

PEOPLE'S WORLD

www.peoplesworld.org

December 1, 2012

Walmart workers strike on Black Friday

By Tim Wheeler

Nearly 100 supporters joined Walmart workers who walked out on strike, in Port Angeles, Wash., Nov. 23. They joined a picketline in front of the store chanting, "What do we want? Respect!" and "Walmart, Walmart, you're no good! Treat your workers the way you should."

The walkout in this papermill town was one of dozens against the retail giant across the nation protesting Walmart's bully tactics aimed at silencing the "OUR Walmart" worker upsurge.

It was a dreary day after Thanksgiving with sullen clouds hanging over Mount Angeles. Yet the strikers' spirits were high.

Many couples brought their young children who walked with the picketers.

In the crowd were members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), International Brotherhood of Teamsters, and other unions. MoveOn members from Clallam County and Jefferson County joined the march.

The strikers carried signs charging Walmart with unfair labor practices for firing or otherwise punishing workers who dared to speak out against the company's employment practices.

Edythe, a 15-year veteran worker at the Port Angeles Walmart store said, "This picket line is for the thousands of Walmart workers who are going out on strike and the thousands more who are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out."

When she began working at Walmart, Sam



Walton, then Walmart's CEO, paid time-and-a-half to any worker working on Sunday.

After Walton died, "that was cut to a dollar-an-hour extra for Sunday work," Edythe said. "It's the same for shift differential. Anybody hired after January 12 of this year does not get that 50 cents per hour shift differential."

Walmart claims the average pay for their employees is \$12.85, she continued.

But a recent analysis proved that the average Walmart worker is paid only \$9.04 per hour - less than the minimum wage in Washington State.

T H I S W E E K :

- Walmart workers strike on Black Friday
- Editorial: Gaza-Israel: more negotiations
- 2013: The post-election agenda
- Las Vegas Teamsters beat Coke decertification attempt
- Alertan sobre repunte de la inequidad económica

READ MORE NEWS AND OPINION DAILY AT WWW.PEOPLESWORLD.ORG

"That is not a living wage," Edythe charged. Walmart reported profits of \$16 billion last year. Elena Perez, a leader of the Making Change

Walmart reported profits of \$16 billion last year.

at Walmart Puget Sound Coalition told the World, "This is a national campaign. A coalition is building across the country to hold Walmart accountable. One of our main goals is to support the workers, to make sure that management knows that we will stand by the workers. These are our neighbors and retaliating against our neighbors will not be tolerated. We're not going away. As long as these workers stand up, we're going to stand up with them."

Dave Schmitz, President of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21 in Seattle, came with a dozen other UFCW workers to show support for the Walmart workers in Port Angeles.

"You think of everything that has happened over the years. These are some of the most courageous, the bravest workers I have ever known taking on this retail giant."

He pointed out that Walmart filed a lawsuit with the National Labor Relations Board against the UFCW. "They claim this is a 'union recognition' fight when in reality it is workers taking a stand against the company's retaliation" on workers exercising their freedom of speech."

Schmitz said it is a sign of Walmart's panic that in one store they expelled Walmart shoppers mistaking them for protesters.

There were walkouts by Walmart workers in Mount Vernon, Renton, and Seattle as well as in California, Colorado, and in Florida where one protesting worker was arrested.

When Schmitz and other protesters arrived at the vast, half empty parking lot, the Walmart chief of security walked up and told them they were trespassing. "This is a strike and federal law allows pickets on company property during a strike," Schmitz replied.

The Walmart security chief threatened to call the county sheriff.

A half hour later, sheriffs deputies arrived. But they did not order the picketers to vacate the premises.

The picketline continued, loud and clear, in front of the Walmart store.



Tim Wheeler is former People's World editor.

Gaza-Israel: more negotiations

PW Editorial

Events in recent days between Israel and the Hamas-led government in Gaza show, once again, the danger of Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's refusal to work seriously toward the resolution of Palestinian grievances. It also shows that firing rockets into Israel will not lead to anything productive.

For some time, a shaky de-facto truce existed between Israel and Hamas, though rockets were still sporadically being fired into Israel from Gaza. In the past week, however, this truce has broken down. The Israeli defense force killed two civilians in Gaza, an 11-year-old boy and a 20-year-old mentally handicapped man. A barrage of rockets was then fired into Israel from Gaza, wounding four Israeli soldiers.

