

Activists denounce restrictions on Chicago G8/NATO protests



Tony Savino / Socialist Action



Saul Loeb / AFP / Getty Images

By CHRISTINE MARIE

On Jan. 25, the Vancouver culture jammers known as *Adbusters* brought new attention to the need to protest the NATO/G8 summit occurring in Chicago from May 19-21. *Adbusters* played a large role in building the Occupy Wall Street protests in New York last fall and their call is expected to put the NATO/G8 summit meetings in Chicago on the top of the list of spring protest sites in the U.S.

Their call began: "Against the backdrop of a global uprising that is simmering in dozens of countries and thousands of cities and towns, the G8 and NATO will hold a rare simultaneous summit in Chicago this May. The world's military and political elites, heads of state, 7,500 officials from 80 nations, and more than 2,500 journalists will be there. And so will we."

The *Adbusters'* call is just one of many initiatives underway for the summit. Occupy Chicago is also planning spring campaigns that highlight the role of the two elite international groups in creating the nightmare of war and austerity pressing down on the 99% around the globe. CANG8, the Coalition Against NATO/G8 Wars and Austerity, and UNAC (United National Antiwar Coalition) are moving ahead with the organization of a large national permitted mass action on the opening day of the summit, May 19, and a People's Summit to build for that march on the previous weekend. The UNAC national conference to be held in Stamford, Conn., March 23-25, is planned to be a major effort to build East Coast participation in the May 19 demonstration.

CANG8 won a major victory on Jan. 12 when the city of Chicago, after a five-month period of uncertainty, granted permits for the May 19 march and rally. The permits were granted only after a series of protests that involved not only the antiwar and Occupy movements, but labor, religious, and community organizations as well. The victory was tempered by the contents of a cover letter attached to the permits, however, that said that these permits could be abrogated by the Secret Service and Homeland Security as the demonstration date nears. In addition, the Chicago city administration, in collaboration with the federal government, is clearly planning to use the NATO/G8

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summit to set new national norms for restricting the right to protest through onerous ordinances, massive surveillance, and an extraordinary police and military presence.

Throughout the month of January, Chicago activists mobilized repeatedly to stop the city from passing a package of terrible restrictions on those who would organize demonstrations in the city. While there was much fanfare about Mayor Rahm Emmanuel backing away from fines of up to \$1000 for a violation of one of the parade ordinances, from the requirement that any demonstrating group provide a peace marshal for every 100 protesters, and from restricting the time

(Photo on right) Riot police at G20 protests in Pittsburgh in 2009. Chicago and federal gov'ts are hoping to restrict civil liberties even more during the G8 and NATO summits in May.

a parade can be in the street from two hours and 15 minutes to two hours, in the end, extremely unconstitutional ordinances have now become law.

For example, resisting arrest, an act that has been defined in Chicago as going limp, can result in a \$1000 fine. Organizers are required to pre-register any sign, with its content outlined, that requires more than one person to carry. The same is true for any sound equipment. Pickets on the sidewalk can be subjected to street parade ordinances. Multiple "violations" could result in a piling up of fees that make protest simply terrifying for working people.

The ACLU is protesting plans to add huge numbers of surveillance cameras with zoom, tracking, and facial recognition to a system that is already recognized as the most expansive and integrated in the country, until there is some guarantee that they cannot be deployed without reasonable suspicion of a crime. The ordinances also allow the mayor to hire almost anyone to function as part of a police force made up of public and private groups, to interfere with peaceful protest during the summit. Since September the city police chief has been spreading fear that those protesting the summit will be "violent" and boasting of the force of 13,000 officers of the law that he would be deploying.

Coming as they do in the wake of revelations about the involvement of Homeland Security in coordinating the violent police crackdown on the Occupy Movement, the threat to use drones and other military hardware in local law enforcement, and the plan to use the militarized U.S. Coast Guard to herd a scab ship to the Port of Longview, Mayor Rob Emmanuel's ordinances and the federal threat to shut down protest in Chicago must be addressed as one of the major challenges before the movements for social change in the U.S. They should not be seen as a Chicago aberration but as a national test of the ability of the antiwar and social justice movement to hold the space for legal protest.

The movement cannot afford to let the precedent

(continued on page 4)

For a Revolutionary Black History Month

By MUMIA ABU-JAMAL

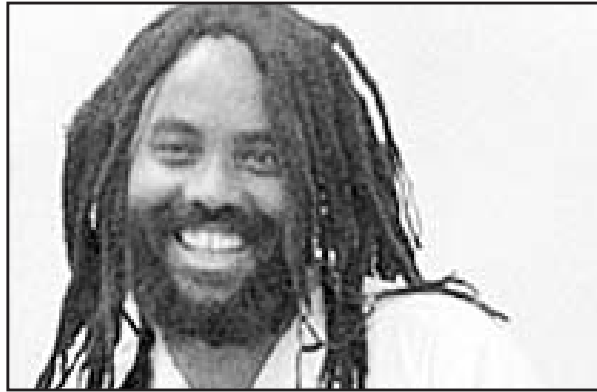
As we once again approach February, the papers and TV stations will feature programming that shows more Black faces than usual. Some will show movies, some documentaries and some will feature history in celebration of Black History Month.

Undoubtedly, Martin Luther King Jr.'s epic "March on Washington" speech will be samples, its grainy, black and white videotape the very symbol of a bygone era, and it's key catchphrase, "Thank God Almighty, we're free at last!"—a haunting and ironic mockery of the real state of most of Black America. One tape that invariably will not be shown is one of the final press conferences of the nation's first (and perhaps only) Black U.S. Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall, aged and ill, yet with the presence of mind to announce, "I'm still not free."

For millions of Black Americans, this Black History Month, while perhaps rich in symbol, comes amidst the greatest loss of collective assets in our history, crippling joblessness, haunting home foreclosures, public schools that perform more mis-education than education, rabid police terrorism, and perhaps the highest Black incarceration rates in U.S. history, and all that entails.

That we have Black History Month at all is due to the Black Freedom Movements of the '60s, and the dogged persistence of Black historian Carter G. Woodson, who began his efforts with Negro History Week, back in the 1920s! Yet, it begins, as do all struggles for progress, with the Movement. If Black mothers and grandmothers, and later Black schoolchildren, didn't follow King, we wouldn't know his name, except perhaps as an historical footnote. For, without followers, there is no movement—and thus no progress.

The late, great Marxist revolutionary historian, C.L.R.



James, in his finest work, "Black Jacobins," a history of the Haitian Revolution, illustrates how the leadership, including Gen. Toussaint L'Ouverture, tried repeatedly to betray the Revolution, on to face two immovable forces—the racist recalcitrance of the French government of Napoleon (who wanted to restore slavery), and the militancy of the Black soldiers, who pushed onward to Revolution.

The point? People make history, by mass movements, often ones which go faster and further than the leaders want. And masses make and sustain revolutions—often against "leaders" whose every instinct is to betray them.

In a forward to one of the many editions of Black Jacobins, James reminds us, "... that it was the slaves who had made the Revolution. Many of the slave leaders to the end were unable to read or write" (James, xvi). But they sure knew how to fight.

Africans, by the tens of thousands, broke their chains, and though penniless, hungry, and scarred by the ravages of bondage, found weapons and the will to fight for freedom against the defenders of slavery: France, Britain, and Spain. They beat them all, because their

hunger for freedom was greater than anything. ANYTHING.

And by so doing they changed world history. They shattered French dreams of an American Empire; and enabled the U.S. to double in size after its purchase of Louisiana from Napoleon. They also did what no "slave" army had ever done in modern or ancient history. They defeated an empire. That is Revolutionary Black History—and it deserves to be remembered during Black History Month. © MAJ 2012

Mumia freed from solitary

It took a petition with 5000 signatures, gathered in a few days, to the Philadelphia District Attorney and prison officials to compel the warden at SCI Mahanoy to release Mumia Abu-Jamal from his "worse than death row" solidarity-confinement "hole." The excuse? Mumia refused to cut off his dreadlocks! While on death row at SCI Greene, Mumia waged the same fight for seven years until his jailors relented. As of Jan. 27 Mumia has been in the General Prison Population.

On Jan. 30, he had his first visit with his wife Wadiya—the first time in 27 years that he was allowed to touch another human being. Here's Mumia's message to the freedom movement, sent via Wadiya: "My dear friends, brothers and sisters—I want to thank you for your real hard work and support. I am no longer on death row, no longer in the hole, I'm in population. This is only part one and I thank you all for the work you've done. But the struggle is for freedom! From Mumia and Wadiya, Ona Move. Long Live John Africa!"

A week later, Mumia had more visitors (see Johanna Fernandez's letter, next page). Write Mumia at: Mumia Abu-Jamal, AM 8335 SCI Mahanoy 301, Morea Road, Frackville, PA 17932. ■

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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What sort of third party do we need?

By JOHN LESLIE

The past year or so has seen a dramatic shift in the U.S. class struggle. The mass movement in Wisconsin against the union busting agenda of tea-party Republican Scott Walker, the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement that spread across the U.S., and the ILWU fight to protect their union rights at Longview, Wash., and elsewhere on the West Coast all show the potential for a working-class fightback against the anti-worker agenda of both the Democrats and Republicans.

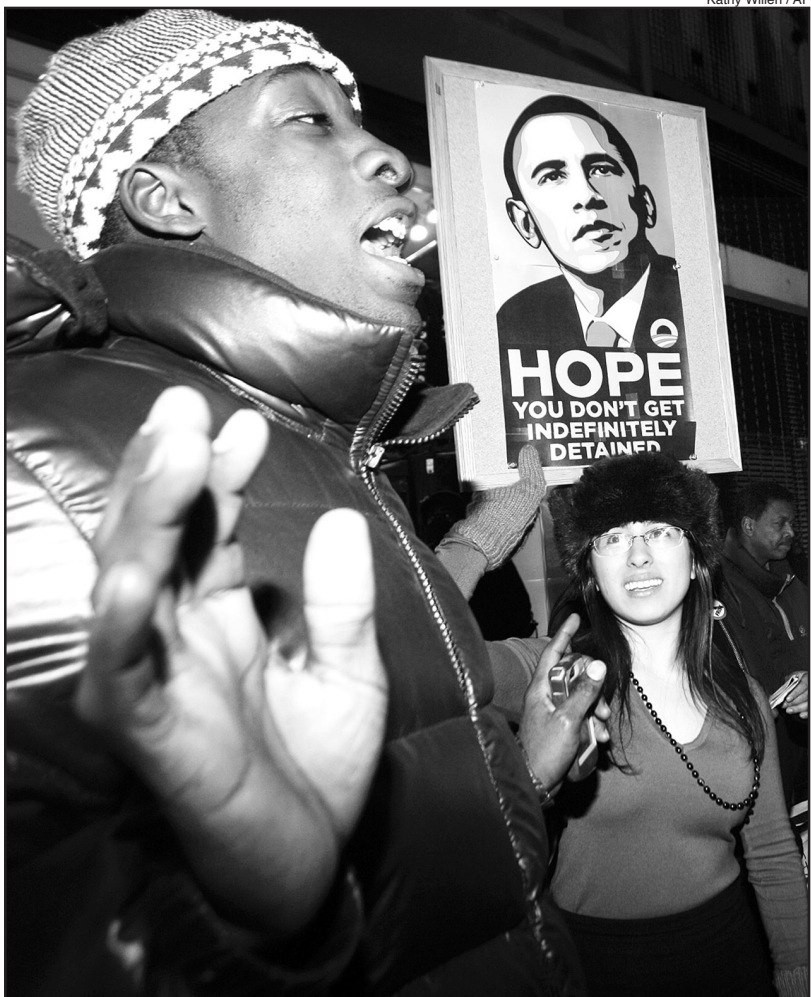
Working people are increasingly receptive to calls for a new third party as an alternative to business as usual. But what sort of party do we need?

As of this writing, the GOP field has narrowed to four candidates, who each seem eager to outdo the others in reactionary, racist, anti-union, and anti-women rhetoric. They promise draconian measures ranging from Ron Paul's "open season" on union organizers, to Gingrich's promise to put Black eight-year-olds to work as school janitors to "teach them the value of work" and to repeal child labor laws, to Romney's professed love of firing people and Santorum's support for a national "right-to-work" law.

