Asia. Instead, it plans more bases, more drone flights, more targeted assassinations, more indefinite detentions.

To effectively build a movement against such a geographically disparate series of U.S. interventions, those dedicated to ending U.S. military interventions need to come together to share analysis and practical experience. There will be such

an opportunity from March 23-25 in Stamford, Conn., at the conference of the United National Antiwar Coalition.

The UNAC conference will provide nearly 40 workshops on topics ranging from updates on the struggles of the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street to the obstacles created for movement building by the government's policy of mass incarceration in the Black and Latino communities. Plenary sessions will allow participants to vote on a list of important activities to follow the major spring antiwar mobilization that will occur at the site of the NATO/G8 summits in Chicago on May 19. To register for the conference and to find out how to help build the event in your area, visit www.unacpeace.org. ■

DEFEND THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION!



(Left) Egyptian women march in Cairo, Dec. 20, to protest police and military violence against them in recent demonstrations.

By ANDREW POLLACK

The military junta ruling Egypt, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), carried out its second wave of murders in as many months, killing at least 14 between Dec. 16 and Dec. 19, when it attacked protesters engaged in a sit-in outside the Cabinet building. As had happened the month before, the murders sparked off a return of mass protests in Tahrir Square and other cities.

The sit-in, called "Occupy Cabinet," was called to try to prevent the assumption of office by the military-appointed Prime Minister Kamal Ganzouri, and in denunciation of the killing and blinding of demonstrators during the Battle of Mohammad Mahmoud Street in November. The mid-December attacks once again included detention and torture of protesters, with the added tactic of army and police throwing glass, stones, and various heavy objects from rooftops onto activists on the streets below.

Egypt's Revolutionary Socialists noted that the military and its allies in the Muslim Brotherhood were particularly worried about the potential for the Cabinet sit-in to deepen links between protesters in the streets and in workplaces, where strikes continue to grow in number and political content. Furthermore, "the army wants to muzzle the revolutionaries until political positions and powers can be divided between the opportunist political forces which consented to enter the battle of parliament under military rule."

Concerns that the military was moving to detain, torture, and even assassinate leading movement activists led to calls for support from international allies. In the U.S. these calls sparked the formation of the Ad Hoc Coalition to Defend the Egyptian Revolution, initiated by the activists who have been holding protests at the Egyptian consulate and mission in New York, as well as at corporate offices of manufacturers whose tear gas has been used by SCAF against protesters (see defendegyptianrevolution.org).

The Coalition initiated a statement protesting SCAF's actions, which in just a few days garnered several dozen organizational endorsements, including at least 13 Occupy sites, and over 500 individuals. The statement drew the connection between repression by the military in defense of Egypt's ruling class (including its own economic perks; the military controls 30% of the country's economy) and the global offensive by ruling classes and governments. And it reminded supporters of the role of the Egyptian revolution in sparking the global fightback, including the Occupy movement, which drew inspiration so explicitly from the Egyptian revolt.

The statement noted: "The same 1% that arms the Egyptian dictatorship commits systematic violence in this country against the Occupy movement; antiwar and solidarity activists; and Arabs, Muslims, and other communities of color. As the U.S. Palestinian Community Network recently observed, 'the same U.S.-made tear gas rains down on us in the streets of Oakland, Cairo, and Bil'in.'"

After the brutal treatment of woman protesters by the police and army, 10,000 women took to the streets to denounce the thuggery.

The Coalition stressed, "Because of Egypt's key strategic location, the fate of its revolution echoes across the world. Its success will bring us all closer to achieving economic and social justice. But its defeat would be a major blow to social justice movements everywhere, including Occupy. ... In short, Egypt is key to the continued success of the Arab Revolution, and movements she has inspired."

The Coalition demanded the end of all U.S. aid and weapons to the Egyptian military and police, an end to the murders, tortures and detentions, release of all political prisoners, and an immediate end to military rule in Egypt. In addition to encouraging protests at consulates and missions, the Coalition organized a speedy, efficient mass calling campaign to the offices of SCAF head Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi Soliman and Prime Minister Kamal El Ganzory.

After the brutal treatment of women protesters, most notoriously captured in a video which went viral showing Tantawi's thugs stripping and stomping a female protester, the Egyptian and Egyptian-American women in the Coalition (who have been its leaders from the beginning) initiated a statement supporting women in Egypt. They noted the bold response of the 10,000 women who took to the streets in Egypt after this thuggery and called in one voice: "Egyptian women will not be stripped!" The statement also noted the leading role of women in "vital initiatives such as field hospitals [to care for wounded protesters] and the campaign to end military trials for civilians."

The Coalition also issued an appeal for Mohamed Hashem (a leading progressive publisher who has worked with dedication to protect protesters from the military's thugs and in return was threatened by the regime), and is working on sector-specific appeals for unions, legal rights groups, and others.

Who's the real "foreign agent"?

On Dec. 29 the military raided the offices of 17 human rights and civil liberties organizations, most of them legitimate, three of them fronts for the U.S. State Department. The latter were purposely chosen as part of the military's campaign to label all opposition to its rule as part of a plot on behalf of unnamed "foreign powers." This was from a regime whose survival is completely dependent on \$1.3 billion in annual military aid from the United States! What's more, the military knows that the overwhelming majority of its opponents have in principle not only refused financial

support from the U.S. government, but in fact see completion of the revolution as indissolubly connected to ending all collaboration with imperialism and Zionism.

The most steadfast of such opponents of collaboration, the Revolutionary Socialists, came under attack on Dec. 24 when a lawsuit against it was filed by a leading member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood's leadership formally distanced itself from the lawsuit, yet repeated in its media the lies articulated in the lawsuit even after it had been withdrawn.

The lawsuit was filed using the pretext of a statement captured on video of one of the leading members of the Revolutionary Socialists, Sameh Naguib, in which, the RS said, he "talked about how the revolutionaries want the downfall of the state to build a new revolutionary state, and that the military council does not protect the interests of the Egyptian people but instead protects the interests

of the 1000 richest families in Egypt, the interests of the Pentagon, the U.S. government, and the Zionists."

"Our reply," the Revolutionary Socialists affirmed, "is that it is no indictment to say that we want the downfall of the oppressive state and the creation of a just state. ... Yes, we are seeking to overthrow the state of tyranny and poverty that has ruled us for the last 30 years, and continues to rule us today, the state that has killed thousands of fighters in its prisons, the state which has looted and stolen from the poor to increase the wealth of the rich. ... This is the state which discriminates between its citizens on the basis of religion, gender, and race."

In a longer late-December document on strategy and tactics in the current stage of the revolution, the RS identified three key forces in the country's politics: First is the ruling military.

Second is the bloc of Islamist and liberal reformist political forces, "which are straining to contain the revolution within the limits of formalistic democracy. These forces believe that they are due a greater share of power and wealth without disturbing the old economic and social system," and as a result "flirt with the military council and the remnants of the old regime, and make promises about their ability to contain and terminate the mass movement politically, as they cannot deliver this by repression."

The third factor is the mass movement, "with the workers' movement in the vanguard and around it the protest movements of the poor and oppressed." This movement "reached an unprecedented level during the months of September and October with a wave of mass strikes by 700,000 workers for the first time in Egypt's modern history."

(A report issued in mid-December showed education workers moving to the forefront of working-class mobilization, with 80,000 workers employed by the Education Ministry and thousands of teachers striking for pay, benefits, and permanent contracts. And, reports the independent newspaper *Al-Masry Al-Youm*, in the last days of 2011 a new form of worker action arose, as large groups of workers blocked roads and doorways in front of various government and corporate offices, calling for the dismissal of the corrupt leaders of their companies, payment of overdue compensation, and implementation of court verdicts in favor of re-nationalization of their companies. They have also protested hundreds of arbitrary dismissals while company officials give jobs to their relatives.)

