

Israeli assaults ignite Palestinian resistance

U.S. maneuvers at UN to shore up plan for Iraq war

By Richard Becker

Massed Israeli military assaults on Ramallah and Gaza City beginning Sept. 19 have destroyed most of the presidential compound of Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat and, as of Sept. 25, left at least 15 people dead.

But the new attacks, while taking a heavy toll, triggered a new upsurge of Palestinian resistance and intensified Israel's international isolation.

Israel's predictable military "victory" turned into an important political defeat, and at the same time complicated the Bush administration's plans for war in Iraq.

The events began with the Israeli government's rejection of an offer by the Palestinian Authority (PA) for a cease-fire on Sept. 17. Israel has been occupy-

ing all the major cities of the West Bank and imposing round-the-clock curfews on the population for several months.

Besides the hundreds of Palestinians killed and wounded, the curfews have made life nearly unbearable for all living under their harsh terms. No one can go out when the curfew is in effect, whether to work, school, visit family, or for medical emergencies.

The day after the Israeli rejection of the cease-fire, the first suicide bombing in nearly seven weeks took place in Israel, followed by a bus bombing in Tel Aviv on Sept. 19. The bombings, claimed by the Hamas and Islamic Jihad organizations, killed eight people.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon then ordered a major assault on the compound of PA President Yasir Arafat in Ramallah the same day. It is well known that both

Hamas and Islamic Jihad are at odds with Arafat on many political issues and do not follow his leadership.

Sharon's assault pre-planned

By the size and scope of the attack in Ramallah, it was immediately clear that the Sept. 19 assault was pre-planned and that Sharon had been awaiting a pretext to launch it.

More than 60 Israeli armored vehicles were involved in the operation, along with helicopter gunships. Armored bulldozers demolished all of the buildings except the one Arafat was in. Tank and ground fire was also directed into the PA president's headquarters.

By Sept. 20, about 200 people were trapped in four rooms on the second floor of the remaining building. Israel demanded that all must be turned over for

"interrogation," which in Israel means torture. Arafat refused.

Israeli commanders announced over loudspeakers that the remaining building would be brought down on top of its occupants if they did not surrender.

On Sept. 21, Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinian demonstrators in Ramallah who defied the curfew to demand an end to the siege, killing at least four people and wounding many more.

Overconfident in their overwhelming firepower, an Israeli official openly boasted to National Public Radio on Sept. 22 that Sharon's objective was to force Arafat into exile within days. The same deputy defense minister revealed that the expulsion of the PA president had been Sharon's objective for two years.

NPR also reported that no U.S. official

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Speakers close the final session of the conference with the singing of the International.

WWP conference maps struggle against capitalist war

By John Catalinotto
New York

Even as the Bush administration was maneuvering feverishly to round up support for its planned war on Iraq, Workers World Party was holding an Emergency National Conference Sept. 21-22 in New York.

The agenda focused both on Bush's "endless war on terror," especially the impending U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the growing capitalist economic crisis.

Members of the party's leading body, the Secretariat of the National Committee, keynoted the discussion in plenary sessions on the imperialist war

This issue of Workers World includes news and analysis based on talks delivered to the party's national conference

PHOTOS OF WWP CONFERENCE TAKEN BY: PAT CHIN, JOHN CATALINOTTO, G. DUNKEL, LIZA GREEN AND BILL HACKWELL.

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Your help is needed!

Fuel the fires of resistance

By Leslie Feinberg

We are standing at a crossroads in history, weathering a storm of reaction. The political climate is hot and oppressive. And the stock market is a barometer of more turbulent days ahead. An economic crisis is shuddering like an earthquake, rolling across the economic landscape in slow motion, yet powerful enough to create a tidal wave that has already toppled economic towers like Enron. Workers are watching their pensions washed away in the Wall Street deluge, and with it dreams of security and relaxation in the not-so-distant future.

The deep rumbling on the economic Richter scale is one reason that Bush and his generals are hurling the lightning bolts of war. This imperial war tempest is capitalist globalization, aiming to sweep aside any obstacles to capital expansion and jolt the economy with war spending. And storm clouds of racism and repression, gathering on the domestic front, aim to intimidate working and oppressed people from rising up in class battles.

Pink slips, layoffs, 401Ks and life savings evaporating, utility bills quadrupling—more and more workers are plummeting to earth in economic free fall while CEOs glide gently past them on golden parachutes and the rich

owners get richer. But economic dislocation, and the war crisis, has the potential to awaken many to the need to fight back. We're already seeing signs of motion.

We believe this period of deep political reaction is laying the basis for a tide of mass struggle that will sweep these barons of banking and industry off the stage of history.

Right now, we've got a war to stop, racist roundups and reaction to halt, and an economic crisis that demands we organize resistance. But a period of capitalist economic crisis makes it even harder to carry out the urgent struggles that we're such a vital part of.

That is why money must be moved to the top of the agenda.

Workers World is a leading force in the anti-imperialist, anti-war movement. We spend a lot of time and energy helping the coalitions we're part of to do their own fundraising. But that's not raising funds for Workers World. We're a working-class party, also hard hit by the capitalist economic crisis.

As a result, we are sounding the opening bell of a fall fund drive.

We all need to pitch in at this critical moment. Revolutionaries cannot be financially beholden to any other class except the one they work to help



Leslie Feinberg

liberate.

One-time contributions are welcomed. Also, please take the time to join the Workers World newspaper supporter program—which has helped extend the reach of our weekly paper by bringing in money from friends and members for 25 years.

And we all need to consider adding Workers World to our wills to ensure that our revolutionary contributions will continue beyond our lifetimes.

Every one of us needs to dig deep. Our money is our labor. So we vow to stretch every dollar till it shouts out loud. All of us need to be creative about how to raise money.

If we want revolutionary fire—and we all do—let's get the fuel!

Join the Workers World Supporter Program

Supporters who contribute \$75 a year receive a year's subscription, a monthly letter and five free trial subscriptions. Sponsors who contribute \$100 also get a book published by WW Publishers. Sustainers also get five books or videos.

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WW CALENDAR

ATLANTA

Sun., Oct. 6

Demonstration at the America Israel Political Action Committee National Summit. Sponsored by Atlanta Palestine Solidarity. 2 p.m. At Swisshotel, next to Lenox Mall. For info email aps@atlanta4palestine.org.

in Palestine Coalition. Gather 11 a.m., Dolores Park, 19th and Dolores. Noon march. 1 p.m. rally at Civic Center, Larkin and Grove. For info (415) 861-7444 or info@adcsf.org or www.adcsf.org/palestine.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Sat., Oct. 26

Stop the war against Iraq before it starts. National march with joint action in San Francisco. For info www.internationalanswer.org.

RED BANK, N.J.

Every Saturday

Join us to say: No to war! No to racism! Picket at noon in front of the main gate, Fort Monmouth, Highway 35 Eatontown. We supply signs or make your own. For info IAC, PO Box 307, Red Bank, NJ.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sat., Sept. 28

Free Palestine. National day of protest. Protest U.S. war drive. Sponsored by Justice

Workers World

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MOVE tells state, 'Hands off'

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia

The MOVE organization has taken the offensive to stave off a threatened police assault. The danger of state intervention followed a judge's decision affecting the custody case of a member's child.

The Philadelphia Police and political establishment have carried out many physical assaults on MOVE, a Black-led radical group, including the notorious May 1985 bombing from helicopters that killed five children and six adults.

After a Sept. 20 news conference at their West Philadelphia home, MOVE members and supporters traveled in a motorcade to New Jersey. They put the Philadelphia and Cherry Hill police departments on notice that MOVE would resist any attempts by police to remove Alberta Africa's son Zachary from their home.

In May, after three years of extensive investigation, Family Court Judge Edward Rosenberg had ruled that Africa's ex-husband John Gilbride could share legal custody of their son, but would only be allowed restricted supervised visits at the Family Court facility.

Rosenberg retired before his ruling could be fully implemented. In August, Judge Shelley Robbins New reversed Rosenberg's decision by allowing Gilbride to take the child out of the home for unsupervised weekend visits.

When Africa refused to turn over her child, Robbins New issued a warrant against her that was due to be carried out by the Cherry Hill police on Sept. 20.

Robbins New served in the Philadelphia

District Attorney's Office for over 25 years, including when MOVE members were on trial for frame-up charges. Following her ruling in the custody case, Robbins New was transferred to a criminal court.

MOVE spokesperson Ramona Africa told Workers World: "This is no simple child custody case. John Gilbride never showed up to try to take his son on Friday, but the threat from the state is not over."

What should have been a legal matter between estranged parents has turned into a pretext for another intervention by the repressive Philadelphia state apparatus against MOVE. □

MOVE supporters rally Sept. 20.

WW PHOTO: BETSEY PIETTE



Resistance in South to anti-immigrant racism

By Dianne Mathiowetz

The onslaught of anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant hate mongering plus the assault on civil liberties and civil rights has had a chilling effect.

Frequently, however, those targeted for repression do not respond as the ruling class anticipates. Rather than be silenced,

they speak out against the injustice and become symbols of resistance

This was certainly the case for three medical students. Because of their nationality and ethnic clothing, Ayman Gheith, Omer Choudhary and Kambiz Butt were illegally held in a police van for 13 hours on Sept. 13 in Calhoun, Ga., while traveling to a South Miami hospital for their studies.

These students spoke against the injustice of "Driving While Muslim." The racist governor, Jeb Bush, publicly called for their prosecution, which is a criminal offense. When Florida officials were unable to find any kind of incriminating evidence, they were forced to apologize to the students.

Then there is the case of Dr. Sami Al-Arian, who had been a tenured professor of computer engineering at the University of Southern Florida in Tampa for 16 years.

He was an active voice for Palestine and a leader in the Muslim religious community.

He and his brother-in-law, Mazen Al-Najjar, established an Islamic studies center and a charitable foundation to benefit Palestinians impacted by the occupation. This brought the two men under scrutiny from the FBI and Israeli intelligence.

After the 1996 Oklahoma City bombing and in spite of the case that was mounting against Timothy McVeigh, a white supremacist and Gulf War veteran, the Tampa newspapers charged Al-Arian and Al-Najjar with being the "terrorist masterminds" behind the bombing.

Their offices were raided, files were seized and the assets of their organizations frozen.

Mazen Al-Najjar was taken into custody on the basis of "secret evidence."

For three-and-a-half years, Al-Najjar was held in solitary confinement, allowed one hour a day out of his cell for exercise and a shower, strip searched upon leaving and entering his cell.

He never was told what crime he was suspected of committing; who his accusers were; or what evidence they had to sup-

port their charges.

His family fought to get his case into the courts.

When a judge finally heard the government's argument for holding Al-Najjar without charges for more than 1,000 days, he ordered his immediate release and thoroughly chastised the FBI in a 57-page decision for violating his rights.