The Democrats will certainly point to the reactionary nature of the GOP, and Obama will likely take a slight left turn in his speeches. For instance, in his State of the Union address (SOTU) last month, Obama used populist rhetoric about taxing the rich, creating jobs, and defending the middle class. This is in contrast to the SOTU he gave last year, in which he signaled his willingness to compromise with GOP budget cutters, saying, "We will move forward together or not at all." But this year's SOTU also contained nationalistic attacks on China—the biggest trading partner of the U.S.—as well as promises to defend Israel and a pledge to "take no options off the table to" stop Iran from achieving nuclear weapons.

Obama's real record in office

It is astonishing to read in the lead editorial of *The Nation* (Feb. 13) the statement that Obama's State of the Union address was "suffused with the spirit of Occupy Wall Street." A glance at Obama's record in office



Kathy Willen / AP

(Left) Occupy Harlem protest outside the Apollo Theater, where President Obama spoke at a fund-raiser, Jan. 19.

continued the war policies of the previous administration. He has supported the continued dispossession of the Palestinian people, played a leading role in the imperialist attack on Libya, and has pursued a policy of war and sanctions towards Iran.

In 2008, Obama campaigned as a pro-union politician, promising to sign into law the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), which would have made union organizing easier. Instead, we have seen a bipartisan attack on collective bargaining, and brutal attacks on the Occupy movement in different cities—mostly by Democratic mayors and coordinated with federal authorities. Obama promised health-care reform, but instead we were given a health-care "deform" that was a massive bailout of private insurers.

The Democrats have a history of co-opting social movements and channeling them into the service of a reactionary social agenda. This was demonstrated a year ago, when the Democrats and the AFL-CIO bureaucracy diverted the movement in Wisconsin, which had occupied the state capitol, into more "respectable" forms of protest like electoral politics and petitioning. The result was the loss of the momentum the movement had achieved.

More recently, the Occupy movement was courted by Democratic Party-supporting organizations like MoveOn.org and by some union tops as a way of bringing the movement's

energy under the wing of the Democrats. Democrats clearly see the opportunity to create a "tea party" of the left as an adjunct of their campaigns. So far, the majority of the movement has resisted the temptation to ally themselves with either of the two major parties of the 1 percent.

An alternative needed—but what kind?

A lot of activists and progressive people rightly point to the need for an alternative to the two capitalist parties, but what kind of party do we need? Many are responsive to the Green Party or to independent candidate Rocky Anderson. Anderson, the candidate of the

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A visit with Mumia

Comrades, Brothers and Sisters:

Heidi Boghosian [executive director, National Lawyers Guild] and I [Johanna Fernandez, Educators for Mumia] just returned from a very moving visit with Mumia. We visited yesterday, Thursday, Feb. 2. This was Mumia's second contact visit in over 30 years, since his transfer to General Population last Friday, Jan. 27. His first contact visit was with his wife, Wadiya, on Monday, Jan. 30.

Unlike our previous visits to Death Row at SCI Greene and to solitary confinement at SCI Mahanoy, our visit yesterday took place in a large visitor's area, amidst numerous circles of families and spouses who were visiting other inmates. Compared to the intense and focused conversations we had had with Mumia in a small, isolated visiting cell on Death Row, behind sterile plexiglass, this exchange was more relaxed and informal and more unpredictably interactive with the people around us ... it was more human.

There were so many scenes of affection around us, of children jumping on top of and pulling at their fathers, of entire families talking intimately around small tables, of couples sitting and quietly holding each other, and of girlfriends and wives stealing a forbidden kiss from the men they were there to visit (kisses are only allowed at the start and at the end of visits). These scenes were touching and beautiful, and markedly different from the images of prisoners presented to us by those in power. Our collective work could benefit great-

ly from these humane, intimate images.

When we entered, we immediately saw Mumia standing across the room. We walked toward each other and he hugged both of us simultaneously. We were both stunned that he would embrace us so warmly and share his personal space so generously after so many years in isolation.

He looked young, and we told him as much. He responded, "Black don't crack!" We laughed.

He talked to us about the newness of every step he has taken since his release to general population a week ago. So much of what we take for granted daily is new to him, from the microwave in the visiting room to the tremor he felt when, for the first time in 30 years, he kissed his wife. As he said in his own words, "The only thing more drastically different than what I'm experiencing now would be freedom." He also noted that everyone in the room was watching him.

The experience of breaking bread with our friend and comrade was emotional. It was wonderful to be able to talk and share grilled cheese sandwiches, apple danishes, cookies and hot chocolate from the visiting room vending machines.

One of the highlights of the visit came with the opportunity to take a photo. This was one of the first such opportunities for Mumia in decades, and we had a ball! Primping the hair, making sure that we didn't have food in our teeth,

should put to rest any suggestion that the U.S. chief executive is one of the "99 percent."

In 2008, Obama ran on the slogans of "Hope" and "Change." But instead of "Change," we see business as usual in the White House. The president has pursued a pro-corporate agenda with bailouts for banks. Obama's so-called jobs bill features tax cuts and "incentives" for business and the rich. He has supervised massive cuts in social programs. He has attacked civil liberties—continuing the scandalous Guantanamo concentration camp—extended the PATRIOT Act, and signed into law the NDAA, which guts the right to habeas corpus and allows for the detention of U.S. citizens without trial.

Obama campaigned as a "peace" candidate, but has



Prison Radio

and nervously getting ready for the big photo moment was such a laugh! And Mumia was openly tickled by every second of it.

When the time came to leave, we all hugged and were promptly instructed to line up against the wall and walk out with the other visitors. As we were exiting the prison, one sister pulled us aside and told us that she couldn't stop singing Kelly Clarkson's line, "some people wait a lifetime for a moment like this."

She shared that she and her parents had followed Mumia's case since 1981 and that she was overjoyed that Mumia was alive and in general population despite Pennsylvania's bloodthirsty pursuit of his execution.

We told her that on April 24 we were going to launch the fight that would win

Mumia's release: that on that day we were going to Occupy the Justice Department in Washington DC. She told us that because she recently survived cancer she now believed in possibility, and that since Mumia was now in general population she could see how we could win. She sent us off with the line from Laverne and Shirley's theme song—"never heard the word impossible!"—gave us her number, and asked us to sign her up for the fight.

We're still taking it all in. The journey has been humbling and humanizing, and we are re-energized and re-inspired!!

In the words of City Lights editor Greg Ruggiero: "Long Term Goal: End Mass Incarceration. Short Term Goal: Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!"

— Johanna Fernandez

UNAC conference, March 23-25: 'Challenge the wars of the 1%'

By CHRISTINE MARIE

A Conference to Challenge the Wars of the 1% Against the 99% at Home and Abroad—this banner heads the call for the United National Antiwar Coalition Conference, which will be held in Stamford, Conn., on March 23-25.

Addressing this theme will be international guest speakers that include Xiomara Castro de Zelaya, the wife of the former Honduran president ousted by a U.S.-backed coup and the just named presidential candidate of the new party of the Honduran resistance known as Libertad y refundación; Fignole St. Cyr of the Haitian Autonomous Workers Confederation; and Andrew Murray, a member of the British Trades Union Congress Executive Council, a leader of the Nov. 30 general strike over pensions, and the head of the UK Stop the Wars Coalition from 2002-2011.

On hand to help draw the links between the potential of the Occupy Movement and the fight against U.S. wars

and austerity will be Clarence Thomas, a longshoreman from Oakland, Calif., who helped to lead the campaigns in defense of the Longview ILWU strikers against the union-busting company EGT, and Scott Olsen, the Iraq war veteran and occupier whose injury by the Oakland police alerted the nation to the connections between the wars at home and abroad.

The war at home on the Black community will be addressed at a major lunch-time plenary panel headlined by Glen Ford of *Black Agenda Report*, Dr. Khalilah Brown-Dean of Quinnipiac College, Pam Africa, and the hip-hop scholar-agitator Jared Ball. Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid of the Muslim Peace Coalition, Monami Maulik of Desis Rising Up and Moving, James Yee, who once served as a Muslim chaplain at Guantanamo, and Cyrus McCormick of the New York City chapter of the Council of American Islamic Relations will help orient attendees to the centrality of the fight against Islamophobia, preemptive prosecution, and indefinite detention.

In short, the new political possibilities and new chal-

lenges opened by the autumn explosion of the Occupy Movement, the mass protests against austerity occurring worldwide, and the U.S. government's drive toward new and deepening military interventions in Iran, Africa, and East Asia have shaped the politics and organization of the conference dramatically. Unlike previous national antiwar conferences that focused more exclusively on the occupations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the UNAC conference is necessarily organized around providing education and space for analysis of the new geographic scope of imperialism's increasingly desperate belligerence.

The opening session on Friday night, entitled "Shifting Strategies of Empire: Analyzing the Military and Economic Plans of the 1%," will allow experts and activists such as Col. Ann Wright, David Swanson, BAYAN leader Bernadette Ellorin, Abayomi Azikiwe of the Pan-Africa Newswire, Kazem Azim of Solidarity Iran, Adaner Usmani of the Labor Party of Pakistan, Jeff Mackler, and others to explain the manner in which the U.S. threats against Iran and Syria are linked to the so-called "Return to Asia" and the step up of operations on the African continent.

The major Palestinian leaders Lamis Deek of Al Awda NYC and Andrew Dalack of the U.S. Palestinian Community Network will be on hand to discuss the relationship between Israel's dramatic new war moves inside Palestine and those they are threatening on Iran. A major plenary panel on Sunday will facilitate a discussion among leading environmentalist Bill McKibben, well-known radical economist Richard Wolff, and Marxist scholar of globalization Vijay Prashad on the theme of the "Global Economic Crisis, Warming, and War."

The remainder of the conference will be taken up with plenary sessions in which attendees will consider and modify a draft Action Plan for united national antiwar activities for the coming months and over 40 educational workshops. At the center of the Action Plan is a proposal for a mobilization for a May 19 permitted march in Chicago in response to the NATO/G8 summit being hosted there. Representatives of the umbrella coalition organizing May 19, called CANG8 or the Coalition Against NATO/G8 Wars and Poverty Agenda, will be on hand to motivate national involvement. The Action Plan, which is available at www.unacpeace.org, is now being circulated nationally, and proposed amendments and counterposed resolutions are being accepted for the gathering's consideration.

The selection of workshops available to attendees spans the entire gamut of themes relevant to building mass actions against Washington's war moves. Titles manifesting the geographical breadth of the educational presentations include, "Defeating AFRICOM & NATO: Building Solidarity with Africa," "Egypt: Will the People Rule?" "Resource Wars in South Asia," "U.S. Geopolitical Strategy and Intervention in the Asia-Pacific Region," "Rethinking Pakistan: People's Struggle and the War on Terror," and "Negotiating Peace in Colombia."

Other threads will deal with the new weapons and related military strategies of the U.S. and NATO. These include "Confronting Robotic (Drone) Warfare," "U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Europe and the Campaign for Withdrawal," and "Prisons: the New Torture Machine."

Some of the most innovative panels bring together the fights of immigrant workers and social justice activists globally. These include two workshops organized by Desis Rising Up and Moving: "Border Militarization/Migrant Workers Rising Globally" and "From Egypt to New York City: 'Anti-Radicalization' Laws, Surveillance, the War on Terror Industrial Complex." The theme of building solidarity between the Occupy Movement, the labor movement, and antiwar initiatives is interwoven throughout the workshop sessions.

Those interested in attending the conference and organizing others to attend will find registration, housing, and transportation information online at www.unacpeace.org. UNAC is attempting to raise scholarship funds and will gratefully accept donations for the registration and housing of students and the unemployed. Information about how to submit amendments and resolutions will be found on this website as well.

Austerity tightens in Greece

Aris Messinis / AFP / Getty Images

Parallels between ancient Greece and current Greece are not lacking in recent times, and the "Greek tragedy" has been served up in all journalistic saucers. In the country that invented democracy to put an end to debt slavery, the European bourgeoisie imposes its reactionary approach: even if the institution of slavery is not (yet) re-established, the poverty into which the Greek people have been plunged at a growing speed greatly resembles a modern slavery.

Every day, 2400 new workers are thrown into unemployment, which has officially reached 17.7% (12.4% a year ago), with 21.5% of women affected and 35.3% of youth. Fifty percent of the unemployed have been out of work for more than one year.