The RS also noted the regular protests by poor Coptic Christians, Nubians, the people of Sinai, "and other sections of society which have suffered decades of organized oppression from the regime."

With the military's lack of certainty, given the continued mobilization and self-confidence of the masses, that it could get away with the wholesale repression that would be needed to put an end to protests, the regime has instead resorted to selective repression

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combined with reliance on its partners in the Muslim Brotherhood and in Salafi (ultra-orthodox religious) groups, who have used the current staged elections to try to fool the masses into thinking they can achieve justice by passive reliance on Parliament and the president.

Such duplicity is carried out in the face of continued assertions by the military that it would not relinquish power to such elected figures, and in the face also of repeated assurances by these Islamist forces to the military and to their U.S. masters that once elected they would maintain "free market" policies and collaboration with Israel (see *The New York Times*, Jan. 4). Their dispute with the military is simply over a division of the spoils and over where to draw the line in what the military and the Islamists agree must be a shared control of the country.

Finally, the RS document examines the factors that could unite the various components of the mass movement, the obstacles to such unity, and specific projects for overcoming those obstacles. The authors break down the mass movement into three principal blocs. First is the youth of the slums, the marginalized and unemployed, "joined by the Ultras [organized football fans] and many independent youth and anarchists." These have suffered the heaviest casualties in street fighting. While representing "a model of revolutionary courage," and calling for the downfall of military rule, the cleansing of the police, an end to military trials and for the rights of the families of the martyrs and the injured, "they have failed to raise social demands, or even to offer solidarity with workers' protests."

"The second bloc among the revolutionary forces has at its heart the core sections of the Egyptian working class ... which have fought a large number of battles since 2006," and dealt the death blow to the Mubarak presidency last February. It has organized many independent unions since then and engaged in waves of mass strikes. "However," writes the RS, "its birth has been aborted by the absence of a revolutionary workers' organization and the absence of demands which link the social and the political," as well as its absence as an organized force in the rallies in city squares and sit-ins against military rule.

The third bloc within the mass movement is the far left, including the RS itself, as well as other radical groups. Taken as a whole, these groups "remain relatively marginal to the political scene, lacking the ability to propose initiatives which rally wider forces, despite their participation in the leadership and development of the November sit-in and their support for workers' and professionals' strikes and sit-ins."

The desire to overcome these weaknesses inspired the Revolutionary Socialists to make several concrete proposals. They advocate turning the abstract slogan of social justice adopted by the revolutionary movement—"which sets them apart from the liberals and the Islamists"—into concrete, practical demands around wages, prices, housing, health, education, and jobs, "in turn connecting the achievement of this program with the presence of a revolutionary government in power."

They note in this regard the demagoguery of the Islamists, whose mention in their electoral program of social demands is pure hypocrisy given their longstanding opposition to labor organizing, their own huge economic investments, and their support for



(Above) Nov. 22 protest in Alexandria, Egypt, demanding end to military rule.

We must raise even louder demands that Washington cut all military aid to client regimes in the Middle East and end aid to Israel.

neo-liberal policies during the Mubarak era.

To organize and mobilize for these concrete demands, and in so doing to link the varied components of the mass movement, the RS proposes "to construct a revolutionary front with a political program," which could unite the social, economic, and political demands of the revolution, and unify the struggles in the workplace, the squares, and the campuses.

Finally, the RS calls for translating its slogan "power and wealth to the people" into a concrete radical program that could mobilize the masses from the very first day on which the newly elected parliament members take their seats and begin enacting anti-worker, anti-revolutionary legislation. And to ensure the success of all these projects, the RS pledges "to build a revolutionary socialist party rooted in the ranks of the workers, peasants and students, capable of leading the masses to victory."

Workers and next phase of Arab Revolution

At the very same time as Egyptian government employees were staging mass protests, their counterparts in Yemen began mass action against their own officials' corruption.

As the AP reported on Dec. 26: "The strikes are following a pattern. Workers lock the gates to an institution, and then they storm the offices of their supervisors, demanding their replacement with bosses who are not tainted with corruption allegations. So far the

scenario has played out in 18 state agencies."

As in Egypt, Yemen's military has a large stake in the country's economy, and hundreds of workers have demonstrated in front of the Military Economic Institution, protesting its budget secrecy and demanding dismissal of the agency manager, one of the regime's most powerful and corrupt figures and a funder of the armed gangs that have attacked protesters.

This similarity in tactics in Egypt and Yemen is, as far as we know, a coincidence. But it could and indeed *must* become part of a conscious, organized sharing of tactics, and a discussion of shared needs and goals among workers across the region. Such a regional class project would, of course, require construction of a revolutionary party for the Middle East and North Africa as a whole.

Furthermore, this discussion of how to deepen the centrality of workers' mobilization and demands in the Arab Revolution is also crucial for opposing imperialism's latest maneuvers. Nowhere is this more needed than in Syria. For months the regime has murdered dozens in cold blood every single day. Yet for months the masses' response has been to turn out in the tens or hundreds of thousands after each massacre.

But in contrast to this almost unparalleled heroism and steadfastness by Syria's working people, depending not on lying imperialist "saviors" but rather on the masses' own strength, the traitorous leadership of the liberals heading the Syrian National Council speaks more and more openly about requesting aid from Washington's murderous military.

We in the U.S. can further this counterposition of workers' power to imperialist maneuvers by raising ever louder our own demands that Washington cut all military aid to its client regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and elsewhere, that it stay out of Syria, and that it end all aid to Israel! ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

"In the Land of Blood and Honey," written and directed by Angelina Jolie.

I liked this intense film about the war in Bosnia. But I wasn't sure if Angelina Jolie intended her directorial debut film to be story about love and betrayal or a depiction of the horrors wreaked against one's own people. In this three-and-a-half-year civil war of the 1990s, soldiers killed people they had been classmates with; it tore families apart, and at least 100,000 were killed and two million displaced.

Jolie, involved in humanitarian work around the world, has said that she felt driven to make a film about the Bosnian war because she knew so little about it at the time (she was 17) and felt guilty because no one seemed to want to do anything. It was the worst European conflict since World War II.

"Blood and Honey," was cut from over four hours to two, which might explain some holes in the script. It opens in 1992 on a scene of people living ordinary lives. Muslim sisters Lejla (Vanessa

Glodjic), a single mother of an infant, and Ajla (Zana Marjovich), an artist, share an apartment.

Ajla is involved with Danijel (Goran Kostic), a wiry, blond Serbian army captain. While dancing at a club, it is hit by an explosion. Danijel, unharmed, takes charge, relieved that Ajla had survived.

The film jumps ahead four months. Heavily armed Serbian soldiers patrol the neighborhoods, ordering people out of buildings. Ajla is shocked to see Danijel, who doesn't notice her, among the soldiers. His father, General Nebojsa (played by Rade Serbedzija), orders him to "cleanse the area, Danijel. Make me a proud father!"

Ajla and other women are herded onto buses and driven to an abandoned school, where Serbian soldiers treat them as both sexual and domestic slaves. Women are randomly raped; they feel doomed.

The women, including Lejla, left in the apartment building are terrified the sol-

diers will return; she worries about her baby and that her sister could be dead. Lejla returns from a furtive run to a bombed-out pharmacy for supplies, and is horrified to find her baby has met a tragic end. In her absence, the military had returned. She joins a resistance group holed up in a ruin.

Danijel protects Ajla. He confesses that he hates the "war," cautioning her that "people don't appear to be who they truly are." At times, he comes across as the voice of conscience. She makes an attempt to escape but is caught and beaten. What I found strange is that Ajla doesn't seem concerned about her sister or the baby. Perhaps Jolie directed Marjovich to appear numbed by it all.