Then 9/11 happened.

Al-Najjar was rounded up again along with thousands of other Arabs, Muslims and South Asians.

After being held for months, he was deported in mid-August for a 20-year-old visa "violation."

All the while his brother-in-law was being held without charges, Sami Al-Arian had been organizing support for legislation outlawing the use of secret evidence.

Congress had acted on the bill and it was awaiting signature by Bush.

With 9/11, it was swept aside by the USA Patriot Act and Justice Department orders that gave government agencies broad authority to spy on citizens, monitor organizations and disrupt dissent.

When Bill O'Reilly of FOX News invited Al-Arian on his program in November 2001, he publicly labeled Al-Arian a "terrorist" and a "supporter of Al-Qaeda."

Immediately, Professor Al-Arian received numerous death threats.

The Muslim school he founded in Tampa was vandalized.

And the university which had previously conducted its own investigation of his activities, and found no wrong-doing, suspended him with pay.

Then within a day of his brother-in-law being deported, the university went into court to fire Al-Arian, charging that he had violated his contract by causing a "disruption" on campus.

The American Association of University Professors has vigorously taken up his case as one of the most serious assaults on academic freedom.

Al-Arian has not been silenced.

He has mounted a public campaign to denounce the threats to civil liberties posed by Ashcroft and Bush and he is a supporter of the Oct. 26 demonstration in D.C. □

No shortage of housing, but crisis grows

By Imani Henry

According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 798,000 people are currently homeless in the United States. The National Low Income Housing Coalition stated on Sept. 18 that out of the nearly 36 million households, one third pay rent every month. You must make about \$14.66 an hour to afford a modest two-bedroom rental and still be able to pay for other basic needs.

The chair of the Senate Housing Committee has now declared that there is a national housing crisis in the U.S. In New York City alone, 35,164 people or 8,600 families have sought emergency shelter and temporary housing. San Francisco has a large homeless population, including many people of color who have been gentrified out of the city because of high rents.

There is not a shortage of housing. In fact there is a surplus, but only if you can afford that luxury condo or the hottest property at the going rate. Meanwhile there are boarded-up buildings that could be used to provide affordable housing. More people are being forced out or even burnt out by greedy landlords and real estate developers who are driven to make more profits.

Five thousand young people die homeless on the streets of the U.S. every year—a large percentage of them lesbian, gay, bi and trans. Now there is another sector of the homeless known as "throwaway youth," whose families are forced to evict them if they live in subsidized housing. The right to shelter, including land, is a basic human need. But under capitalism, it is a

privilege, a commodity to be bought and sold for profit regardless of human need or suffering.

It is why 40 acres and a mule has remained the symbolic demand of the struggle for reparations, as Black farmers in the South fight the Bush administration for money owed them to save their farms.

In Harlem there is a struggle against soaring rents displacing many.

Most every national liberation struggle or imperialist war comes down to the land question and who has a right to it—from Native nations here to the people of Vieques to Palestine to Zimbabwe to Iraq.

An estimated 1.2 billion people worldwide lack adequate housing. Socialism is a humane system that values human need over profit. One out of every five people is homeless in the world, but none of them live in Cuba. In fact, young people and children are the most valued in Cuban society.

Housing, just like education and health care is a right in Cuba. While education and health care are free in Cuba, workers pay only 6 percent to 10 percent of their yearly income for housing, unlike in the U.S., where it is over 30 percent. With only a tiny fraction of the tremendous resources of the U.S., the Cuban government made sure that 100,000 people and tens of thousands of farm animals were evacuated when Hurricane Isidore hit on Sept. 20 without a single loss of life, thanks to socialist planning. □



Lenin's message to today's workers

By Milt Neidenberg
Retired Teamster

No matter how much the Bush administration and its loyal opposition, the Democratic Party, whip up the war frenzy against Iraq and the "war on terrorism" in the name of national security, it is the economy that is preoccupying the workers and the oppressed.

We need a strategy to turn around the "war on terrorism" into a war on poverty—and the issue of "national security" into job security.

Labor columnist Steven Greenhouse conducted an important interview in the Sept. 6 New York Times with David J. Olson. It illustrates the potential power labor can wield.

Olson is a professor, a founder of the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, and a consultant on ports and the longshore union. Bridges was founder of the International Longshore Workers Union and leader of the historic 1934 San Francisco general strike.

Greenhouse asked Olson what the impact on the economy would be if the longshore workers, who unload container boxes from ships, conducted a short work stoppage.

Olson answered, "It would severely affect those companies that depend on just-in-time inventory ... the whole gamut of merchandisers [from] Wal-Mart to Sears, to name a few."

Olson stressed, "The container box is the warehouse for modern-day business. ... The ports handle millions of parts needed for assembly or manufacture. ... We're not talking about goods flowing into the country, but also goods flowing out of the country."

Picture ships from abroad landing on these shores filled with containers. The containers are unloaded by dockworkers, picked up and transported inland by trucks, railway and airlines to their destinations, where the commodities are unloaded. Then visualize the reverse: commodities being exported from these shores.

Any disruption in this interconnected process spells disaster for the employers. More than \$300 billion worth passes through the West Coast ports—7 percent of the entire gross domestic product.

Now comes the introduction of a higher stage of technology into the mix. It ranges from satellites to hand computers and inter-modal shipments to increase productivity and speed-up. Inter-modal means moving commodities by a combination of road and rail.

In one swoop, the technology brings together a global industrial workforce that includes service workers who plot and record the movement of commodities. Marxists call this the socialization of labor.

Some 10,500 longshore workers acting in unity can unleash this power. It points up just how vulnerable the capitalist economy is to the power of labor, which threatens U.S. imperialist and globalization objectives. It's also important to note that the longshore workers are very multinational and have close ties to their communities.

Of course, the Bush administration would intervene in any way it could to immediately remove this threat to the stability of the capitalist system and its plans to dominate the globe.

However, the threat of severe cutbacks in the living conditions of the workers and the oppressed nationalities will elevate the class struggle to another level.

There are huge hurdles to overcome, not the least of which is the labor bureaucrats, with their political ties to the Democratic Party, their defense of the capitalist system and their hope for its reform. Nevertheless, they are not the fundamental class enemy. The leadership is divided on many issues and tactics over how to deal with the crisis of imperialist war, recession, repression



'If the government drags the reluctant workers into a war, it will speed up their class awakening.'

and racism, and the anti-union assault.

It will be significantly easier to reach the rank and file than it was in earlier periods during and since the Cold War. If the government drags the reluctant workers and oppressed into a war against Iraq, it will speed up their class awakening.

Lenin offered today's workers an important lesson about the transition to a period of a revolutionary perspective.

He wrote an essay entitled "On Strikes" in 1899, when Russia suffered both repression and war. He began by discussing the importance of the strike weapon:

"Every strike strengthens and develops in the workers the understanding that the government is their enemy and that the working class must prepare itself to struggle against the government for the people's rights," he said. He called a strike "a school of war."

He talked about wider and broader forms of struggle that develop a revolutionary political perspective. "[We] look forward to the time when all class conscious workers would become socialists [and] will build a party that struggles for the emancipation of the people as a whole ... from the yoke of capital."

He ended his essay with a call that still rings with urgency today: Workers and oppressed of the world, unite!

The enemy that U.S. workers face today is not in Baghdad. It is in Washington and Wall Street, which rip off the wealth and resources created by the multinational labor of the workers and the oppressed. □

Port workers in major labor showdown

By Nancy Mitchell

A major labor showdown is brewing in 29 ports on the West Coast. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union—the ILWU—represents 10,500 West Coast workers. It's a strong union and has won good wages and benefits that really set the standard for what workers should enjoy.



ier or the workweek shorter? If we let the bosses control it, they'll always use it against the workers and to increase their own profits. The fate of the ILWU affects all workers.

The port workers' struggle is also part of the struggle against corporate globalization. We need to expose the role of the Waterfront Coalition—The Gap and Wal-Mart—in trying to break the ILWU and their super-exploitation of oppressed workers around the world.

This is a fighting union that began with a struggle against racist hiring and police repression. When few people knew who Nelson Mandela was, the ILWU refused to unload cargo from South Africa and played a decisive role in defeating apartheid. They have stood against U.S. intervention from El Salvador to Iraq. During the 1995 newspaper strike in San Francisco, not one newspaper moved through the ports. They shut down the ports for Mumia Abu-Jamal in 1999 and they did it again during the protests against the World Trade Organization.

We and others have been working with the ILWU to build labor and community support and change the balance of class forces with rallies up and down the West Coast. The AFL-CIO and the Teamsters have recognized the importance of this struggle and have actively taken on solidarity campaigns with the ILWU. In the Bay Area in particular, the ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War & End Racism—has been working very closely with ILWU Local 10 and the port workers' solidarity committee.

Together with others, we are also organizing a leafleting campaign on the West Coast to let the public know what the corporations in the Waterfront Coalition are doing to break the union and oppress workers. This is a campaign we want to spread eastward to add pressure on the bosses.

Things are extremely tense. There could be a lockout or a slowdown or a strike at any time. And if that happens where will we be? On the picket line! □

The union's contract was up July 1 and it is facing strong opposition from the bosses: the Pacific Maritime Association and its wicked little front group, the West Coast Waterfront Coalition—a grouping of Payless, The Gap, Home Depot, Wal-Mart and others who import an estimated \$300 billion worth of goods a year through West Coast ports from their sweatshops abroad.

Add to this distasteful mix the Bush administration, which is threatening government intervention on the side of the bosses. A couple of days into negotiations, Jim Spinoza—the president of ILWU—was contacted by Homeland Security head Tom Ridge, who said the government may consider this an issue of national security. Meaning what? That they have to protect us from the port workers? I don't think so. Yet they're threatening anything from Taft-Hartley legislation against the union to bringing in troops to unload the ships.

The port workers' struggle is part of the fight-back against the Bush regime's endless war. They're using the war to bomb workers around the world and they're using it here at home against immigrant workers, militant workers and the labor movement.

What is this contract struggle really about?

The real crux of the issue is the bosses' introduction of new technology. Through computerizing what the union clerks now do, the bosses are trying to outsource jobs and essentially take control of hiring, which would lead to the withering away of union jobs. The bosses say the union is anti-technology. The real issue is who is going to control the technology? Will it make work eas-

Crisis in Buffalo calls for worker unity

By Bev Hiestand

Conditions of life are very difficult for workers and oppressed communities in Western New York. Like other former centers of industry and transportation, we have been very affected by the dismantling of heavy industry, downsizing and layoffs.

What solution does the capitalist class offer? High tech! Reindustrialization was supposed to create an economic turnaround in this increasingly impoverished region.