Paul Tomsen—the best known personality of the troika (IMF, EU and ECB), today de facto in charge of the country's affairs—says on the one hand that the imposition over the last six months of the fiscal burden on a part of the population which can no longer pay is an error, and on the other demands two measures: the suspension of collective agreements (to impose flexibility and the alignment of wages with productivity) and the closure of a certain number of public enterprises (which in his view have ceased to fulfill the function for which they were created). Obviously, no question of asking the people for a democratic opinion on the utility of these enterprises!

The mobilizations by sector or enterprise are numerous and sometimes allow partial victories over the employer or the state. Numerous strikes have taken place in transport, a strike has broken out against the neoliberal university reform, and the taxis are on strike against the "opening" (to the big companies) of the profession and so on.

One of the most significant struggles currently concerns the audiovisual and press sector (newspapers, television, radio, magazines, and internet). Massive layoffs, brutal pay cuts have affected every company in the sector. Tens of thousands of workers are no longer paid or not paid on time, with most companies paying wages months late. The television channel "Alter" has not paid



its 700 employees for a year, and the big Athens newspaper *Eleftherotipia* stopped paying its 840 employees this summer.

However, there is resistance to this daily violence in the workplaces. After months of working for free, the workers at "Alter" decided to occupy the head office of the television and turn it into a center of solidarity (collecting food to organize their own survival) and beginning to broadcast programs (rudimentary for the moment), which have become a center of popularization of the struggle of several sectors and factories. Similar projects are now being discussed by the workers at *Eleftherotipia*.

The most emblematic struggle currently is at the steel factory of Halivourgia in Aspropyrgos, in the Athenian suburbs, against lay-offs and wage cuts. This struggle is led by workers linked to the pro-KKE union current PAME and is characterized not only by its combativity, but also by the very broad support it has received, including union and political support. For example, the intervention of our comrade Yannis Felekis, historic leader of the Greek section of the Fourth International, OKDE-Spartakos, was warmly received by the strikers!

This is adapted from an article by Tassos Anastasiadis and Adreas Sartzekis on the Fourth International website: www.internationalviewpoint.org.

... Chicago protest against G8 / NATO

(continued from page 1)

being crafted collaboratively in Chicago and DC for the NATO G8 summit be set without a major challenge. While many militant youth believe that the fight over permits and legal protest space is passé, they underestimate the power and determination of the state. The movement cannot afford to let an opportunity go by to push back the NATO/G8 summit restrictions—a campaign that can have wide appeal among broad layers of the U.S. public.

A national ad to be printed in the *Chicago Sun Times*, demanding the right to protest war and austerity in May, has been initiated by UNAC and signed by hundreds of nationally prominent figures, including Noam Chomsky, Tom Hayden, Jules Lobel, Bill Quigley, Naomi Wolfe, and others (see www.unacpeace.org). It is a modest beginning to a critical national civil liberties battle that should be joined by all.

The way in which Chicago has been designated as an early battlefield in the government's attempt to dramatically roll back civil liberties was also reaffirmed on Jan. 24, when a lawyer for the 23 Midwest antiwar and solidarity activists being threatened with indictments in a grand jury investigation of

material support to "terrorism" was told that Assistant U.S. Attorney Barry Jonas has been assigned to the prosecution team. Jonas, according to Jess Sundin of the Committee to Stop FBI Repression, "is famous for one of the most appalling attacks on civil and democratic rights in the past decade—the prosecution of the Holy Land Five."

The Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development was once the largest Muslim charity in the U.S. Its efforts were geared towards providing humanitarian aid to help the people of Palestine and other countries. Beginning in 2001, as part of the run-up to the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the government began to attempt to use the founders of this organization as part of

its campaign of fear and saber rattling. The trial that resulted in the conviction and sentencing of the five defendants for periods of time ranging from 15 to 65 years included secret witnesses, the use of hearsay evidence, and the introduction of evidence that had nothing to do with the defendants in the case—such as showing a video from Palestine of protesters burning an American flag, as a means to prejudice the jury.

Jonas was the lead prosecutor then and has now been assigned to work under Chicago U.S. Attorney Patrick Fitzgerald in the current attack on the Midwest antiwar and solidarity activists. It is time to rally the entire movement to reclaim Chicago as a center of working-class politics.

By ANDREW POLLACK

Occupy movement debates the call for a May 1 general strike

At least 15 sites of the Occupy Movement have endorsed a call for actions on May Day 2012, including a general strike, initiated by Occupy LA (OLA). The debate within New York's Occupy Wall Street (OWS) over whether to endorse the call is illustrative of the ideological differences within the movement, as well as the possibility for unity in action despite such differences.

In this sense the debate overlaps simultaneous discussions on the West Coast about the relative roles of Occupy sites and unions, of differences between union officials and rank-and-file, and of the centrality of labor as opposed to an undifferentiated "99%".

In December, the Direct Action working group, the body that considers and endorses action proposals for OWS, set up an exploratory committee to consider the call. On Jan. 28 the committee came to consensus, with no "blocks" or even "stand asides," on the following language:

"May Day 2012: Occupy Wall Street stands in solidarity with the calls for a day without the 99%, a general strike and more!! On May Day, wherever you are, we are calling for: No Work, No School, No Housework, No Shopping, No Banking. TAKE THE STREETS!!!!!"

In forwarding this resolution to the planning group's list after its passage, one of the co-facilitators of the process said, "We reached consensus on language for May Day that respects diversity of tactics, the different needs of various communities and the autonomy of individuals, while not putting us at odds with occupations across the country." This is an accurate reflection of the discussions leading to the final language, and a testament to the desire for unity, despite wildly varying interpretations of what a general strike is, whether and how it would be possible, and of the possible repercussions for participants.

The phrase "a day without the 99%" is in the OWS call as a nod to the concerns of the OWS Labor Outreach Committee and its Immigrant Worker Justice Working Group (IWJWG). Both of these groups pointed out that many workers are legally barred from striking or fear victimization by *la migrá* for doing so. LOC and IWJWG activists also pointed out that a general strike can't just be called, that historically such strikes occur as part of a broader organic process of mobilization and radicalization of working people.

Desire for unity

While the overwhelming majority of the OWS May 1st committee still believe a general strike is possible, it agreed to insertion of the "day without the 99%" phrase—including its placement before the general strike phrase, as a recognition of the seriousness of those concerns, and as a display of the deep-seated desire for unity. This reflected a desire manifested throughout the four-hour-long meeting, culminating a weeks-long process, which reached consensus on the call.

Those differences even include what exactly a general strike is, with the LOC and IWJWG referring to its traditional meaning of a workplace-based action, while the anarchist-influenced majority conceiving of it as a more general nonparticipation in any economic aspect of the system.

The final agreement is something of a mish-mash: a call for a universal stay-away from work, combined with a list of actions for those who can't. And in that it reflects the original OLA call in the diversity of tactics recommended, with an explicit acknowledgment in the OLA call that anti-labor legislation and other intimidating factors might lessen the response by both organized and unorganized workers to a strike call.

LOC and IWJWG activists pointed out that general strikes typically break out as broader responses to specific battles in a context of overall class-wide dissatisfaction, and they argued for building May Day actions as the culmination of support for already ongoing struggles, such as the many contract and organizing campaigns going on in New York in a wide variety of industries. They further argued that such pre-May Day activities present an opportunity to talk to those in struggle about the need for class-wide action.

There are three basic tendencies in the OWS May Day planning group, whose meetings range from 60 to 100 in size: (1) hard-core anarchists who are openly and insultingly dismissive of unions (and who don't differentiate between union officials and rank and file, believing unions themselves are inherently creatures of capital); (2) mainstream anarchists, whose ideology is predominant in OWS, and who take seriously their insistence on finding ways to work with those

they disagree with; (3) the LOC and IWJWG, most of whom are socialists and activists for union reform and militancy.

During discussions about what we wanted to see happen on May Day, both groups of anarchists said they hoped for a complete shutdown of the city, or "shutting down capitalism," by "widespread disruption" such as blocking bridges and roads. Some even advocated picketing workplaces to force workers not to go to work, as opposed to encouraging them to strike. This, of course, is an ironically patronizing and substitutionist approach for a movement that prides itself on fostering the autonomy and self-determination of all the oppressed.

Are unions still relevant to the struggle?

The anarchists also claimed that a general strike could no longer be conceived of as primarily workplace-based, and that "strikes" against payments of rent, mortgages, student loans, credit card debt, etc. were just as important as job walkouts. Arguments for such a conception of a general strike were motivated by claims that unions are now irrelevant, ignoring the historical fact that the percentage of labor organized has always sunk to tiny fractions of the workforce in periods of ruling-class offensive—but has mushroomed quickly and massively in periods of struggle.

The anarchists also claim that the labor process itself and the extraction of profits from work is no longer a defining feature of our system. This again ignores history, as do similar theories about "the end of labor" or "the post-industrial society" every time capitalism appears to have achieved stability—theories which are quickly swept away by the same upsurges which swell the ranks of organized labor.

These ideological differences appeared to be leading OWS to a split over what to do on May Day. At the Jan. 28 meeting, one of the hard-core anarchists made a motion that we divide into two working groups, with those wanting to issue a general strike call going their way and those arguing for other actions going theirs.

Fortunately, one of the mainstream anarchists, a key leader of OWS, then put forward an amendment stating that we would "stand in solidarity with" the call by Occupy LA for a general strike, but also, "in recognition of the needs of organized and unorganized labor," we would call for a day without the 99% (meaning that the 99% would do whatever they could on that day, including activities on the job, during lunch, or before or after work, but not necessarily striking). And it was pointed out that "stand in solidarity with" obligates no one in New York City to actually participate in or even agitate for a general strike.

Amazingly, the hard-core anarchist who put forward the original motion accepted the new one as friendly,

(Left) Poster advertising call for Nov. 2, 2011, "general strike" in Oakland, Calif.



and throughout the rest of the meeting she and her ideological comrades worked hard to maintain that unity. When consensus was reached, a huge cheer filled the room. Now we move to implementation.

Work leading up to May Day will also be an opportunity for LOC and IWJWG to bring forward demands articulating working-class concerns, which will surely include calls for jobs for all, immigrant rights, increased publicly-funded health care and education, revocation of anti-labor laws such as Taylor and Taft-Hartley, etc. Such demands and others around war, repression, women's rights, and so on were in the original call from OLA.

OLA's suggestions for participation on May Day for those who can't explicitly strike include requests that workers call in sick, take a holiday or personal day, join activities after work such as marches, block parties, rallies, and so on. Similarly, in New York an LOC activist drafted a list of possible activities for those unable to strike: "In the workplace, workers can decide on what grievance to act on. ... Pay? Benefits? Physical conditions? Lack of breaks? Theft of tips? ..."

"Environmental issues, mortgage issues, schooling issues, policing issues, gender issues, discrimination issues, health-care issues. ... Unions can offer communications, logistical support, meeting places, the infrastructure for wider cooperation and coordination. ... Walk off the job for the day, or sit in for the day. ... Call in sick. Slow down. ..."

LOC and IWJWG activists will now be engaged in intensive discussions with workers in struggle about how actions leading up to and on May Day can further their cause (including by continuing LOC's longstanding practice of encouraging mutual solidarity among those in struggle). Another key task facing New York labor and immigrant activists will be using the new May Day momentum provided by the Occupy phenomenon to build on the fragile unity between longstanding May Day coalitions in New York—e.g., the one based in immigrant worker groups that holds an annual rally in Union Square, and the one started by liberal union officials who traditionally gather in Foley Square. Last year they agreed for the first time that those rallying in Union Square would march to Foley for a joint event ending the day. This year joint efforts involving both coalitions and OWS can lead to a bigger and more politically powerful set of actions.

The LOC activist who listed possible at-work actions for May Day concluded by reminding us that through such activities "what we develop is the sense of collective power, communication, and cooperation that would make a general strike possible."

That developing awareness is key to the possibilities inherent in the May Day call, which, however self-contradictory it may appear on the surface, presents an opportunity for new momentum for both the Occupy and labor movements, as well as a mutual reinforcement of the best elements of both.