Danijel and Ajla argue about his killing of her people. She shouts, "I don't have to sleep with their murderer!" He asks if she believes her people are not murderers, too: "That you are clean?"

In one scene, General Nebojsa bursts in on Ajla; berating her about his moth-

er's working hard so Muslim women could wear fine clothes. She tells him she believes there's no difference between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims; for this, he rapes her.

Fifteen years after the war, the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, of course, still remember. Jolie has said that it was difficult asking Bosnian and Serbian actors to relive it; some were extremely emotional. Yet because of their experience, they made the film real. She admits that they helped her write and direct it.

This is not exactly a blatant antiwar film. Nor does it get to the roots of the the "Great Serbia" ideology, which trod upon the rights of other nationalities in the former Yugoslavia. The conflict flared up over the years, and was spurred on by the Stalinist bureaucracy.

Still, the film depicts the stupidity of war and how, in order to attain their ends, rulers constantly resort to whipping up national, religious, and misogynous prejudices—no matter how irrational they might be. Similarly, the U.S. and NATO are now raising a hysterical cry against Iran, which they have set their sights upon for the next war. ■

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada



Socialist Action

Attawapiskat: Native people suffer while corporations mine riches

By ERIC KUPKA

It has been called Haiti at minus 40 degrees celsius. Attawapiskat, an isolated Cree First Nations community located near James Bay in northern Ontario, is enduring a severe housing crisis that is just the latest in a series of tragedies that have affected the health and well-being of its residents.

With a current population of just under 2000 people, Attawapiskat was established as a settlement of permanent buildings in the 1960s. In 1979, a diesel spill

contaminated the soil near the community's elementary school. The students suffered bad health effects and the school was ultimately condemned in 2000, displacing the students to portables, where they continue to learn today.

In the last five years, Attawapiskat has suffered through flooding, a power outage that forced the evacuation of the local hospital (because it had no backup generators) and a sewage spill that dumped waste into eight homes housing 90 people.

Meanwhile, since 2008, DeBeers Canada is min-

ing diamonds at a site just 90 kilometers west of Attawapiskat. The contrast between the extraction of such wealth, utilizing the most modern facilities, alongside such deprivation led Attawapiskat residents to travel to Toronto in 2009 to confront DeBeers. They argued that the company had not lived up to its agreement to provide employment opportunities and building materials to the community.

The current crisis results from the growing number of residents, including babies and young children, living in tents or wooden shacks with no electricity, running water or toilets. With winter temperatures routinely dropping well below minus 20 degrees Celsius, heat is provided by improvised (and potentially dangerous) wood-burning stoves. Many of those lucky enough to live in houses have to deal with mould and overcrowding.

The NDP has been at the forefront of the response to this situation. Local NDP MP Charlie Angus spoke out about Attawapiskat's challenges well before the present crisis. He recently twice visited the community, the second time in the company of NDP Interim Leader Nycole Turmel. (The NDP's late Leader, Jack Layton, who visited in 2007, described the conditions he saw as "abominable.")

Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on the other hand, initially reacted by blaming the leadership of the Attawapiskat First Nation, stating that the crisis was "unacceptable" in light of the funds provided by the federal government to the band. This led to the appointment of a private-sector consultant to manage the reserve's finances, at a cost of \$1300 per day, to be billed to the First Nation.

The situation in Attawapiskat is a reminder to Canadians that many of our First Nations' brothers and sisters on reserves live in Third World conditions, inside one of the wealthiest countries on earth. Centuries of cultural genocide and indifference have left many First Nations communities struggling with alcoholism and solvent abuse, suicide epidemics, gang violence, substandard housing, contaminated water, unemployment, and abject poverty. This must end.

Socialists demand an immediate, robust and well-funded response to the housing crisis in Attawapiskat, along with a long-term, concerted, federal effort at resolving the dire conditions in which Canada's First Nations continue to subsist. We demand that the mineral and other wealth of aboriginal lands be transferred out of the hands of multinational corporations and into the control of the First Nations' communities on those lands. ■

Mounties spied on aboriginal protesters

By BARRY WEISLEDER

When it comes to native housing, health, and education needs, Ottawa provides funding through an eye-dropper and at a snail's pace. But where it concerns meeting the perceived "security" needs of capital and the state, the authorities act swiftly, generously, and without much regard for civil liberties.

In early 2007 the Canadian federal government created a vast surveillance network to monitor protests by aboriginal groups aimed at "critical infrastructure" like highways, railways, and pipelines, according to RCMP documents obtained through access to information requests.

An RCMP slide show, produced in the spring of 2009, reveals that its "intelligence unit" reported weekly to about 450 police, government and unnamed "industry partners" in the energy and private sectors. A Mountie spokesperson told the *Toronto Star* that the Aboriginal JIG (joint intelligence group) was dismantled, but "we cannot confirm that RCMP divisions are not performing Aboriginal JIG activities under another name of program."

An annual Strategic Intelligence Report from June 2009 indicates that the spying focused at the time on 18 "communities of concern" in five provinces. These included First Nations in Ontario such as Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI), Ardoch, Grassy Narrows, Six Nations and Tyendinaga, which carried out road and railway blockades and opposed mining and logging on their lands.

The JIG presented itself as a "central repository" of information about First Nations protests, assisted by an "extensive network of contacts throughout Canada and internationally," and an un-

disclosed number of spies in the field acting as its "eyes and ears." No price tag was specified for this "extensive" surveillance apparatus.

An RCMP submission to the Canadian Intelligence Security Service (CSIS) in April 2007 states: "There is a growing concern among high-level government officials and the policing community about the potential for unrest in aboriginal communities, and an increasing sense of militancy among certain

segments of the aboriginal population."

True enough. One example is the KI First Nation, in northern Ontario, which in 2008 prevented the establishment of a platinum mine by Platinex on their traditional territory. The Liberal Ontario government bought out the Platinex claim for \$5 million—a sum that would cover the cost of building more than 20 modern houses in a remote northern aboriginal community.

In its sales pitch to the private sector,

the RCMP slide show promotes the notion that the aboriginal intelligence unit can "alleviate some of your workload as we can help identify trends and issues that may impact more than one community."

Now, can you imagine a federal police service that would gather information on, and arrest *corporate violators* of aboriginal treaty rights and land claims? Can you imagine the cops doing that, instead of spying on, harassing and jailing First Nations' activists who defend their communities? In capitalist Canada?

No, neither can I. ■

Ottawa ignores Kyoto

A previous Liberal government cynically entered into it, and systematically violated it. The present Conservative government thumbed its nose at it from the start, and unceremoniously quit the treaty on Dec. 12. Despite its abject weaknesses, including low targets and unenforceability, the Kyoto Protocol still signifies the need to address escalating carbon emissions, climate change, and the dire threat they pose to civilization.

Negotiators from nearly 200 countries spent two weeks in Durban, South Africa trying to reach an agreement on a new climate treaty to replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires at the end of 2012.

The original treaty was a concession to the mobilizing power of the global environmental movement. Its limitations reflect the class nature of that movement, its failure to collectively articulate a socialist agenda—the prerequisite to democratic control and economic planning in harmony with nature.

The Harper Conservatives seem not to be troubled that their unilateral exit of Kyoto violates domestic law. The Kyoto Implementation Act, adopted by Parliament in June 2007, remains on the books. It was not rescinded. The latest Tory decision was not even debated. The law still requires Canada's environment commissioner, Scott Vaughan, to inform Parliament annually of the government's progress in meeting its targets under the climate accord. That is bound to be a bitter pill the government will want to ditch a.s.a.p.