But the greatly hailed scientific high-tech revolution of the 1970s and 1980s has been so different than the scientific-technological revolution of a century or more ago. Those big leaps in the means of production led to the expansion of capitalism, but with it came an overall improvement in the living standard of the working class. Today reindustrialization has brought more layoffs and been an excuse for a greater offensive against the working class.

And while the imperialist war drive will



bring death and destruction, poverty and misery to the people of Iraq, it will also deepen economic and social suffering here. The capitalist state, instead of providing resources on an emergency basis, is in deficit because of the economic crisis and because the social surplus created by our collective labor is being funneled to Wall Street and the

Pentagon while the infrastructure is left to rot.

War will not bring about jobs and prosperity. The Gulf War in 1991 ended in an economic downturn severe enough that Bush Senior didn't get re-elected.

When people are losing their jobs, the budget deficit is expanding and benefits are being cut while corporations are raking in billions, it's natural to awaken to the need to fight back.

Now that impulse is being drowned in a frenzy of hoopla about "terrorist cells" in Buffalo. The highly publicized arrests of six Yemeni American young men has taken

Continued on page 8

Old assumptions don't work

War drive fails to lift economy

By Deirdre Griswold

The gyrations of the stock markets during the last week of September give a very clear picture of the tremendous contradiction facing the Bush administration in its headlong rush to war.

This war is meant above all to shore up U.S. capitalism's position in the world—especially the fortunes of the giant oil monopolies and the high-tech corporations linked to the military-industrial complex.

Yet every time the administration takes another big step toward actually carrying out its plans for a blitzkrieg on Iraq, the stock markets take another dive.

Every major speech by President George W. Bush over the last six months has sent the markets plunging.

For example, when he went to Wall Street on July 9 to reassure investors about the economy with promises that the government would crack down on corporate crime linked to huge bankruptcies, the Dow Jones Industrial Average plunged 178 points even as he was speaking.

The latest big slide in the markets began when Bush went to the United Nations on Sept. 12 to try to push through a resolution of support for the U.S. war.

In explaining why share prices are going down again, the financial analysts invariably have to admit that investors are scared off by the war talk. More and more, doubt over whether war spending will boost the economy is creeping into their analysis.

This is just the opposite of how the markets reacted to war news in the 1950s and 1960s. Then, escalation of the Korean and Vietnam wars caused jubilation on Wall Street. It was the generally accepted view among many workers, too, that war would bring jobs and economic prosperity—a factor that dampened the anti-war movement during the early years of the Vietnam War.

'Defense' stocks don't help the market

At present, even the stocks of those companies with a direct stake in the present war are no longer being buoyed by the Bush administration's belligerent talk or by the big increase in the military budget that followed Sept. 11.

An article called "Looking at Stocks with a Stake in War" appeared in the Business section of the Sept. 22 New York Times. It was based on an interview with Byron K. Callan, an analyst at Merrill Lynch.

"A war would carry a wide range of possible scenarios for defense stocks," said Callan. "Is it quick, messy, but ultimately the United States prevails, or does it cause a lot of instability in the Middle East? I don't think we'll know any of this for a while. But the worst scenario for the defense stocks would be a quick, simple military campaign that produces success beyond the wildest imagination. In that event, defense stocks would underperform the market quite badly."

So the picture that the Bush administration is trying to sell to the people of this country—that a Pentagon onslaught would quickly topple the Iraqi government without U.S. troops taking many casualties—would be the "worst scenario" for the war profiteers. The only thing that will lift their spirits is a long, dirty war.

Callan adds that his "enthusiasm" for war stocks is "tempered because of valuations, which are close to all-time highs. Absent Iraq, the U.S. defense budget news won't get a whole lot better." In other words, the prices of these stocks are already extremely high. It would take enormous and sustained carnage to drive them up much further.

Callan also discussed the "homeland security market." This, he says, is "a real growth market." This year the government



The Nasdaq is the market for hi-tech stocks, many of which have military applications. This chart showing the Nasdaq's meteoric rise in the late 1990s and its equally dramatic fall since March 2000 illustrates what happens under capitalism when a rush of investment leads to overproduction

is spending \$37 billion on everything from handcuffs and prisons to gathering information on people's lives and ordering dangerous vaccines from the pharmaceutical giants.

But even this ominous new growth industry is not helping the overall economy out of the doldrums. Not only are the financial markets continuing their relentless decline, but long-term joblessness is up sharply, along with new claims for unemployment insurance.

The Census Bureau just released a report on poverty that shows 1.3 million more people slipped below the meager poverty line in 2001, while median household income fell 2.2 percent. The income decline affected all categories—those defined as "non-Hispanic whites" as well as the nationally oppressed.

If Bush thought his war drive would provide a quick fix for capitalism, he is being proven wrong.

The truth is that the U.S. economy has grown so large, and has had such a large military component for so long, that even war spending on the level envisioned now cannot jolt it out of a crisis of overproduction.

While a war for U.S. corporations to control the oil and other resources of the Mid-

dle East and the Caspian Sea may promise big profits years hence, the problem the bosses face is: how will it affect the bottom line now?

Imperialist geopolitical strategists and war planners may work out on paper exactly how far their power will extend by 2005 or 2010, but capitalism is not a planned economy. It is an economic system wracked with contradictions that can cause it to implode, as in Argentina today. Corporate bosses will walk over anyone for a profit, but that profit has to come now, in time for the next quarterly report, or they can find themselves in an Enron-sized crisis.

Ultimately, it is economics that drive politics. Behind the seemingly monolithic, pro-war unity of the two-party capitalist political machine in the U.S., the fears are growing stronger in the ruling class establishment that this war may only exacerbate their problems. The sudden emergence of Al Gore as a born-again critic of Bush and the war, after his capitulation to Florida election fraud and disappearance into the night, shows that politicians with nothing to lose have sensed a new wind.

Meanwhile, the anti-war sentiments of the people are growing, even though this is masked by the extraordinary self-censorship of the corporate media and its obsession with the "war on terror."

The genuine, popular-based movement to stop the war should take heart from these developments.

When self-doubt creeps into the hearts of these ruthless predators, it is time for the opposition to press harder, organize more forcefully, and make them understand that the course now being pursued by Bush & Co. will only bring the war home. □



This chart shows the big decline in the price of shares listed on the New York Stock Exchange that started in March of this year. Bush's increase in the military budget, the war in Afghanistan and the buildup for the war against Iraq have not been able to overcome the market contraction

War is also a woman's issue

By Dorothea Peacock

Last year on Sept. 22 the Women's Fight-back Network (WFN) in Boston took to the streets to say "NO" to war against Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Colombia, the Philippines, Korea, Vieques, Cuba or Zimbabwe.

Martin Luther King Jr. stated in 1967 that, "The U.S. bombs falling in the villages of Vietnam are exploding in the inner cities of the U.S."

Links were made between the wars abroad and the war at home—be it budget cuts impacting on poor women and children, the unemployed, elders, students and youth along with racist killer cops and repression against immigrant workers and youth of color.

Billions of dollars are spent each year on the Pentagon to bomb and murder people around the world. Now the bankers, bosses and big oil companies want upwards of \$200 billion on top of the \$400 billion Pen-

tagon budget to carry out an invasion of Iraq.

We say, overturn the Pentagon war budget and fund human needs—including health care, housing, public education, day care, mental health and drug treatment services, HIV/AIDS funding, Women, Infants and Children (WIC) and welfare.

Grandmas on fixed incomes are babysitters raising grandchildren because there is no money to pay for childcare or private sitters.

This week in Massachusetts thousands of workers have been laid off from welfare offices and the Department of Mental Health. Access to free mental health care has been abolished for those battling depression and for those released from prison as well as undocumented immigrants.

Racist prison wardens are demanding rent money from prisoners in Massachusetts to balance the war budget on the backs of the poorest—but not without a

fight! Our brothers and sisters behind the walls are resisting this dictate even if it means stiff punishment.

Some 11,000 seniors are being thrown off the Tufts HMO plan, which no longer accepts Medicare. Another 1 million people in Massachusetts can no longer fill prescriptions at CVS and Walgreens due to the outright extortion by the drug and insurance companies.

Governor Swift's \$2-billion budget cuts in October do not include cutting the police, who have a shoot-to-kill policy against people of color. Recently, a 25-year-old mother, Eveline Barros-Cepeda, was shot in the head by a cop in Dorchester. The WFN attended a vigil for her.

From attacks on affirmative action, desegregation and bilingual education to



racist Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System testing, public education is being carved up to pay for bombs, tanks and the collapse of Enron and WorldCom.

There is an epidemic of domestic violence and murder of women in Fort Bragg, N.C., by their soldier husbands who returned from Afghanistan. Young mothers serving in the U.S. military are boarding war-

ships headed for the Persian Gulf and leaving their babies. The mothers of Iraq and Palestine have children dying from sanctions, bombs and helicopter gunships made in the USA.

Women in the U.S. have a responsibility to speak out and organize. The WFN will be organizing a contingent of women to march on Oct. 26 to stop imperialist war and fight for human needs and socialism. □

World wants to know—

What will U.S. movement do to stop war?

By Larry Holmes

Holmes, a member of WWP's Secretariat, was part of an International Action Center delegation at a Baghdad anti-war conference Sept. 17-19.

Teresa Gutierrez, Kadouri Al-Kaysi, journalist Barbara Aziz and I constituted a delegation to a conference in solidarity with Iraq in Baghdad this week. It was scheduled to begin last Monday, but it was postponed for a day, and we did not know why.

It turned out that Monday was a climactic day in the international pressure campaign on the Iraqis, really from all sides, to agree to admit unconditionally the so-called weapons inspectors, who we know are the first division of the invasion force.

There was a sense of relief at the conference when the decision to admit the inspectors was announced. It says a lot about how dire the situation is. I don't think the participants at the conference, or the Iraqis, think the simple fact that they agreed after their arm had been twisted will stop the war. However, they hope it will buy time.

Our question is: Will it really do that? It appears that since Iraq agreed to inspections, instead of backing off, Bush and his clique and the generals have stepped on the gas pedal and are speeding ahead with preparations for war. Bush is demanding immediate authorization from Congress and the United Nations.

Despite all this, I think the conference was good for the Iraqis. It was a necessary

boost to morale. The media were there, interviewing delegates from all parts of the world. The delegations made strong statements, making it clear that this is not just an attack on Iraq but on people everywhere. And they promised to find concrete ways to solidarize themselves with Iraq.

There were about 170 delegates representing 80 to 90 countries, including the Arab world, Asia, Africa, Latin America and Western Europe. We were the sole delegation from the United States, so they listened carefully to what we had to say. But I would say the majority were from Russia, Yugoslavia, Albania, Romania, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Tajikistan.