The Occupy movement was not at its inception based on organizations rooted in particular workplaces or even neighborhoods. Community-based assemblies subsequently were organized, especially after evictions from citywide camps. And labor committees of Occupy sites have been seeking to sink their roots in particular workplaces and unions. Activities building for May Day can further this essential process of grounding the Occupy movement in workplaces and neighborhoods, and fostering the most militant elements in each while building broad united fronts.

As another leading LOC activist put it in an e-mail exchange: "The alliance between the militant, direct action of OWS (which LOC is committed to), which put us on the map, and the resources, and mass, mainstream constituency of labor, which gave us legitimacy and support of the 99%, is the key to power for OWS, and we have to work hard to preserve this alliance..."

"The distrust of unions has a genuine basis; there is bureaucracy and lack of militancy or inclusiveness, and needs the push and support of OWS to move forward. LOC is trying to reform the labor movement, so that it will use direct action and represent the 99%, but to do so we have to be both inside and outside the unions. ... For the first time, I expect to see a general strike in my lifetime. OWS has changed everything." ■

ILWU Local 21 Victory!



BY JEFF MACKLER

As we go to press, the EGT conglomerate has formally recognized ILWU Local 21 as the bargaining representative for all workers at its Longview, Wash., terminal and on all vessels that load grain from that facility. Contract negotiations are underway and expected to be concluded on union-favorable terms in the next few days.

Until Jan. 23, few people in the labor and social justice movements expected anything less than a major class confrontation at the state-of-the-art \$200 million grain facility at Longview, Wash. The scab complex was operated by the multi-billion-dollar Export Grain Terminal (EGT) and owned by three giant international agribusiness holding companies—Bunge Ltd. (one of the seven top grain exporters in the world), Itoche, and STX Pan Ocean.

The scene had been set for what might have erupted into a battle of the first order. That action would have been more akin to the mass labor struggles of decades past than the present spectacle of a class-collaborationist labor bureaucracy acceding to the employers' every incursion on past contract gains won in class-struggle confrontations long ago.

On the union side stood the ranks of the small but battling Local 21 of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU). EGT, ignoring 70 years of ILWU jurisdiction over West Coast port jobs and its pledge to the Longview Port Commission to hire ILWU workers, instead utilized the General Contractors organization to hire some 10 to 50 workers from the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 701, in a blatant scab-herding endeavor.

On the ruling-class side, the Obama administration had authorized armed U.S. Coast Guard vessels, which operate under the authority of the Department of Homeland Security and in collaboration with the U.S. Navy, to escort a cargo ship to load hundreds of thousands of tons of grain for export to Asia. Breaching union pickets, EGT had accumulated sufficient grain via rail and truck shipments to fill this massive non-union storage facility, capable of loading a typical bulk-grain-carrying ship in 24 hours as compared to the week required at less mechanized operations.

This was the first time in 40 years that the U.S. government had authorized the use of the military in an overt strike-breaking operation. The cargo ship was also to be escorted by armed military helicopters. On the ground, police and associated military forces from throughout the region and beyond were readied to thwart any union interference.

To challenge this government-sponsored union-busting venture, Local 21 put out a broad call for ILWU and national rank-and-file union mobilizations—although it was by no means certain that sufficient forces would respond. Local 21 was also in close collaboration with the Occupy movement, including sending messages of solidarity with Occupy Oakland's mobilizations that

Longview port workers set an example for the entire labor movement.

twice closed the Port of Oakland—once on Nov. 2 in the course of the “general strike,” and again on Dec. 12.

While no one knew the precise date that EGT would attempt to send its grain cargo ship up the Columbia River, the tension grew in mid-January as a grain ship set anchor at the coastal port city of Astoria, Ore., 30 miles from the EGT operation. Both sides saw this as a test of strength, which if successful on EGT's part, could open the door to expanding scab operations along the entire West Coast.

It was in this context that rumors of an impending settlement began to circulate. At the initiative of Washington Gov. Chris Gregoire, negotiations were opened between the ILWU and EGT on Jan. 23. A tentative agreement regarding arrests was reached that included the dismissal of most, but not all, of the charges filed against some 225 union activists and their supporters. It appears that the settlement concerning the arrests has been approved by the ranks of Local 21. Since then, all six jury trials have dismissed EGT charges against ILWU members, indicating that the Longview community has no stomach for jailing courageous union fighters and their allies. The ILWU is pressing for the dropping of all charges.

EGT has bought out the contract it signed with the General Contractors, the agency that hired the International Operating Engineers Union to scab on Local 21. At present there are no scab workers at the EGT facility—only ILWU Local 21 members. In the meantime, the grain cargo ship anchored at Astoria has left, thus eliminating the immediate threat to load grain from EGT's terminal.

An announcement approved by the Solidarity with Longview working groups of Occupy Oakland, Occupy Portland, Occupy Longview, and Occupy Seattle reads as follows: “Supporters of the Longview workers are still planning to mobilize if needed, but are asking the caravans [organized to travel to Longview in defense of Local 21] to wait for official word on the contract negotiation outcome. If in fact the membership of ILWU Local 21 approves a contract, Occupy will mobilize in celebration of this victory for the community of Longview and workers everywhere.”

There is no doubt that some minority elements in the Occupy Movement have made excessive, if not foolish, statements that dismiss the U.S. labor movement in its entirety and see the Occupy movement, despite its absence from capitalism's central points of production and transport, as a present alternative to the unions. This usually anarchist and substitutionist minority, who have claimed to represent the “89 percent” of

(Left) Longshore union signs ring the front of Cowlitz County, Wash., courthouse, Sept. 16. About 200 workers “turned themselves in” to law authorities after punitive charges had been levied against them for halting grain to the EGT scab shipping terminal.

unorganized workers, have good reason to be harsh critics of the present union bureaucracy. But they are entirely mistaken in any assertion that a movement lacking an organized class base at the point of production can substitute for a reinvigorated, democratic, and fighting labor movement, and especially one with an emerging class-struggle left wing aimed at the heart of the capitalist system itself.

This said, the vast numbers of these enthusiastic and dedicated Occupy activists see their fates tied to the victories of workers against the capitalist establishment and hail what they hope will be a resounding victory for the ILWU.

Class-struggle confrontations

It appears likely that Local 21's ranks will approve a basically sound contract even if it includes some important concessions that have previously

been negotiated by ILWU locals in the region. History will record this struggle as among the first critical victories registered by class-struggle fighters in decades.

EGT did not eagerly return to the bargaining table. Its intention was to break the ILWU and set a precedent for future union busting along the entire coast. As far back as the 1980s the Pacific Maritime Association reported, “We continued in 1986 to see a slow but steady progress toward an improved labor environment. Dramatic and essential reductions were accomplished in offshore labor costs. A clear reversal of a trend in longshore labor costs was accomplished in the East Coast and Gulf Coast ILA settlements, although a *fragmented approach to bargaining was required to set this in motion*” (emphasis added).

EGT's filling its new terminal to the brim was accomplished with brute force, as local and regional police and company-hired goons repeatedly breached the fighting Local 21 picket lines. In early September, Local 21, with some 250 members, and aided by ILWU locals in the region from Tacoma, Seattle, and beyond, mobilized over 1000 workers in defiance of a court injunction and entered EGT's expansive 34-acre rail and trucking line complex to challenge the scabs and company goons head on. This ILWU mobilization had the added effect of closing down the Tacoma and Seattle ports.

By pulling the plug on several grain-laden rail cars, tons of grain were dumped onto the EGT terminal's railroad tracks, while goons protecting the scab operation were “gently” moved out of the way—union style. Police and company officials later charged the union with “kidnapping” some of these paid union busters.

EGT responded soon after the September battle with a massive display of ruling-class power. They mobilized an army of cops and hired strikebreaking “protection agencies” to challenge Local 21 and its allied picketers. They arrested some 225 workers and leveled a broad array of punitive charges against the trade unionists. But these workers were doing what unions are supposed to do in such disputes—close down employer operations and defend their jobs at the point of production. Fines exceeding \$300,000 were levied against Local 21 by compliant judges.

The national AFL-CIO assisted the EGT scab operation when the federation ruled that the hiring of the scab workers from the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE), as opposed to the ILWU that had jurisdiction over West Coast ports for the past 70 years, was a “jurisdictional” dispute to be resolved by “arbitration within the AFL-CIO.” The Richard Trumka-led American “Fakeration” of Labor, as the IWW used to call it long ago, bent to its higher dues-paying Building and Construction Trade Council affiliate as opposed to the smaller, 55,000 member ILWU.

Local 21 calls for working class solidarity

The ILWU's signature solidarity credo, “An Injury To

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One Is An Injury to All,” was put to good use as Local 21 initiated a call to the entire labor movement and all its supporters to mobilize in Longview to challenge the planned scab operation. Local 21’s call was enthusiastically supported by AFL-CIO-affiliated Washington State county central labor councils, which called on “all able-bodied workers” and community supporters to come to the aid of Local 21.

ILWU Local 10, based in the San Francisco-Oakland area, allocated \$10,000 to organize Bay Area caravans to prepare to join the Longview mobilization. The San Francisco Labor Council allocated \$1500. Union locals across the country and AFL-CIO state federations, as in Wisconsin, passed resolutions condemning the government’s use of the military to break strikes. Carpenter locals in the AFL-CIO’s Building and Construction Trades Council broke ranks with the Trumka leadership to condemn EGT scab herding.

A powerful new ally in the form of the broad Occupy movement joined the ILWU Local 21 cause early on. This was seen in the course of the Nov. 2 “general strike,” called by Occupy Oakland to protest the brutal police dismemberment and tear-gas and pepper-spray attack on the Frank Ogawa Plaza Occupy encampment and the police-fired canister-missile that fractured the skull of encampment activist Scott Olsen, an Iraq War veteran. In that action, 30,000 protesters closed down the Port of Oakland, with the obvious solidarity of ILWU Local 10 members, who refused to cross the “mass picket lines.”

While the ILWU’s International leadership took its distance from this port closure, it was not so passive on Dec. 12, when Occupy Oakland moved to organize a West Coast port shutdown in solidarity with Local 21. A message of appreciation from Local 21 President Dan Coffman was read out to the Oakland crowd of 6000 and widely publicized. ILWU tops in contrast, stood in direct opposition to this partially successful effort—instructing its members to cross the Occupy picket lines up and down the coast. Even here, a number of ports were closed, including Portland, where an estimated 4000-5000 mobilized.

When the Occupy Wall Street organization in New York City allocated \$12,000 toward the organization of caravans to Longview and other mobilization efforts, it was clear that Local 21 had a new and important ally that was serious about mobilizing to defend labor’s cause.

The stunning reversal of EGT, embodied in its return to the bargaining table and the intervention of the Washington state governor to try to settle this dispute has no explanation other than an emerging and major change in the relationship of forces on the ground. It is one thing for a giant multi-billion-dollar conglomerate to take on a small ILWU local; it is quite another when that local successfully calls on its allies inside and outside the trade-union movement to mobilize in massive numbers to challenge the bosses and their capitalist state, that is, its police, military, courts and anti-union legislation.

Local 21 took on these powerful forces and, indirectly, perhaps, the ILWU tops as well. The latter pledged to mobilize workers in Longview, while at the same



Noah Berger / AP

(Left) Occupy leads huge march through the Port of Oakland, Nov. 2, effectively closing it down when ILWU workers refused to cross the mass “picket lines” in solidarity.

ist Action, January 2012, for key portions of the ILWU statement).

Taft-Hartley, historically dubbed the “Slave Labor Act” by the labor movement, was passed by Congress in 1947. It explicitly prohibits jurisdictional strikes, wildcat strikes, solidarity or political strikes, secondary boycotts, secondary and mass picketing, and closed shops. In short, it bans labor from mobilizing in solidarity with workers under attack.

Early on in the Local 21 struggle, one could argue that McEllrath’s statement was little more than a defensive formulation aimed at officially protecting the ILWU from future lawsuits and punishment under Taft-Hartley. But it soon became clear that “protective” legal language was not the ILWU’s intention.

When Labor Solidarity Committee members of Occupy Oakland and leading activists in Local 10 traveled to Portland and Seattle to join with Local 21 rank and filers and other trade-union and Occupy leaders at

public meetings to plan solidarity mobilizations for Longview, the ILWU officialdom was outraged.

