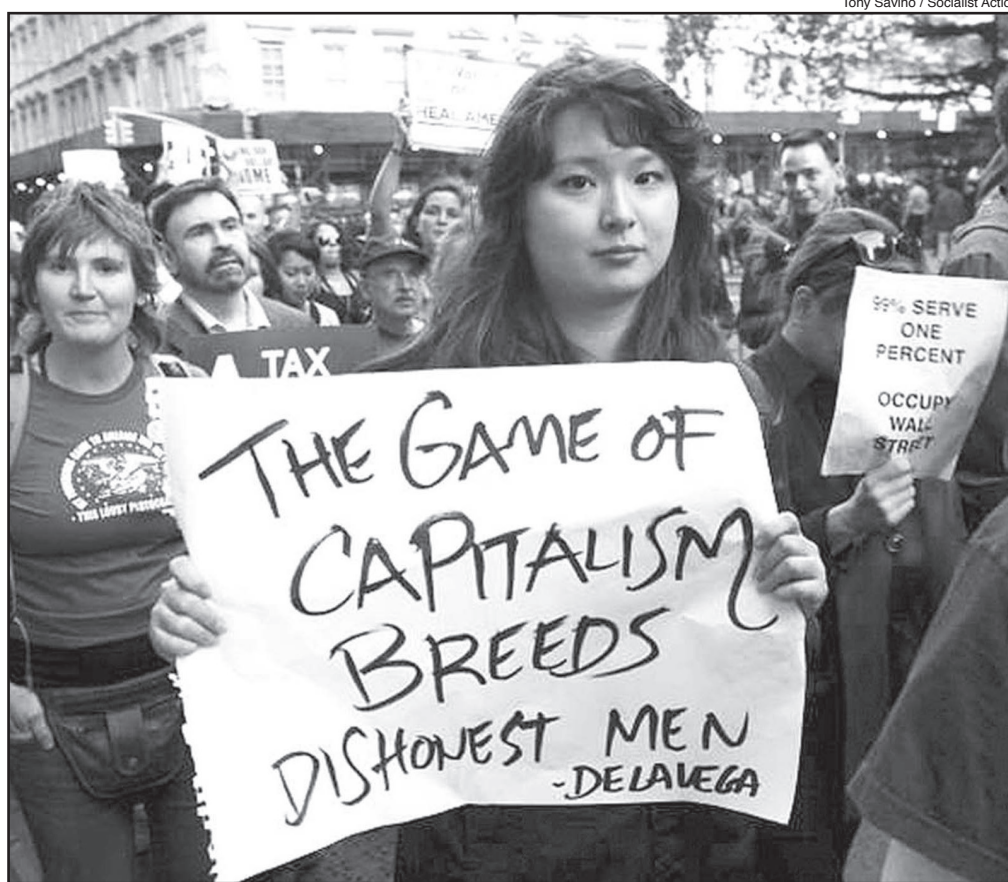


Massive occupation targets Wall Street



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Stan Honda / AFP / Getty Images

PROTESTS SPREAD AROUND THE U.S.

(Above) Members of the Transport Workers Union join the Occupiers at New York's Zuccotti Park on Sept. 30. (Left) Wall Street marchers.

By MARTY GOODMAN

Worldwide economic misery, inequality, and war have sparked an explosion of protests against Wall Street's super crooks. The Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement, which began in New York City, has spread like a wildfire across the United States. Protesters, led mainly by young people, have built encampments in numerous cities, with accompanying marches and rallies that have brought out thousands.

Their chants strike out at the injustices of capitalism: "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out!" "They say cut back, we say fight back!"

The original call for the Wall Street protests was made on July 13 on a website owned by *Adbusters*, a Canadian anti-corporate cultural magazine. The protest was set for Sept. 17. Many activists didn't know what to make of it, but on that date about 1000 demonstrators arrived. Within a couple of weeks, the actions went viral, with protests erupting in every major U.S. city. As we go

to press on Oct. 8, the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement has spread to over 250 U.S. cities and towns, and is helping to define a new generation of rebels.

Reasons for anger at Wall Street aren't hard to find. Anger has erupted in the context of unpopular wars for oil and resources in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the U.S.-backed war in Libya. The racist execution of Troy Davis in Georgia on Sept. 21 brought many activists to a boiling point. Capitalism is showing its true face to ever more millions, especially the youth who are confronted with bleak job prospects and lack the means to further their education.

The stark economic inequality of the United States has produced a backdrop for their rage. Between the 1970s and today, the inflation-adjusted income of working people stagnated. In contrast, the income of the richest 1% from 1979 to 2005 rose an incredible 480%. The average annual salary of the top 1% went from \$4.2 million in 1979 to \$24.3 million in 2005.

OWS is loosely modeled on the "Arab Spring" symbol of mass protest, Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt—where

the movement toppled the pro-Israel, U.S. puppet dictator Hosni Mubarak earlier this year. The OWS also drew inspiration from the occupation of the Capitol building and mass rallies in Madison, Wis., by militant trade unionists and their supporters last February.

"Festival of the oppressed"

The New York City Occupation is centered in Zuccotti Park, a block-sized privately owned space a short walk from Wall Street. Political discussions go on at all hours. Protesters on the Broadway side display to passersby signs and banners denouncing inequality and mocking greed. Each day there are protests at the opening and closing bells of the stock market. Twice a day the movement has a General Assembly in which hundreds participate, and anyone can speak. On Oct. 8, a Washington Square meeting gathered 3000 people. An Egyptian revolutionary addressed the crowd, to rave applause.

Lenin used the phrase "a festival of the oppressed" to

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UNAC plans antiwar rallies and conference

By THE EDITORS

This month marks the 10th year of the Afghanistan War. Despite token troop drawdowns, U.S. troops and mercenary "contractors" seem poised to continue their occupation of the country for some time. The 10-year war has brought only death and carnage to the Afghan people, while over 2670 soldiers from the United States, Canada, and other Western

countries have also given their lives.

Yet Afghan insurgents are able to continue their attacks unabated. On Oct. 8, they attacked four U.S. outposts simultaneously, using rockets and a suicide bomber.

The U.S.-backed government of Hamid Karzai is rife with corruption and deeply unpopular. The so-called Afghan army has proved incompetent to take over from U.S. forces. The brutality of

Karzai's regime was brought out this month by a UN report revealing that Afghan security officials systematically torture prisoners in order to obtain confessions. The report described abuse including ripping detainees' toenails out and twisting their genitals. Nearly half of the prisoners interviewed said they had been tortured by Afghan security agents.

And now, while the quagmires in Af-

ghanistan and Iraq persist, the U.S. has undertaken a new war in Libya, and threatens further action in Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and elsewhere.

To mark the 10th anniversary of the Afghanistan War, the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) has called for nationally coordinated antiwar activities to take place in cities throughout the United States on Saturday, Oct. 15.

About 25 cities have announced antiwar events for Oct. 15 or 16. In many

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White House protest against pipeline

By BILL ONASCH

XL is the proposed final stage of TransCanada's Keystone system of pipelines carrying crude synthetic oil from Alberta tar sands to the USA.

Some stages to Illinois and Oklahoma destinations have already been completed. XL would run 1,980 miles (3,190 km) from Hardisty, Alberta, to refineries in Houston and Port Arthur, Texas—with easy access to Gulf of Mexico shipping. Some of the refined product would be consumed in the U.S. market while much would be exported to Europe and Latin America.

The route from the outskirts of the Arctic to the gateway to tropical waters invades a variety of ecosystems—vulnerable to inevitable spills. That is the issue that has belatedly brought together a broad array of opponents to XL making a last ditch stand.

But even more important to those concerned about climate change is the fact that these pipelines are crucial to expanded development in the tar sands—among the dirtiest greenhouse as well as ecological polluters in the world.

At the end of August and beginning of September, Park Police arrested 1252 protesters carrying out two weeks of nonviolent civil disobedience at the White House to try to stop XL. Most were cited for loitering and fined a hundred dollars. There were some prominent names among those taken away in handcuffs such as Daryl Hannah, Margot Kidder, and Naomi Klein. First Nation and American Indian leaders from both sides of the border were there, among the most



resolute and articulate participants. Al Gore, while not at the action, sent a statement of support.

Perhaps the world's most recognized climate scientist, NASA's 70-year-old James Hansen, did take a turn riding in the paddy wagon. He had earlier written, "Exploitation of tar sands would make it implausible to stabilize climate and avoid disastrous global climate impacts."

Essentially, he says losing the tar sands fight would mean "game over" in the effort to avoid calamitous climate change. On the line at the White House Hansen shouted just before his arrest, "If the tar sands pipeline is approved, we will be back and we will grow. For the sake of our children and our grandchildren, we must find somebody who is working for our dream."

The Amalgamated Transit and Transport Workers unions issued a rare joint statement, "We need jobs, but not ones based on increasing our reliance on Tar Sands oil. There is no shortage of water and

sewage pipelines that need to be fixed or replaced, bridges and tunnels that are in need of emergency repair, transportation infrastructure that needs to be renewed and developed. Many jobs could also be created in energy conservation, upgrading the grid, maintaining and expanding public transportation—jobs that can help us reduce air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and improve energy efficiency."

Every indication points to White House approval of the XL project. The president's action on ozone standards announced just before the Labor Day holiday break sends another clear message he is not the one "working for our dream."

Ozone formation occurs when nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide, and volatile organic compounds react in sunlight. The major contributors to this smog are motor vehicle and lawn mower exhaust, industrial emissions, and chemical solvents. High concentrations cause or complicate a host of respiratory health problems—particularly threatening to the very young and very old.

It's estimated that reducing ozone pollution by one-third could save 4000 lives in the USA each year—an annual figure roughly equivalent to the total number of GIs killed in combat so far in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

In 2008, the Bush EPA addressed this major public health problem by adopting the unanimous recommendation of an independent scientific panel to substantially reduce emissions producing ozone through much stricter new pollution standards. Bush reversed their ruling, substituting instead the present inadequate standards.

Earlier this year the Obama EPA again adopted the stricter rules. In the face of the usual boss howls of job-killer about every environmental or workplace safety standard ever proposed, the EPA was again ordered to retract them last week by President Obama, postponing any further action until after next year's presidential election. ■

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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Obama rediscovers the jobs crisis

By JOHN LESLIE

The August jobs report issued by the *Bureau of Labor Statistics* paints another grim picture for the unemployed. The August numbers show little change in the number of unemployed, with the economy creating barely enough jobs to compensate for the 150,000 new workers who enter the workforce every month.

According to the BLS, "the number of unemployed persons, at 14 million, remained essentially unchanged in August," with the unemployment rate remaining at 9.1 percent.

Of course, the unemployment rate is higher amongst oppressed nationalities; at 16.7 percent for African Americans and 11.3 for Latinos. Add to this 14 million the 8.8 million working part-time jobs because they cannot get a full-time job and an additional 2.6 million workers that the BLS refers to as "marginally attached to the workforce," and you get a clearer picture of the jobs crisis. More than 25 million workers in the U.S. are either unemployed or underemployed.

This crisis is compounded in cities like Philadelphia, a city with a 40 percent African American population, which has lost much of its former industrial and manufacturing base. According to the *Philadelphia Daily News*, the current crisis has created a "lost generation" of workers, men in their 30s, 40s, and 50s who "will not be able find any kind of work."

This bad news comes in conjunction with the decision by SUNOCO to either sell off their local refineries or shut them down if no buyers are found. ConocoPhillips has also announced its intent to shut down its local facilities. Aside from the 2000 well-paying refinery jobs that could be lost, the ripple effect in the Port of Philadelphia would be tremendous. Almost 20 percent of the shipping traffic coming into Philadelphia is destined for these refining operations.

Liberals jump back onto Obama bandwagon

With the 2012 elections looming ahead, Obama unveiled his jobs plan at the beginning of September. The Obama's jobs bill is in fact a massive giveaway of tax money to corporations. It would spread unpaid internship to the unemployed, as it includes a plan to force jobless workers to labor for companies while receiving only their unemployment checks. What's more, the bill would be paid for largely through cuts in social programs, especially health care.

The right responded by accusing Obama of engaging in "class warfare" for his rather modest program of tax increases on the rich. The fact remains that the rich have accumulated an unprecedented 90 percent share of the wealth in the United States and are not interested in doing anything to relieve the crisis that has fallen on the backs of U.S. workers.

Of course, liberals who have been critical of Obama for not "standing up" to Republicans and for making too many concessions are happy to see the "old"



Obama back. You know, the "good" Obama who is for "Hope and Change!"