As we looked around at the delegates, speaking in so many languages being simultaneously interpreted, it made me think that years ago these delegates could have been representing a strong socialist camp. They could have come with more than words. They could have come with weapons, food, medicine and other material things the Iraqis have been deprived of because of the sanctions. And they would let the imperialists know that they could only go so far, because we will not tolerate it. But this no longer exists.

We appreciate that this is the kind of solidarity Iraq really needs right now. We know if it's just a military struggle, if that's the sole criterion, then of course U.S. imperialism is the far stronger power.

If you listen carefully to what the Iraqis are saying, they are relying on solidarity from the Arab masses and any maneuvers they can make to win a temporary diplo-

'We don't have the luxury of being bystanders. We're catalysts for revolution'



matic edge in the United Nations Security Council. But this is not enough. And it begs the question: What are we going to do about it?

Everybody wanted to know: What are you going to do over there? It's your country that wants to wage this genocidal, racist war against the people of the Middle East.

It begs the question of the relationship of the movement, not just the anti-war movement but the working-class movement, to the struggle against the war and the struggle for socialist revolution.

During the last century we saw that rebellions against imperialism first sprang up where imperialism was weak, at the extremities of the system. At the center, in Europe and here, the struggle was slow. But we also appreciate that ultimately the struggle has to move from East to West, to the heart of imperialism—to give the system a heart attack.

Almost 100 years ago Lenin understood the relationship of the movement in this country to the world revolution. The fate of the world revolution will probably be decided by the struggle of the working class in the United States, because this is the center of imperialism.

If we understand this, we can feel the special responsibility we have to the world.

I think that's a good thing, because nothing motivates serious revolutionaries more than understanding their relationship to the struggle. When you understand that, you wake up in the morning and you know you have a purpose.

Popular anger and resistance to U.S. imperialism around the world is greater than it has been in a long time. Contrary to popular opinion, this country is not an island. It is not separate from the planet, unaffected by the change in consciousness of the masses. Workers and oppressed people in this country are weary of war. That's why the imperialist propaganda machines are really turning it on, trying to drag everyone into the war, because they're nervous about whether the workers will follow them.

We know Bush and his clique want to divert attention away from rising joblessness, poverty and misery among our sisters and brothers. The capitalist economic crisis is very deep. What's happening in the stock market, WorldCom, Enron and so forth, is just on the surface. Underneath there's a catastrophic capitalist crisis in the making.

Will the combination of the war crisis and the economic crisis have the effect we've been awaiting for so long? Will it finally radicalize the masses, wake them up,

Why Iraq is pivotal in imperialism's schemes

By Sarah Sloan

U.S. policy toward Iraq is not motivated simply by the narrow economic interests of those who own ExxonMobil, Texaco and other oil companies. Karl Marx said that the government is the executive committee of the ruling capitalist class. Its function is to act in the interest of the capitalist class in its entirety. And so the U.S. government is currently considering not just how to make additional profit by gaining control of billions of additional barrels of oil, but how to maintain and extend its domination of the entire region.

U.S. imperialism has long held a plan to reshape the Middle East. And now they hope that with the power they possess in the post-Sept. 11 period they can return the Middle East to the colonial status that existed before the 1950s.

The colonial period was ended in the decades after World War II, when anti-colonial bourgeois-democratic revolutions and wars of national liberation swept the world. In some cases—such as Vietnam, Korea, China and Cuba—these revolutions were led by the proletariat through the communist party. In others, the leadership was in the hands of non-proletarian and primarily bourgeois—that is, capitalist—forces.

In 1958 in Iraq there was a people's rev-



olution led by communists and radical bourgeois elements, mainly from the military. In the post-revolutionary government, it was the bourgeoisie that consolidated power. Before the revolution, Iraq's oil wealth was 100-percent owned by U.S., British, Dutch and French oil companies. In 1972, the country's vast oil fields were national-

ized, the foreign profiteers kicked out and the resources used for development—to build roads, hospitals, schools and other infrastructure.

Immediately after Iraq nationalized its oil, Iraq was placed on the U.S. list of terrorist nations.

Many countries where anti-colonial revolutions took place were able to counter the pressures of imperialism by forging extensive ties for economic aid and trade with the Soviet Union and the socialist camp. This was particularly true for Iraq.

Over the last 44 years, the United States has never succeeded in rolling back the gains of Iraq's 1958 revolution and making Iraq a complete puppet as it was before. But that has been the true objective in the last 12 years of war.

In this sense, a war in Iraq is not simply a redivision of markets or spheres of influ-

ence like World War I and World War II, when the imperialist countries fought to redivide the world because they had run out of territory to grab.

The war against Iraq is more like a counter-revolution, a rollback of the social progress achieved by the bourgeois-democratic revolution in the formerly colonized world.

The U.S. government is opposed to the government in Iraq because Baghdad has maintained that its land, labor and resources are not the property of the imperialists. Washington wants to smash any government that seeks to be independent. Whether it's a bourgeois nationalist government as in Iraq, the socialist government in Cuba, or the Chavez government in Venezuela—if you stand up, if you say no, if you serve as an example to others and offer an alternative, you are deemed an enemy by imperialism.

The Bush administration would like to undo the verdict of the national liberation movements that took place in the 20th century, to roll back all the achievements those countries attained while they were pursuing their own development free from their colonial oppressors.

The question that remains is whether the great tide of history—which is to go from slavery and colonization to freedom and liberation—can be turned back by the mechanism of high-tech missiles and precision laser bombs. While we're not for a moment dismissing the possibility of setbacks and reverses, the answer we give is a clear and resounding no.

Humanity's social progress is the consequence of deep social and economic changes that have actually laid the foundation for the complete emancipation of the oppressed working class of the world. First and foremost in that struggle is the achievement of national liberation, independence, self-determination and equality.

The people of Iraq, Venezuela, Korea—all those who are struggling and sacrificing for national liberation—need a resurgence of revolutionary class struggle inside the advanced capitalist and imperialist countries.

This is the underlying reason why the actions planned by the ANSWER coalition, which include the national mobilization on Oct. 26 and other struggles, have gained such worldwide attention, especially since Sept. 11.

Our party and our movement are waging a huge historical struggle. We must dedicate ourselves to recognizing that reality and vigorously working to revive the movement right here in the belly of the beast. □

The Bolsheviks and War Lessons for today's anti-war movement

By Sam Marcy \$5.95

What distinguished the Bolsheviks from the other parties in the Socialist International? Lenin and the Bolsheviks used the crisis of WWI to organize the revolutionary overthrow of the old order in Russia.

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At a critical moment

Anti-war forces gear up for Oct. 26

and begin to melt away the passivity of the working class?

Will it end the demoralization, disintegration and confusion of the revolutionary and progressive forces that have been a consequence of the counter-revolution of the last period? Will it open up a new chapter of the working-class struggle?

We can't wait for conclusive answers to these questions. But we are obliged to act as though the answer is affirmative—and that not only is it coming soon, but that with every moment that passes we are losing time in preparing for it.

We don't have the luxury of being bystanders. That's contrary to everything revolution is about, from a socialist and communist perspective. We're catalysts, agents of revolution, an essential ingredient. We don't have to worry about the workers. They'll come. But the leadership has to be ready. History is full of stories where the masses were ready and the leadership was not.

Of course, our first priority is the war. We have got to awaken the full scope and breadth of anti-war sentiment in this country. That's what the Oct. 26 march is about. Whether people agree with us on every detail is not important. Everybody's got to come out. If they ask us, can we really stop the war before it starts, we've got to say if you come and you each bring 100 or 1,000 or 10,000 people with you, then maybe we can!

We have to revive the socialist movement, because there's been no socialist movement in this country. It's been beaten down. We have to build it up. Who else is going to do it? We have an opportunity to make a socialist and anti-imperialist and anti-war movement that is revolutionary. Why should we wait for someone to lead it in a weaker direction?

We not only want to stop the war; we want to bring the war home where it belongs. □

Special to Workers World

With just one month to go before the Oct. 26 march on Washington, organizing is kicking into high gear across the country. As one of the march's initiators, the International ANSWER coalition—Act Now to Stop War and End Racism—is reaching out to anti-war, peace and civil-rights organizations to build the broadest possible demonstration to “Stop the War on Iraq Before It Starts.”

“Despite the Iraqi government's agreement to accept unconditional UN weapons inspections, the Bush administration and the Pentagon are moving full-speed ahead with their plans to invade Iraq in defiance of the whole world,” said Brian Becker, a spokesperson for ANSWER.

“It is critical at this juncture for all who oppose a new war against Iraq to come together to mobilize the greatest possible expression of anti-war sentiment in the United States,” Becker continued.

“We urge everyone who agrees with the demand to ‘stop the war before it starts’ to join us in making Oct. 26 a massive outpouring the White House can't ignore.”

A West Coast regional demonstration is also planned for Oct. 26 in San Francisco.

A delegation from the International Action Center, one of several groups that make up the ANSWER coalition steering committee, participated in a Sept. 17-19 anti-war conference in Baghdad, Iraq. At the conference, attended by delegates from over 80 countries, they announced plans for the Oct. 26 march and urged

activists in other countries to make it an international day of protest.

So far, demonstrations are planned in Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, south Korea, Spain and more.

More than 2,300 organizations and prominent individuals have endorsed the Oct. 26 mobilization, according to Sarah Sloan of ANSWER. Dozens more add their names every day.

Sloan told Workers World that Oct. 26 sponsors include: Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation; National Lawyers Guild; San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO); 1199/SEIU health care workers union; New York City Labor Against the War; Fellowship of Reconciliation; Student Liberation Action Movement (SLAM); Black Voices for Peace; Not In Our Name/Pledge of Resistance; Los Alamos Study Group; and Dorothy Day Catholic Worker.

Also: former UN Oil for Food Program Director Dr. Hans von Sponeck; former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark; Bishop Thomas Gumbleton of Detroit; the Rev. Graylan Hagler, Plymouth Congregational Church in D.C.; political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal; historian Howard Zinn; Kathy Kelly, Voices in the Wilderness; and Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility.

The ANSWER coalition steering committee includes: Partnership for Civil Justice-Legal Defense and Education Fund, IFCO/Pastors for Peace, Free Palestine Alliance, Mexico Solidarity Network, Nicaragua Network, Korea Truth Commission, International Action Center, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Middle East Children's Alliance,



Brian Becker

Muslim Student Association and Bayan USA-International.

“We are getting phone calls, emails and letters from people all over the country who are planning to bring buses to D.C.,” Sloan added. “But we need more.”

Bev Heistand of the IAC chapter in Buffalo, N.Y., said there is great enthusiasm for the Washington anti-war protest in Western New York. “We've already reserved two buses,” she told WW.

The groups building for the Oct. 26 march are also supporting many anti-war activities around the country leading up to that date. This includes the National Day of Protest for Palestine. Major actions are planned Sept. 28 in San Francisco and Sept. 29 in Chicago, along with other cities.