After six years of Conservative rule and \$9 billion budget-

ed to curb green house gases Canada's output remains very high. Even if Prime Minister Harper keeps his promise to cut emissions by 2020 in lock step with the U.S., by 17 per cent from 2005 levels, Canada will continue to generate some 600 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent annually. That is the same as in 1990, the Kyoto benchmark year.

Skepticism about the pledges made at the United Nations conference in Durban is no excuse for inaction at home. The United States, China, and India, the world's biggest carbon spewers, pledged to negotiate a common binding agreement in the next few years. Even if they do, it won't have much impact until 2020, which means another wasted decade in the drive to cap the rise in Earth's temperature to a barely tolerable 2 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial era, instead of a disastrous 3.5 degrees.

But at least those governments acknowledge the problem and set themselves a target. Ottawa, on the other hand, closes its eyes and sticks its head into the dirty oil sands, failing even to provide tax incentives for renewable energy, or measures to curb coal-fired electricity, and car and truck emissions.

Liberal MP Justin Trudeau was certainly justified in denouncing Tory Environment Minister Peter Kent when Kent blamed an NDP MP for not attending the Durban conference. It was Kent who had barred opposition MPs from the Canadian delegation to Durban.

So, Trudeau was right to call Kent "a piece of shit." But the same can be said for the whole Canadian establishment, from the hypocritical eco-posturers to the climate change deniers. The world is in a soggy mess, and time is running out, not only on capitalism but on the human species.

— BARRY WEISLEDER

The big business Conference Board of Canada predicts that 2012 will be a year of major labour-management strife across the Canadian state.

In a report released in early December, the Board points to Toronto, where the right-wing administration of Mayor Rob Ford has been waging a war on workers to cut costs, and to privatize city services. The report also noted that the Toronto District School Board is set to negotiate a new collective agreement with teachers in 2012 "on a course of bargaining that is unlikely to be resolved peacefully."

In 2011, Canada Post workers staged rotating strikes, got locked out by management, and were ordered back to work by the federal government, which imposed a wage rate lower than management's last offer. The threat of legislation kept Air Canada workers from striking, despite workers voting twice to reject management's position.

According to McMaster University labour relations Professor Charlotte Yates, governments aren't just trying to keep deficits in check; they are cutting for political reasons. Unions, per se, are the target. They believe they can succeed at this time knowing that the bosses are permitted to cut jobs without any real challenge from the working class, including its unionized sections. When postal workers challenged the Stephen Harper Conservative government agenda, the labour movement across the country failed to back them up with job action. The NDP filibuster in the House of Commons made many workers feel good, but it did not threaten to deter the government's course of action.

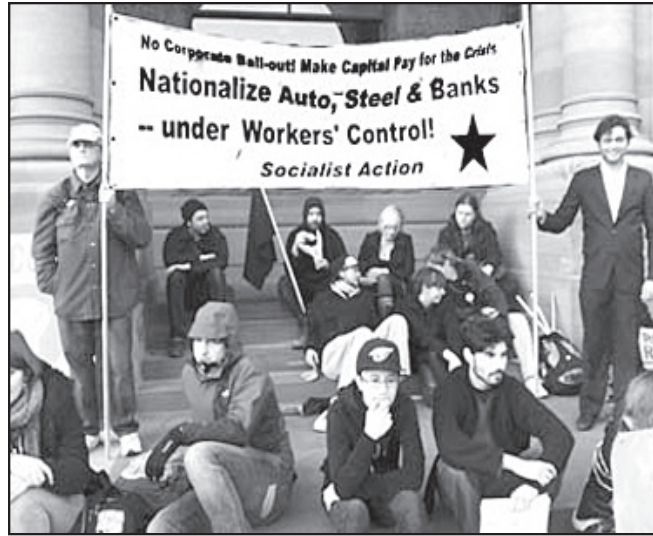
The Conference Board is now worried that the potential for strikes in the public sector will be greater in 2012 because those workers gave concessions at the outset of the recession/depression in 2008. Rank-and-file frustration is rising. The average public sector raise will be 1.5 per cent in 2012—below the predicted inflation rate of 2 per cent. In contrast, private sec-

Will 2012 be year for Labour fightback?

tor workers will earn an average raise of 2.3 per cent. Overall, workers' wages have been falling or stagnant for over 30 years.

Health care workers in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba will be negotiating new collective agreements in 2012, as will employees at the Canada Revenue Agency.

By alerting its well-heeled members to potential labour conflict, and by countering the arguments that unions make (for example, that government revenues are down due to corporate tax cuts and concessions to the rich), the Conference Board is helping to get the Canadian capitalist class ready for the big fight ahead. But what is the labour leadership doing to get workers ready for this fight?



Socialist Action

The Ontario Federation of Labour, at its November biennial convention in Toronto, promised to expose the one-sided class war being waged by bosses and their governments. But OFL leaders have no plan to challenge the rulers' agenda with mass action in the streets and work places.

There is talk about a possible merger of the Canadian Auto Workers Union and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers' Union. A democratically conducted merger would be good. Much better than a raid, which too often is the resort of shrinking unions. But a merger is no substitute for organizing the unorganized, much less for an anti-concessions strategy.

Can workers fight back? Transit workers in York Region, north of Toronto, show that we can. Those employees of private bus companies that pay \$7 an hour less than what Toronto transit workers earn, are in the third month of a strike for a wage and benefits catch-up. Their weekly mass pickets and bus occupations are attracting tremendous attention and inspiring considerable hope in broad sections of the working class.

They show the way forward—to a coordinated labour struggle against the bosses' "austerity" agenda.

If 2012 is to be the year for a labour fight back, now is the time to start talking up the idea of a general strike. Nothing less than escalating, mass job actions are needed to stop the attacks on jobs, public services, and workers' rights. And that's what we need to win nationalization of the banks and big business under workers' democratic control—to lay the basis for an economy that serves the majority. ■

U.S.-Canada treaty escalates attack on civil liberties

The Dec. 7 border agreement between Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President Barack Obama requires Canada to adopt more U.S.-style security measures, and to share more information on Canadians with American state authorities. This is contrary to the interests of working people in both countries.

Obama has agreed to ask the U.S. Congress for money to speed up truck and business traffic across the border. The funding may or may not be forthcoming. In any case, the price is too high. Heightened security means a stepped up war on civil liberties. Talk of security is a distraction from the capitalist system's real economic malaise. It's an excuse for more spending on police and the military, and less money to meet pressing human needs, like health care, education and housing.

So, what exactly is at risk in the latest deal? It's not "privacy" in the abstract. Remember the U.S. no-fly list? Under the deal, Ottawa has effectively agreed to adopt it. This is the list that famously targeted, among others, the late U.S. Senator Ted Kennedy. It has already barred some innocent Canadians from air travel within their own country because their planned flight paths briefly crossed the U.S. The agreement to develop common "decision processes" for air screening can only lead to more folks being stranded.

Since the deal was announced, attention has focused

on a new scheme for border exit controls. But bigger dangers lie elsewhere. For instance, the agreement commits the two countries to engage in more "informal information sharing." Canada also agrees to change its laws, if necessary, to "provide the widest measure of (intelligence) cooperation possible."

Maher Arar knows first-hand about such intelligence cooperation. He is the Canadian citizen who was arrested by U.S. officials during a New York stopover and sent to Syria to be tortured. As a royal commission later found, Arar's ordeal was caused by exactly the kind of informal and wide-ranging intelligence cooperation that the new deal envisions.

Since 9/11, U.S. governments, regardless their political stripe, have hurt civil liberties. Washington spies on the most mundane habits of its people, including which library books they read. In at least one case, it carried out the extrajudicial execution of an American citizen. Its agents are no longer permitted to torture people on their own. But even Obama has refused to renounce the practice of so-called extraordinary rendition—sending suspected terrorists to third countries to be tortured.