AFL-CIO head Richard Trumka, speaking at a press conference, praised the Obama plan with these words: "The president took an important step tonight—he started a serious national conversation about how to solve our jobs crisis. He showed working people that he is willing to go to the mat to create new jobs on a substantial scale." Other liberal activists, like anchor Rachel Maddow and filmmaker Michael Moore, jumped back on the Obama bandwagon—conveniently forgetting the president's vicious attacks on the living standards of seniors and his promises to cut budgets at the expense of the very workers he now champions.

The truth is that the Obama jobs plan is an inadequate bandage on a major wound to the arteries. Faced with what economists predict will be a decade of slow growth, the need for a massive project to create jobs is clear. In order to create the 25 million jobs we need, the economy would have to create almost 570,000 jobs per month over a five-year period. It's obvious that the capitalist class and their political servants in both parties lack the will to tackle unemployment on any such scale.

Working people do not have a decade to wait around for the system to solve its problems. We need an immediate public works program to create jobs at top union wages and benefits. We need a national health system that makes medical care available and free to all. We need an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, an end to all foreclosures, and the full funding of Medicare and Social Security.

The bosses will say there's not enough money to pay for all of these things, but that is not true. The capitalists created this crisis and they should pay for it. We call for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops and mercenaries overseas and the spending of the wars dollars here at home. The banking and financial system should be nationalized under workers' control, and their resources used to create jobs for the unemployed.

The capitalist class and its political mouthpieces have proven that they are not fit to rule. Their policies have destroyed whole eco-systems, started wars in every corner of the globe, and driven millions into poverty worldwide. Their crisis-ridden system needs to be replaced by a new society run by and for working people. ■

W. Coast longshore workers fight for their jobs

By DAVID BERNT

For the past five months the small town of Longview, Wash., has been the scene of one of the most militant labor battles in recent history. International grain exporter EGT, a *Fortune* 500 company, has attempted to open a new \$200 million terminal on space leased from the port of Longview. EGT is attempting to operate the new facility without employing ILWU Local 21 longshore workers, despite contract language that all work done on port property is under the jurisdiction of the ILWU.

All other grain operations at West Coast ports are operated with ILWU members. EGT is attempting to break this gain of the longshore workers, and in doing so undermine the strength of the union. Unfortunately, EGT has gotten support from one labor union in efforts to break the longshore workers' union.

Operating Engineers Local 701, in a despicable move, went around the back of the longshore workers and signed an agreement with EGT that they would represent the new grain operation. The crooked bureaucrats in charge of that local, which was expelled from building trades councils for raiding activity, are assisting the bosses' attempts to break the

ILWU in exchange for the right to collect dues at one shop. Unions across the country have denounced the actions of Local 701, and ILWU has filed raiding charges with the AFL-CIO.

ILWU president Robert McEllrath sent a letter to the membership in September explaining the struggle in Longview: "ILWU longshoremen work at every grain export facility in the Pacific Northwest—Seattle, Tacoma, Aberdeen, Portland, Vancouver, and Longview. EGT Development has built a \$200 million facility on the same site as a previous grain facility where longshoremen worked. That site is directly on Port of Longview property. EGT is attempting to break the master grain agreement and become the first grain export terminal in the Pacific Northwest to operate without ILWU. This constitutes an assault on over 80 years of longshore jurisdiction—an assault that could fundamentally change the dynamics of the relationship within the grain industry as a whole. It is critical to the Longshore Division that this does not happen."

In May the longshore union began negotiations with EGT on terms for a contract at the grain facility. The company wanted the workers to agree to 12-hour shifts with no overtime. As negotiations stalled,

the union began organizing informational picket lines. In July a picket line of 600 longshoremen blocked trains full of grain from leaving the EGT plant. Police in riot gear fired tear gas at the picket line to break it up.

In August, the NLRB, in typical fashion, ordered the longshore workers to end their "violent" demonstrations at EGT. This was followed by an injunction from a federal judge that limited picket lines at EGT to eight members at a time.

Longshore rank and file, undeterred by the pro-boss courts, continued picket lines. On Sept. 8, hundreds of longshore workers from across the West Coast mobilized in Longview for a picket line. Allegedly, train cars of grain were dumped, brake lines cut, a guard shack's windows were broken, and six security guards were held hostage. Local 21 denies that the group took any hostages.

In response, local police began arresting members of Local 21, charging them with misdemeanor trespassing charges. Over 10 days, 35 members were picked up at their homes or on the street. Evan Rohar reported in a *Labor Notes* article, "They're rounding us up like we're murderers," said Dan Coffman, president of the Longview local. Five police dragged one union official out of his car by his

hair, roughed him up, and slammed him into the back of a squad car. Another member was hauled away while caring for his children, two and seven years old, leaving them to fend for themselves in an empty house. Yet another, a part-time minister, was arrested by police wielding assault rifles."

To avoid further dangerous situations with gun-toting sheriffs, ILWU attorneys contacted the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Dept. and offered the entire membership of Local 21 to be arrested. All 200 members marched silently to the courthouse from the union hall. The Sheriff's Dept. refused to arrest all members, though later they arrested the Local 21 vice-president.

Local 21 members have continued to fight despite police harassment and brutality. On Sept. 21 three Local 21 officers, including local president Dan Coffman and nine members of the ILWU women's auxiliary, were arrested for blocking a train from entering the EGT plant.

Media reports have focused on "violent" strikers. In reality, ILWU members and their supporters have shown tremendous restraint in the face of constant provocations from EGT, the police, and private security guards hired by the company. One EGT employee ran his car into a picket line and was never arrested or ticketed by police. The media also repeated the

(continued on page 5)



(Left) Thousands of striking Egyptian teachers, seeking higher pay, protest near prime minister's office, Sept. 24.

Middle East revolt gains force

By ANDREW POLLACK

"Arab Spring, European Summer, American Fall!" So read the huge banner greeting marchers as they returned to New York's Liberty Plaza, home to Occupy Wall Street, at the end of a 30,000-strong march. This is just the latest example of the constant evocation of the Arab revolution as inspiration by OWS and similar "Occupy" events around the U.S.

And the links go beyond just inspiration from witnessing others' mass mobilizations. At a meeting to discuss countering the latest revelations of NYPD spying on the city's Muslim communities, this author made the point that just as police repression of OWS stems from ruling-class hopes to crush any dissent from their domestic rule, so too repression of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians in the "war on terror" is designed to quash any dissent, at home and abroad, of their new wars to maintain U.S. global economic primacy.

And key to ending those wars is the global intifada, spreading from the Arab world, to the massive general strikes and occupations in Europe, and now into the belly of the beast. In recognition of these linkages, we offer here an update on events in the Middle East uprisings and their meaning for the global struggle.

Palestine

After months of uncertainty as to whether Palestinian Authority head Mahmoud Abbas would go for "statehood" for a Palestinian Bantustan at the UN Security Council or at the General Assembly, Abbas finally opted for the former.

There was much speculation that he might have done so knowing that although this would anger the U.S., his bid would be bottled up in committee for weeks, allowing precious time for Palestinian grassroots hopes and anger to dissipate before the inevitable U.S. veto was cast.

Abbas, not known for being an effective speaker, nonetheless got hearty applause from UN delegates, simply because Israel is increasingly isolated even in the rarified strata of bourgeois diplomacy. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech was a predictable rejection of any Palestinian demands, inside the UN or outside, coupled with an amazingly explicit Islamophobic rant against Iran and any other country challenging Israeli dominance.

Barack Obama's speech was basically, "Yeah, what he said!" Commentators were shocked at the almost complete lack of effort by Obama to even verbally appease Palestinians. The UN charade was soon followed by moves in Congress to cut off \$200 million in aid to the PA—just for daring to ask for a state!

In the weeks immediately before and after the UN discussion, violent attacks by settlers on Palestinians and on their land, homes, mosques, and olive trees, already steadily increasing over the past year, mushroomed.

Anti-Palestinian violence is escalating inside pre-1967 Israel as well, with attacks on mosques, and announcement of a plan to evict 30,000 Bedouins from their homes.

In response to the escalating attacks, Palestinians have formed self-defense committees in some villages and towns, to observe or even counter settler raids. *The Economist* reported: "'The age of sumud (stubborn steadfastness) has passed,' says a local businessman. 'We must defend ourselves. The whole town is prepared.' At an evening planning meeting, an 85-year-old landowner encourages his sons to abduct the next settler who chops down trees in his olive groves or slaughters one of his sheep...."

"So far the new, more robust tactics of the villagers have worked. On September 16th ... a Qusra farmer, Fathallah Abu Rayda, spied a band of settlers near his local well, seemingly intent on destroying or poisoning it, and notified the village network. Within minutes the mosque's loudspeakers had sounded the alarm, and hundreds had gathered to shoo the intruders away. One fled, said villagers, in his underpants. In the panic Mr. Abu Rayda was shot in the leg, but they have yet to return."

The article also described a new group called Youth Against Settlements in Hebron, which coordinates 300 volunteers who patrol the area by car, by bicycle, and on foot, watching out for settler raids.

These self-defense committees, should they spread and coordinate their actions, could lead to a revival of the grassroots mobilization of past Palestinian uprisings. Such committees could in turn become the germ of a new power challenging Zionism itself—a road over which a key obstruction is Abbas's PA, which continues its "security" coordination with Israel's police and army.

Also in late September, a hunger strike by Palestinian political prisoners was launched against the barbaric conditions under which they are held. It has garnered worldwide support, including from activists organizing support for hunger strikers in California's prisons who face similar attacks by guards.

Renewed protests in the Gulf

Mass mobilizations have returned to Yemen and Bahrain, and spread even to Saudi Arabia, where protests erupted in early October in the majority-Shia eastern parts of the country. Mass demonstrations, met by regime violence, broke out in Yemen on the return of President Ali Abdullah Saleh to the country after weeks in a hospital in Saudi Arabia.

In late September protests also resumed in Bahrain after a relative period of quiet following the crushing of dissent in March by Saudi troops with U.S. support. Some youth armed only with stones are battling troops in scenes reminiscent of Palestinian Intifadas.

The immediate trigger was the regime's fraudulent special parliamentary elec-

tions, called to fill the seats abandoned by Shiite lawmakers to protest the repression of the movement for democracy, which has also spotlighted the rampant discrimination against Shiites, who represent 70% of all Bahraini citizens.

Washington has stuck by Bahrain's rulers, who so graciously host the base of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, a key launching pad for wars throughout the region.

The regime has arrested leaders of the movement, often sentencing them to decades in prison. This has included not only leaders of the teachers union but, most notoriously, 20 nurses and doctors, sentenced to terms of five to 15 years by a military court solely for the "crime" of treating protesters wounded in regime assaults on demonstrations.

Outrage from activists and human rights groups around the world forced the regime to temporarily free the health-care workers pending their retrial by a civilian court. But supporters of the workers place little faith in the impartiality of that court and continue to demand dropping of the charges.

One particularly inspiring message of solidarity came from the Medics' Committee of Occupy Wall Street, who noted that the imprisoned health-care providers "are guilty only of doing exactly what we, the Street Medic Committee, do every day: tend to the health-care needs of peaceful protesters standing up against tyranny, corruption and oppression. We wish to join all the people of Bahrain fighting for their freedom as the people who occupy the street in New York City stand and fight for ours."

From stalemate to shooting in Syria?

In recent weeks the mainstream media has begun running stories claiming that defecting Syrian officers and soldiers are forming anti-regime units, and that peaceful protests will soon be replaced by civil war. These stories inevitably include supposed calls by opposition figures or organizations for outside intervention.

It is impossible to ascertain the veracity of these stories because of the regime's banning of foreign correspondents, the wishful-thinking factor on the part of the media, and the fragmentation of the opposition—although the organizations and individuals most central to the mass mobilizations have been strongly against imperialist intervention.

A number of so-called "unified" opposition councils have been announced after meetings in Turkey or elsewhere outside the country. Yet another one was announced in September, this one apparently involving not just disconnected, usually liberal, exiles, but also representatives of the Local Coordination Committees, as well as their most well-known figure, Burhan Ghalioun.

The *Asia Times* reported that "the new body, the Syrian National Council, has stated that it is resolutely opposed to foreign intervention," but also claimed

that "some opposition voices have called for civilian protection mechanisms, such as no-fly zones in parts of the country to protect activists on the ground."

Yet to be heard from is any organized representation of the country's workers, while Syrian capitalists are still standing by their benefactor, President Bashar al-Assad.

Massive strike wave in Egypt

So in the region as a whole we see, underlying individual country variations, a common tableau of popular steadfastness, continued mobilization, and refusal to back down, opposed by regime intransigence manifested in murderous violence and repression.