Organizers will join a Sept. 29 “March Against War” in Washington, D.C., sponsored by several peace and justice organizations. The march is one of many protests planned to coincide with the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in late September and early October. They will also participate in the Oct. 6 “Not In Our Name” rally at New York's Central Park.

For more information—including how to endorse, get a speaker, organize transportation, or make a tax-deductible donation—readers can visit ANSWER's Web site at www.internationalanswer.org or e-mail dc@internationalanswer.org.

In New York, call (212) 633-6646; Washington (202) 332-5757; Chicago (773) 878-0166; Los Angeles (213) 487-2368; San Francisco (415) 821-6545. □

'Weapons inspections' part of U.S. war against Iraq

By Sara Flounders

Workers World Party was trained to be combative in the face of an imperialist war, to stand with whoever is under attack. We make no attempt at conciliation on the fundamental issues—even as we try to build the broadest possible unity in mobilizing opposition to the war. We want to work with all possible forces opposing this war, even when we have differences.

Bush has an enormous problem that he is trying to cover over with the most bellicose threats. He has weapons of mass destruction, but his political support is thin, apprehensive and suspicious. Among the masses of people, there is already deep suspicion.

Wars radicalize whole sections of the population overnight. The ugly face of the capitalist drive for markets is exposed. The veneer of democracy and legality is ripped off.

Why is the mass anti-war demonstration called for Oct. 26 so important? It is an action in coordination with many political forces who want to resist. It is a living coalition that is growing by the hour.

We are committed to its success because the first action of mass opposition to an unfolding war defines the movement. It

shapes what comes after—what role the oppressed and working class organizations will play.

In countless interviews with the mass media, we have helped to cut through the war propaganda with class-conscious politics, explaining who benefits from the war and who pays.

The same political currents that divided the movement against the Iraq war in 1991 and artificially injected the slogan, “Sanctions, not war” are now raising the slogan “Inspections, not war.”

Both of these slogans imply that Washington and Wall Street have legitimate interests, have the right to intervene. They disorient the movement. They put demands and pressure on the oppressed nation under attack and imply that the intransigence is on their part.

Support for sanctions has proven to be support for the right of U.S. imperialism to starve a whole people. It is the most brutal form of war.

Inspections are war, too. They allow an invading army to reach into a country and claim the right to blow up industries, cut off all technology in the name of searching for weapons of mass destruction.

The new U.S. demand for more “muscular inspections” or “coercive inspec-

tions” is a cynical war plan developed by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. It is a plan to include U.S. tanks, jets and armored units with the inspectors. It would impose no-drive zones along with the present no-fly zones. It would cut off whole sections of Iraq, carve it into pieces and destroy at will, all in the name of looking for weapons of mass destruction. Any resistance would be met with bombardment.

Iraq would be required to pay for this occupation with funds from the “Oil for Food” program. It is the end of all sovereignty. This is the plan Bush wants to introduce in a new UN resolution.

Bush has made a declaration of war on the peoples of the entire world. No country, no government can risk military confrontation with the U.S. Even small socialist countries are trying to avoid direct threat. They may have to make onerous political and economic concessions in order to survive.

Our challenge is to help shape the resistance, to expose the lies and to mobilize opposition.

No secret conspiracy can succeed. Only mass mobilization of millions in the streets in determined opposition can stop this war.



Millions who are conscious that their own interests are directly opposed to the war makers. Consciousness is a weapon.

We have cadre who are tenant or union

organizers, who struggle for women's rights, lesbian and gay rights, prisoners' rights, are organizers against the death penalty, student organizers. Everyone who has worked on any campaign has an urgent role to play right now in mobilizing our class.

Our party is trained for a crisis. Even a small group can give leadership at the most difficult junctures. That is what a Leninist party is capable of because it is the concentrated experience of our class, armed with a scientific outlook. It is an organized force that sees clearly the cause of the war crisis and understands what must be done.

We know what this war is and what this new, more aggressive stage of decaying imperialism will mean for our class. We also know how to mobilize, how to get resolutions, buses, make calls, set up outreach.

This is the struggle Workers World Party was born to fight.

Flounders is a Secretariat member of Workers World Party. □

Africa and the Bush doctrine

By Monica Moorehead

Where does Africa fit in the scenario of the insane, aggressive Bush doctrine?

A Sept. 18 New York Times article headlined "U.S. Moves Commandos to East Africa to Pursue Al Qaeda in Yemen" reported that hundreds of U.S. Special Operations forces have been "quietly" stationed at a military base in Djibouti, a former French colony located where the Red Sea intercepts the Gulf of Aden. Along with these Special Forces, there is also a U.S. assault ship, the Belleau Wood, off the Horn of Africa facing Yemen to pursue whoever caused the blast on the USS Cole a few years ago.

The following day the New York Times ran a front page article headlined "In Quietly Courting Africa, U.S. Likes the Dowry." And what might that dowry be? Oil, oil and more oil. This outrageous admission cannot be separated from the growing U.S. military presence in East Africa—which is an integral part of the U.S. military build-up against Iraq—or from Secretary of State Colin Powell's recent trip to Africa, where he visited Angola and Gabon, two oil-producing countries. Nor can it be separated from the recent announcement that Bush plans a major visit to Africa next year.

Ever since Sept. 11, 2001, the Bush administration has sought venues other than the Middle East for getting oil reserves. This is based on the mounting social instability of their puppet regimes, especially Saudi Arabia. And now, with the United States just itching to invade Iraq, home to

'Women have always been in the forefront of national liberation movements for socialism. Today African women are forwarding the class struggle'

10 percent of the world's oil reserves, Washington has once again set its sights on Africa. The aim is not only to get their hands on more oil but to expand their oil-importing markets.

Thirty-three out of the 41 countries categorized by the World Bank as "Heavy Indebted Poor Countries" are in Africa. The total African debt owed to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank is an estimated \$350 billion. One-fourth of Africa's export earnings go to pay off the debt.

There is a debt owed not by the African people but by the banks and imperialism. They owe a long overdue debt to the African people. The \$350 billion, with no political strings attached, should go toward rebuilding Africa—including health care, education, housing, food production, transportation, etc.

African women are playing a leadership role in forwarding the class struggle. Women have been in the forefront of the national liberation movements and the struggle for socialism from the Russian Revolution to the revolutions in Vietnam, Cuba and China—and Africa is no exception.

Nigeria is the world's sixth-largest ex-

porter of oil, the fifth-largest supplier of oil to the United States. Imperialism has intervened many times in "regime changes" in Africa by "Balkanization"—breaking up bigger countries into weaker, smaller states. During the 1960s the United States provoked a civil war that led to a breakaway of the mineral-rich Biafra region.

During this past summer, hundreds of indigent Nigerian women took hostages including management for weeks at Chevron-Texaco oil facilities to demand jobs for their sons, paving of roads, and construction of hospitals and schools. These heroic takeovers showed the importance of direct action and exposed the intolerable conditions that African people, especially women, are forced to endure. Those affected most severely by poverty and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa are women.

On the cover of the Sept. 16 New York Times Magazine there was a picture of a top government official in Rwanda who happens to be the first woman to face charges in an international court for inciting genocide against the Tutsi people in 1994. The Times described this official as the "Minister of Rape." To say that this is

blatant racism and sexism is an understatement. The Nigerian women helped to expose who the real rapists and plunderers of the African peoples and continent are: imperialism, dating back to the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the 16th century and up to the current role of the IMF, World Bank and transnational corporations. The Times Magazine piece was an attempt to incite further imperialist intervention—and to divert attention away from the real issues, which are rooted in the divide-and-conquer legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism that has cost the lives of hundreds of millions of African people.

If we want to show our solidarity with Africa as well as with Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, the Caribbean and elsewhere, we must do everything that we can to defeat imperialism in the belly of the beast—by instilling class consciousness among all sectors of the workers and oppressed, including bringing out as many people as possible on Oct. 26 to stop the war against Iraq. U.S. out of Africa! Cancel the debt! Reparations for the African people!

Moorehead is a member of the Secretariat of Workers World Party. □



Crisis in Buffalo calls for worker unity

Continued from page 4

place at the very moment that the Pentagon has quietly deployed hundreds of Special Operations troops to a military base in East Africa and has positioned an assault ship facing Yemen.

It's part of the campaign to push this country in a direction of war. It's orchestrated to create the impression among the population that they are at war with the Arab world. It prepares the population to get ready for war abroad, not war at home.

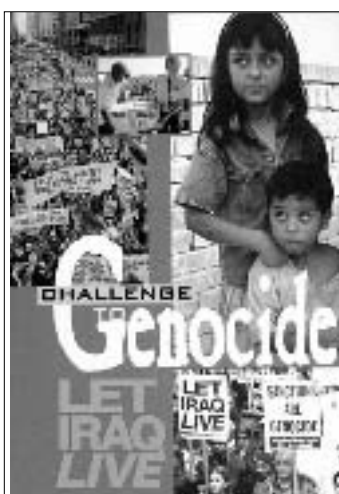
In recent months we've seen tens of thousands demonstrate to stop budget cuts from gutting Buffalo public school education. In March, more than 20,000 protested the plan of the Kaleida health conglomerate to shut down Children's Hospital of Buffalo. And a protest quickly drew together in May when Kaleida tried to shut down a health clinic in a poor community.

The working class is made up of work-

ers from so many countries and nationalities, so many women, so many lesbian and gay, bi and trans people and disabled workers that the potential is there for a more left-wing leadership among the laboring class.

The anti-war forces in Buffalo have an important role to play in helping workers get past this difficult period by demanding no U.S. war and stop the round-ups of Arab, South Asian and Muslim people. It's up to the radicals to give encouragement to beat back this racist assault. Through our coalition work we have helped keep the anti-war movement from being derailed, and keep the anti-imperialist focus. And we are already ordering a second bus for the Oct. 26 demonstration in Washington.