The U.S. maintains a prison camp at Guantanamo Bay that, in the tepid language of a 2010 Supreme Court judgment, has engaged in the "improper treatment" of detainees, including a Canadian, Omar Khadr, captured

by U.S. forces in Afghanistan at age 15.

Sweden learned about the dangers of allowing American agents to operate on its soil. In December 2001, the Swedish government decided to deport two Egyptian refugee claimants whose asylum applications were refused. The Swedish Security Police accepted a U.S. offer to provide the plane to carry out the deportation.

When the Swedish officials handed over the deportees, after having searched them according to Swedish procedure, the Americans proceeded to cut off the two men's clothes, dress them in jump suits and hoods, medicate them, and bundle them on board. They were transported to Egypt, where they were allegedly subjected to torture.

In a 2005 report, the Swedish ombudsman concluded that Swedish officials mishandled the case. They had allowed the American officials to operate on Swedish soil in a manner contrary to Swedish custom and possibly in breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits torture and inhumane and degrading treatment.

U.S. law and practices violate Canadian laws and norms. More to the point, the new border agreement threatens to diminish individual liberties already under attack. In the name of universal human rights, and working-class internationalism, the deal must be undone. — B.W.

Statement by Afghan and Pakistani forces

(This statement has been slightly cut for space reasons. — Socialist Action Editors)

The progressive and democratic forces of Pakistan and Afghanistan met here in Lahore for two days [Dec. 21-22] in the first ever joint conference.

This is a historic step for the progressive forces of both sides to sit together and share the sufferings of our people at the hands of U.S.-led NATO forces as well as the religious extremists in the form of the Taliban. We also vehemently condemn the military establishment and the governments of both countries who use different excuses to justify the occupation by foreign forces as well as [being the] tacit [patrons] of religious extremism.

We resolve to launch a sustained campaign against the forces of imperialism and religious extremism. We plan to organize coordinated days of action and other initiatives at the political as well as

the cultural and educational levels.

We plan to broaden this movement and include other left and progressive forces who share the common goals of establishing a just peace and of progress in the region. We resolve to also include the progressive movements in India and Iran in order to build up a broad regional alliance to secure a just peace.

We agree that by occupying a sovereign country under false pretences, in blatant violation of all accepted norms of international law, then cynically deploying the smokescreen of "human rights" and "democracy," NATO's active promotion of criminal, misogynist warlords has exposed the myth of bringing democracy and freedom to the people of Afghanistan.

The policies of the occupation forces have resulted in the country being hijacked by medieval warlords, who are adamant in their rejection of democratic processes and denial of civil liberties and

equal rights for women as the Taliban regime they have replaced. This has resulted in Afghanistan regaining its ranking as the biggest producer of opium in the world, adding another potent element to the lawlessness that is destroying the fabric of Afghan society.

The violent, theocratic movement of the Taliban is deeply anti-people and promotes the ideal of rule by an elite clergy. The Taliban claims to defend the sovereignty and freedom of Afghanistan, yet it is unable to guarantee basic freedoms and protection to its own population, and its policies make Afghanistan an easy target for foreign interference (e.g., from Pakistan and Iran) and even outright occupation.

It is commonly portrayed in the Western media that the situation of women in Afghanistan has drastically improved since the NATO intervention, with the protection of women being used as an excuse to justify the occupation of Afghanistan as well as military operations in Pakistan.

We reject these claims as false and point out that after 10 years of occupation, Afghanistan has been awarded the rank of the most dangerous country for women, with Pakistan in the top five.

Looking at the effects of the U.S. "War on Terror" on Pakistan, we note the consolidation of the links between the CIA and sections of the Pakistan army, resulting in drone strikes inside Pakistan, the abduction and selling of Pakistani citizens to the United States, the continued transit of military supplies to ISAF [International Security Assistance Force] from Karachi to Khyber, the use of Pakistani military bases by U.S. forces.

We also observe that the closing of ranks between the Afghan Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban and the Pakistan army—as part of the Pakistani establishment's policy of dealing with both the Taliban and NATO—has led the army to adopt a more belligerent attitude in public, and seeking to capitalize on the peak in anti-U.S. feeling in the country, to attempt to de-

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... Occupy, ILWU challenge bosses

(continued from page 12)

This was a peculiar development, and especially so in light of the ILWU's longstanding tradition, and the contract provision won in struggle, that allowed the union to respect third-party picket lines when the "health and safety" of ILWU workers was in question. For decades, the ILWU ranks have utilized this "health and safety" contract provision, as well as others, to respect political picket lines and to effectively demonstrate solidarity with working-class causes around the world.

Over the years, the ports of Oakland and San Francisco, and sometimes the entire West Coast, have been periodically shut down for 24 hours, and sometimes longer, in solidarity with a broad range of struggles. These have included the fight against South African apartheid, protests against the slaughter of Salvadoran trade unionists by that nation's then death-squad government, freedom and justice for Mumia Abu-Jamal, opposition to non-union ships arriving from unionized ports in other countries, and antiwar actions demanding the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

These political and symbolic strikes have been widely acclaimed by trade unionists and social activists. The implication that today's one-day port shutdowns to defend ILWU Local 21 are done behind the backs and against the wishes of ILWUers is not credible, and especially so when Local 21 and a broad range of other trade unionists clearly understand the major threat posed to the entire labor movement.

ILWU International President Robert McEllrath's Jan. 3 statement entitled, "Prepare to take action when EGT vessel arrives" was issued to all ILWU locals. The statement expresses the union's solidarity with Local 21's cause and condemns the employers, government, and anti-union laws like Taft-Hartley that restrict solidarity pickets.

But McEllrath's statement appears to differ in at least one critical aspect from the call for mass mobilizations issued by Local 21 and Local 10 and the San Francisco and Washington State Labor Councils. These organizations appear to be aiming their calls for solidarity to the coast-wide ILWU ranks and to the broader labor movement and its allies in the Occupy movement. Understanding that any confrontation with police and military authorities to thwart the operation of the EGT scab terminal must entail a labor and allied mobilization of massive proportions, not only in Longview but at all West Coast ports, they have not advised ILWU locals to refrain from mobilizing in Longview. By implication they seek to not only close down Longview but the entire West Coast.

McEllrath's statement, in contrast, takes great pains to do the opposite. It reads, in part: "Locals need to be aware of the narrow path that we must cut through a federal labor law (the Taft-Hartley Act) that criminalizes worker solidarity, outlaws labor's most effective tools, and protects commerce while severely restricting unions. Because Local 21's labor dispute is with EGT, federal labor law entitles the Local to conduct picketing and other collective actions directed at EGT. Further, while the NLRB, which administers Taft-Hartley, sought and received an injunction in federal court on behalf of EGT against the ILWU and its members, the federal court denied the NLRB's motion to ban picketing at the EGT facility in Longview, preserving our First Amendment rights to peacefully picket the company.

"The NLRB is currently seeking a second injunction, this time on behalf of PMA, on the theory that any disruption of work by the ILWU on the West Coast docks at the same time that the Union is protesting EGT constitutes a violation of Taft-Hartley. However, we have no dispute with PMA or its member companies. *Thus, any showing of support for Local 21 at the time that a vessel calls at the EGT facility must be measured to ensure that the West Coast ports have sufficient manpower so as not to impact cargo movement for PMA member companies. A call for a protest of EGT is not a call for a shutdown of West Coast ports and must not result in one.*" (Emphasis added.)

McEllrath's statement also cautions ILWUers as to the severe penalties, including imprisonment, that might be imposed on would-be Longview protesters. And while condemning the government's anti-worker collusion with corporations, McEllrath warns ILWU leaders to "take extreme caution" against those who might take non-ILWU-sanctioned actions against EGT.