There is one crucial exception to the regional absence of explicit working-class representation and action in the continued revolts: that of Egypt, home to the region's most massive and militant working class. A huge strike wave has broken out in the country, in which we can see the elements necessary for moving to the next phase in completing the revolution.

In late-September, doctors, teachers, and public transit workers all launched strikes, and rallied thousands in front of government buildings in support of their demands. Those demands included higher wages for their members, which often meant just living up to the promised countrywide minimum wage increases, but also demands for a higher wage on which families can actually survive; more money for the health-care, education, and transportation services they provide and reform of how those services are provided; and an ouster of the Mubarak regime officials who still dominate their institutions and who couple incompetent provision of services with corruption and anti-worker repression.

Strikes are also spreading in the private sector, most notably at the port of Ain Al Sokhna, run by a Dubai firm.

This strike wave coincides with a recent ruling by an administrative court returning three of the country's biggest companies, located in the historically key textile town of Mahala, to public ownership. The court found that they had been privatized in a corrupt process that gave new owners assets for pennies on the dollar and stripped workers of their rights. The ruling came not from any sudden accession to wisdom by the jurists, but rather as a result of years of agitation by the area's textile workers.

This ruling is particularly important, as workers throughout the country have demanded renationalization of the bulk of the economy—and the current strike wave shows they have the power to win that if their struggles broaden and become more unified.

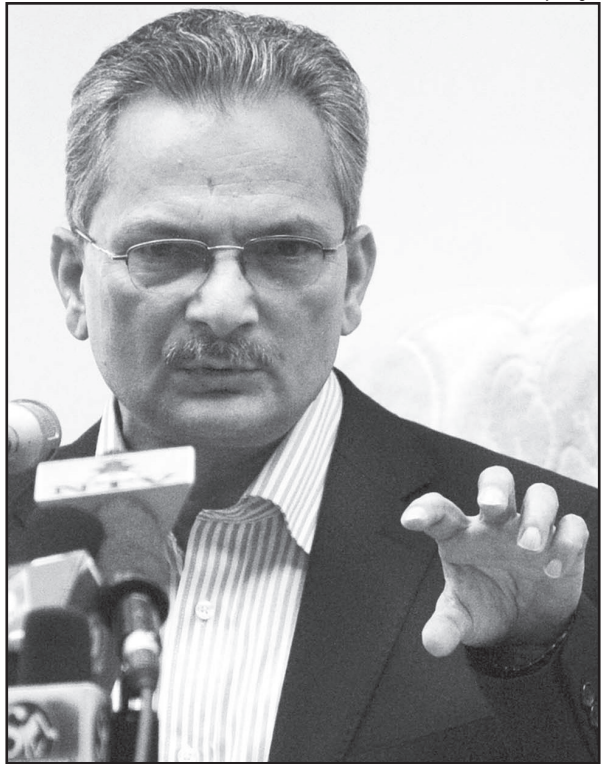
In an article in *The Atlantic*, radical journalist Thanassis Cambanis quoted Kamal Khalil, a leader of the Democratic Workers Party, saying, "The heart of the revolution is the workers." Khalil described the successes of DWP members and others in organizing independent labor unions, as well as their keenness to maximize the unified power of these new formations. The more simultaneous strikes, a bus driver activist told him, "the greater the pressure on the government and the greater likelihood of success."

Supporters of the Arab revolution and of other uprisings around the globe must do everything we can to support the efforts of Egypt's workers and the revolutionaries trying to organize them. This is important not only for the sake of Egypt's workers but because of the inspiration they provide for upsurges in the Middle East and around the world.

Activists from Greece to Wall Street can learn political lessons from Egypt's workers: It is only the working class that can, and must, see these uprisings through to their end. And it is the task of revolutionaries to root themselves in working-class organizations involved in the uprisings, and to unify and coordinate struggles for those demands within a given country and internationally. ■

Maoist leader appointed prime minister in Nepal

Prakash Mathema / AFP / Getty Images



Altat Qadri / AP



By WAYNE DELUCA

On Aug. 28, Baburam Bhattarai became the fourth Prime Minister in Nepal since 2008. He is vice-chairman of the United Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (UCPN-M), whose chairman, Prachanda (Pushpa Kamal Dahal), was unable to form a stable government three years ago. Bhattarai's election was widely hailed in the bourgeois media as a step forward after two prime ministers from the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-Leninist (UML) were unable to broker a constitution or a final settlement of the civil war that ran from 1996 to 2006.

The Maoist party had waged a "people's war" for a decade before the April 2006 uprising that overthrew King Gyanendra. A ceasefire was declared and the Maoists joined the government of the new Republic of Nepal, but their People's Liberation Army had yet to give up its arms or integrate into the former royalist armed forces.

A general strike led by the Maoists in 2010 was unable to tip the situation in their favor and they returned to parliamentary tactics. Bhattarai's ascent to power was centered on turning over the arms held in storage by the PLA, which has been done. Full integration is not yet complete but expected in the near term.

Bhattarai's government has included significant participation from the Madhesi, an ethnic group in the southern plains of Nepal who had previously been excluded from the politics of Kathmandu and was a major supporter of the Maoists during the civil war. This has caused some strain inside the UCPN-M, as senior leaders of the party have alleged that the agreement with the Madhesi Front party was kept secret from them.

Timing is critical for Bhattarai's government. The current parliamentary mandate will expire on Nov. 14, and both the peace process and the writing of a constitution need to be finalized by that point. If no further progress is made, it is unclear where the political process will move. Bhattarai, challenged by the

opposition UML party, has already backed down from initial promises that he would finish integration and disarmament 45 days after taking office.

Nepal, a landlocked country between two rising world powers, is split between India and China. Many Nepali prime ministers have made their allegiance clear by scheduling their first foreign visit to India. Bhattarai has chosen to play a different game, going first to New York to visit the United Nations. He has vowed not to allow anti-India or anti-China activities in Nepal, and called for the country to act as a "friendship bridge" between the two greater powers. While Bhattarai plans to visit India on a goodwill trip, he is also pushing for Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to make a state visit to Kathmandu.

The four-point pact that brought Bhattarai to power includes an extradition treaty with India, and the presence of Indian air marshals at Nepal's International Airport. His government has also endorsed an earlier deal that calls for a "No Work, No Pay" law and a ban on industrial strikes for up to four years in exchange for a Social Security Act and a Minimum Wage Board.

The Maoist party came out of its guerrilla war with deep divisions among its leadership. Bhattarai represents the right wing of the party, ready to make concessions as needed. The move to turn over the keys to weapons containers was protested by the hard-line faction led by Mohan Baidya (also known as Kiran) and pro-India moves have been criticized as surrendering a critical part of Nepal's sovereignty.

Baidya's threat of a boycott forced the UCPN-M leadership to delay a steering committee meeting, but his lieutenants have emphasized that a split is not coming. His faction is at a strategic dead end; dramatic torchlight protests did not stop the turnover of the arms. The Maoist party needed disarmament in order to capture leadership. The failure of the 2010 general strike sealed the fate of armed struggle by the Maoists and made the parliamentary road inevitable.

Since before 2006, the UCPN-M has aimed to establish capitalist development in Nepal and a democratic

(Left) Nepalese Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai gives his first Address to the Nation, Sept 9.

(Right) Maoist rally in Kathmandu, May 1, 2010.

republic. This is based on the theory of stages put forward by Joseph Stalin in the 1920s, saying that every country needed to go through "democratic" capitalism before a socialist revolution would be possible. It led to disaster in China, Spain, and elsewhere.

In the modern world, as Leon Trotsky showed, the forces of imperialism make this transition a utopia. The local capitalist class in an underdeveloped country is bound hand and foot by international capital and cannot fulfill the tasks of the bourgeois democratic revolution—equal rights for oppressed nationalities, popular suffrage, land reform, etc. Only the working class can do this by taking over the means of production and using them for the common good of the workers and their allies.

Concessions to India and disarmament are key steps on the real "Prachanda Path," as the Maoist leader has described his strategic vision. As long as they follow it, the UCPN-M will bow to international capital. Having surrendered their arms, they may find themselves defenseless if any regional powers, or local elites, decide that they need to be removed from power—or worse. As the opposition sets its feet in, this may happen sooner rather than later if the political impasse is not resolved.

Democracy in Nepal has a tragic history. The 1990-91 democratic wave washed up on the deep divide between the Nepali elites and the impoverished masses. Now the movement that began in 2006 is in danger of ending in another tragedy. Nepal has clear lessons for countries like Egypt that are going through democratic revolutions. It is not simply enough to throw out the king or dictator. The revolution must be fought to the end, and must become a socialist revolution. In an age of austerity, capitalism has nothing at all to offer the people of Nepal or Egypt. For a better future, for real development, the only road is socialism. ■

... Longshore

(continued from page 3)

lie from police that security guards were held hostage during the Sept. 8 action.

In September, picketers caught on camera police holding an ILWU member by the throat. The Local 21 president said, "Who's telling the truth here? We have a city government here that's basically EGT's security force. They're beating up people that have lived in this community their entire lives."

On Sept. 30, the courts once again acted on behalf of the bosses, fining the union \$250,000 for the "vandalism and other illegal activity." The court also set fines of \$2500 for individuals who trespass on rail tracks or break the law in future protests. The fine will be \$5000 for union officers.

The police and courts have made it clear whose side they are on. It's up to the rest of the labor movement to stand on the side of the longshore workers in this critical labor battle.

In order to be victorious, the ILWU will have to continue stopping EGT operations in Longview. The AFL-CIO and Change to Win

federations and other labor bodies should step up and pledge to pay all fines levied against the ILWU. They should also mobilize members from across the country to form picket lines in the tens of thousands instead of a few hundred. The ILWU, with the support of the entire labor movement, could shut down the whole port, and every port on the West Coast by extending picket lines.

The ILWU has one of the most militant histories of any U.S. labor union. This union once again is giving workers an example of the kind of trade-union militancy that can win labor battles. The mass mobilizations earlier this year in Madison, Wis., showed labor's potential to mobilize and gain public support for a fightback. Unfortunately, that struggle was eventually lost, as labor leaders shifted the tactics from mobilization to electing Democrats and legal challenges. In the end, Wisconsin public workers lost almost all of their bargaining rights.

Longshore workers in Longview have no intention of losing in this battle. A popular t-shirt worn by picketers reads, "No Wisconsin Here." It's up to the entire labor movement to stand with Local 21 and ensure that their fight is won. ■

... Antiwar

(continued from page 1)

areas, the antiwar calls have been linked to demands that protest the fact that the U.S. government is waging a war on working people at home—cutting back on health care and education while bailing out the Wall Street banks.

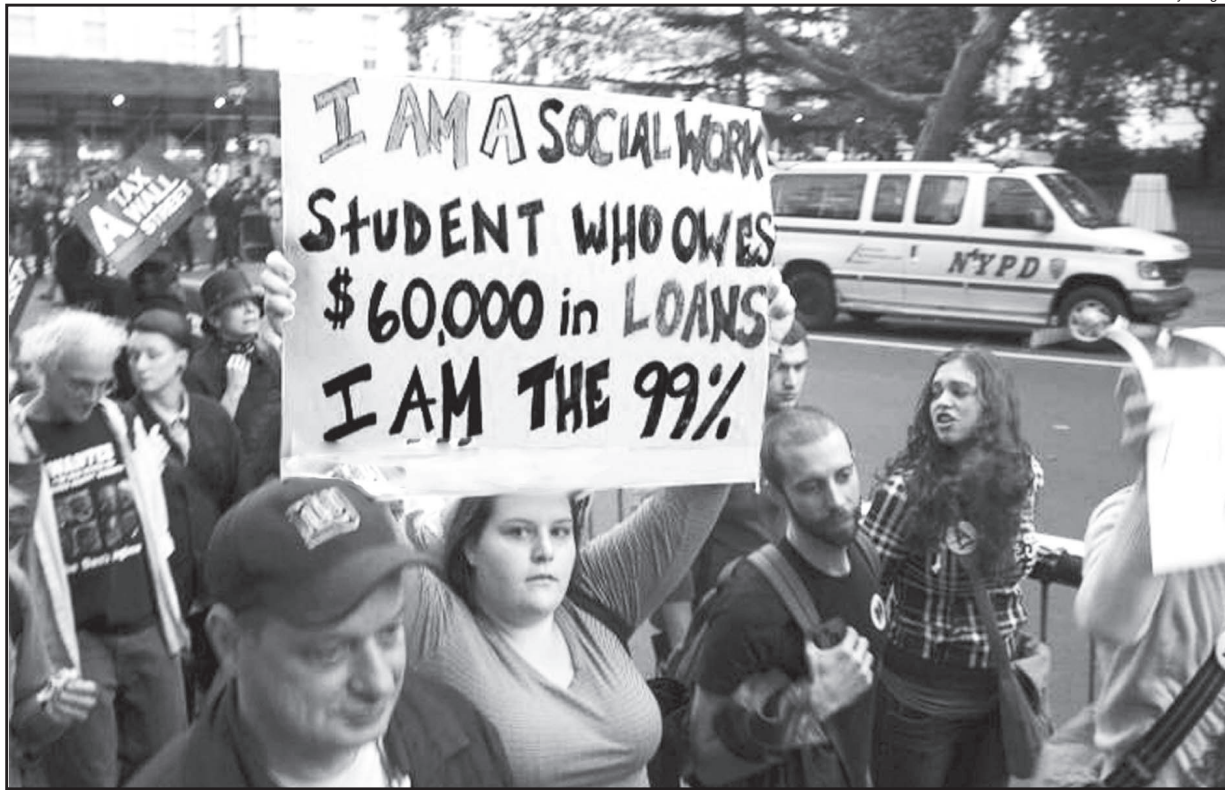
In some cities, Oct. 15 protests will be coordinated with the ongoing Occupations. The New York UNAC march will hold a noon rally on Wall Street and then march to the Zuccotti Park encampment. The slogan is, "Wall St. is War St.!" Boston and Philadelphia antiwar forces will hold similar marches to their local Occupation sites.