But reportedly, a truce was already in the works when on Wednesday, November 14, Israel sharply escalated the conflict by assassinating Ahmed Ja'abari, the head of the Hamas military wing, with an air strike that also killed and injured a number of bystanders. This set off an angry reaction from Gaza, with another barrage of rockets into Israeli territory. Israeli bombing of targets in Gaza, called by Israel "Pillar of Cloud" or "Pillar

of Defense," was also then sharply escalated and has continued up to now. More than 1300 Israeli air strikes were carried out, doing great damage to infrastructure.

Netanyahu called up reserves and massed troops on the border, strongly hinting at another land invasion.

The United States and other Western powers condemned the rocket attacks and emphasized Israel's right to defend itself. But most countries in the Arab and Muslim worlds, as well as many others, have condemned the Israeli attack as an act of brutal aggression.

The escalation must be seen in the context of the intransigence of the Netanyahu government, which has stalled peace talks while it actively promotes the building of settlements on land promised to the Palestinian people, and has enforced a blockade of Gaza for years.

The Communist Party USA called on the Israeli government to stop escalating the conflict and pull back from sending in ground troops.

The CPUSA also urged the U.S. to press Israel to stop further attacks in Gaza and return to serious negotiations toward a two-state solution meeting the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

For some time, a shaky de-facto truce existed between Israel and Hamas.

2013: The post-election agenda

By Sam Webb

The economy is framing everything in the post-election period - and not only for the short term. Here's why.

While some pickup in economic activity has occurred since the crash in 2008, overall employment gains and economic growth have been fitful and anemic.

It's hard to see where the dynamism is going to come from anytime soon without the entry of the federal government on a scale that only a few in Washington are ready to embrace.

Debt, which drove the last economic expansion (1992-2007), is not an option.

Further, there will be no help from our global partners. Europe is reeling. And China is not positioned to carry the rest of the world on its shoulders. Its growth has slowed too and it's feeling the contradictions that come from its deep integration into the capitalist global economy.

Crises are supposed to be capitalism's mechanisms to clear away the debris that inhibits a revival of production, profits, employment and growth on a wider scale.

But that scenario doesn't appear to be in capitalism's future.

Instead, slow growth and high unemployment seem like the "new normal." And, always lurking in the background is the danger of deeper crises.

All of which begs the question: Are we entering a new era of capitalism, characterized by over-production, hyper-intense monopolistic rivalry, and long-term economic stagnation on a world scale?

My initial read (more in-depth study is required) is that we are entering such an era. That would go a long way in explaining why big capital is in such a frenzy to impose a new model of political and economic governance on the working class and people - one that is stripped of social obligations to its citizens, "free" of unions and activated civic organizations, unchecked by weakened democratic institutions, and shorn of any barriers to its global accumulation strategy.

The dream of the 1 percent is to return to the Gilded Age when neither the people nor nature had any rights that capitalism had to respect.

The outcome of the 2012 elections has made



the realization of the 1 percent's dream more difficult, but it has by no means settled the question. Don't expect big capital to throw in the towel.

While it supported Romney, its claws are in the sides of both parties and in every branch of government. The state remains a capitalist state.

Faced with this reality, the option for the working class and people in the near and medium term isn't to retreat from electoral and political struggle.

Instead, working people need to further expand their independent and mass presence in the electoral and political arena (as well as other arenas) of struggle, where advanced democratic solutions to the capitalist crisis can be fought for and won.

For example: expansion of voting rights; curbs on the financial power of big capital; investment in meaningful and massive jobs creation; protection of the equality and rights of women, immigrants, workers, people of color, gays and lesbians; steps toward greening and de-militarizing our economy and society; protection and expansion of public services, education, health care and retirement security.

These struggles will lead us to the longer-term option: socialism - reshaping our society into one in which working people and their allies govern in the interest of the immense majority.

A society that puts people and nature before profits.

Further, there will be no help from our global partners.

LV Teamsters beat decertification

By Paul Mihalow

Coca-Cola's attempt to get rid of the Teamsters and a union contract in Las Vegas fizzled out like so much bad soda.