Experienced trade unionists have long been aware that the ILWU and many other unions have often been compelled to take great care in their formulations to the ranks in order to avoid government-aided company attempts to impose serious fines and other sanctions against unions that exceed the limitations im-



Justin Sullivan / Getty Images

posed by contracts. Indeed, most all of the politically powerful ILWU solidarity actions and one-day strikes over the years have been formally conducted in the name of ILWU members' "concern" over their "health and safety" should they cross a third-party picket line aimed at closing down a port. Few believe, however, that any of these third-party pickets would pose a serious threat to an ILWU member's safety.

This must be kept in mind when evaluating the statements of President McEllrath. The test of his fealty to Local 21's cause will be in life itself, not in the words that might have been crafted to legally protect the union against massive employer damage claims. If the ILWU leadership mobilizes the mass forces necessary to seriously confront the planned scab operation in Longview, a battle of the first order is in the works. If not, the Longview struggle may well be lost, but nevertheless seen as an important component in labor's coming fightback.

One critical point seems clear. The ILWU International president's statement expressing solidarity with Local 21, however restricted, and its pledge to aid in the upcoming protests at Longview, would not have become a reality were it not for a dedicated small group of Oakland Occupiers and the solidarity they have lent to an ILWU local that faces destruction at the hands of a boss class that has hitherto run roughshod over workers around the world.

Workers' pent-up anger explodes worldwide

The Longview struggle takes place in the context of working-class mobilizations around the world. These include the mass mobilizations that forced the resignation of the U.S.-backed dictators in Tunisia and Egypt (though the victories are still incomplete), the eight or more one-day anti-austerity general strikes in Greece, the mobilizations of millions in France that challenged the degradation of the pension system, the millions in Spain who occupied public plazas to protest the government's austerity measures, and the 150,000 workers who occupied Madison, Wis., for a month to challenge the state's abolition of public employee collective bargaining rights.

Today's majority-supported Occupation Wall Street movement proved to be the spark that ignited the anger and pent-up class hatred of never-ending government and employer attacks on workers, oppressed nationalities, students, and youth in the United States. The 99 percent are coming to understand that their interests are diametrically opposed to those of the ruling-class rich and its government.

This government was quick to respond to the challenge to its political hegemony. In short order it systematically organized, military style, its ever-growing repressive police/military apparatus across the country to demolish virtually every one of the close to 1000 Occupy sites. In the course of a few weeks 5000 innocent protesters were arrested, many brutalized and jailed.

The power elite understood the modest campsites and meeting places of a few score to several hundred activists as the physical symbol of a challenge to its legitimacy, and thus deemed them unacceptable. The elite did not foresee that the brutal removal of Occupiers along with their tents and equipment would galvanize hundreds of thousands across the country.

The Occupiers found a receptive audience when they championed virtually every demand of the oppressed and exploited, including opposition to capitalism's wars, its racist discrimination, its attacks on public education and soaring tuition, its increasingly for-profit and privatized prison-industrial complex, and its bail-out of multi-billion-dollar banks and other financial institutions at the expense of working people.

Today, the call initiated by Occupy Oakland to stand in solidarity with beleaguered longshore workers is being watched closely around the world.

The shift in the public mood has been rapid and remarkable. A December 2011 Pew poll found that among young people in the age bracket of 19-29, 49 percent preferred socialism over capitalism. Forty-three percent favored capitalism. "Despite all of the declarations that socialism is dead," said the Chicago-based education publication *Substance News*, "a growing minority of people, especially the young, see socialism as a more human alternative." The Pew survey found that in the general population 60 percent to 31 percent favored capitalism over socialism. Among Blacks 55 percent favored socialism as against 36 percent favoring capitalism. The figures mark a significant change from a similar Pew poll taken a year ago.

It is unfair to expect the Occupy Wall Street movement to spearhead the inevitable class battles to come. But history will record that at a time when capitalism's offensive was at full blast, Occupy was part of a series of struggles that evidenced the capacity of working people to resist and fight back. Such was also the case with the 2006 one-day strike of five million immigrants to protest planned punitive immigrant legislation.

Today Occupy stands tall as an example of what a dedicated core can accomplish if its politics and demands reflect the highest aspirations of the masses for a better life. Occupy's solidarity with ILWU Local 21 and its encouragement of a mass effort to reverse yet another ruling-class offensive will not be forgotten. ■

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rail the India-Pakistan peace process ...

Given this history, we reject any military solution to the problems of Pakistan and Afghanistan and pledge to devote all our energy to constructing concrete alternatives to the false choice between NATO and Taliban, a genuinely pro-people, pro-freedom alternative. The immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops along with measures aimed at achieving socioeconomic justice are what we believe can alleviate the suffering of the people of both Afghanistan and Pakistan and lead to a just peace in the region.

However, let us be clear that none of these people-friendly measures will ever be given to the people, but will have to be extracted from the impending alliance of local and foreign powers that is planning to dominate Afghanistan even after the withdrawal of NATO troops (the recent Bonn conference is the latest example of attempts to make such alliances). And this can only be done by a genuine movement of the masses of Afghanistan and Pakistan working together with a clear identification of their common enemies: U.S. imperial power, the neo-colonial Pakistan army, and the Taliban and various allied groups. We recognize this struggle as part of the larger fight against the economic colonization of the region in the name of globalization and neoliberal agenda. ...

Afghan Labour Revolutionary Organization
Solidarity Party of Afghanistan
Afghan Revolutionary Organization
Malalai Joya Defence Committee
Labour Party Pakistan
Awami Party Pakistan
Workers Party Pakistan
Pakistan Trade Union Defence Campaign
Awami Tehreek
United Kashmir Peoples National Party

By DAVID BERNT

Coming fresh off his reelection victory, Teamster President Jimmy Hoffa Jr. is seeking to take away the right of rank-and-file members to elect their international officers.

Hoffa was reelected with 59% of the vote against two challengers, reform activists Sandy Pope and former Hoffa ally Fred Gegare. Despite such a large margin of victory Hoffa and other top union officers want to do away with direct election of officers and replace it with a delegated convention election—the way most U.S. unions do it.

Hoffa and his slate won reelection despite massive concessions, job losses, pension cuts, and declining Teamster contract standards. Only 20 percent of the membership returned their ballots, meaning Hoffa won with the support of about 12 percent of Teamster members. This took place despite Hoffa's raising over \$3 million for his campaign, donated mostly by officers and staffers who owe their jobs to Hoffa.

Hoffa sent out multiple glossy mailings to the membership, mostly attacking reform candidate Pope, and hired professional telemarketers to do phone banking. Additionally, the International spent millions on supposedly non-partisan get-out-the-vote advertisements, including robo-calls from Bill Clinton and actor Danny DeVito, who just happened to portray the incumbent president's father in a movie called "Hoffa."

Sandy Pope, a veteran activist and local officer from New York, ran a different kind of campaign. She didn't have millions of dollars and Hollywood actors to support her campaign. Instead, Pope had an army of rank-and-file activists who volunteered their time, money, and energy to get out her program to mobilize members and use the union's resources to fight back against bosses' attacks on workers.

Where Pope supporters campaigned

and provided members with an alternative to the Hoffa concession train her support was strong. Pope did well in locals with large numbers of members under national contracts, particularly UPS and Freight. Despite these efforts, Pope was able to get only about 17% of the vote.

In addition to Hoffa's resource advantage and the allegiance of most local officers to him, the Pope campaign was hurt by the presence of another opposition candidate. International VP Fred Gegare, a long-time Hoffa ally, formed a slate along with a handful of other VPs and local officers. Gegare gained support from some old-guard bureaucrats who felt left out of the inner circle of power surrounding Hoffa.