UNAC was formed in July 2010, when over 800 antiwar activists gathered in Albany, N.Y., for the largest U.S. movement conference since the beginnings of the "War

on Terror" a decade ago.

UNAC organized large bi-coastal antiwar mobilizations last April 9-10 and it also built timely responses to the huge events of 2011: the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and other Arab countries; the wars on communities of color, with racist attacks on Muslims and pre-emptive prosecutions; heightened attacks on civil liberties, such as the FBI's victimization of antiwar activists; and the struggle against Israel's blockade of Gaza.

UNAC has called for giant demonstrations next May to protest the NATO /G8 summit in Chicago. To help build the protest, UNAC will hold its next national conference on March 23-25 in Stamford, Conn. The conference will also develop an action program for the next stage of building a mass movement for social change. ■



... Occupation targets Wall Street

(continued from page 1)

describe revolutions, and while OWS is not a revolution in any sense, it shares with every other genuinely mass movement or strike a family-like camaraderie and feeling of tolerance and mutual support; the unleashing of creativity and collective decision making.

The number of working groups is continually growing, and includes medics, direct action, food, comfort, facilitation (for chairing the General Assemblies), and media. Although from the beginning the majority of the facilitators (who are also central political leaders of OWS) were people of color, a People of Color Committee has been established to rectify the balance of what had initially been a disproportionately white assemblage. Their efforts overlap with the national Occupy the Hood effort. A production team has published a newspaper, *The Occupied Wall Street Journal*.

At the same time, Zuccotti Park is lined with plenty of well-armed police. Video footage of New York cops pepper spraying and savagely beating peaceful protesters on Sept. 24 shocked millions across the globe (see occupywallstreet.org). Over 1000 OWS protesters have been arrested.

Arrests of more than 700 peaceful protesters on the Brooklyn Bridge on Oct. 1 revealed the depravity and fear felt by the profit-driven U.S. ruling class of an issue that has resulted in giant worker-led protests and general strikes in Europe. A class-action lawsuit was filed on Oct 4 against New York City for the Brooklyn Bridge arrests. "We believe the NYPD engaged in a premeditated, planned, scripted and calculated effort to get protesters off the street," said the Partnership for Civil Justice, which represents protesters.

A Youtube video reveals one cop saying to another on Oct. 5, before police savagely attacked protesters, "My little nightstick's gonna get some—a workout tonight, hopefully." But the police violence backfired for the ruling class since the outrage that it provoked served subsequently to bring out many more protesters.

Labor support for protesters

Organized labor's initial response to OWS was slow. But, on Oct. 2, John Samuelsen, president of Transport Workers Union Local 100, the 35,000-member New York City subway and bus worker's union, filed an injunction against the NYPD for commandeering from their regular routes five TWU drivers and their buses to have them haul Brooklyn Bridge protesters to jail. Unfortunately, the injunction request failed, but the TWU's bold action won recognition for its defense of civil liberties and the rights of its members.

The previous week the Local 100 Executive Board voted unanimously to support OWS. Local 100's contract expires on Jan. 15. It is threatened with three zeros and health-care cuts. If it doesn't accept the rotten deal, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority—deeply in debt to Wall Street crooks and rich owners of tax-free MTA bonds—says it will impose another round of mass layoffs. Last year, some 900 members were laid off, mostly African American, Hispanic, and immigrant workers. Most have returned to work.

Said TWU organizer Marvin Holland, "We endorsed Occupy Wall St. because we agreed with 99% of what the protesters were saying. They're 100% right that banks caused this problem. We've had rank-and-file members there since day one."

TWU Local 100 began organizing other unions for what would be an historic Oct. 5 march in support of OWS. It began at Foley Square near City Hall and marched down to Zuccotti Park, a distance of about

Their chants strike out at capitalist injustice: 'They got bailed out, we got sold out!'

one mile. Signing on were the United Federation of Teachers, the 1199 Service Employees International Union (SEIU), the Professional Staff Congress, the Amalgamated Transit Union, SEIU 32BJ, and others.

Julie Fry, a lawyer at the Legal Aid Society and union member there, put it this way, "We're so fed up and getting nowhere through the old political structures that there needs to be old-fashioned rage in the streets."

The rally attracted around 20,000 demonstrators, which filled Zuccotti Park to overflowing. The call had clearly electrified working-class activists, eclipsing in size recent city union contract rallies. Marchers took up the now famous chants of the OWS, "We are the 99%" and "Banks got bailed out, we got sold out!" "All day, all week, occupy Wall Street!" The Oct. 5 rally was a relief from the more perfunctory and politically conservative affairs organized by official labor.

Later that evening, some 200 protesters left Zuccotti Park for a march on Wall St., but were met with savage club-wielding NYPD goons armed with pepper spray. Twenty-eight protesters were arrested.

What it takes to win

Capitalism is in an economic and *political* crisis from which there is no genuine solution but socialism, the democratic rule of the working-class majority over the wealth that we've created. A mere 20 years ago, with the fall of the authoritarian Stalinist governments in Eastern Europe, capitalism's pundits proclaimed the "end of history" and an eternity of capitalist rule. No more. Pro-U.S. dictatorships have fallen or are being seriously challenged by rebellion. Major strikes and rebellions are breaking out in Europe over severe government cuts demanded by banks and international financial institutions.

More and more people are beginning to view the capitalist system as corrupt and unreformable. In the U.S., millions who had expected change with the election of Barack Obama have had their hopes dashed on

virtually every issue, from health care to warfare.

Taking the worldview of this trend, a Sept. 27 *New York Times* article observed, "Complaints range from corruption to lack of affordable housing and joblessness, common grievances the world over. From South Asia to the heartland of Europe and now even to Wall Street, these protesters share something else: wariness, even contempt, toward traditional politicians and the democratic political process they preside over. They are taking to the streets, in part, because they have little faith in the ballot box."

It is no surprise to *Socialist Action* readers that President Barack Obama received *more* Wall Street campaign contributions in 2008 than John McCain, his right-wing, pro-war Republican rival. Obama's largest donors on Wall Street were the mega-crooks at Goldman Sachs, the largest brokerage outfit.

Both parties gave trillions to bail out the mortgage racket, the auto industry bosses, and Wall Street crooks like Bernie Madoff. Meanwhile, these corporate thieves are raping our environment, creating an unparalleled disaster that threatens life on earth. Both parties, from New York state to California, are slashing public services and jobs, wrecking lives, in order to make working people pay for a crisis that they had no part in. Both parties support war and death, from Haiti to Palestine to Afghanistan.

The twin parties of big business know that their options are few within the ever-shrinking prospects of capitalism. The official U.S. unemployment rate in September was unchanged at 9.1%. Economists put the true figure as high as 16%. Unemployment is twice as devastating in the African American community and worst amongst African American, Hispanic, and immigrant youth.

Capitalism is a system born of misery that has been made immeasurably *worse* by this crisis. Humanity says enough is enough! It will take mass protests and strikes based on millions of organized working people—and ultimately revolution—to stop Wall Street's assault on working people, the unemployed, and immigrants. But wherever the OWS movement goes from here, it has already taught us powerful lessons on the need to organize democratically and independently of the ruling class. OWS has lifted many people from their bitter disappointments in Obama's betrayals and presented a way to fight against greed and inequality.

Socialist Action calls on working people to support the Occupation protests. Deepen the links to workers' struggles. We propose turning our union halls into giant congresses of labor, the unemployed, and the oppressed, for an ongoing democratic discussion on how to defeat Wall Street's attacks. Break with the two big business parties, the parties of war and racism; they cannot be changed or reformed. We need a party of our own; a truly democratic party built on a militant labor movement—a labor party!

Labor needs to raise the demand to nationalize the banks and Wall St. firms—that is, to seize the wealth of those institutions for public uses like education, health care, and mass transportation. Taxing and tweaking Wall St. practices will never control these criminals, nor recover the vast wealth stolen from working people by fraud. The money in their banks belongs to us!

Socialists say, "Cancel all home mortgage debt and all government debt to Wall Street crooks! No cuts to public services, no to layoffs! Make the rich pay for their crisis! Nationalize the petroleum industry and replace fossil fuels to save the planet! Fund human needs, not war! Tuition-free education now! Jail N.Y. top cop Ray Kelly and his club-wielding thugs!"

To struggle to achieve these goals, a revolutionary party is needed; one with experience in organizing and educating the working class against economic exploitation, war, racism, sexism, and homophobia. A party is needed that engages in day-to-day struggles without forgetting the necessity of revolution. We invite you to join such a party—Socialist Action (see socialistaction.org).

Let us all deepen our solidarity with this growing movement. Occupy Wall Street! ■

THE OWS MOVEMENT EXPANDS

The occupation movement has expanded across the U.S., from Sacramento to Providence, R.I., and from Minneapolis to Dallas. For updates go to occupywallstreet.org. Occupy Portland (Ore.), which has built an encampment in Chapman Square, mobilized close to 10,000 in a march on Oct. 6.

Boston protesters have built a tent city in Dewey Square. An Oct. 7 protest attracted up to 1000 demonstrators.

In Philadelphia, over 1000 occupied the plaza in front of City Hall on the first day, Oct. 6. Two days later, close to 1000 marched from the encampment to Independence Hall. Occupy Philadelphia was endorsed by the city labor council (AFL-CIO), which has called a union rally on Oct 12 at the Occupation

site. Links have been made between the Occupation movement and Philly Against War, an affiliate of the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), in order to coordinate the Occupation with the Oct. 15 antiwar protest in Philadelphia.

Los Angeles saw an Oct. 6 march on Bank of America offices downtown, apparently organized by Make Banks Pay, not OWS. Protesters have camped at Los Angeles City Hall since Oct. 1, and disrupted a bankers' conference at a Newport Beach yacht club.

Several hundred protesters have established a camp and rallied in front of the Federal Reserve in Chicago's financial district. Police refused to let protesters sleep on the sidewalk, so they have resorted to sleeping in nearby parked cars. On Oct. 8, Occupation protesters joined an antiwar demonstration, swelling the crowd to close to 1000. ■

20,000 join New York labor protest

By MARTY GOODMAN

No doubt the Oct. 15 Occupy Wall Street (OWS) rally will add a new coat of paint to many lackluster labor leaders, including national AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, who has also pledged to “support” OWS. That’s certainly part of the union bureaucracy’s calculations for staying in office and maintaining their salaries and perks, while continuing to sell out to the bosses and the Democratic Party.

However, nothing can disguise the fact that many of these so-called labor leaders or their like-thinking predecessors presided over decades of defeats. Many members remain apathetic and unwilling to respond to the occasional call for any action outside of narrow contract issues.

The recent decision by leaders of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) to send 45,000 striking Verizon workers back to work on Aug. 20 without a new contract no doubt aroused some bitterness in the outlook of many workers towards unions. (The CWA leadership endorsed the Oct. 5 demonstration!)

Union leaders traditionally urge the ranks to beg Democratic Party politicians for justice—even though Democrats dominate the New York City Council and an anti-union Democrat is governor. Relying on politicians rather than their own power, including striking, has left the ranks confused about mobilizing to win.