In Seattle some two dozen ILWU officials, led by three Northwest ILWU presidents, physically attacked a meeting of some 200 Occupy and trade-union activists gearing up to mobilize for the then impending Longview confrontation.

The officials’ stated pretext for the disruption was that they were demanding to read aloud McEllrath’s statement, which warned against any efforts to close West Coast ports and against ILWU locals taking their lead from forces not under the control of the ILWU—a more than oblique reference to the Occupy movement. These ILWU leaders

were physically escorted from the meeting but not before they had hurled a few punches and screamed vile and sexist epithets at a number of the woman who helped monitor the meeting.

Some in the solidarity and socialist movements have argued that this confrontation might have been avoided had the meeting’s leaders agreed to read and debate McEllrath’s fork-tongued statement early on rather than announcing that it would be read immediately after the meeting’s speakers had concluded their remarks. Whatever the merits of this view, they are subordinate to the fact that it was well known in advance of the meeting that the ILWU officials aimed to disrupt the Seattle solidarity event rather than engage in a fraternal exchange.

The ILWU’s top leaders judged with fear and trepidation that their most likely tepid Longview protest might have taken on a different character altogether had the Occupy forces proved capable of mobilizing forces on the scale of or exceeding the 30,000 that had closed the Port of Oakland on Nov. 2. The ILWU ranks themselves could not be other than inspired by tens of thousands of working people mobilizing on their behalf.

The dynamic set in motion by Local 21’s call for a mass mobilization, already supported by local central labor councils, other ILWU locals, and union bodies across the country—combined with the youthful ranks of the courageous Occupy movement—might well have resulted in an outcome far exceeding anything the bosses, their government, and the ILWU officialdom had anticipated.

Following the disruption in Seattle, the Seattle-based ILWU Local 19, in accord with the warning against Occupy signaled by McEllrath, passed a lengthy and angry motion denouncing the Occupy movement and breaking all relations with it, while demanding that Occupy leaders come to the union’s hall with a formal apology. Yet the same local maintained its commitment to support Local 21 when the EGT scab operation was at hand. Such is labor’s contradiction, and especially operable in the ILWU, where democratic forms exist to this day allowing the ranks to elect their officers on a yearly basis. In general, those who fail to lead in accord with the interests of the ranks are not long for top posts in ILWU locals.

Ruling class and EGT back off

The potential for such a serious challenge to the EGT/government offensive, in the context of a grind-

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The labor movement — based in critical economic sectors such as construction, transportation, and manufacturing — retains the power to bring the system to a grinding halt.

time guaranteeing the Pacific Maritime Association bosses that no other West Coast ports would be closed—a contradiction indeed!

If the ILWU bureaucracy had any real intention of challenging the union-busting effort at Longview it could not divide its forces and present a credible power at the same time. It could not promise the bosses in the massive ports of Los Angeles, San Pedro, and Oakland—and at every other port—that work would continue as usual while mobilizing in Longview at the same time. In fact, the most serious challenge that the ILWU could offer would be to mobilize the full power of ILWU’s Longshore Division to *simultaneously* shut down the scab operation in Longview *and* close down the West Coast ports.

ILWU tops bend to Taft-Hartley

While ILWU’s international president, Robert McEllrath, pledged to support the impending Longview confrontation, his statement went to great lengths to affirm its obligations under the Taft-Hartley law to refrain from interference with what that reactionary law defines as “the full flow of commerce” (see *Social-*

try, were most often both honored to express their solidarity with radical political causes on the one hand and pleased to take a day off on the other, and especially so because the union faced no employer threats to invoke Taft-Hartley.

We must add here that not all ILWU one-day strikes have been conducted under the union’s “health and safety” contract provisions. The ILWU’s May Day 2008 West Coast antiwar port closure, for example, was a strike in defiance of the PMA and in the face of its threat to invoke Taft-Hartley. Today, the ILWU tops cite this anti-union law to justify their effective paralysis in the face of a major ruling-class offensive.

To the very extent that this remains the policy of the ILWU, and virtually all other unions in the country, American labor relinquishes its most powerful weapon—solidarity. No single union is capable of taking on the full force of the U.S. government. But the full utilization of the combined forces of all labor does present more than a formidable obstacle to employer/government abuse. — J.M.

ILWU One-Day ‘Strikes’

From the ILWU bureaucracy’s point of view, it is one thing to employ the union’s historic contract provision that allows members, for reasons of “health and safety,” to respect third-party picket lines, as ILWU members have done for decades on issues ranging from opposition to the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars to demands to free Mumia Abu-Jamal. It is quite another to challenge the bosses and their government on an issue pertaining directly to the ILWU itself—in this case Local 21’s fight against EGT’s government-backed and AFL-CIO-abetted union-busting onslaught.

The occasional one-day ILWU strikes over the years were aimed at expressing workers’ solidarity with the oppressed and persecuted in the U.S. and around the world. But the one day’s lost pay that ILWU members usually incurred was more than offset by the great majority’s working double or even triple shifts soon afterward to more than make up for the loss.

One could honestly say that the ILWU ranks, among the most highly-paid workers in the coun-

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

Harper warns against environmental 'radicals'

By ERIC KUPKA

The Conservative Stephen Harper government has revealed its mean streak once again. In an open letter released on Jan. 9, Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver lashed out at environmental organizations, branding them as "radicals" who "use funding from foreign special interest groups to undermine Canada's national economic interest."

The letter came on the eve of regulatory hearings into the development of the \$5.5 billion Northern Gateway pipeline project, which would see oil flow from the Alberta tar sands to the British Columbia coast, where it would be poured into supertankers bound for Asia and elsewhere. It is one of two proposed tar sands pipelines, the other being the Keystone XL pipeline to Texas, which was dealt a major setback in January when U.S. President Barack Obama rejected (for now) its proposed route through a sensitive ecosystem in Nebraska.

As with Keystone XL, the Northern Gateway poses a serious risk to the environment. The pipeline would pass over the Rocky Mountains and cross 1000 rivers and streams in some of Canada's most pristine natural sites. It would also cut through 65 First Nations communities, 61 of which have declared their opposition to the project.

It is therefore not surprising that 4300 people have asked to participate in the regulatory review to draw attention to the pipeline's threats. However, according to the Conservatives, a "radical ideological agenda" is at play, aided by "jet-setting celebrities," which aims to "delay a project to the point it becomes economically unviable."

This argument is a mix of misinformation, hysteria, and blatant hypocrisy, which has become Harper's standard formula in attacking opponents. Undoubtedly, certain Canadian environmental groups do receive support from abroad—it is only normal that they would work with other groups who share their concern for protecting the planet. But the real threat is the corporate money that is being poured into the dirty business of extracting the tar sands. According to the Globe and Mail, such money is "welcome" in Harper's Canada, even when it comes from disreputable anti-worker regimes such as China's.

In the midst of the manufactured hysteria, it bears noting that, according to Environmental Defence, all of the environmental organizations intervening in the review are based in Canada, and 79 per cent of those registered to speak are B.C. residents. On the other hand, 10 of the 16 intervening oil companies have foreign-based headquarters.

Harper's demonization of respected environmental organizations is a disgraceful tactic, deployed to ensure that the even more disgraceful business of extracting tar-sands oil continues unabated. Socialists demand a halt to tar-sands extraction, and call for strong resistance to Harper's belligerence against civil society groups, whose advocacy work represents an important expression of the exercise of democratic rights. ■

of class perspective. For what class programme does the NDP fight?

The ambiguity of the NDP's stance underscores the need for NDP political education in the spirit of working-class independence from the system of exploitation, and from its state apparatus. So, when the NDP Socialist Caucus argues that, in order to survive, the NDP must turn sharply to the left, clearly it is no exaggeration. ■



Julius Arcott / Socialist Action

Ontario workers rally against concessions and lock-out

By JOHN WILSON

Some 10,000 people, according to the *Toronto Star*, converged at London's Victoria Park, two hours west of Toronto, on Jan. 21 to participate in the rally sponsored by the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) against the lock-out of 500 workers.

The London workers are members of the Canadian Auto Workers Union at the Electro-Motive Canada plant (recently acquired by Caterpillar Inc.).

The lockout was imposed after the union refused to negotiate the outrageous concessions de-

manded by the company, including a 50% reduction in wages, and savage cuts in benefits.

The company is threatening to move the work to the United States and to close the plant. The rally heard from a number of speakers, including OFL President Sid Ryan, NDP federal Leader Nicole Turmel, and the mayor of London.

Unfortunately, more than half the crowd could not hear the speakers because the OFL—once again—failed to mount an adequate sound system.

Following the rally a large number of the demonstrators trav-

elled to the plant, a few kilometers away, where they joined the CAW picket line.

Socialist Action members carried a banner that read, "Nationalize Auto, Steel and the Banks—Under Workers' Control! Make Capital Pay for the Crisis."

After the rally, NDP Socialist Caucus activist and unionist John Orrett told this reporter, "In his speech Ryan said the OFL believes in a different model of capitalism, but of course they never spell this out. For them it is just capitalism with a happy face. They never admit that there is no such thing." ■

Defection to Liberals highlights dilemma for NDP

By BARRY WEISLEDER

While NDP officials go to great pains to prevent leftists from becoming NDP candidates at election time, they'd do better to spend more time screening the right wingers in their ranks. A case in point is Lise St-Denis, who was elected NDP MP in the Quebec riding of St-Maurice-Champlain and who crossed the line to join the federal Liberals on Jan. 10. She was one of 58 NDP rookies to win a seat in Quebec last May 2. Why the sudden decision to bolt, after St-Denis spent a decade volunteering for the party?

The 71-year-old MP said she did not feel "at ease" in a party that wanted to put an end to the Canadian Forces mission in Libya, that called for abolition of the Senate, and that rejected any private-sector involvement in building a new bridge in Montreal. She stressed that the NDP had lost its "drawing card" in Quebec with the death of Jack Layton.

But could St-Denis be as flaky as that? Could she have been unaware of basic NDP policies when she ran last Spring? Or was it a case of the party brass being unaware, or worse, unconcerned about her "ease" with perpetuation of the status quo—including the non-elected "Upper Chamber," imperialist interventions in the Arab countries, and private-public partnerships that undermine workers and squander public funds?

NDP MP Guy Caron, who chairs the party's Quebec caucus, was correct to say, "Changing political affiliation is a blatant lack of respect for democracy. If the Liberals think that this is what the voters of her riding want, we challenge them to run Ms. St-Denis in a by-election." But there is another point to this incident. And it's not just that the NDP was unprepared politically for the "orange wave" breakthrough—a victim of its own success, so to speak.

The point is that the party leadership recruits candidates in its own image. At its core, that image is increasingly associated with opportunism, lack of principles, and shallowness. Party bureaucrats and party electoral campaigns project

accommodation to the capitalist system and its vaunted institutions. They foster illusions in Ottawa's foreign policy, covering up the reality of military intervention at the service of corporate power and profit.

And the party elite's longstanding subordination of the aspirations of oppressed nations to the vice-grip of the bourgeois state makes it completely unsurprising that the NDP attracts liberal federalists in Quebec like St-Denis, who after surviving the shock of her election as MP, discovered that she is more at "ease" in the Liberal Party caucus. The only good thing about this incident is that there will be one less advocate of merger with the Liberal Party inside the NDP federal caucus.

Until her departure, St-Denis was a strong supporter of Thomas Mulcair's bid for NDP Leader. What does Mulcair think about his erstwhile fan's act of treachery? And what say the other candidates for NDP Leader? The silence is deafening. What we see here is fundamentally a problem

... Local 21 victory!

(continued from page 7)

ing economic crisis that has cut deep into the fabric of American life, proved to be decisive in the decision of the ruling class, the one percent, to back off in order to seek to take their pound of flesh at another place and another time. The Obama administration chose not to risk a nationally publicized spectacle of thousands, if not tens of thousands, of workers and their allies confronting a government scab-herding military operation.

The Longview events will undoubtedly teach labor and social justice activists some important lessons: First and foremost is that the labor movement—still based in critical points of manufacturing, transportation, construction, shipping, and many other decisive sectors of the capitalist system—retains the power to bring the system to a grinding halt and to win important gains, not to mention inspiring support from unexpected layers.