Gegare criticized Hoffa's concessionary record, especially the failing health of the Central States Pension Fund. Yet while Gegare was an International VP on the Hoffa slate, he never raised any criticisms, even when Hoffa crippled the CSPF by letting UPS withdraw from the fund. However, even though Gegare was not a credible reformer, he often raised credible criticisms of Hoffa and echoed many of the same positions as Pope, therefore siphoning votes away from the Pope campaign.

The biggest challenge the Pope campaign faced was disillusionment and frustration of rank-and-file members, who after experiencing more than a decade of losses and concessions under Hoffa, and a generally weakened labor

Following Teamster election victory, Hoffa seeks limits on members' rights



Teamster union reformer Sandy Pope.

movement, have given up hope that the union's losses can be turned around. These members didn't participate in the campaign, and 80 percent didn't even bother to vote.

Ken Paff, national organizer of Teamsters for a Democratic Union, wrote of the recent election, "In the 1990s, Ron Carey [elected Teamster president on a reform slate], could tap a sentiment

that Teamster power was real, and just needed someone willing to unleash it. And the union began to do just that, including the victorious 1997 UPS strike. In the recent political climate, our argument has been more difficult: that Teamster power can be rebuilt. Thousands of members are up for the challenge, and are the heart and soul of the TDU movement. But most Teamsters have been hunkered down, without great hopes of transforming the union to take on corporate power."

Rank-and-file activists in the Teamsters are now preparing for new battles ahead. First will be a fight to preserve the direct elections of International officers. National contracts at UPS and Freight will expire in the next few years, and members in those industries are preparing to build contract campaigns to force Hoffa to take a strong stand on negotiations.

While Teamster activists continue to face challenges engaging co-workers to get involved, there are encouraging signs. The Occupy Wall Street movement has inspired and mobilized working people, including Teamsters to fight back against the bosses' offensive. It is notable that in New York the OWS movement has supported and marched in solidarity with locked-out Teamsters at Sotheby's in New York. The Sotheby's workers are members of Local 814, a local led by reform officers who supported the Sandy Pope campaign.

Efforts like that of the Sotheby's workers, the Sandy Pope campaign, and the UPS and Freight workers' contract organizing campaigns are the foundations for rebuilding Teamster power and returning the union to its militant roots. ■

Reviving the Strike — How to win labor's battles

By CARL SACK

Book Review: "Reviving the Strike: How Working People Can Regain Power and Transform America," by Joe Burns, IG Publishing, \$15.95.

The holiday season may have come and gone, but it's never too late (or too early) to find the perfect gift for that aspiring rabble-rouser in your life. Before you wrap up Joe Burn's "Reviving the Strike" in back issues of SA, though, you'll want to spend a few hours reading and digesting it yourself.

Burns, a labor lawyer and veteran contract negotiator, presents a concise summary of both the internal and external forces causing the disintegration of organized labor in the U.S. He doesn't mince words in identifying the "only true weapon" that American unions have practically given up on but must revive in order to regain their power—the production-halting strike.

To start, Burns draws a clear distinction between the meager—both in number and in effectiveness—"strikes" of today, which usually involve picketers standing around watching scabs under police and court projection march in to take over their jobs, and those of the 1870s through 1940s that brought industrial giants like General Motors to their knees. There are two key components that have been lost: the ability to shut down production, staunching the bosses' profit lifeline, and worker solidarity, defined as coordinated, industry-wide or region-wide work stoppages.

Before 1935, unions were able to build the mass power of organized labor and use it to defy arbitrary barriers imposed by the legislative and judicial agents of the boss class. Burns quotes labor historian William Forbath: "Principled disobedience to injunctions was official AFL policy from the late 1880s until the passage of Norris LaGuardia and beyond."

What happened since? A series of federal labor laws, designed to look "fair" to both business and labor but really targeted at the right to strike, slowly restricted the legal playing field for unions. The bosses' robed henchmen on the Supreme Court furthered the process by ruling against workers in almost every labor case they took up since the passage of the National Labor Relations Act, at times blatantly defying the language of the act itself to do so. Liberal justices often led the anti-labor charge.

Burns astutely outlines the philosophical differences undergirding the fight between labor and the bourgeoisie. To the bosses and the courts, human labor is a commodity to be bought and sold on the open market, the means of production are the private property of investors, and workers need to be controlled by management or else they act irresponsibly.

On the other hand, the traditional values of organized labor held that workers are *not* simply meat for the grinder—they have lives and families that need support, and they are the true owners of the factories, stores, and farms because their labor creates all of the wealth that the boss steals and calls profit. A job is not a consensual contract between worker and boss that can be terminated by either party; it is a means of subsistence and demonstrates membership in a class whose collective interests outweigh the individual "rights" associated with so-called free trade (the "right" to scab, the "right" to quit and starve, etc.).

Sadly, in recent decades, the crop of "progressive" labor leaders who got radicalized in the 1960s have taken on the management framework, and now speak in ways that are much more conservative than even the likes of AFL head Samuel Gompers did in the early 20th century. Today's union officers often have wages, benefits, and job security that set them apart from the workers they represent. They fear the law and the courts, through which they could face heavy fines or jail time for daring to show the sort of real solidarity and militancy that won the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters strike or the 1936-37 Flint sit-down strike.

Many unions today operate more like the craft unions of the early AFL than the industrial unions of the CIO. They bank on their members' job skills preventing the bosses from replacing strikers with scabs (which they don't). They accept the precept—unthinkable before the 1980s—that their role is simply to represent their members in grievance procedures and negotiate contracts with a single employer.

Perhaps the strongest section of the book details the "alternatives" to militant strikes that have been entertained in recent years, and why each has failed to take the place of the strike (though some can be effective supplements). These include one-day strikes, work-to-rule, corporate campaigns, "social unionism," and lowering the bar for what constitutes "success." An entire

chapter is devoted to explaining why top-down organizing drives such as those conducted by SEIU are an expensive and ineffective diversion from the task at hand.

There are a few notable, heroic exceptions to the modern lack of labor militancy, and Burns is quick to highlight them—particularly the 1985-86 Hormel P9 strike, the 1989-90 Pittston coal-mine strike, the 1993-94 Staley lockout, and the 2008 Republic Windows occupation. Each of these is treated to a concise analysis of its strengths, weaknesses, and the lessons workers can draw from it.

These struggles are compared to the major establishment battles of the U.S. labor movement, which are outlined early on in the book. Throughout, Burns draws more on quotes from right-wing labor presidents of yesteryear than from the leftist radicals, explaining that his purpose in doing so is to demonstrate just how far to the right of the *former* right the current "progressives" at the top of today's labor movement are. However, he does briefly acknowledge the contributions of socialists, anarchists, and communists in building the strength of the movement and leading many of the pivotal battles of the mid-1930s and late '40s.

One weakness of the book is its vague treatment of the role of the advanced systemic crisis of capitalism in pushing down wages and working-class standards of living. There is mention made of the more globalized nature of capital and the need to coordinate action beyond national borders, but not much specific on how workers might respond to a boss's threat to shut down a plant and move its jobs to Singapore. Ultimately, the working class will have to replace the entire capitalist system with true economic democracy to stop attacks on its standard of living and make a better world for all.

Burns does not claim to have all of the prescriptions. He acknowledges that economic and social conditions differ markedly today from the early 20th century, and along with defying and ridding ourselves of reactionary laws, unions are going to have to be creative in developing new tactics to fight our battles. He correctly asserts that "collective bargaining cannot work without an effective strike," and also that "the system of labor control forbids effective strike tactics." The implication is: to hell with the boss's law—the great battles of the working class against their oppressors must, and will, be fought again. ■

Occupy, longshore workers challenge anti-union bosses



Noah Berger / AP

(Left) Protesters mount scaffolding at Port of Oakland mass picket, Nov. 2.