The struggle ahead is not going to be easy. That's why they call it the struggle! But we are ready, willing and able as a party to take on the challenges we're up against. □



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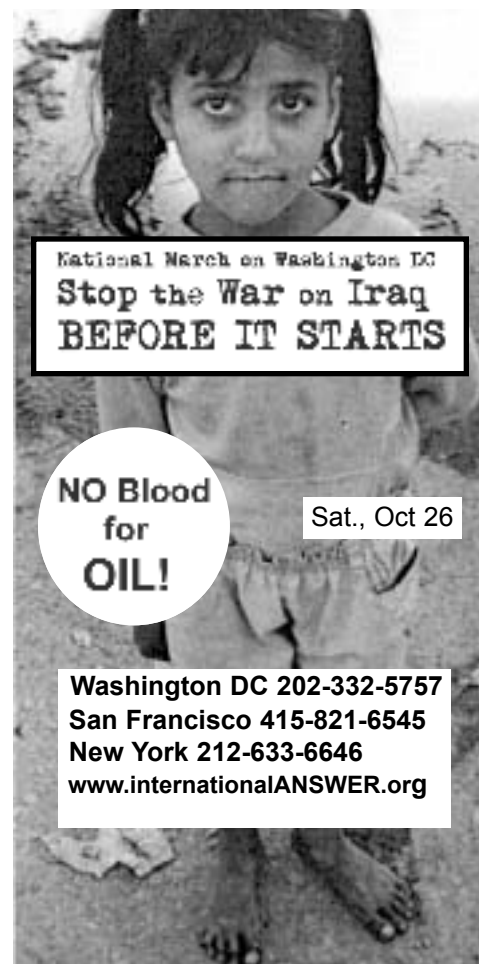
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Bush's National Security Document

What drives U.S. capital to adventurism

By Fred Goldstein

"The National Security Document of the United States," which codifies the Bush doctrine of the New World Order, was leaked to the New York Times on Sept. 19, before it was scheduled to be submitted to Congress. The source of the leak may be a matter of speculation, but it was timed to coincide with the debate over the launching of an unprovoked war of outright aggression against Iraq.

It also came just days after German Minister of Justice Herta and Paul Amirault said to have declared that President George W. Bush was using the Iraq war to divert attention from problems at home, just as Hitler did. This statement caused consternation in Washington. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who won the election despite a barrage of criticism from the U.S., then fired the justice minister as bourgeois commentators everywhere complained how outrageous it was to compare Bush to Adolph Hitler.

To be sure, Hitler was a fascist dictator who came to power in 1933 in a situation of extreme social crisis. The economic depression was leading to a civil war between the workers and the capitalist class in which the question of which class would wield power was emerging.

Hitler consolidated his power, after being named chancellor, by unleashing his storm troopers to carry out the bloody suppression of millions of communists, socialists and progressives and the destruction of trade unions and all forms of working-class organization, using the dual themes of anti-Bolshevism and anti-Semitism.

Today there is no generalized social crisis in the U.S. And even though Bush got into office by stealing the election from the Democrats, he still presides over a political system of imperialist democracy. Yes, it is growing increasingly repressive and reactionary, with stronger incursions by the military and the FBI. And it is becoming more racist against people of Middle Eastern origin.

However, the forms of capitalist democracy—for example, the legal existence of trade unions—still exist for the working class and the oppressed to utilize in their struggles.

In this respect, there is no comparison. But the minister, whatever her politics and whatever her motive, was alluding to a different parallel that bears critical examination.

The problem for German and U.S. capital

Hitler persuaded the German ruling class to let him try to conquer all of Europe and the Soviet Union. His talk of establishing a Third Reich to last for a thousand years had a compelling appeal to the powerful German financiers and industrial capitalists.

Germany's gigantic, modern and highly militarized industrial establishment was capable of vast output, but it was constrained by the other imperialist powers from grabbing the resource-rich colonial spheres of exploitation and plunder.

Their thirst for the kind of super-profits being sucked out of the colonized world by Britain, France, Belgium and Holland was thwarted. In this situation, the prospect of a new economic and social crisis in Germany persuaded the bankers and the bosses to back the expansionist military adventurism of the Nazis.

In addition, they had supreme confidence in the mighty, modern German mil-

itary machine, with its advanced rocket technology, powerful air force and numerous Panzer tank divisions.

The victory of the Nazis in the domestic counter-revolution did not solve German imperialism's crisis. It still had to expand on the world arena.

Promising new areas for exploitation

The Bush administration's National Security Strategy (NSS) document puts considerable stress on the absolute military power of the Pentagon. The New York Times of Sept. 20 wrote that "one of the most striking elements of the new strategy document is its insistence 'that the president has no intention of allowing any foreign power to catch up with the huge lead the United States has opened up since the fall of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago. ... Our forces will be strong enough,' Mr. Bush's document states, 'to dissuade potential adversaries from pursuing a military buildup in hopes of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States.'"

The document is filled with military threats, including the right to first strike. From the point of view of the right-wing military geostrategists in the U.S. establishment, this document reads like their dream come true—even though it is said that Bush "toned it down" in places because it sounded "arrogant." So now it doesn't?

But from the point of view of the ruling class—the industrialists, bankers and monopolists of the transnationals—other portions of this document also read very favorably. They find it ever more appealing as the slow-motion stock market crash proceeds, the phony profit reports and corporate scandals pile up, and capitalist overproduction, deflation and a decline of profits haunt the boardrooms.

The bosses and bankers of course prefer "stable" forms of plunder and exploitation—that work through the automatic processes of corporate operations supplemented by IMF extortion, bribery, industrial spying and so on. They will only opt for adventurism with the prospect of instability when that is considered the lesser evil compared to a protracted decline of profits and the prospect of economic collapse.

Ever since the outbreak of the Asian economic crisis in 1998, Federal Reserve Bank head Alan Greenspan and the financial establishment have been engaged in staving off an economic crisis. In fact, Greenspan has poured hundreds of billions of dollars into the economy through direct bailouts during the 1998-99 period. By lowering interest rates, the Fed delivered trillions of dollars in cheap money to Wall Street.

Every area of economy stifled by surplus

A sweeping survey of business conditions in the Washington Post of Aug. 25 gives a glimpse into what the ruling class has been facing.

Describing the epidemic of capitalist overproduction, or in bourgeois terms of "overcapacity," the Post survey says "it can be found these days in a wide swath: agriculture, autos, advertising, chemicals, computer hardware and software, consulting and financial services, forest products, furniture, mining, retail, steel, textiles, telecommunications, trucking and electric generation, just to mention a few. In almost every case, it is accompanied by prices that are flat or falling. ...

"Flush with cheap money made available by Wall Street, businesses of all sorts



rushed out and expanded their capacity," continued the Post. By now over one quarter of the industrial establishment is lying dormant—and that figure is getting higher every day.

For the first time since the 1930s—the Great Depression—the U.S. economy is facing deflation, which means fewer profits, less surplus value and eventually vast losses for the bosses, along with unemployment and hardship for the working class.

Numerous examples are cited by the Post study. One is the airline industry: Airline payrolls have been cut by 120,000 in 12 months; another 100,000 layoffs are planned. The Post reveals that 500 passenger jets, many of them brand new, sit on the desert in Victorville, Calif. It shows that "the airlines have begun to delay or cancel contracts for new planes and engines from Boeing, Airbus SAS, General Electric, United Technologies Corp. and their vast network of suppliers."

This process is duplicated in every industry, from telecommunications to hotels to the legal profession.

Indeed, the U.S. ruling class has just come through a lengthy period of revolutionizing production and communications—the scientific-technological revolution. Greenspan and others have boasted of the great rise in productivity, which really means the rate of surplus value, or rate of exploitation of the workers. It is precisely the tempestuous growth of the means of production that is putting pressure on capitalism worldwide.

U.S. capital's problem is capitalism itself

Unlike German imperialism in the 1930s, U.S. imperialism is not a power restricted in its sphere of exploitation by any imperialist rivals. On the contrary, the U.S. transnational banks and corporations are all over the world, with production facilities, sales outlets and financial offices.

Yet this new generation of modernized capitalist industry is so powerfully productive that the present state of U.S. imperialist expansion is totally insufficient to make all this vast investment profitable. Like the German imperialists of the 1930s, the U.S. finance capitalists are feeling more and more constrained and more and more amenable to Bush's New World Order adventurism.

The NSS document says that one of its principal aims is "to ignite a new era of growth through free markets and free trade."

Washington will use "our economic engagement with other countries" to promote "pro-growth legal and regulatory policies

Unlike Germany in the 1930s, U.S. imperialism is not restricted in its sphere of exploitation by any imperialist rivals. Nonetheless, its tremendous productive capacity exceeds its present markets. Like the German imperialists of the 1930s, U.S. finance capitalists are feeling more and more constrained and more amenable to Bush's New World Order adventurism

to encourage business investment," "tax policies that improve incentives for work and investment," "strong financial systems that allow capital to be put to its most efficient use," "sound fiscal policies to support business activity," "free trade that provides for new avenues of growth."

The document is laced with references directed straight at the bottom-line profit interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But all this is linked to military and political domination of the world.

The fact that it was leaked in the midst of the debate over Iraq tends to send a message to the ruling class that a war against Iraq is just part of a much broader plan to solve their problems. Yes, the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld-Powell-Wolfowitz group wants to destroy the Iraqi Revolution of 1958. Yes, they want to seize the 110 billion barrels of oil. But they know that the overproduction crisis of a capitalist economy that produces a \$10-trillion GDP cannot be solved merely by conquering Iraq.

Document aimed at China

In fact, the document aims straight at the People's Republic of China, telling the leadership there to stop developing their military and that only capitalist restoration is acceptable to Washington. It denounces the Chinese leaders because they "have not yet made the next series of fundamental choices about the character of their state."

The document makes all manner of arrogant political and social demands—thus holding out the prospect to the ruling class here that somehow the Bush administration will bring about "Lebensraum" in that land of 1.3 billion people. In addition, the document alludes to further opening up India and Russia.

This document was penned by a group rooted in the Reagan and Bush administrations and the period of the collapse of the USSR, the retreat of China, and setbacks for the national liberation struggles. Their thinking has been shaped by counter-revolution, which they regard as permanent.

The fundamental assumption of the entire document is that the masses of the world, including the workers and the oppressed right here at home, will remain in retreat forever. That is what makes the entire document delusory.

Indeed, the Bush group is trying to escape the contradictions of capitalism through adventurism. It is a prescription for reawakening the mass struggle and ultimately undoing the so-called New World Order.

Goldstein is a member of the Secretariat of Workers World Party. □

workers world editorial

Lessons of the German election

With 10 percent of Germans unemployed, Gerhard Schröder had little chance of reelection as German chancellor. Ten points behind in the polls, he made a desperate attempt to stay in office. He decided to allocate government funds to repair flood damage in the East and, even more importantly, he decided to play the peace card and run against Washington.

If this sounds cynical, it might be because we know that the Social Democrat Schröder and his Greens partner Joschka Fischer had led German imperialism into its first major foreign adventure since World War II: the 1999 war on Yugoslavia.

But the peace card was just the antidote for Schröder's failing popularity. German public opinion was overwhelmingly against the U.S. plans to attack Iraq. Schröder and Fischer campaigned heavily against the U.S.'s Iraq policy and promised they would never send German troops into battle there.

Indeed, tens of thousands protested Bush's visit to Berlin earlier this year, and U.S. open planning for an unjustifiable attack on Iraq has since aroused massive resistance in Germany. Unions and anti-globalization groups have joined traditional anti-war groups to organize against German participation in the U.S.-led war.