As a result, though most of those who marched Oct. 5 were from the working class, the several big endorsing unions could only muster a few dozen demonstrators to carry placards and banners. The bulk of the march was likely a scattering of union members, unorganized workers, students, and the un-



Tony Savino / Socialist Action

employed.

Fortunately, the Occupy Wall Street movement can play a positive role by posing issues that union tops usually fear to address, like police brutality, the relationship between Wall Street and the major parties, bipartisan support to bank bailouts, ongoing wars, etc.

Mass pressure from the ranks is key to increasing union support for Occupation protests across the U.S. While working together on OWS, it may become obvious to workers and some officials that citywide unity in action is more of a necessity now than ever; and that includes possibly striking together.

In addition, there should be no union pressure on OWS to support Democrats, especially Barack Obama and the Democratic Party leadership, who are now peddling a phony “jobs bill” and possibly seeking to distort the Occupation’s idealistic, if vague, goals and then peddle it to the working class.

Occupy Wall Street can play a positive role by posing issues that union tops often fear to address.

OWS must also resist the temptation to be bought off subtly or unsightly by labor bureaucrats who may use donated resources to bring OWS into the Democratic Party fold, which would signal the death knell of the Occupation, as it historically has done for all social movements in the United States. In that way, the energy of OWS can be preserved as a catalyst for action.

Speaking to *Socialist Action*, Wayne King, a veteran track worker and Local 100 member, had these observations

of the Oct. 15 labor protest: “I am here because we need to support these kids who started something that the unions and the workers should have started.

“I didn’t see too much labor support in this rally but I’m glad that some of labor came out. What I see is a lot of students. To me they’re carrying the whole rally. I was happy to see some members of Local 100 come out but I was very disappointed by the poor turnout, not only from Local 100 but also from the other unions. At least I’m here to show my solidarity.

“These Wall St. bankers and rich people do not intend to share the pain. They will give up nothing, but they want workers to give up everything. It’s a shame what happened to the other [state] unions and they’re going to try the same thing on us. That’s why I’m happy

these kids are sending a clear message. I’m so excited to see how this has grown. Wall Street, we’re coming for you!”

Similar views were expressed that day by Ray Laforest, a Haitian union activist and member of the International Support Haiti Network. “This is a very important day,” said Laforest. “It is incredible, the attack on working people, people of color, on minorities, on immigrants, from the right wing and the banks. From a system that is sucking this country and the world dry. They didn’t pay any price for it; in fact they got trillions of our blood and sweat dollars. We think these kids are great and brave to challenge the system. The [union] membership must keep putting pressure on unions, this is the way out. Not to just put pressure on the Democrats. We need a labor party, if anything.” ■

Postal workers rally against concessions

By DAVID BERT

CHICAGO—Thousands of postal workers and their allies held rallies outside 492 post offices across the United States on Sept. 27 to protest the recent announcement by Postmaster General Patrick Donahue that he would seek massive layoffs, union concessions, post office closings, and outsourcing. Postal Service management claims they need to make the massive cuts due to operating losses caused by mail volume declines.

Management wants to eliminate 120,000 jobs, end Saturday deliveries, and close 2,500 post offices and 200 processing plants—creating “village post offices,” privatized postal centers that would be located and run by retailers like WalMart.

The corporate-owned media has repeated the mantra that the Postal Service is dying a natural death due to the growth of electronic communication. In reality, the Postal Service had its highest volume in history in 2006. Since then volume has declined, but still remains historically high.

The real source of the Postal Service’s financial problems is the result of a 2006 law passed by Congress that requires it, within a 10-year period, to pre-fund retiree health care for the next 75 years. No other governmental agency has this requirement. This requirement, which costs the Postal Service \$5.5 billion a year, was intended to trigger the postal financial crisis and justify busting the postal unions. Additionally, the same law restricted the Post Office from raising postage rates above the rate of inflation, including rates for high-volume customers, such as magazine publishers, who receive deep discounts. Postal unions have called for the passage of HR 1351, which they say would allow the Postal Service to delay payments to the retiree health-care fund.

In Chicago some 500 workers rallied at the Thompson Center, demanding an end to attacks on postal

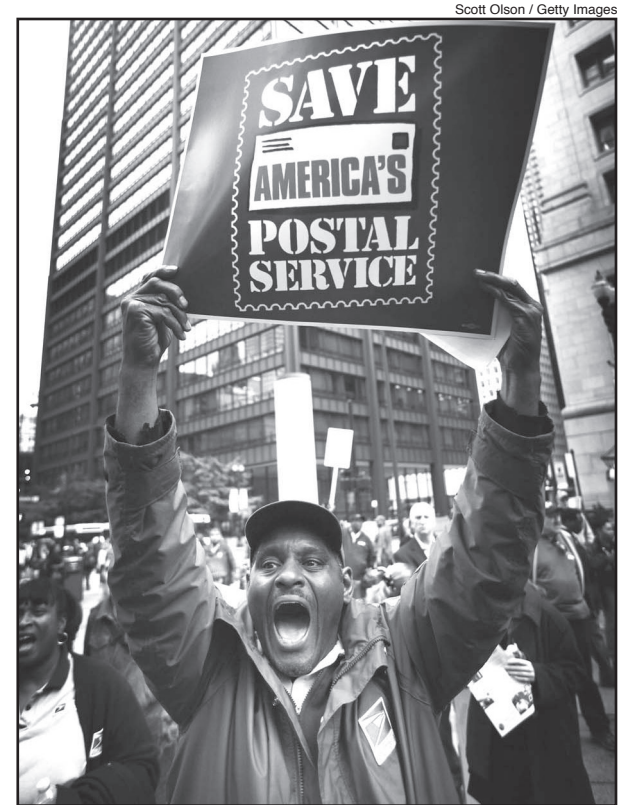
workers and for passage of HR 1351. The spirited crowd was largely African American, and many of the rally speakers noted the historical importance of postal employment in that community. Additionally, they denounced the fact that most of the proposed post office closings in Chicago are in the Black neighborhoods on the south and west sides of the city.

Many at the rally pointed out that this attack against postal workers is not just about the financial situation of the Postal Service, but part of a larger attack against workers. Conservatives in Congress and in the media speak of the Postal Service as yet another example of government waste and of public-sector unions with rich unaffordable contracts and pensions. The reality, of course, is that the Postal Service does not receive any subsidy from the federal government. If it were not for the retiree health-care funding obligations, the Postal Service would have run a surplus of \$200 million over the past four years.

Despite not receiving any federal subsidies, the Postal Service must operate under Congressional mandates that its competitors such as UPS and FedEx don’t have. These include free service for the blind, passport services, and money-order services.

The most significant mandate is the Universal Service Obligation, which requires the Postal Service to deliver to all addresses in the United States, even in the most remote rural areas, for the same price. Competitors UPS and FedEx don’t service the most remote areas, and charge much higher prices when they do. This is the mission of the postal service, to provide communication services for everyone in the United States regardless of location or income.

Talking heads in the media, in an attempt to build public support for busting the postal workers’ unions, have used the typical story of waiting in long lines at the post office as an example of the inefficiencies of a governmental agency. Postal workers point out, however, that longer lines and other service problems



Scott Olson / Getty Images

are caused not by lazy workers, but by management, which has reduced the number of postal workers by 130,000 over the past four years, largely through attrition. The number of postal clerks has been reduced, causing longer lines. Letter carriers must work longer routes, causing service delays. The cuts proposed by management would further reduce service.

The four major postal workers’ unions have launched a national campaign to lobby Congress for the passage of HR 1351. While this bill, if passed, may temporarily hold back the squeeze management is putting on postal workers, it does not address the fundamental conflict between them. That is, whether the Postal Service will continue as a low-cost com-

(continued on page 11)

Interview with political prisoner Lynne Stewart

PDX Film Fest



By PATRICIA VICKERS

Attorney and political prisoner Lynne Stewart was interviewed by mail by Patricia Vickers, a founding member of the Human Rights Coalition (HRC) of Pennsylvania. Ms. Vickers is the co-founder/editor of *The Movement* magazine of the HRC. A former 1960s student activist, Ms. Vickers is an eco-feminist whose youngest son, Kerry "Shakaboona" Marshall, was a wrongly convicted juvenile serving life imprisonment in Pennsylvania prisons. Though incarcerated for 25 years, he is a political activist.

Human Rights Coalition: Hello. Welcome to *The Movement*, Sister Lynne. Thank you for granting me this interview with you. How are your health and spirits, and how are you being treated at FMC Carswell [Federal Prison]?

Lynne Stewart: My health is passable—the usual brushfires of aging, but good. My spirits are always high, especially with the mail I get to encourage me. I am being treated as well as can be expected. I receive heavy scrutiny—all mail, e-mail, and phone conversations.

Human Rights Coalition: There are people who aren't aware of your unlawful confinement and the government's repression of you for your legal representation of the Muslim Blind Sheik. Can you enlighten the people about your situation?

Lynne Stewart: There are two aspects to my "situation," as you so gallantly described it. First, I was prosecuted for doing what I believe is the duty and work of an attorney—to represent the client zealously and conscientiously. In the case of the original trial (1995) of the Blind Sheik, Omar Abdel Rahman, of Egypt, we wanted to keep his name alive so that we could eventually try to negotiate a return for him even if it meant jail in Egypt. In that spirit I made a press release public, and to Reuters, expressing his point of view on a unilateral cease fire then in effect in Egypt. I believed that this was part of salvaging him from the torture of his solitary confinement and also that it was part of the work I had sworn to do. I was tried and found

'... you can look in the mirror every morning and be at one with the person there because you made the difficult choice and decided to fight for the people against the evil empires. It is the best way to live ...'

guilty for materially aiding "terrorism."

Then, after I received a sentence of two-and-one-half-years, as opposed to the 30 years the government wanted, on appeal, the Second Circuit Court sent the case back for the judge to give me more time. Without much ado, he sentenced me then to 10 years, partially based upon statements I made after the sentencing and before I surrendered in November 2009. That sentencing is currently on appeal and will be argued in the fall in New York City.

Human Rights Coalition: In the people's eyes, mine included for sure, you are our [s]hero and represent a long line of principled and committed warriors of the struggle. How do you take being a political prisoner of the American government?

Lynne Stewart: I believe I am one of an historical progression that maintains the struggle to change the perverted political landscape that is the U.S. It seems that being a political prisoner must be used as a means of focusing people's attention on the continuing atrocities around them. Nothing seems to be too shocking or corrupt to blast the complacency. Like my client Richard Williams used to say, I might think I hadn't been doing my utmost if they didn't believe I was dangerous enough to be locked up!

Human Rights Coalition: In April, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit ruled that political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence is unconstitutional. However, I am sure there are forces working behind the scenes within the Criminal Injustice Sys-

tem—like what happened in your case—to manipulate another death penalty outcome on Mumia. What is your opinion of the current news surrounding our brother Mumia?

Lynne Stewart: Mumia's case is our greatest challenge because he is the best and the brightest, and they know it too. We, the progressive revolutionary movement, and Mumia's lawyers, must create the strategy that forces the District Attorney to elect to try the death penalty issue. Then we get a chance in public, in court, to clearly present the overwhelming proof of his innocence. The worst thing that could happen is that the DA elects to give him life without parole—a living death that deprives our movement of one of its true leaders. I just hope that the blood-thirsty Blue Line forces the issue and holds out for the death penalty so we are in the position to take advantage and advance our cause, and Mumia's.

Human Rights Coalition: July 4th is widely celebrated as "Independence Day" in America, but the masses of people are experiencing their independence (freedom) taken away by the corporate American government, and by the big banks and mega-corporations that run them. Are the citizens of America truly free, or is their independence a grand illusion?

Lynne Stewart: I re-read Frederick Douglas' great 4th of July speech every year to just remind myself of how little the ultimate issue has changed from the founding of the nation to today's alleged "freedom." Racism is at the core of the empire; and we can never be blinded by all the fireworks in the world.

Human Rights Coalition: Can you describe the difference between civil rights and human rights?

Lynne Stewart: For me the difference is the same as between the Constitution's Bill of Rights and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. The Bill delineates the ways that government may not encroach on our ability to operate freely. It is a prohibition on the government limiting free speech, religion, the right to bear arms, and the right to free assembly. It delineates the rights within the legal system.

The Declaration guarantees fundamental human entitlements—freedom from hunger, freedom from fear, freedom to choose, freedom to live in an environment that doesn't kill us, and our children.

We obviously fight for more than the political guarantee to be free of government interference—it is to be able to live an open and generous and contributing life toward the betterment of people on the entire planet.

Human Rights Coalition: Sister Lynne, What are human rights to you? What do you make of the growing human rights movement in the U.S.? And how can people advocate their human rights effectively?