Equally important is the fact that the Longview

battle demonstrated the absolute necessity of labor reaching out to all the oppressed and exploited—to the unemployed and youth, to the immigrant communities and oppressed nationalities. And it is essential to be on the alert for alliances with new movements that have been brought into being by virtue of a capitalist crisis for which there are no solutions other than deeper repression and incursions on working-class life.

History is replete with examples of workers finding these new allies and new forms of struggles, from the mass unemployment leagues of the 1930s and '40s to the worker's councils and assemblies that periodically rise up to provide new organizational forms to encompass all those who are driven to fight back in order to survive and to stand in solidarity with all others in the same situation.

The emerging Local 21 victory can only inspire even bolder and more conscious efforts. The first hard-fought victories after a long string of defeats are always among the most important and longest remembered. They serve as an example to millions that a united labor movement in alliance with all its allies can win. ■

By MARTY GOODMAN

NY Transit Workers Under Attack

NEW YORK—The contract between Transport Workers Union Local 100, representing 34,000 subway and bus workers, and the state-run Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), expired at midnight Jan. 15. The MTA is demanding a contract with three years of no raises, increased healthcare costs and other big concessions.

The MTA's demands are an attempt to make working people pay for a crisis of the profit system and its Wall Street crooks. As the union with the power to shut down the financial capital of the world, Local 100's contract fight impacts struggles far beyond New York City.

Speaking to a crowd of several hundred Local 100 workers and supporters at an evening contract rally on Jan. 15, union President John Samuelson ended his speech by declaring, "We're not eating three zeros. We're not going to let Governor Cuomo and the head of the MTA say that they're balancing their budget on the backs of Local 100 members. I'll tell [them] that we'll fight them for a month, we'll fight them for two months, we'll fight them until they relent and give us a fair contract."

Samuelson's speech was interrupted several times by chants of "Shut it down!" But even so, the contract expired without visible effect. There had been three contract rallies of modest size; the largest had about 1000. For now, Local 100 will be working under the old contract. Local 100 had struck the MTA in 1966, 1980, and again in 2005, the latter a failed 2½-day strike that demoralized workers.

The MTA says raises are to be "net zero," paid for by massive union concessions. Added are \$6000 in costs per year per member for health care, the use of part-time workers in buses, and reducing jobs and safety with One Person Train Operation—that is, computerized train operation.

Public workers across the U.S. are under attack by Democratic and Republican administrations. Trillions have been slashed from public services. Lost are half a million public sector jobs since the recession. In 2010, over 900 Local 100 members were laid off due to a so-called budget deficit. Most have returned, except for 150 at the start of 2012.

Untouched were skyrocketing MTA debts to banks and wealthy buyers of MTA-issued bonds, who receive hundreds of millions per year in tax-free income. In 2011, the MTA paid over \$2 billion from its \$12.6 billion budget to banks and MTA bond owners.

Billions worth of MTA bonds are sold to make-up for funding cuts at the federal, state and city level. There is a \$9 billion shortfall in construction funding, mainly on over-budget "mega-projects" to be funded by more billions in MTA bond sales. Socialists say, "Cancel the debt to banks and bond holders! Fund mass transit, not war!"

The key strategy of the boss class is to pit transit workers against riders—that is, pit working people against each other—while making the entire working class pay for the crimes of Wall Street crooks. In 2010 alone, there were unprecedented service cuts and a fare hike. Transit workers were portrayed as the prime culprit.

Governor Cuomo recently appointed Joe Lhota to head the MTA. During the 1980s Lhota was a top official in the law-and-order administration of Mayor Rudy Giuliani. In 1999 Giuliani imposed a court injunction on Local 100 against striking, which included a \$1 million-a-day fine and/or jail for the union, including fines for *talking* about striking. The injunctions were based on New York State's notorious Taylor Law, which forbids strikes by public workers. Democrats and Republicans passed the Taylor Law



Marty Goodman / Socialist Action

(Above) TWU Local 100 workers rally Dec. 15 before marching to Occupy Wall Street site at Zuccotti Park.

(Left) Local 100 President John Samuelson speaks at Transport Workers rally in 2010.



member's yearly mass meeting. Deflecting criticism, the union's website briefly listed "no givebacks," but added "no unreasonable givebacks."

Lastly, a "strike authorization vote" was not taken at December's meeting. In reality, the important vote merely gives permission to the Executive Board to call a strike, which it seldom does. No such vote sends the MTA a clear signal. Samuelson has publicly refused to rule out striking. But when questioned, he

insists that the Executive Board "has not discussed it," diminishing the strike threat.

In fact, the current leadership took no position at all on the course of the 2005 strike. Today, thousands remain in "bad standing" for non-payment of dues after automatic union dues collection (dues check-off) was removed by a Democratic Party judge for Taylor Law violations in 2005.

In January, 20 Albany "pro-labor" Democrats called on the MTA to "bargain fairly" and negotiate a "decent contract." None of these fakers told the press that they actually embraced and would fight for TWU demands.

Last fall, Local 100 initiated two large rallies in support of Occupy Wall Street, attracting up to 20,000 working-class fighters, although mostly not behind union banners. The rallies were historic. Unfortunately, that momentum has not been sustained. Yet, mass action is what the union movement desperately needs, both on the job and off.

Union leaders, tied to the Democratic Party, are quite comfortable with borrowing OWS phrases but unwilling to adopt the bold, confrontational tactics of OWS. Unions must flip the script on Wall Street and the 1%. Labor must shut it down to win!

in the wake of Local 100's successful strike in 1966, which secured greatly improved pensions.

Last year, a three-zeros contract with increased employee medical costs and 2% raises in the last two years was rammed down the throats of state workers in the large Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) and Public Employees Federation (PEF). Cuomo's bullying included threats to layoff 4500 workers. PEF members rejected the rotten deal after a "vote-no" effort, but finally ratified it after a fear campaign by Cuomo and union bureaucrats.

Thus far, Samuelson has rejected calls to knuckle under to the CSEA and PEF model. Actually, Local 100 salaries already trail workers who serve mostly better-off riders on the MTA suburban lines. Local 100 pay is also less than virtually all other urban mass transit systems. The last two Local 100 contracts were imposed by an arbitrator's ruling, always a bad deal for unions, cutting short militant action and allowing bureaucrats to duck responsibility.

In years past the slogan "No contract, no work" was a guiding, although seldom observed, principle. Not so in 2012. Also absent is the "no givebacks" demand, another staple of Local 100 contract fights. The "no givebacks" demand was not presented at the start of negotiations in November nor mentioned at De-

Indiana passes anti-union 'right to work' law

By DAVID BERNT

In the latest attack on workers' rights by state government, Indiana became the 23rd "right to work" state when Gov. Mitch Daniels signed the anti-union law on Feb. 1.

Thousands of trade unionists and Occupy activists marched outside of the state capitol to denounce the reactionary bill. For weeks the same forces have been rallying in even larger numbers outside the statehouse. Occupiers and union members from throughout the state have mobilized.

The misnamed "right to work" law in reality gives workers the "right" to work for lower wages. These laws make dues payment voluntary even if

workers are protected by a union contract. While dues are voluntary, unions are still legally required to service non-members. (Closed shops are illegal in the United States under the Taft-Hartley law; however in the 27 other states non-members must pay a service fee to the union.)

Right to work laws are intended to deplete union treasuries while creating divisions in the workforce between members and non-members. The result is that in the states that have "right to work laws," workers make an average of \$1500 less per year.

Indiana is just the latest example of the bosses' war against workers' rights, coming on the heels of massive struggles in Wisconsin and Ohio. In all three

states the attacks on unions have been met by a huge outpouring of support for organized labor.

In Indiana protesters continuously marched outside the state capitol. As in Wisconsin, Democratic Senators held up a vote by leaving the state and preventing a quorum. To the disappointment of many activists, however, the Democrats returned after Republicans proposed fines of \$1000 a day. Apparently for the Democrats, solidarity has its limits!

While the Indiana AFL-CIO supported the rallies in Indianapolis, many activists complained that they did not put their full resources into mobilization and instead focused on lobbying, unsuccessfully, a small group of Republican Senators to oppose the bill.

Activists are now organizing a series of events in Indianapolis under the banner of "Occupy the Super Bowl." They intend to use the event to draw attention to the right to work laws through informational pickets and other actions.

The NFL Players Union, which has gone on record against right to work, has pledged its support and some NFL players are planning to participate. Some Occupy activists have called for occupations of parks and other direct actions.

While it appears the battle in Indiana is lost for the moment on "right to work," the resistance to it, as in Wisconsin and Ohio, shows that while organized labor might be weakened, it still has the potential to mobilize mass numbers and to attract broad support among working people when it stands up and fights back.

Protests demand: No war and no sanctions against Iran!

On Feb. 4, activists demanding “No Sanctions, Assassinations, Interventions! No War Against Iran!” held emergency demonstrations in at least 70 U.S. cities and towns. There were actions from Huntsville, Ala., to Amarillo, Texas, and from Buffalo, N.Y. to Racine, Wis.

Other cities held demonstrations in the days immediately preceding or following the national day of local protest against the devastating sanctions, covert operations, and threats of overt military action against the oil rich regional powerhouse of Iran. The U.S. demonstrations were echoed by actions in Vancouver, Canada; Shannon Air Base in Ireland; Dacca, the capital city of Bangladesh; Calcutta, India; and Oslo, Norway.

The emergency actions came together on short notice as the result of a national Jan. 17 phone conference that formed an ad hoc group to publicize the call. The organizations that initiated or endorsed the call included the United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC), the International Action Center (IAC), World Can't Wait, Solidarity with Iran, Peace of the Action, ANSWER Coalition, American Iranian Friendship Committee, the Campaign Against Sanctions & Military Intervention in Iran (CASMI), WESPAC Foundation, Antiwar.com, Come Home America.us, St. Pete for Peace, Women Against Military Madness (WAMM), Defenders for Freedom, Justice, and Equality of Virginia, Peace Action Maine, Occupy Myrtle Beach, Minnesota Peace Action Coalition, and the Twin Cities Peace Campaign.

Opposition to the growing U.S./UN/NATO and Israeli threats of direct and open military action against Iran will also be a central theme of the March 23-25 United National Antiwar Coalition Conference in Stamford, Conn. Iranian activists from the diaspora who hold many different political perspectives on Iranian politics but who all oppose intervention will lead at least three workshops and participate in plenary panels.

They include Mansoureh Tajik, an expert in sustainable development; Ka-



(Above) USS John C. Stennis sails through Straits of Hormuz. U.S. has refused Iran's demands to keep its aircraft carriers out of the waterway.

zem Azim, a leader of the Taxi Workers Alliance and Solidarity Iran; Margaret Sarfehjooy of the Women Against Military Madness; and Manijeh Nasrabadi, a writer and member of the Raha Iranian Feminist Collective. For more information on the conference, visit www.unac-peace.org.

Jan. 16 statement by the United National Anti-War Coalition (UNAC) on the assassination of Iranian scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan and the growing threat of war against Iran:

Another Iranian scientist has been assassinated in Iran by a car bombing. This is the fifth Iranian scientist targeted in Iran during the past two years. This is a dangerous escalation of the covert activities conducted by the CIA and Israeli intelligence and their domestic spies in Iran against the government and people of Iran.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton stated, “I want to categorically deny any United States involvement in any kind of act of violence inside Iran.” However, both the Israeli and the U.S. governments have admitted to covert activity in Iran. Irrespective of the actors, the assassination of

law-abiding scientists living and working in Iran is a reprehensible act that should be condemned by all.

The fact is that the governments of the U.S. and Israel have declared Iran to be their enemy and have publicly stated that they will use all means possible, up to and including military attack, to stop the production of nuclear energy in Iran and to change the government of Iran. To this end, they have admitted to:

- 1) Using hacking to disrupt nuclear energy facilities in Iran.
- 2) Conducting covert operations in Iran.
- 3) Deploying spy drones to Iran.
- 4) Imposing draconian sanctions and embargo against Iranian oil exports, banking and trade.
- 5) Deploying U.S. nuclear super carrier battle groups with destroyers and nuclear submarines to the Persian Gulf.
- 6) Threatening Iran with military attack.
- 7) Planning to hold in January the largest-ever joint military exercises with Israel.