Enough people changed their votes by Sept. 22 that the "red-green" government of Schröder and Fischer won 306 of the 603 seats in the German parliament, a narrow majority. The rightist candidate Edmund Stoiber wound up

with 295 votes for his coalition of Christian Democrats and Free Democrats.

The Party of Democratic Socialism—which started the election with the best anti-war credentials of the parliamentary parties—wound up another casualty of Schröder's demagoguery. It dropped below the undemocratic 5-percent minimum needed for proportional representation and thus lost all but two of its 37 seats. The PDS's failure in recent congresses to take an absolutely clear anti-war position—as well as its recent participation in service-cutting state governments in the East—had also cost it support from its traditional base in eastern Germany.

The war-mongering Bush administration was more than a little put out by Schröder's election strategy. It got angrier when one of Schröder's cabinet was quoted saying Bush's policy of making war to distract from domestic failures reminded her of Hitler's. For telling this particular truth, she has now been sacked.

Her firing has not yet satisfied the Bush gang, who so far are refusing to welcome German imperialism—at least under the Schröder-Fischer leadership—back into the club.

Many German anti-war activists expect Schröder to quickly reverse his anti-war stand once safely in office. They point out that U.S. planes are still using German bases on their way to the Persian/Arabian Gulf, and a German special unit is still stationed in Kuwait.

They intend to keep the strong anti-war sentiment of the people mobilized and ready to take to the streets. □

WORKERS WORLD NEWSPAPER

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WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

Israeli assaults ignite Palestinian resistance

Continued from page 1

had called to criticize the siege, or even make a ritual call for "restraint," making it clear that the Bush administration had given Israel the green light necessary for an operation with such high stakes.

But over the next 24 hours the political scene shifted dramatically, due to two factors: the mass mobilization of the Palestinian people; and the nearly unanimous international condemnation of the Sharon government's actions.

Political scene shifts

Political demonstrations grew to the thousands and a general strike swept Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The assault on the PA headquarters had a unifying effect.

In Gaza, armed demonstrations included members of Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Arafat's Fatah party and others.

"Despite the different views between us and Mr. Arafat, Mr. Arafat is the president of the Palestinians," said Hamas spokesperson Abdel Aziz Rantisi in an interview. "All Palestinians are united on this issue, because we feel that attacking the president of the Palestinians is attacking all Palestinians."

In Ramallah, thousands of youths marched on Sept. 23 despite the heavy toll of dead and wounded just two days earlier. "No one threatens our president," 18-year-old Ali told the Washington Post. "Our president is elected by us and we protect him."

The foreign ministers of many European, Middle Eastern and other states condemned the siege and demanded that it be halted. So strong was the wave of international condemnation that the U.S. also began issuing statements critical of Israel, but using the mildest possible language.

A more-than-bizarre White House release said that President George W. Bush "views what Israel is doing now as unhelpful to the cause of bringing about reform in Palestinian institutions."

On Sept. 23, after U.S. attempts to derail it failed, the United Nations Security Council passed a resolution that called for:

- Israel to "immediately cease measures in and around Ramallah, including the destruction of Palestinian civilian and security infrastructure."
- The "expeditious withdrawal of Israeli occupying forces" from Palestinian cities toward positions held prior to September 2000.
- The "complete cessation of all acts of violence, including all acts of terror, provo-

cation, incitement and destruction."

To Israel's evident surprise, the U.S., while critical of the wording, did not veto the resolution, abstaining instead. The resolution passed 14 to 1. The U.S. has routinely vetoed Security Council resolutions that criticized Israel.

U.S. posture tied to war plans

The Bush administration's decision not to veto this resolution is very much tied to its plans for a new war against Iraq. A major concern for many in the foreign policy/national security establishment is the widespread anger against the U.S. that permeates the Middle East because of Washington's military, economic and diplomatic support for Israel.

For Washington to have vetoed a resolution against Israel's assault on the Palestinian leadership and people, in the face of global condemnation of Israeli actions, could have ignited a new round of anti-U.S. protests in the region. Such a development could postpone or even undermine Bush's Iraq war plans, as happened in the spring of this year.

Despite the vote at the UN, there is no indication that the latest Security Council resolution condemning Israeli aggression will be enforced, any more than dozens of similar resolutions against Israel over the past three decades.

While the U.S. insists that Iraq must be attacked again if it doesn't "fully comply" with all UN resolutions, it protects Israel from suffering any sanction or penalty for its defiance of the Security Council.

Defying the latest resolution as well, Israel has not pulled back from its siege in Ramallah. And, the night after the UN vote, it launched the biggest military assault in years on densely populated Gaza City. Israeli tanks and helicopters attacked in the middle of the night.

The out-gunned Palestinians put up fierce resistance. Three Palestinian militia members and six civilians were killed. At least 24 people were injured in the attack.

It is especially important that international solidarity with the Palestinian people and their just cause be intensified in the coming period.

A next step will be demonstrations marking the second anniversary of the Al-Aqsa Intifada (uprising) on Sept. 28 in San Francisco and Sept. 29 in Chicago, as well as in many other cities worldwide.

As the international movement to stop a new U.S. war against Iraq grows, it must also raise the banner of justice and self-determination for Palestine. □

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—Los Angeles Times



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WWP conference maps struggle against capitalist war

Continued from page 1

crisis, the resistance to an anti-worker, anti-immigrant and racist offensive, and the building of the party.

Larry Holmes opened the conference by characterizing Bush's National Security Statement, released the day before, as a call to "beat up and bully everyone to get your way."

Holmes had just returned from an International Solidarity Conference in Baghdad, where 170 delegates from 80 countries expressed their solidarity with the Iraqi people. He was part of a delegation from the International Action Center, along with Teresa Gutierrez and Khadouri al-Kaysi.

Holmes pointed out that what the working-class and anti-war movement does inside the United States "has to be decisive. Everybody is depending on what we do."

Will the war crisis and the economic crisis "wake up the working class and melt away its passivity? We are obliged to act as though the answer is affirmative," said Holmes.

'Can U.S. workers stop the war?'

Sara Flounders and Brian Becker, well known as leaders of the anti-war movement in the U.S., both exposed the Bush administration's lack of popular and political support for the invasion of Iraq. Successful resistance to this war might be difficult, they said, but it is possible.

They also explained the important role of Workers World Party in the anti-war movement. Becker related what happened a year ago, following Sept. 11, 2001, and the Bush administration's rapid mobilization for war.

WWP decided quickly to confront the heavy propaganda offensive, and urged that anti-globalization actions set for Sept. 29, 2001, be turned into anti-war actions. This resolve to resist the tide of reaction emboldened courageous anti-war groups and individuals, helping to give birth to the ANSWER coalition.

Flounders compared the current slogan being raised by some in the movement of "inspections, not war" to the slogan raised during the 1991 Gulf War of "sanctions, not war." She pointed out that "inspections ARE war" in another form, as Washington's demands for "aggressive inspections" are really meant to provoke Iraq and create a pretext for an attack.

Flounders prepared party activists to struggle within the movement on this question, at the same time as they build an anti-war demonstration on Oct. 26 that includes all forces opposing the war.

Monica Moorehead discussed the impact of U.S. intervention in Africa, and Johnnie Stevens of New York reported on the importance of the struggle for land in Zimbabwe and the need to support Robert Mugabe's initiative. Preston Wood spoke on the Palestinian struggle on Saturday; the next day Richard Becker of San Francisco presented an update on the urgent situation caused by Israel's most recent aggression against Palestinian President Arafat's compound in Ramallah.

Guest speaker Peta Lindsay, a youth organizer for the anti-war ANSWER Coalition in Washington, D.C., and a first-year student at Howard University, infused the conference with the vitality of this new movement. She has been debating her pro-government political science professor on virtually every question discussed this semester, and has been winning the argument so far as her fellow students are concerned. They're forming groups across the campus to build the demonstration on Oct. 26 against a war on Iraq.

And the working class? Nancy Mitchell from San Francisco described the struggle of the very progressive International Longshore Workers on the West Coast, who are facing a major showdown with "the biggest and sleaziest multinational corporations, hand in hand with the Bush administration," which is threatening to use troops to load ships.

Mitchell described the ILWU's active role in the anti-war struggle. She also promised that "we're going to be with them all the way" should the current labor negotiations turn into an open struggle of over 10,000 workers in 29 ports along the coast.

Dorothea Peacock of Boston described how women are forced to bear the costs of war, and raised the slogans "Not on women's backs!" and "No war, no way. It's time for the bosses to pay!"

Cleveland autoworker Martha Grevatt, a leader of the struggle for lesbian, gay, bi and trans rights in the auto industry, raised the slogan, "Out of the closets, no to the war!"

Andre Powell of Baltimore explained the just struggle for reparations for Africans and the descendants of slaves and how "socialism is the best reparation."

Five discussion groups gave everyone the chance to exchange information about their local work and deepen their understanding of the main political themes of the conference. A main focus of the discussion was how to mobilize for the national demonstrations on Oct. 26.



'Hands off Iraq! Build a Workers World!'

Activists from San Diego and New Jersey also reported a new openness among rank-and-file military personnel to anti-war leafleting. Others reported that troops and reservists had called wanting to resist military service for a war against Iraq.

The reports from these discussion groups to the entire conference made it clear that the members and friends were enthusiastic about reaching out to all sectors of the working class with the anti-war message.

A worldwide front

Fred Goldstein opened the third plenary with a critique of Bush's National Security Statement and its attempt to mobilize the U.S. imperialist ruling class for an arrogant attempt to dominate the world both militarily and economically. Other speakers referred to the Bush doctrine also.

This naturally included discussion about the many areas of the globe where U.S. imperialism is actively intervening, either with military troops, sanctions and/or subversion.

Lydia Bayoneta of Rochester spoke on the U.S. moves to reoccupy the Philippines under the cover of the "war on terror." Rebeca Toledo of New York described the attempts to overthrow the elected government of Hugo Chavez in Venezuela. Alicia Jrapko of San Francisco showed how neo-liberalism and the international banks had brought the Argentine economy to its knees. Berta Joubert of Philadelphia spoke of the continued struggle of the people of Vieques, Puerto Rico, to get the U.S. Navy off their island.

Teresa Gutierrez discussed the consequences of Sept. 11, 2001. Gloria La Riva from San Francisco, who addressed the May Day demonstrators in Havana this year, called for continued defense of the five heroic Cubans held in U.S. prisons for having monitored anti-Cuban terrorist groups in Miami. The prisoners sent messages of solidarity to the WWP conference.

There were also guest speakers: Khadouri al-Kaysi described conditions in Iraq; an exiled trade unionist discussed the situation for the working class in Colombia; and Yoomi Jeong of the Korea Truth Commission reported on the state of the struggle against U.S. troops in south Korea. □

In reports on repression at home, Gloria Verdieu of San Diego spoke of the struggle to free Mumia Abu-Jamal and the growth of the prison-industrial complex. Dianne Mathiowetz of Atlanta and Bev Hiestand of Buffalo described recent frame-ups of individuals from the Arab and Muslim communities in their regions.