On Nov. 8, a surreptitious campaign by Coke management and its minions culminated in an 85-54 National Labor Relations Board-ballot box spanking of the company. The defeat of Coke's attempt at decertifying Teamsters Local 14 came on the heels of Coke trying to circumvent longtime contract language.

The battle began when 14 agents slapped down Coke's direct bid to negate the contract and established past practices. A decertification notice appeared on the fax machine.

Contractual relations between Local 14 and Coke in Las Vegas have decades of history behind it. Local 14 President Al Ghilarducci, business agent at Coke for over six years until agent Jaime Olvera was assigned to the company, asked the on-site general manager what his problem was.

"He feigned surprise about the decertification," Ghilarducci said. "But what we found out was that a guy had been promised a sales job for filing the petition. We also found out that another bargaining unit member who used to be in management was pushing it and is a union-hater."

Local 14 Secretary-Treasurer Larry Griffith said the decertification effort is what Coke fosters against Teamster units.

"They opened up the company checkbook and brought in the hired-guns, a union-busting company from back east. They followed that by shipping in Coke management people to work over our Teamsters in captive meetings," he said.

As election day neared, Cammack dispatched the council's show truck to the company gates. For two days Teamsters from far and wide picketed and rallied with the Coke members up to voting time.

Alertan sobre repunte de la inequidad económica en EE.UU.

By Prensa Latina

La diferencia de bienestar entre la clase pudiente de Estados Unidos y el resto de la población se disparó hasta niveles astronómicos durante las pasadas tres décadas, mientras los ingresos de la familia promedio son los peores desde 1969.

Un informe del economista y catedrático de la Universidad de Nueva York Edward Wolff, quien estudió el movimiento de los dividendos ciudadanos entre 1983 y 2010, refleja que la clase media norteamericana tiene las más bajas utilidades en 43 años.

En la etapa mencionada, la disparidad en cuanto a ingresos monetarios aumentó significativamente en el norteamericano país sobre todo como consecuencia del quebranto de las inversiones en el sector inmobiliario, que afectó con énfasis a activos de la comunidad trabajadora.

De acuerdo con el Reporte Wolff, mientras una familia de clase media perdía un 18 por ciento de sus entradas financieras, aquellos ciudadanos incluidos en el uno por ciento poblacional -los más acaudalados- vieron incrementar sus ingresos en 71 por ciento.

En 2010 también el salario promedio anual decreció hasta sus peores niveles desde 1999, unos 26 mil 360 dólares, y como resultado una persona dentro del llamado uno por ciento disfrutaba de valores 288 veces superiores al de un ciudadano estadounidense promedio.

La Gran Recesión que golpeó a la industria nacional entre 2007 y 2010 provocó que el bienestar económico de las familias de clase media decayera un 38,8 por ciento durante ese período, con mayor perjuicio para aquellos

individuos entre 35 y 44 años.

El presidente Barack Obama adelanta desde inicios de 2012 una campaña pública para consolidar el apoyo ciudadano hacia su iniciativa relacionada con el aumento de impuestos a los más ricos como medio de contrarrestar el déficit.

Obama se ha reunido con líderes sindicales, representantes del sector privado empresarial y delegados de ambos partidos políticos con la meta de ganar adeptos para una propuesta de incrementar gravámenes desde 35 hasta 39,6 por ciento.

El propósito del mandatario demócrata apunta hacia aquellos ciudadanos con ingresos mayores de 250 mil dólares anuales, una porción de la población beneficiada con pactos legislativos certificados durante la administración de George W. Bush.

Según cálculos de la Casa Blanca, el fin de la era-Bush de privilegios fiscales podría aportar un adicional de 440 mil millones de dólares de recaudos gubernamentales en los próximos 10 años.

Una cifra record de 42,2 millones de estadounidenses celebró el reciente Día de Acción de Gracias bajo el programa federal de auxilio para pobres que reparte estampillas con derecho a comidas subsidiadas.

Acorde a un estudio del foro Sunlight Foundation, el uso de los bonos para alimentos se disparó en Estados Unidos desde el colapso del sistema financiero hace cinco años.

Esta opción aumentó en 70 por ciento desde 2007 y no disminuirá hasta que caigan los números del desempleo.

NATIONAL CONTACT

Editorial: (773) 446-9920 Business: (212) 924-2523
Email: contact@peoplesworld.org