Lynne Stewart: Advocating for human rights must always delineate that our struggle is not one of "self interest." It is a fight for all of us. This raises the always-troubling question of the recognition that for some this may mean sacrificing their entitlements (i.e. skin privilege, class privilege) to better others' lives. Nobody wants to give up what they feel that they have achieved legitimately, "within the system." But without the recognition that one has benefited unfairly by the unwritten "code" that has favored certain groups over others, change cannot occur.

I also believe we have lost the sense that we enjoy the right of self-defense. Everyone is so busy announcing their "peacefulness" and willingness to be a victim for a cause, that we forget that a true measure of one's seriousness is to defend oneself, and others—to live; Che's observation that a revolutionary is moved

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Ontario voters put Liberals on a short leash

By BARRY WEISLEDER

In the lowest turn out in Ontario history, voters reduced the Liberal Party regime of Dalton McGuinty to a minority government in Canada's most populous province on Oct. 6.

Broad social discontent with higher fees, tuitions and taxes put the Liberals on a short leash. So did anger over deteriorating public health services, transportation and prospects for youth employment. But the lack of inspiring alternatives led to a miserable participation rate of only 49 per cent of eligible voters and a 'hung' legislature.

Ironically, this is a better outcome for the working class than a majority of seats for any party committed to implementing the capitalist austerity drive. Minority governments are more vulnerable to

protest.

While Premier McGuinty crowed about the election of the third consecutive Liberal government in Ontario, the electoral rebuke his party suffered was clear: a loss of 19 seats, and a drop in popular support from 42 per cent in 2007, to 37 per cent in 2011.

The labour-based New Democratic Party gained 7 seats and rose 6 per cent in the votes cast to reach 23 per cent. This was largely due to enduring sympathy for recently deceased federal NDP Leader Jack Layton, and a spunky campaign performance by Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath. It was certainly despite an anaemic NDP platform that only modestly differentiated from that of the Liberal Party.

The Progressive Conservative Party led by Tim Hudack blew a 15 per cent

lead reported by pollsters in June. The PCs gained 12 seats and 3 per cent more votes than previously, but fell far short of victory.

Hudack, a member of the former hard-right wing Mike Harris Ontario Tory government of 1995-2003, let a little too much of his agenda out of the bag. His openly desultory remarks about "foreign workers", his call for more prisons and compulsory chain-gang-type inmate labour, his appeal to anti-choice-on-abortion groups, and his defence of homophobic Tory campaign literature showed his true colours.

The Green Party plunged from 6 per cent to 2 per cent. It has yet to win a seat in the Ontario Legislature, which is based on the undemocratic first-past-the-post electoral system.

In bourgeois circles, there was plenty of disappointment to go around. Federal Prime Minister Stephen Harper's sum-

mer-time bluster about a hat-trick of Conservatives ruling in Ottawa, at Queen's Park, and at Toronto City Hall, clearly fell flat. The Ontario election results refuted claims by some union leaders that the only way to stop the Tim Hudack Tories was to vote Liberal in a majority of ridings. Actually, discontent with Liberal policies went more to the NDP than to the Tories, and to the major category of non-voters.

A united front of labour and social protest movements, committed to a Workers' Agenda, could have motivated more Ontarians to vote for their own class interests. The idea that the masses hunger for more right-wing government also took a bruising in Manitoba, where the NDP, led by Greg Selinger, split the vote with the Conservatives, but emerged with the fourth consecutive NDP majority government in that province, just west of Ontario. ■

By BARRY WEISLEDER

As voters troop to the polls in six provincial and territorial elections across Canada in October and November, they do so in the shadow of another global economic melt down.

Stocks are falling, markets are contracting and credit is seizing up. Many economists and politicians are already declaring the onset of a recession. Distractions from reality, like Prime Minister Stephen Harper's "law and order" parliamentary agenda (see article below), are coupled with elite demands for more sacrifice by the working class. But this begs a few questions.

Did the "Great Recession" of 2008 ever really end? When did the downturn that wiped out trillions in wealth, destroyed millions of jobs, and plunged millions of people into abject poverty, turn around? What happened during the so-called economic "recovery"? Well, the rich got bailed out. The income gap widened. Young people bore the brunt of rising unemployment.

In Canada, the banks (through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) and the auto giants got hundreds of millions of dollars in government relief. Big capital benefited from billions in corporate tax cuts, which contributed mightily to the public debt that is so often cited as the reason for cutbacks. This is the story, from the feds on down to each city hall.

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

Recession with a vengeance

In the USA, \$2 trillion in tax money went to Wall Street bailouts. For their greed and malfeasance, the rich actually got rewarded. Business CEOs now pay themselves 325 times the compensation of their shop floor or office cubicle wage slaves. That ratio was closer to 25 to 1 in the 1960s—no thanks to *Mad Men*.

The gap between rich and poor in Canada has widened markedly. The top 1 per cent of income earners accounts for almost 40 per cent of total national income. In the 1950s and 1960s that figure was a mere 8 per cent. Today, up to 4.4 million Canadians live in poverty.

The official jobless rate, at 7.3 per cent, remains higher than the 6 per cent of October 2008 when the Great Recession began. According to Statistics Canada, the unemployment rate among people 24 and younger is 17.2 per cent. That's up 0.3 per cent from the previous

summer, and more than 3 per cent higher than it was in 2008.

Canadian household debt, which fueled the illusory "recovery," is at near record levels, as the income of working people, including white-collar professionals, has continued its 30-year stagnation. In the downtown corporate towers, business profits have soared. But capital investment is down. That's because billions of dollars are sitting in reserve, or moving to low-wage countries where the conditions for plunder are "more promising."

Recession is a grim reminder of how capitalism operates, and a warning as well: If working people don't take back the wealth created by our labour, the wealthy will only continue to take it out of our hides—to make us pay for the crisis of their system. Now that's something to think about on the way to the polls. ■

Tory crime bill wants to lock 'em up

By ERIC KUPCA

Canada's Prime Minister Stephen Harper kicked off his first Conservative-majority Parliament on Sept. 19 by introducing changes to the criminal justice system that seek to put more people in prison and keep them there longer.

The Tory crime bill imposes mandatory minimum sentences and restricts the availability of house arrest, thus depriving judges of discretion in such matters. These measures are not aimed only at serious offences; a person caught with as little as six marijuana plants would now face at least six months in jail.

The bill also downgrades almost all factors for consideration in the correctional and parole process, including the special needs of First Nations. This risks increasing the First Nations' incarceration rate, which is already scandalous at 17 per cent of the overall prison population. Aboriginal peoples make up less than 3 per cent of adult Canadians.

Behind this regressive law-and-order crackdown by Harper is the uncontested fact that crime rates have been falling steadily in Canada for the past 20 years. This has led to much criticism of the reform bill, including by many in the mainstream media. The *Globe and Mail* mock-

ingly called it the "Prison is the Answer to Everything" bill. The *Toronto Star* denigrated it as "a classic of misplaced priorities, a wholesale assault on a problem that doesn't exist" that will cost billions. *Star* columnist Carol Goar warns that Harper's adoption of U.S.-style crime policies will lead to a "disproportionate increase in the number of poor, non-white people behind bars."

The Conservatives tried to pass many of the same provisions in previous parliamentary sessions, when they ruled as a minority government. However, they were blocked by the opposition parties, including the labour-based New Demo-

cratic Party. Now back with a majority, the Conservatives warn that this bill is "just the beginning." As we witness the highly controversial execution of Troy Davis in Georgia, and the recent hunger strikes by prisoners in California, we shudder to think what else Stephen Harper has in mind.

Socialists demand that the Conservative crime bill be withdrawn, and that the government focus its efforts on crime prevention rather than fear-mongering and punishment. We demand that special attention be given to young persons, women, and aboriginals who are involved in the criminal justice system. Education and good jobs, not punishment for being poor, should be at the center of society's agenda. ■

Will NDP Socialist Caucus run a candidate for Leader?

By JULIUS ARSCOTT

NDP socialists are looking for a left-wing alternative to Brian Topp, the backroom strategist who announced his candidacy for the federal party leadership. In June, at the NDP federal convention in Vancouver, Topp expressed his support for the stillborn Liberal-NDP coalition that took shape two winters ago. NDP leftists strongly reject coalition or merger with the business-backed Liberal Party.

Romeo Saganash, the Cree leader and MP from northern Quebec, declared his candidacy in mid-September. He didn't outline his platform, but his candidacy may already have had the salutary effect of crippling the leadership bid of Thomas Mulcair, a Montreal area MP who jumped from the Quebec Liberal Party cabinet

to the NDP in 2006. Sadly, leftist Vancouver East MP Libby Davies has ruled out a run for the job.

The NDP Socialist Caucus, the cross-country, organized left wing of the labour-based New Democratic Party, will host a conference on Nov. 26 in Toronto to decide its position on the federal NDP leadership race.

The Socialist Caucus, which played a significant role in preventing removal of the term "socialist" from the party constitution at the June 2011 federal convention in Vancouver, is concerned that putative candidates for leader, like Winnipeg- MP Pat Martin, advocate a merger of the NDP with the big business-backed Liberal Party, and seek to steer the NDP on a policy course further to the right.

The SC opposes suggestions that the party weaken its ties to the union movement. Socialists seek to in-

crease and strengthen the labour character of the party, and to win it to the fight for a Workers' Agenda—counter to the corporate agenda, and against the mounting anti-worker "austerity" measures being imposed at all levels.

At the Nov. 26 SC conference, members may decide to run a candidate for Leader, or to support one of the candidates already running for the post. SC policy resolutions, publications, forums, and candidates for party executive positions at the Federal NDP convention (March 23-24 in Toronto) and at the Ontario NDP convention (April 12-15, 2012) will also be on the agenda at the Nov. 26 SC gathering. ■

For more information, please telephone: (416) 535-8779, e-mail: info@ndpsocialists.ca. Visit the website: www.ndpsocialists.ca.

Ontario NDP brass violate party democracy

By ELIZABETH BYCE

On Sept. 1, Barry Weisleder, chairperson of the NDP Socialist Caucus, won the nomination to be the NDP candidate in Thornhill constituency, just north of Toronto. Two days later Darlene Lawson, the Ontario NDP provincial secretary, "rescinded" the democratic nomination, which occurred at the best-attended meeting of that NDP riding association in decades.

What was the excuse for the punitive action? Lawson said it was an article by Weisleder mildly critical of the party platform and leadership written weeks before he sought the nomination. It was nearly a month before Lawson gave his bid for the candidacy her stamp of approval at a meeting held in her office on Aug. 10. The only thing that changed between Aug. 10 and Sept. 3 is that Weisleder won the Thornhill nomination.

Unfortunately, this attack on party democracy is not an isolated incident. It is being challenged. Heading up this effort is the Campaign to Restore Democracy in the Ontario NDP (CREDO NDP). There are

many ways you can help.

How to respond to the attack on party democracy —

1) Vigorously oppose the multiple attacks on party democracy being waged by Ontario NDP officials. Urge all New Democrats to protest the removal of the democratically elected candidate in Thornhill, Ontario. NDP and union members, indeed everyone concerned about democracy in the workers' movement, should send e-mail messages, letters, faxes, and make telephone calls of protest to Darlene Lawson at 101 Richmond St. E., and to the office of Ontario Leader Andrea Horwath at Queen's Park. Telephone: (416) 591-5455, ext. 2245. Fax: (416) 599-4820. E-mail: dlawson@on.ndp.ca.

2) Endorse and join CREDO. The NDP Socialist Caucus, along with many friends and allies, is launching the Campaign to Restore Democracy in the Ontario NDP (CREDO NDP) as a broad, common front. The purpose of the Campaign is to hold Ontario NDP officials accountable for rescinding the democratic NDP nomination

in Thornhill, and to expose and reverse the attack on party democracy occurring on all levels. After the Oct. 6 Ontario election, this effort will be launched publicly. It has already reached hundreds of New Democrats through direct personal and internet contact.

The party bureaucracy's decision to rescind Barry Weisleder's nomination follows the ugly incident in Toronto's Etobicoke North constituency. There, on Aug. 17, NDP officials did not allow Diana Andrews (a Black, lesbian, elementary school teacher) to run for the NDP nomination, ostensibly because she is involved in a conflict with her union leadership.

It also follows the bureaucratic overturn of the elections held at the Ontario New Democratic Youth convention in Fall 2010 by party officials, and the cancellation of the constitutionally mandated ONDP convention that should have occurred in Spring 2011.