The assassination of Iranian nuclear

scientists falls within the covert activities in disrupting nuclear energy production in Iran. In addition, it works to create an atmosphere of fear among other Iranian scientists who want to work in their field of study. This is similar to the right-wing assassinations of physicians in the U.S. who perform the procedure of abortion, which is legal in the U.S. The terrorists who kill scientists aim to make it difficult for the Iranian nuclear energy industry to find scientists who would work there. However, the people of Iran have repeatedly stated their resolve to defend their right to nuclear energy.

Considering that Hillary Clinton threatened Iran with military attack, it is disingenuous for her to state that the U.S. denies involvement in any act of violence within Iran. A military attack on Iran, especially an attack on Iran's nuclear energy facilities, would produce results similar to a nuclear attack (U.S. Concerned Scientists report). It would be the most violent act against the people of Iran, resulting in hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths.

All the actions listed above, sanctioned by the U.S. government, are intended to weaken the Iranian government and economy, create an atmosphere of fear and dissatisfaction among the people, increase unrest, and decrease trust, all in the service of making it easier for a military attack on Iran. Of course, so far these actions have only strengthened the Iranian people's resolve to protect their country against Imperialism. Similar U.S. actions are aimed at any government which fails to submit to the U.S. corporate domination. This disobedience or defiance by Iran is its real “crime.”

It is extremely important that all international and especially U.S. antiwar and progressive organizations condemn these acts of assassination of innocent citizens as well as all forms of violent and aggressive actions by U.S. and Israel.

- 1) Condemn the assassination of Iranian scientists.
- 2) End all sanctions against Iran.
- 3) End covert activities inside Iran.
- 4) End all war threats against Iran.

“No war, No Sanctions, No Internal Intervention in Iran!”

An earlier and more comprehensive statement by UNAC on the threat of war against Iran can be seen at www.unac-peace.org under “UNAC Statements.” ■

‘People’s State of the State’ protests Wisconsin mining bill

By CARL SACK

MADISON—On Jan. 25, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker gave his State of the State address, in which he touted fake “job creation” and balancing the budget on the backs of state workers, who took a more than 8% pay and benefit cut and lost their collective bargaining rights.

Earlier in the day, an independent “People’s State of the State” was held in the capitol, in which anyone could testify and which was broadcast live over the internet. Some spoke passionately about what the austerity measures have

meant for working people here. One speaker testified that her child’s classroom aide needed food stamps and lost health insurance for her family when the premiums increased, while another said that her son opted out of going to college because he was afraid of accruing student loan debt that he wouldn’t be able to repay.

That evening, over 400 people gathered on the steps outside the capitol to protest a bill that would gut the state’s environmental standards to facilitate an open-pit iron mine in northern Wisconsin. The rally was endorsed by 20 organizations and featured a number of

speakers, including environmentalists, pro-labor groups, and tribal elders from the Bad River Band of Ojibwe, whose Indian reservation is downstream of the proposed mine.

The State Assembly took up the mining bill the following day. Two busloads of Ojibwe people, including many youth, traveled over 250 miles from Bad River to Madison, greeting legislators as they came into the Assembly chambers with anti-mine banners and asking some point-blank, “Are you going to kill me?” The tribe has characterized the mine as a life-or-death issue for them, as its runoff could pollute their water source and

damage wild rice beds that they rely on for food and income. One Ojibwe drummer was cited by the cops with “disorderly conduct” for drumming a traditional song in the capitol rotunda.

A public speak-out on the mining bill was held throughout the day and live webcasted. Before the vote, the Assembly gallery was cleared of spectators when several broke administrative rules by holding signs and taking photos. A crowd of the 50 or so who were ejected chanted outside of the chamber as the bill was passed 59-36. The legislation now must go through the Senate, where more opposition to some provisions is expected. Senate Republicans support the bill as is, while Democrats have said they want to tweak the bill to encourage “responsible mining” of the Penokees—an oxymoron according to Ojibwe tribes and their allies.

Meanwhile, unions and their allies are gearing up for a week of protests in mid-February marking the first anniversary of the Wisconsin uprising. One year ago, hundreds of thousands took to the streets here, and the state capitol was occupied for 17 days and nights, in a heroic attempt to defend the rights of public workers to collectively bargain with the state that inspired working people around the world and the ongoing Occupy movement. A large turnout is expected on Feb. 11 and the following days for planned marches and rallies. Stay tuned! ■

Bay Area forums to hear author of book on Kevin Cooper

A coalition of social justice activists in the San Francisco Bay Area has organized a Feb. 5-12 book tour for J. Patrick O’Connor, the author of “Scapegoat: The Chino Hills Murders and the framing of Kevin Cooper.” O’Connor’s new book provides a detailed analysis of Cooper’s case and exposes the broken criminal “justice” system in the United States.

Kevin Cooper has been on death row at San Quentin for over 25 years, falsely convicted of the murders of a California family and their houseguest in 1985. “Scapegoat” demonstrates how the San Bernardino district attorney’s office framed Cooper for the murders, and how the court system has failed him at almost every turn in his long appeal process. If it were not for a court-ordered moratorium on executions in California over the lethal injection controversy, Cooper—with no appeals remaining—would have been executed by now. It is expected

the moratorium will be lifted in late 2012.

J. Patrick O’Connor has been the editor and publisher of *Crime Magazine* since 1998. He was a reporter and bureau manager for United Press International, editor of *Cincinnati Magazine*, and an associate editor of *TV Guide*. He is the author of “The Framing of Mumia Abu-Jamal,” which was published by Lawrence Hill Books in 2008.

Tour sponsors include the Kevin Cooper Defense Committee, Mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal, Campaign to End the Death Penalty, and many other groups.

Public forums with O’Connor and other prison activists will include Laney College in Oakland, 7 p.m., Wed., Feb. 8; UC Berkeley, 7 p.m., Fri., Feb. 10; and San Jose Peace & Justice Center, 2 p.m., Sunday, Feb. 12. For information on these and other meetings, contact: jmackler@lmi.net. ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

"Le Havre," written and directed by Aki Kaurasmaki, in French with English subtitles.

An older man, Marcel, with the telling last name of Marx (Andre Wilms), shines shoes outside the bus terminal in the port town of Le Havre. He gets few takers and goes home to his dog, Laika, and much younger, but plain, wife, Arletty (Kati Outinen). He takes the dog for a walk while she fixes dinner, and heads for the neighborhood pub. The camera stays on Arletty, chopping onions. A look of pain crosses her face; her hand moves to her chest.

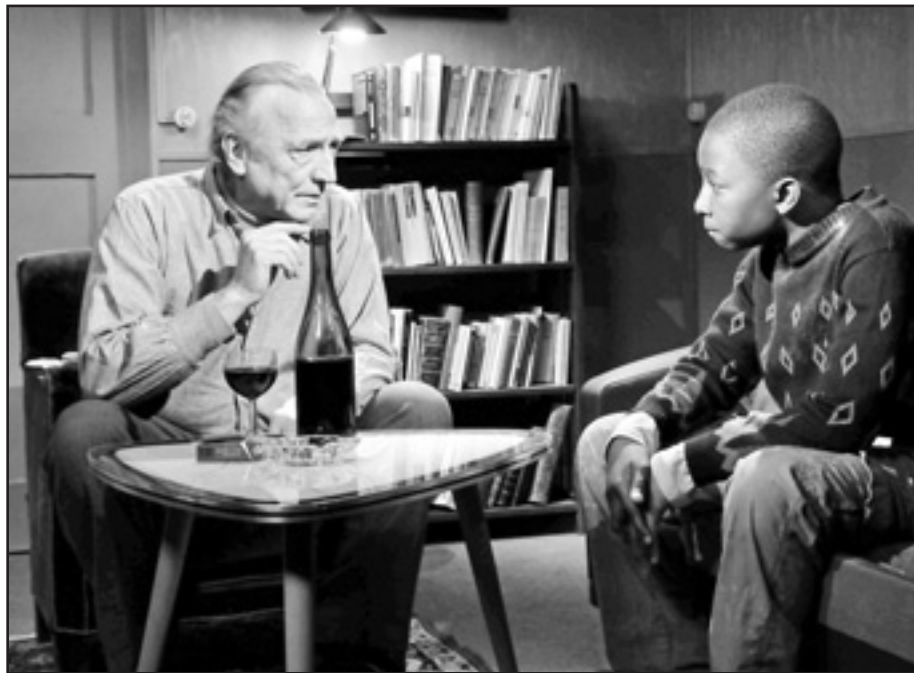
They are the shabby poor, barely able to keep the tin roofs of their slapped-together wooden homes over their head. A meal consists of cheese, bread (often stolen), and a glass of wine, occasionally a stew. On the way to the pub, shopkeepers along the way hassle Marcel about money he owes them, say he's a thief. The simple life there is belied by an air of suspicion.

The overall mood of the film is depressing, but many of the characters the actors portray are quite heart warming.

People are stopped by authorities at random and asked for IDs. An Asian regular at the pub, named Chang (Quac Dung Nguyen), confesses to Marcel that he himself is an illegal—Vietnamese—with fake Chinese papers. Things heat up when a watchman at a shipping yard suspects that people have been smuggled in from Africa in a container.

Cops are called; an armored strike force shows up. When the container

Kindness of Strangers



is opened people stare out blankly. A young, teenage boy, wearing jeans and a sweater, dashes out. A cop raises his assault rifle but is stopped by Detective Monet (Jean-Pierre Darroussin), in long dark overcoat and slouch hat. "He's only a boy," he says. Headlines and TV news reports about the immigrants lead to fear of an al Qaeda connection. Authorities ask if they are terrorists.

Eating his lunch in the harbor one day, Marcel sees the boy hiding hip deep in the water under a pier. With one look, an understanding is reached. From then on, while his wife is in the hospital, dy-

ing of an unstated fatal disease, Marcel helps the boy, Idrissa (Blondin Miguel). In a roundabout way involving a visit to an immigration detention center, where he lies about his relationship to the detainee ("I'm the family albino"), Marcel is told that Idrissa's grandfather lives near Calais, in a camp with other migrants on a beach called "The Jungle."

Calais is currently home to around 1000 migrants—about 800 Afghans—who want to get to the UK and avoid the strict immigration controls at the port. French authorities destroyed their camp in a dawn raid in 2009 (the film

was made in 2011). Some inhabitants were imprisoned at the Centre de Ré-tention of Coquelles; others were taken to detention centers all over France before being released. They then try to make the long journey back to Calais on foot while French authorities threaten to repatriate them to Afghanistan.

A nosy neighbor rats on the boy. The shopkeepers—now sympathetic since Marcel is about to become a widower, along with palpable contempt for the authorities—hide Idrissa during Marcel's absence. After a long bus ride to Calais, a taxi drops him at the immigrants' beach camp. Idrissa's stately, robed, grandfather, Mahmat Saleh (Umban U'kset), gives him the name and address of the boy's mother, a legal resident, living in London.

With Inspector Monet constantly on their heels, the film begins to feel like "Les Miserables" or "The Fugitive," with Monet as Javert or Samuel Girard respectively. Eventually, Idrissa is stowed away in the hold of a fishing vessel. Marcel had arranged a charity concert, headed by real-life rocker, Little Bob (Robert Piazza), a strange, small man with a white, birds' nest hairdo, to raise the fee for the boat owner to take Idrissa across the Channel to England, where he'll find his mother.

Although the film deals with the themes of injustice, poverty, and the systematic oppression waged against immigrants, its message is never heavy handed. Hopefully, many in the audience will come away from "Le Havre" with increased sympathy for immigrants, and more understanding of their plight. ■

Letter from Lynne

By LYNNE STEWART

An appeal of Lynne Stewart's lengthened sentence is set for 8 a.m., Feb. 29, at the federal courthouse at New York's Foley Square. There will be an all-night rally for Lynne in the square, starting at 7 p.m. Information: (917) 853-9759.

After the disaster in July 2010, when Judge Koeltl, following the directives of the Second Circuit increased my sentence from 28 months to 10 years, our righteous indignation fueled this appeal. The government's argument will center on my testimony at trial and the alleged perjury. All of those facts were before the court at the time of the 28-month sentence and were not the basis then of a double-digit sentence.

Our brief attacks the increased sentence on two different fronts—one on a doctrine of "substantive unreason-

ableness," meaning it's just too much of an increase, five fold—given the circumstances. Secondly, we argued that the only "new" information before the judge were my statements after my first sentence in October of 2008 and remarks I made on the courthouse steps before I surrendered to prison. We contend strongly that this is protected speech under the First Amendment of the Constitution, and cannot be used to increase or as a basis for sentencing. (Even if they hate it!!!)