BY JEFF MACKLER

Time Magazine designated its “Person of the Year 2011” as “The Protestor.” To make clear that its reference was to what the editors considered the most important development of the year, *Time* added to its cover-page headline: “From the Arab Spring to Athens, from Occupy Wall Street to Moscow.” Its feature story began, “No one could have known that when a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire in a public square, it would have ignited protests that would topple dictators and start a global wave of dissent. In 2011 protesters didn’t just voice their complaints, they changed the world.”

Time, among the most popular mainstream news magazines in the United States, has a point of sorts. No one can predict whether a specific event will ignite mass struggles that can change the course of history. But history does repeatedly demonstrate that the importance and interconnection of seemingly isolated events depend in great part on the historical context in which they take place. Today this context is the worldwide crisis of the capitalist system and the total incapacity of the ruling rich to offer any solution other than deeper incursions into the quality of life of working people everywhere.

In this context, the Occupy movement’s resounding proclamation of the class divide—“We are the 99 percent; the bankers, corporations, and their government are the one percent”—has been seared into the consciousness of millions. In the blink of an eye, yesterday’s impossible challenges can today become the order of the day. The nearly 40-year virtually uninterrupted series of concessions and defeats imposed by capital against labor can be reversed only on the condition that the 99 percent organize to fight back, and that in the course of this fightback a mass revolutionary socialist party is constructed to challenge the capitalist system itself.

A seemingly instant turn of events was sparked by the late December call of the relatively small numbers actively engaged in Occupy Oakland to mobilize a mass force in January to help embattled International Longshore and Warehouse Workers Union (ILWU Local 21) workers challenge a major union-busting effort by the EGT corporation. EGT’s union-busting ship, to be escorted by the U.S. Coast Guard, military ships and helicopters, and an expected mass force of land-based police and military personnel, seeks to dock and upload a grain cargo at its new \$200 million non-union facility

This won’t be the first time that EGT has moved to make its scab facility operational. Last July, 1000 ILWU members and supporters responded by blocking a train carrying grain to the Longview terminal. And again, on Sept. 7, according to a flyer distributed by Local 21, “400 union supporters blocked a grain train in Vancouver, Washington, and then again in Longview. The next morning hundreds of longshore workers ar-

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rived from all the Northwest ports before dawn, and news media reported thousands of tons of grain ended up on the tracks. The ports of Seattle, Tacoma, Everett, Vancouver and Portland were shut down—the workers were all in Longview.”

Today, ILWU Local 21 and the Bay Area-based ILWU Local 10 have joined to put some teeth into Occupy Oakland’s call for a January mass mobilization in Longview. They are supported in this effort by the San Francisco Labor Council, which will be joining a Solidarity Caravan headed for Longview. The labor council, which subsequently approved \$1500 toward the caravan’s expenses, passed a Dec. 19 solidarity resolution that states: “Whereas, EGT Development, a joint venture of multinational corporations Bunge, Itochu and STX Pan Ocean, agreed to hire union Longshoremen when accepting millions in taxpayer funds to build a massive grain exporting terminal at the Port of Longview, and once the terminal was built has tried to void its contract and has refused to hire ILWU labor, ...

“Whereas, with the use of police and courts and the 220 arrests in the 225-member ILWU Local 21, EGT has managed to get enough grain across ILWU picket lines and into the terminal that EGT appears poised to load a ship soon in violation of their agreement with the Port of Longview, ...

“Whereas, an ILWU Local 10-endorsed solidarity caravan of union members and community activists from the Bay Area is being organized to bolster our brothers and sisters of ILWU Local 21 in Longview, WA, for an emergency mass protest when requested to do so, therefore:

“Be It Resolved that the San Francisco Labor Council endorses the solidarity caravan, will spread the word about the caravan to its membership and constituency groups, and encourage their participation.”

Similarly, the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Counties (Washington) Central Labor Council adopted a Jan. 2 resolution stating in part: “It is estimated, sometime in late January or early February the [scab] EGT facility at the port of Longview will receive its first grain ship to be loaded at its berth. The name and timing of this ship will undoubtedly be kept secret until the last possible moment. It is likely there will be a few days to as little as 24 hours notice of when the ship will dock. Notification will be given via the Internet and any other relevant means of networking throughout the country.

“We are imploring all able working-class people willing to take time out of his or her own lives, to come to Longview, Washington for a historic protest. ...

“The class struggle never really goes away. Right now the rich and the ruling class are attempting to deal a blow that labor might never recover from. The ILWU has always been the vanguard of labor everywhere. Today, the ILWU’s value of “An Injury to One, Is an Injury to All” couldn’t be any more pertinent for all organizations. So please, if you believe in a better future for the 99% of us that work for a living, do what you can to support ILWU Local 21.”

The stakes in the Longview ILWU struggle are high. If EGT’s planned scab-operated effort is successful, the door will swing open for the corporations to attempt to smash unionized ILWU port workers on the entire West Coast—one of the most important union bastions in the country. As with the massive defeats they imposed on the United Automobile Workers in recent years, the government and bosses now seek to take their pound of flesh from the ILWU. They aim to reduce labor costs to the near minimum wage rates that have been imposed on other once powerful unions.

A defeat in Longview will resound throughout the world—as will a union victory. The highly unionized West Coast ports are the point of entry and departure for commodities worth hundreds of billions of dollars that are traded on world markets. The historic ILWU victories against powerful corporate and government forces in the 1930s and 1940s were a product of the 1934 San Francisco General Strike of 65,000 workers that won the union collective bargaining rights, model wage scales, benefits, and working conditions that persist to this day.

“Third-party” pickets

The Occupy Oakland call to close down the port of Longview was no idle bluster. It was the Occupy Oakland activists who first issued a call for a city-wide “general strike” on Nov. 2 to protest the police attack a few days earlier that had demolished the encampment at Frank Ogawa Plaza (renamed Oscar Grant Plaza by the Occupiers) and brutalized peaceful Occupiers with tear gas, pepper spray, and clubs. A police-fired missile that night that smashed the skull of the encampment leader and U.S. Marine veteran of the Iraq War, Scott Olsen, was a shot heard around the world.

The reaction shocked more than a few when 30,000 working people mobilized in response to shut down a good number of Oakland’s banks and other corporate institutions and the multi-billion-dollar Port of Oakland itself. In the face of this power in the streets, the very city officials that ordered the crackdown felt compelled to instruct their subordinates that no punishment was to be implemented for city and country workers who chose to join the “general strike.”

In solidarity with the Longview workers and with some 22 Los Angeles truckers fighting for a union contract who were fired by a port corporation owned in part by Goldman Sacks, Occupy Oakland’s General Assembly proceeded to organize for a Dec. 12 West Coast port shutdown, in which 6000 protesters took part in Oakland alone. Support was won from the Longview ILWU Local 21 members, from the Los Angeles Labor Council and from several unions up and down the coast. Major efforts were undertaken to win the solidarity of ILWU workers at most of the West Coast ports.

This partially successful second effort to challenge the bosses’ austerity drive and organize solidarity for port workers from Los Angeles to Longview caused a bit of a stir in the labor bureaucracy. Some ILWU officials and other class-collaborationist labor bureaucrats argued, for the first time, that “third-party pickets”—that is, Occupy Oakland supporters and their allies who mobilized at the docks up and down the state—were flaunting what they called the “democratic right” of ILWU members to decide whether or not to engage in solidarity actions.

The corporate press and employers took it a bit further, claiming that the Occupy-initiated pickets were causing ILWU members to lose pay.

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