A highlight of that session came with the introduction of Haitian immigrant Marcus Jean, a guest speaker from Boston. Union activist Steve Kirschbaum described organizing support for Jean against phony "terrorist threat" charges his boss made to combat his union activity.

The role of the party

The final session, led off by Workers World newspaper editor Deirdre Griswold, discussed the essential role of a revolutionary Marxist party in combating the plans of the imperialist ruling class and defending the workers and oppressed peoples worldwide.

In almost all directing bodies in U.S. capitalist society, from the U.S. Senate to the boards of directors of the major corporations, the composition reflects all the biases and special oppressions built into the imperialist system. Thus aside from a few token representatives who are women or people of color, these bodies are composed of white men, usually with Anglo-Saxon names.

For many observers, perhaps the most impressive thing about the WWP conference was that over 60 percent of the 52 people who took the podium were women, 40 percent were people of color, many were activists in the gay, lesbian, bi and trans struggles, and all were not only eloquent speakers but obviously leading organizers in many areas. It was a promise for the future. □



This conference of workers fighting for a socialist solution to capitalist war, depression and racism reflects the rich diversity of the U.S. working class in nationality, gender and sexual expression.



Los días de Gerardo en la prisión de Lompoc

Por Alicia Jrapko
(miembro del Comité Libertad para los Cinco de San Francisco, California)

Para millones de cubanos, las condiciones en la que viven los Cinco Presos Políticos Cubanos en prisiones norteamericanas, es una de sus mayores preocupaciones. Estos Cinco cubanos quienes entre otras cosas fueron acusados de espionaje, enfrentan sentencias desde 15 años a dos cadenas perpetuas. Desde que fueron sentenciados en Diciembre del 2001, los Cinco fueron trasladados a diferentes prisiones federales alrededor del país. Era obvio que el gobierno de los Estados Unidos pretendió separarlos en un intento de doblegar la fuerza y moral que los Cinco patriotas mostraron en la Corte.

Las condiciones de las diferentes prisiones donde se encuentran los Cinco, varían entre ellas, y reflejan tanto el clima político del estado donde se encuentran, como así también el nivel de seguridad de cada prisión.

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, quien enfrenta la sentencia más severa de dos cadenas perpetuas y 80 meses, se encuentra en la prisión federal de Lompoc en el Sur de California. A la prisión de Lompoc la llaman "The New Rock" (La Nueva Roca) porque fue la prisión que sustituyó a la prisión de Alcatraz que era conocida como "The Rock" (La Roca). Allí son enviados presos que han tenido algún problema de disciplina en otras cárceles, y si por 18 meses sus comportamientos mejoran los asignan a cárceles de menor rigor.

Las celdas son pequeñas ya que Lompoc es una prisión muy antigua. Cada movimiento de los presos está controlado. Por ejemplo para ir al comedor, a la biblioteca o al patio, solo se puede hacer cuando se anuncia un "movimiento" a través de los altoparlantes. Gerardo se levanta a las 5:50 de la mañana al igual que los demás prisioneros. En ese momento, los guardias abren automáticamente las rejas de todas las celdas y de allí los presos pueden salir para las áreas comunes de la unidad. Entre las 6:15 y las 6:30 llaman para el desayuno. Después del desayuno los presos regresan a sus celdas o a las áreas comunes donde alrededor de las 7:45 llaman para ir al trabajo.

En las prisiones federales, es obligatorio trabajar. La compañía que opera todas las producciones de las prisiones se llama "Unicor". En Lompoc hay tres fábricas, una ensambladora de cables, una imprenta y una fabrica de señales. Las tres fábricas se encuentran adentro de la prisión. Conseguir trabajo en las fábricas no es fácil ya que muchos prisioneros quieren trabajar en ellas. Aunque el pago es ínfimo, para muchos presos, el trabajo es la única fuente de ingreso que tienen. Si los prisioneros no consiguen trabajo en la fábrica, son asignados a otras tareas, como limpieza, la cocina o servicios, etc.

En los Estados Unidos, la industria de las prisiones, ocupa el segundo lugar en relación a la cantidad de personas que tra-

bajan en ella. La corporación de prisiones federales genera ganancias exorbitantes. Los presos ganan entre 23 centavos a \$1.15 por hora, mientras que el salario mínimo fuera de las prisiones es de \$5.15 por hora. En estos momentos ese salario ni siquiera se acerca a la cantidad necesaria para satisfacer las necesidades básicas de una familia.

Gerardo gana un promedio de entre 60 y 80 dólares por mes, o sea aproximadamente 50 centavos por hora. El fue asignado a un trabajo de mucha responsabilidad. No es precisamente porque quieran que Gerardo se supere o tenga un mejor bienestar, sino porque se dieron cuenta de que Gerardo poseía un nivel de educación y conocimiento el cual podían utilizar para beneficio de la fábrica. No es sorpresa, ya que Gerardo al igual que los otros 4 patriotas rehenes del imperio, fue educado en Cuba, donde todas las personas tienen acceso a la educación gratuita y de indiscutible calidad, desde el jardín de infantes hasta las escuelas de graduados y post-graduados.

Gerardo trabaja en una computadora, donde se encuentran todas las bases de datos de la fábrica y está a cargo de entrar las órdenes, llevar los récords, redactar las órdenes y pasarlas a producción, cerrar las órdenes cuando son enviadas a los clientes, hacer los informes de ventas y los estatus de órdenes, y además, él responde a cualquier solicitud de datos.

Debido a la difusión del caso dentro y fuera de los Estados Unidos, Gerardo recibe entre 5 a 10 cartas por día procedentes de todas partes del mundo y al igual que los otros 4 patriotas Cubanos, se ha ganado el corazón de miles de personas amantes de la paz y la justicia. Su mayor preocupación es no tener suficiente tiempo para contestar todas esas cartas pero trata de responder a todas las personas que le escriben, aunque la respuesta tenga que demorar en llegarles. Su deseo es expresar su agradecimiento por todo el apoyo y buenos augurios que le llegan de todas partes, y a su vez disculparse por no tener el tiempo suficiente para contestar con prontitud cada una de las cartas que recibe diariamente. Para él, las cartas de solidaridad son muy alentadoras y lo estimula saber que hay tanta gente que lo apoya.

Lo que es evidente en Gerardo, es su habilidad para permanecer fuerte y comprometido con la lucha para defender a su pueblo y a pesar de las adversidades, conserva su gran sentido del humor. Gerardo no tiene ninguna duda de que un día será libre y podrá regresar a su amada patria.

Desde hace dos meses, Gerardo está solo en su celda ya que su "celly" como le llaman allí a un compañero de celda fue enviado a otra prisión. Para él, ésta es una gran ventaja, ya que al estar solo, esta un poco más cómodo y además puede adornar la celda a su gusto. Él tiene en su celda dos murales que consiguió con mucha persis-



WW PHOTO: ALICIA JRAPKO



De izquierda a derecha:
Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez



Ramón Labañino,
René González.

cuentran en prisión con Gerardo, consideran que haber salido de Cuba ha sido el error más grande de sus vidas y algunos se declaran abiertamente revolucionarios. Muchos de ellos le han pedido a Gerardo fotografiarse con ellos y han enviado las fotografías a sus familiares en Cuba. Otros han compartido con él las cartas que reciben de sus familiares donde

les piden que cuiden a Gerardo, y que sean solidarios con él.

Pero el caso de Gerardo al igual que el caso de los otros cuatro patriotas Cubanos, también es conocido por otros presos. Varios han leído los alegatos y algunos le han pedido que les regale un libro firmado por él. Hay varios presos negros que regularmente le piden prestado algunos de los materiales en ingles que él recibe, para leerlos. Muchos de ellos siguen muy de cerca el caso de Mumia Abu-Jamal y varios le han expresado a Gerardo su admiración por Fidel.

Gerardo tiene una radio y su mayor anhelo es sintonizar una radio proveniente de su patria. Como buen cubano, acostumbrado a resolver cualquier problema, ha hecho varios intentos por sintonizar Radio Habana Cuba. Después de varios intentos, logró sintonizar la BBC de Londres donde a cierta hora puede escuchar un servicio en español y además, después del servicio en español Gerardo logra sintonizar RHC en Ingles. Aunque con muy baja frecuencia, y casi sin poder escuchar lo que dicen en la radio, sin embargo puedo alegrar su corazón escuchando música y sobre todo como bien dice Gerardo, se "carga las baterías" con el Himno.

A diferencia de otros prisioneros en los Estados Unidos, Gerardo, Ramón, René, Fernando, y Antonio, son los únicos prisioneros políticos que tienen el apoyo incondicional de todo su pueblo. Ellos adentro de prisiones norteamericanas y la inmensa mayoría del pueblo cubano libran la misma batalla. La batalla por la libre autodeterminación de ese pueblo heroico y el derecho de defenderse en contra de todo tipo de agresiones.

Ellos mas temprano que tarde regresarán a su patria. □

tencia, adornados con fotos de Fidel, el Che, Mandela, imágenes del pueblo cubano en las tribunas abiertas y marchas, dibujos que le enviaron los pioneros y fotos de manifestaciones de los grupos de solidaridad.

En lo posible, uno de los dos días del fin de semana, trata de salir al patio después del almuerzo para hacer ejercicio y tomar sol y el otro día del fin de semana lo aprovecha para lavar y secar su ropa, limpiar su celda y continuar con la correspondencia acumulada. Los sábados son especiales para él ya que en lo posible es cuando trata de llamar a Cuba y hablar con sus seres queridos.

En la prisión de Lompoc hay alrededor de 20 cubanos y en la unidad donde está Gerardo, son 6 incluyéndolo a él. Todos son Marielitos y aunque muchos de ellos ya han cumplido sus sentencias, están retenidos por Inmigración, por tiempo indefinido. Algunos de ellos llevan desde diez, quince y hasta veinte años presos. Esta situación ha sido creada por el cruel e inhumano bloqueo económico impuesto por los Estados Unidos en contra de Cuba desde hace 43 años, y debido a ello, no existe tratado de extradición entre ambos países. La situación de los cubanos detenidos indefinidamente no es solo un fenómeno de la prisión de Lompoc; lamentablemente son miles y se encuentran en todas las prisiones del país.

Muchos de los cubanos que están en la prisión con Gerardo, no tienen ningún contacto con sus familiares y él, en una muestra de solidaridad y buenos sentimientos, ha ayudado a algunos de ellos a localizar a sus familiares en Cuba. Gerardo se hizo algo conocido debido a este noble gesto y hasta presos norteamericanos le han pedido que los ayude a localizar a sus familiares. Muchos de los Cubanos que se en-