Before that, the Ontario party Leader ordered NDP MPP Michael Prue not to speak at an open hearing on the issue of public funding for Catholic schools. The hearing, attended by over 100 New Dem-

ocrats on March 12, 2010 at OISE U of Toronto, was organized by the NDP Socialist Caucus and was held when the party was openly reviewing its position on the question and seeking public in-put.

Most recently, the Preamble to the federal NDP Constitution, which still includes the word "socialist" after a bitter, highly publicized struggle at the federal convention, has disappeared entirely from the federal party website.

3) CREDO invites New Democrats to spread the word about this campaign for accountability and party democracy via e-mail, phone calls, websites, and Facebook. It invites everyone to attend an open public meeting, at a time and place to be announced, featuring a panel of activists who will speak to the incidents mentioned above.

For the latest news, contact: info@ndpsocialists.ca.

4) NDP members will exercise the right to appeal the party brass decision to rescind the Thornhill nomination, and continue to seek accountability and justice in this matter at the next Ontario NDP Provincial Council meeting on Nov. 19,—indeed, all the way to the April 12-15, 2012, Ontario NDP Convention. ■

... Troy Davis & Mumia Abu-Jamal

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multaneously extend every effort and untold billions of dollars to re-build, to rehabilitate, to educate, in a new world, all those who have been bent, broken, and deformed by the system itself. It would create all the conditions for a quality standard of life for all.

The problem we face today is not the danger posed by the release and real rehabilitation of the few who may cause danger to society. We are not lacking in the resources to return them to a healthy state. No human being is beyond humanity's love and concern. The relative few can and will be brought back to lead productive lives.

The real problem is the imprisonment of the many, the millions who remain behind bars—punished by an unjust social order. The leaders of this social order are never punished for sending armies and weapons of mass destruction across the globe to murder millions, plunder resources, and wage wars for imperial domination. This too will change.

We must also note here that 75 percent of all those in prison today are there for non-violent crimes—mostly drug-related and petty theft. These millions are criminalized for being the victims of an unjust society rampant with racial and gender oppression. We also set aside those who have been imprisoned because they have no serious recourse to legal counsel and those who, like Troy and Mumia, are victims of police and prosecution frame-ups. And there are those who are swept off the streets to service the prison-industrial complex's need for cheap labor to produce commodities that are competitive on the world market.

We do not set aside the fact that the U.S. leads the world in the number and percentage of people on death row. It is also first in the world in the number and percentage of its people in prison. These statistics

alone are a damning indictment of the present social order.

In truth, there is no justice in a racist and classist society, where the few rule and profit from the labor of the many—and where racist police, racist courts, and racist and class oppression permeate virtually every government institution. Under these circumstances we do not recognize any right of this state power to imprison anyone, much less to take their lives.

America's growing prison system is the reflection of a morally degenerating social order—one that expends trillions on wars and bank bailouts while gutting social programs won by working people many decades ago. Every human being has the potential to make monumental contributions to society's collective wellbeing. This potential is largely denied to vast sections of the poor and oppressed, and increasingly, as the economic chaos unfolds, to the broad working class more generally.

Perhaps Eugene V. Debs, five-time socialist candidate for the U.S. presidency, said it best. Addressing a Cleveland federal court at his 1918 sedition trial for opposing World War I, Debs stated: "Your Honor, years ago I recognized my kinship with all living beings, and I made up my mind that I was not one bit better than the meanest on earth. I said then, and I say now, that while there is a lower class, I am in it, and while there is a criminal element, I am of it, and while there is a soul in prison, I am not free."

A mass struggle to win Mumia's freedom would both honor the memory and life of Troy Davis and advance the freedom struggle across the board. ■

Save the date: Friday, Dec. 9, marks the 30th year of Mumia's incarceration. The Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal will be organizing an important "Evening



of solidarity and call to action: "Honor Troy! Free Mumia!" event in San Francisco, 6:30 p.m., at 518 Valencia St. East Coast Mumia organizations are preparing a major rally with the same objectives, also on Dec. 9, at the National Constitution Center, 5th and Arch Sts., in Philadelphia.

... Lynne

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by great feelings of love. This includes not only self-sacrifice but also daring to struggle, daring to win (to quote another hero, Mao).

Human Rights Coalition: What are some of the human rights violations that you see happening in the U.S. today that we, the people, need to eliminate?

Lynne Stewart: The most egregious and obvious violations are occurring in the prison system. Not only the obscenely long sentences but the torture holes of "Special Housing Units." These are the equivalents of Belsen and Dachau, resulting in living death and mental deterioration. When I think that so many imprisoned without current hope of redress are political prisoners and have been held so for decades, it not only brings tears but also a feeling of grim determination to make it change!

Human Rights Coalition: What are some of America's foreign human rights violations going on that people may not be aware of?

Lynne Stewart: I personally feel that the deterioration of the African sub-Saharan continent and its descent into rapacious capitalism will ultimately translate into unparalleled destruction of people and resources. I include South Africa in this assessment. If the African National Congress (ANC) and Mandela had remained steadfast in the socialist principles that guided their resistance and not given in to the terrible temptations of compromise, greed, and power, we might have seen the beginning of a different balance of power. Alas, this was not to be and instead we see the deprecation of Africa, by absolutism and the American capitalist paradigm.

Human Rights Coalition: People seem to be oblivious or indifferent to the human rights abuses that occur daily in U.S. prisons against other human beings, women prisoners in particular. Can you shed some light on that human rights issue?

Lynne Stewart: Human rights do not exist in prison. Aside from the obvious violations described above, I see day-to-day a brainwashing that teaches all prisoners that they are less than nothing and not worthy of even the least human or



Marty Goodman / Socialist Action

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

humane considerations. This is reflected in the lack of adequate medical care, the appalling diet, the steady diet of spoon-fed mediocrity—TV (Archie Bunker reruns), movies, no access to the web, etc. There is an absence of legal advice or aid inside the walls. Law libraries with books have been eliminated; instead they have a computer program that is so anti-user that even I, an attorney of 30 years, have difficulty navigating it. Their goal is to keep us dumbed-down, docile and estranged.

The outside world is oblivious because they too have been brainwashed into believing that those locked away are less than human—based on differences of race and class. It is most difficult to struggle against the power if you don't have a belief that the struggle is worth the sacrifice.

Human Rights Coalition: Do you consider the legal practice of sentencing children to life imprisonment without any possibility of release (a de facto death sentence) for homicide, to be a human rights violation?

Lynne Stewart: I am 100 percent opposed to anything that does not have a factor of human redemption or at least of remediation. I guess it is part of a whole belief system. If you are, like I am, committed to "changing" the world it must be ALL of us, who deserve to live in a system that recognizes that terrible psychic and

physical damage can be done to human beings, and has a plan to make people, especially children, whole and restore them to our community.

Human Rights Coalition: In Pennsylvania, being debated is whether sentencing child offenders to life imprisonment without parole should simply be "reformed" by leaving the legal practice intact and simply give the child offender a sentence of life with parole eligibility or should the legal practice be abolished entirely and a new sentencing scheme be developed for child offenders instead? What is your position on the matter—reform or abolish it?

Lynne Stewart: Your question really asks if "reform" is possible within an inhumane system? This is an issue revolutionaries have wrestled with always. Do we give the starving a crust of bread or leave them hungry to make the greater change. I, like Rosa Luxemburg, always made it my practice to minister to immediate primary needs but also to render the explanation for their predicament in political terms and with political (group action) solutions. At least in that way, the baby was no longer starving for milk and there might be a spark ignited for the next confrontation with the oppressor.

In the strict context of your question, we do need to struggle to save people from the most inhumane punishments. However, until we resolve the burning questions of race and class, we must not forget that these are palliative, Band-Aids on a hemorrhage.

Human Rights Coalition: What do you say about the illusion of democracy in America that the people are now witnessing from the domestic austerity program that the federal and state governments are imposing on the American people?

Lynne Stewart: Our job is how to smash the myth of America and we haven't really figured out as a movement how to blast our way past the sentimentality the media foists on us. We used to believe that if people knew the "truth," this would shake their faith and move us toward change; or alternatively, if their personal shoe pinched, they would act in self-interest. Now people seem to know only fear and rely on the myths of Big Brother government to assuage them. Our job is to keep on struggling, keep on raising the contradictions, create an atmosphere where we the people are ungovernable.

Human Rights Coalition: Any final comments for the movement out there, Sister Lynne?

Lynne Stewart: In this struggle, once you enlist, it is for life. There are no guarantees and you will be disappointed. But you will also be uplifted when there are victories and enriched by friendship and dedication of the comrades. Most importantly, you can look in the mirror every morning and be at one with the person there because you made the difficult choice and decided to fight for the people against the evil empires. It is the best way to live and I have been on the lines for fifty-plus years, living it. ■

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You can write to Lynne Stewart at: Lynne Stewart, #53504-054, Unit 2N, Federal Medical Center, Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127.

Contributions can be made to: Lynne Stewart Defense Committee, 1070 Dean St., Brooklyn, New York 11216. For further information: (718) 789-0558 or (917) 853-9759.

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

"Black Power Mix Tape 1967-1975," a documentary in English and Swedish with English subtitles, directed by Göran Olsson and co-produced by Danny Glover.

"Black Power Mix Tape 1967-1975" is a powerful documentary film, an unprecedented account of a significant era in the U.S. covering assassinations, riots, and the rise of the Black Power movement against the backdrop of the Vietnam War. Swedish filmmakers had visited the U.S. to document the status of Blacks after hearing of the unrest and revolt in the country. The print languished in a basement of Swedish television for 30 years and has just now been released. Directed by Göran Olsson with political activist Danny Glover as co-producer, "Black Power" conveys historical footage in a fresh, contemporary manner.

The footage contained in those eight years of filming is a wealth of images, music, narration as well as recent, added-in commentary by prominent African American artists and activists such as singer Erykah Badu, Harry Belafonte, Melvin Van Peebles, and musician Talib Kweli.

By the filmmakers' own admission, the film does not tell the whole story. But it gives an intimate view to the struggle by interviewing not only noted personalities from those years, but also Black small-business owners in the South who appear content serving their community, a customer in a coffee shop, and Black Vietnam vets who complained understandably that they fought over there and risked their lives—and when they returned the U.S. gave them nothing. The gritty, grainy, black and white film makes the raw poverty of the inner city life that much more believable in a wrenching scene of a poor Black woman in a one room apartment getting her six children ready for school.

In 1967, the filmmakers focused on Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture), who highlighted the term "Black Power," a term that scared whites as well as some Black leaders; at one point, Martin Luther King called it an "unfortunate choice of words." They filmed Carmichael giving speeches in which he said that Martin Luther King, Jr. was too soft. Later, he changed his mind when he admitted that the bus boycott worked. There is a clip in which Carmichael interviews his mother, who said that it was accepted that in slow economic times, Blacks were let go, no matter how much work seniority they had. His father, a carpenter, was currently laid off, she said, because he was "colored."

Carmichael was filmed in his front room with some musician friends. He was burning something in an ashtray. He said that he was burning the FBI and added that he wanted the FBI to "burn, baby, burn." That phrase was first used by DJ Magnificent Montague in Los Angeles on KGFJ, and earlier in New York on WWRL. It had nothing to do with riots or fire damage, but passion for a piece of music he liked. However, it went on to serve as a rallying cry of Blacks during the devastating riots in Watts, Detroit, Newark, and other cities, from 1965 on. Footage of the riots shows cops and National Guardsmen beating people with batons, fire-hosing, and unleashing dogs on unarmed civilians. Kweli, in a post-production interview for the film, had been detained by the FBI at an airport in 2001 after 9/11, because he used the "burn, baby, burn" phrase in his music in the '60s. He couldn't believe the FBI was still listening to it 40 years after the fact.

The film shows clips of Black Panther Party members, armed and uniformed in black leather jackets and berets. Panther leaders tell filmmakers that they carried weapons to defend themselves, their neighborhoods, against police brutality. Interviews in the film were of Black men, women, and children availing themselves of the social programs started by the BPP—free breakfasts, lunches, and dinners, as well as clothing, books, and school supplies.

Sensing an organized threat to America, the FBI wasted no time in rounding up Panther members, arresting them and throwing them in prison. In a voice-over, the narrator states that FBI head J. Edgar Hoover contended that the free breakfast program was the most dangerous activity of the time. There is footage of Hoover instituting COINTELPRO with the aim of infiltrating the Panthers and other radical groups, effectively turning their members against each other. COINTELPRO contributed to the murder in cold blood of Fred Hampton, the deputy chairman of the Illinois Panther chapter, by the Chicago Police Department.