The same group of three judges that heard and decided the original appeal will also hear the arguments on the 29th. The government is not asking for more time; they are satisfied with their pound of flesh but it is not likely that this court will take any action that will help me. The times are askew for prisoners and their lawsuits. (The brief is available at my website, lynnewestewart.org.)

The lawyers that argued in July of 2010 will be on board, with the addition of Herald Price Fahringer, an eminent attorney in the First Amendment field (the win in the Larry Flynt Hustler case in the U.S. Supreme Court was his. He

was also in the line of fire (no injuries) when the shooting took place.) He will enthusiastically present our case. I will not be present—not unusual once imprisoned. But my spirit will be there to inspire!!!

Of course, my case has always been government firing warning shots to lawyers, that a vigorous defense, of certain clients, if not conforming to government specifications, will be punished severely. This chill effect in these days that we are confronted with grand jury investigations and dismantling of Occupations is not something we should contemplate with anything less than alarm. I have just finished David Gilbert's book ("Love Struggle") and the intercession of lawyers when there are arrests of designated enemies of the "state" are the only meaningful protection available.

A large outpouring of support in Foley Square and Tom Paine Park and in the courtroom will signal to these arbiters of "justice" that attention must be paid, the 99% are watching them with suspicion and tallying up the roads not taken. ■

... Third party?

(continued from page 3)

newly formed Justice Party, is a former Democrat and two-term mayor of Salt Lake City. The Greens have yet to choose a candidate.

What matters most, when we consider the Greens, or a candidate like Anderson, is the role of political program. Anderson's campaign, for instance, offers a variety of financial and economic reforms but not the type of fundamental change that must be enacted to address the economic crisis. He focuses on tax cuts and incentives to businesses who "hire U.S. workers and disincentives to those that don't; splitting up too big to fail banks; and he opposes hiring ex-financial executives as advisors to the president on economic policy."

Tax policy and breaking up big banks ultimately are not the solutions. The banks and financial institutions will still exert control over the economy and politics. Socialists argue instead for the nationalization of the banks and the *Fortune* 500 under workers' control. Capitalism is the problem, and trying to make it better, or more humane, is fruitless.

Anderson's campaign statement promises an end to the wars of the Bush-Obama administrations, support for universal health care (while laying out no specifics), support for the environment, and for LGBT rights and gay marriage. He says little, however, about the massive assault on civil liberties under Obama, including the NDAA and crack-downs on the occupy movement.

The Green platform is superior to Anderson's in many ways. It offers a number of reforms, many of which are radical sounding. However, the Green platform does not advocate doing away with capitalism but rather proposes to "reduce the economic and political power of large corporations, end corporate personhood and re-design corporations to serve our society, democracy and the environment." At the same time, it would change "the legal design of corporations so that they generate profits, but not at the expense of the environment, human rights, public health, workers, or the communities in which the corporation operates."

This sort of thinking is contradictory. Corporate power and the drive for maximum profits are at the center of the capitalist system. The reforms that the Greens propose are impossible because capitalists would never adhere to them. Exploitation of the environment, human rights, public health, workers, or communities is endemic to the capitalist private-profit system.

Workers need their own party

Socialists argue against support for electoral campaigns that do not have a base in the organized struggles of the working class and oppressed people. We believe it is a mistake to sow illusions in reformist candidates, or to downplay putting forward a clear working-class program in order to find a short cut for obtaining votes. Rocky Anderson, the Greens, and similar electoral campaigns—like that of Ralph Nader before them—will result in no lasting mass working-class organization and little in the way of fundamental change.

That is why socialists call for a labor party in the United States, based in the unions. This isn't an ab-

straction, but a reflection of the real needs and interests of the working class. Class independence and the ability to fight and speak in our own name are fundamental tasks for working people. The working class is the one force in society with the potential strength and economic power to fundamentally change society.

More than 25 million working-class people remain either underemployed or unemployed, with no action from Washington to solve the problem. Spending on infrastructure projects would benefit some sectors of the economy, but what is really needed is a massive public works jobs program to put the unemployed back to work at good union wages. Millions could be put to work in a matter of weeks—improving infrastructure, weatherizing homes and public buildings, cleaning and protecting the environment, providing needed social services and education.

Without class independence, we are forced to depend on the goodwill of politicians who answer to Wall Street. A workers party, or labor party, will emerge from mass struggles to defend the interests and living standards of the working class, protect the environment, and stand behind all oppressed people—Blacks, women, immigrants, LGBT people, etc.—who are fighting for their rights.

Such a party would not have to be a bureaucratic, pro-capitalist party like the Social Democratic Parties of Europe. Nor would it be a party that merely puts forward candidates in the electoral arena. The labor party that we see on the horizon, having come out of a renewed upsurge in the U.S. class struggle, would remain first and foremost a mass-action party—organizing people who are fighting back in their workplaces and in the streets. ■

Egyptians mark anniversary of uprising with new protests



Khalil Hamra / AP

(Left) Egyptians rally in Tahrir Square on Jan. 26, one year after the uprising against Mubarak. But the revolution is still incomplete.

By ANDREW POLLACK

In early February, a number of protesters were killed and over 1500 injured, as Egyptian police attacked demonstrations that had been called to express the mounting public anger over the deaths of at least 74 people at a soccer match in Port Said.

The mainstream media at first blamed the Feb. 1 soccer stadium fight on the fans of rival teams; later it was admitted that police had watched the action without intervening, and had not searched fans for concealed weapons—indicating that they knew in advance that something was up. Many activists believe that the brawl was set up by the Egyptian military to justify their announcement several days earlier that they would retain the current emergency law.

As protests escalate, a coalition that includes student groups and unions has called a nationwide strike for Feb. 11—the date that Mubarak was toppled one year ago.

On Jan. 25, hundreds of thousands marked the anniversary of Egypt's uprising with rallies demanding the continuation of the revolution, starting with the immediate end of the military regime headed by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). Many participants said the crowds in Cairo and other cities were bigger than demonstrations of a year ago.

In contrast to the protesters' demands, the Muslim Brotherhood, whose Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won the most seats in the newly-elected parliament, chose to mark the day with a "celebration" of the alleged progress made in the past year, drawing the wrath of most protesters.

In the days since Jan. 25, left organizations have continued to mobilize in Tahrir Square, especially at the new focal point, the state TV station Maspero. Journalists inside are challenging government domination of the station, which has meant that many Egyptians, especially in rural areas or small towns, have yet to see coverage of many of the regime's atrocities. Another response to this lack of information has been the "Askar Kazboon" or "Military Liars" campaign, whereby activists tour the country with videos of the crimes committed by the regime's army, police and hired thugs.

Workers are also coming to the Maspero building to bring forth their own grievances, reminding us once again of the truth of Rosa Luxemburg's point in "The Mass Strike" about the mutual reinforcement of political and economic struggles in a period of upsurge. Following on the huge strike wave of last fall, workers continue to build new independent unions and to raise such demands as a minimum and maximum wage (the latter directed at corrupt, overpaid managers and executives) and the right to permanent status on the job.

Pro-capitalist Muslim Brotherhood

Revolutionaries in Egypt point to those struggles as evidence of the possibility to unite the fight in the squares and the workplace. This possibility is in fact

Obama is doing his part to keep the regime on the neoliberal path by offering to double U.S. investments if Egypt gives 'incentives'—such as tax breaks for foreign capital.

an urgent requirement, given the openly pro-capitalist orientation of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood has given voluminous testimony, in interviews with the media and in meetings with potential investors and their governments' representatives, to their faith in the "free market." This even extends to pledging support for the previous regime's Qualifying Industrial Zones agreements between Egypt, the U.S., and Israel, in which Egypt's exports get access to the U.S. market as long as a certain percentage of a good's value originates in Israel.

More evidence of the Brotherhood's fealty to the idol of Mammon was laid out in Avi Asher-Schapiro's *Salon* article, "The GOP Brotherhood of Egypt: Demonized in the U.S. as radical terrorists, Egypt's Islamists are actually led by free-market businessmen." He reported that "while Western alarmists often depict Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as a shadowy organization with terrorist ties, the Brotherhood's ideology actually has more in common with America's Republican Party than with al-Qaida.

"Few Americans know it but the Brotherhood is a free-market party led by wealthy businessmen whose economic agenda embraces privatization and foreign investment while spurning labor unions and the redistribution of wealth. ... Like the Republicans in the U.S., the financial interests of the party's leadership of businessmen and professionals diverge sharply from those of its poor, socially conservative followers."

He then detailed the business interests and political beliefs of several Brotherhood millionaires. Asher-Schapiro reports on meetings between Brotherhood leaders and European investment bankers in which the former reassured investors "that the new government shares their goals." And he quotes a Reuters interview with Hassan Malek, a textile mogul and Brotherhood financier, in which Malek said the Brothers "want to attract as much foreign investment as possible ... and this needs a big role for the private sector." Malek heads the group's "Egyptian Business and Investment Association," a coalition of leading Brotherhood businessmen working to promote private investment.

Malek even praised the economic policies of the

Mubarak regime. "We can benefit from previous economic decisions. There have been correct ones in the past. ... Rachid Mohamed Rachid [Mubarak's minister of trade] understood very well how to attract foreign investment."

"What Malek failed to mention," said Asher-Schapiro, is that Rachid fled to Dubai after the ouster of Mubarak and has since been convicted in absentia of squandering public funds and embezzlement." Furthermore, "Rachid worked to privatize Egyptian industries, reduce taxes and subsidies, and defang unions.

This economic model, adopted at the urging of the IMF and international financial institutions, delivered strong economic growth—nearly 6 percent a year from 2004 to 2009—but also generated inequality. The gains were concentrated in the hands of Egypt's economic elite, while millions of working-class Egyptians saw their wages stagnate, as rising food prices pushed many to the brink."

The *Salon* piece reminds readers of the Brotherhood's hostility to trade unions. "The Brothers have been against wildcat strikes and all significant labor actions," says Zeinab Abdul-Magd, an Egyptian academic and leftist activist. "The Brothers just don't relate to workers."

Asher-Schapiro ends his piece by citing the rising unemployment, debt and deficit, and diminishing currency reserves used by Western capital as supposed proof of the need for austerity—and, confronted with this crisis, the regime's turnabout from its previous rejection of an offered IMF loan to its pleas to the IMF in January for the loans.

Meanwhile, Obama is doing his part to keep the regime on the neoliberal path, offering an "emergency plan," which the independent Egyptian journal *Al-Masry Al-Youm* reported centers on doubling U.S. investments by encouraging Egypt's rulers to offer "incentives" (read tax breaks for foreign capital).

The need for ongoing solidarity

The consensus between the Brotherhood, the military, and the Egyptian ruling class over the need for a continuation of pro-capital economic policies is the background to the Brotherhood's support for SCAF's timetable for relinquishing only some of its powers, and even those not until after it helps shape the writing of a new constitution and election rules for choosing a new president.

The Brotherhood knows that only a strong military and police can hope to maintain a level of repression sufficient to hold back the rising tide of worker militancy and mass mobilization on behalf of genuine freedom and social justice. On Jan. 25 and in the days since this has meant repeated confrontations in the streets and squares between the Brotherhood and the masses demanding that SCAF step down.

On Jan. 21 there were rallies in solidarity with the revolution in dozens of cities around the world. That date was chosen to send a message to the regime that their threats of violence against protesters on the anniversary had not gone unnoticed and that revolution supporters were ready to mobilize against future attacks. (The regime had been spreading rumors about "foreign agents" planning trouble on the Jan. 25, a clear indication of plans to attack activists. But on the 25th itself the crowds were far too massive for SCAF to take any action.)

On Jan. 22 and Jan. 25 the main Egypt support group in New York, the Ad Hoc Coalition to Defend the Egyptian Revolution, held standing-room-only teach-ins on the economic, social, and political roots of the revolution and its prospects. The coalition is collaborating with Occupy Wall Street working groups on campaigns against U.S. provision of military aid and tear gas and other weapons exports to the regime, as well as efforts to publicize cases of repression by the regime. For information on continued solidarity efforts: defendegyptianrevolution.org. ■