The film includes footage of and interviews with Angela Davis (her hair in a gorgeous "natural," i.e. Afro), a member of the Communist Party and an associate of the Black Panther Party. She was the third woman in history to make the FBI's Most Wanted List. She'd been in Europe during the church bombing by racists in Birmingham; having been born in Birmingham, she knew and had grown up with the girls who were murdered. The filmmakers included clips of her speaking at rallies with BPP members against racism and violence towards Blacks.

One young Black man tells an interviewer that none of the shops in Harlem are owned or run by Blacks

'Black Power Mix Tape 1967-1975'



Roz Payne



and that Blacks can't get anywhere because they have no work. So they can't save enough money to open a business or buy a home and are at the mercy of white landlords.

Musician Talib Kweli, in an interview by Olsson, says that the government brought drugs into the Black communities to stifle any opposition to government controls, and that Blacks went to Vietnam and came back hooked on heroin. We are shown unsettling clips of people shooting up, nodding off on the street, and cops and ambulance drivers bringing in the bodies of teenagers who had OD'd.

Today, Black people are not much better off than they were 40 years ago, with Black unemployment at 17%, the highest since 1984, while white unemployment is a steady 8%. Black men are the majority of the prison population (35%); also, besides Hispanics, their foreclosure rates are the highest in the country.

With the release of this film, the eyes of many might be opened. Hopefully, they will soon join the rallies

(Clockwise) Angela Davis; Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture); opening day of trial of Black Panther leader Huey P. Newton, Oakland, Calif., 1969.

for an end to ongoing police brutality, murder, and imprisoning of Black people—and join in raising demands for social programs that can speak to the needs of Black youths, the poor and disfranchised.

Some people hoped that a Black president would turn the plight of the poor and disenfranchised around, regardless of color. But predictably, as have all U.S. presidents, Obama has sided with the oppressors. Stokely Carmichael had written in his 1967 book, "Black Power" (with co-writer Charles Hamilton): "It is a call for black people in this country to unite to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. It is a call for black people to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations." Today, there is still a need to build Black political organizations independent of the Democratic (and Republican) parties. ■

... Postal workers

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munication service for all, or a privatized for-profit agency.

The idea of the so called "village post offices" are one example of how management envisions the future of the Postal Service. The postal kiosks would be operated by private retailers, who are salivating at the prospect of massive profits. Companies like WalMart would be contracted to staff the kiosks, paying the company to do postal work and using near minimum-wage labor. The Postal Service already has multi-million and billion-dollar contracts with private companies, including the main competitors, UPS and FedEx, to handle some sorting work. Postal management envisions expanding this sub-contracting; it is seeking to bust the postal unions to carry out this privatization scheme—which would be a windfall for corporations.

The postal unions must be prepared for a major showdown as management advances its union-busting policies. Unfortunately, the postal unions' recent history in bargaining with management has undermined preparation for such a battle.

The American Postal Workers Union (APWU), which represents mail sorters in much of the country, signed a major concessionary contract last April. The contract set up a second tier of workers at lower pay and allows for the expansion of casual, "non-career" workers in exchange for returning some outsourced sorting work and a no-layoff provision. Now, while the ink is barely dry on that agreement, postal management is asking Congress to pass a law overriding it, to allow laying off tens of thousands of workers covered by the contract.

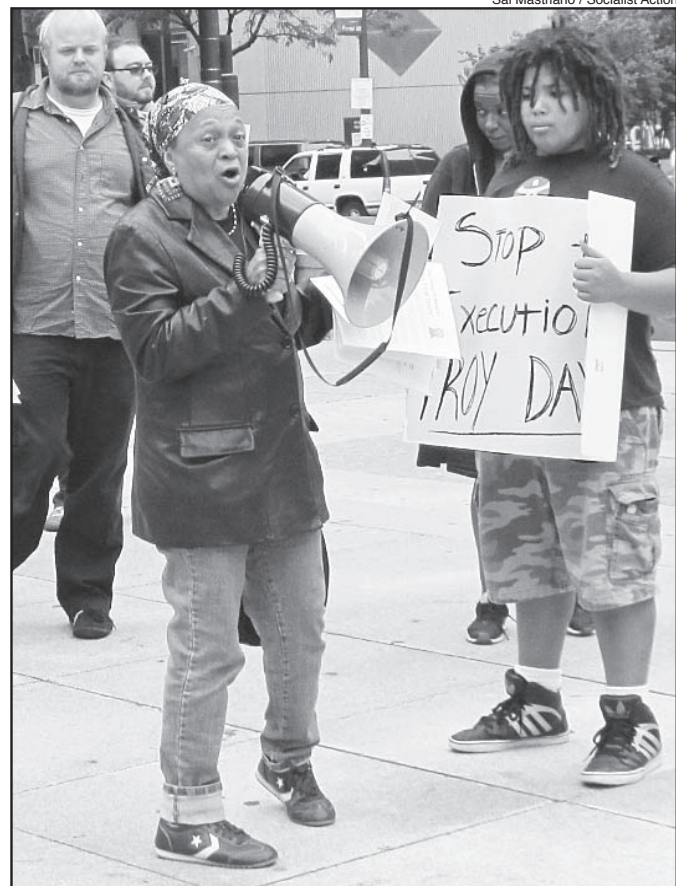
Postal workers need to organize a campaign in defense of their jobs and the future of the Postal Service itself. As the political hacks in Washington talk about the jobs crisis, what sense does it make to lay off 120,000 unionized workers at one of the country's largest employers? As Obama talks about the need for his "jobs bill" to be passed to create jobs, he has at the same time endorsed, along with many other congressional Democrats, the elimination of Saturday mail service.

The postal unions can't count on "friends" in Congress to defend their jobs. Instead, they must carry forward the protest by any means necessary against union busting, including making preparations for a nationwide postal strike if Congress passes the proposed Postal Service cuts. ■

For Troy Davis and Mumia Abu-Jamal



Frank Franklin II / AP



Sal Mastroianni / Socialist Action

By **JEFF MACKLER** and **LAURA HERRERA**

The authors are co-coordinators of the Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, in San Francisco.

Friday, Dec. 9, marks the 30th anniversary of Mumia Abu-Jamal's incarceration on frame-up murder charges. Amnesty International, the NAACP, city and national governments, national labor unions, and prominent human rights groups and individuals around the world have backed Mumia's demand for justice and his insistence on his innocence—as they did for Troy Davis.

Mumia is still on death row at SCI Greene in Waynesburg, Pa., imprisoned on false charges of killing a Philadelphia police officer. State prosecutors continue their relentless drive to secure his execution. Having failed in all such efforts in state and federal courts, Mumia's would-be murderers recently filed their last appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, the same court that broke the "rules of our civilized society" and approved the Sept. 21 execution of Troy Davis. With wind in their sails, they believe that they can now proceed to permanently silence Mumia by taking his life.

One million-plus signatures on Troy's petitions, millions of phone calls—to which judges and public offices turned a deaf ear—and protests in cities across the country and around the world were not enough to stop Troy's institutional murderers. The life of an innocent and courageous Georgia death-row prisoner, who fought for his freedom for 22 years, has been stolen. Our collective hearts go out to Troy's family, who unwaveringly stood by Troy and so eloquently led the fight for his freedom.

We are once again compelled to ask, "What will it take to stop this racist and classist system from executing Mumia, not to mention to set him free?" We do have an answer.

The struggle for Troy's life was not in vain. He relied on us to fight for it to the end, and we did. Millions were engaged as never before. Millions learned the facts of the case—the proof of Troy's innocence of the charges of killing a white police officer, the police coercion of seven of nine "eyewitnesses" (who subsequently recanted their lying testimony), and the spurious "legal" arguments that were employed.

"Innocence is no defense!" the Supreme Court declared again and again—truly a doctrine of the Dark Ages. They can kill anyone they please, so they believe. They make the laws to suit their system's needs. And they do kill, en masse, as well—in U.S. prisons and in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and now in Libya.

Troy's tragic murder, contrary to the system's insistence on its infallibility, has led millions to understand more deeply its corrupt and brutal nature. The dynamic struggle for Troy's life saw awakening layers of society learning about the importance of unity in action, of working together in a cooperative and respectful manner to educate and mobilize to demand justice. These lessons will not be lost, as the struggle will soon shift to stop Mumia's contemplated execution and win his freedom.

Troy reminded us once again that there is a mighty power that can be unleashed to challenge the status quo, a power in the streets, a power representing the

Troy reminded us again that there is a mighty power that can be unleashed to challenge the status quo — a power in the streets.

broad working class, the oppressed Black and Brown communities—who suffer most from racist injustice—and the youth. When organized, united—and yes, outraged—this power will not be denied. Troy set it in motion. Our assignment is to make it stronger.

Many of the mainstream groups that initiated what soon became a far broader effort to stop the execution and win Troy's freedom are not accustomed to mass social movements. Their arena of struggle has been largely restricted to patient pleas to the courts and to "lesser evil" politicians.

But when it became undeniable that the promised justice of the legal system was an illusion, the spark ignited by Troy's struggle stirred the passions of people everywhere, who had previously felt powerless to change the course of events. Amnesty International distributed a T-shirt that was reproduced across the country. "I AM TROY DAVIS," it stated boldly, conjuring up the heartbreaking and yet inspiring words in the magnificent film, "Spartacus," based on Howard Fast's novel about a slave rebellion that nearly toppled the Roman Empire more than 2000 years ago.

"I am Spartacus," the defeated army of slaves responded, first one at a time, as Spartacus rose but before he could identify himself. And then the slaves spoke in unison, in the thousands, when their choice might have led to leniency if they had revealed their rebel leader, rather than death. "I am Spartacus" subsequently became an expression of solidarity and unity against the oppressor and absolute identification—to the end—with the struggle of the oppressed.

The film's director, the long blacklisted Dalton Trumbo, later explained that the moment was meant to dramatize the solidarity of those who, during the McCarthy era, had been accused of being Communist sympathizers and brought before witch-hunting congressional committees, where they refused to "name names"—to implicate others—and, as a consequence, were jailed or blacklisted from the film industry.

"If you take the life of Troy Davis your system has forever lost its legitimacy in my eyes," might adequately capture the mood of defiance that swept the country. "I put my body on the line. I walk the talk," might be another interpretation.

In the course of defending Troy, an historic commitment to unity in action of broad social forces was forged on a critical issue. The mobilizations included the ranks and leaders of many long-established groups, such as the NAACP, Amnesty International, and other anti-death-penalty organizations. Newly activated youth on campuses and in the communities were joined by an impressive range of social justice organizations and socialist parties. They organized meetings to educate the newcomers and took to the

(Above) Pam Africa of International Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal addresses Philadelphia rally for Troy Davis.

(Left) Times Square, N.Y., protest on Sept. 16.

streets with daily, and then nationally coordinated, protests in cities everywhere. With astonishing speed the word spread that the ultimate injustice was in the making for an innocent man, and the streets were the place to be.

But while it was Troy's plight that sparked the leap in consciousness, the mobilizations and outrage were fueled by the common understanding of tens of millions with personal knowledge and contact with the criminal injustice system. By virtue of their direct experience with rampant police brutality or their own imprisonment or the incarceration of family members, friends, and neighbors, the seemingly isolated experiences of millions became a collective and mass experience. Troy's murder, however tragic to his family and all who knew him or knew of him, exacted a great price from the powers that be. The price, not to be underestimated, is the shattering of illusions in the minds of broad swaths of the populations in the credibility of the system itself.

For this reason, if for no other, Troy Davis will never be forgotten. His murder will come back to haunt his state-power killers. He opened the door wider than ever for a renewed struggle to abolish the death penalty and to win the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners. His last words, his attorneys tell us, were a battle cry to move forward with the abolition struggle as well as a ringing proclamation of his innocence. He died with the knowledge and comfort that the struggle will continue. And it will!

Troy's murder and the renewed effort to take Mumia's life require the abolition movement to tackle new ideas concerning the criminal "justice" system. We began "The Mobe" (Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal) some 16 years ago with a few simple demands: Free Mumia! Abolish the Death Penalty! Free All Political Prisoners! Stop Police Brutality!

Today, in the U.S. there are almost 3500 death-row prisoners awaiting execution on America's domestic killing fields. There are 3.5 million U.S. working people in prison, mostly youth under 35, the majority Black, Latino, and other oppressed nationalities. There are 7.2 million under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system.

Would we be out of order to demand freedom for them all? Our intention here is not to raise the specter of the consequences of releasing a relatively small number of prisoners who have been seriously damaged by a life of oppression and denial, who have committed heinous crimes, and who may be a danger to others. The humane society we struggle to bring into being would open the prison doors and free all the victims of social and economic injustice. It would si-

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