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Want to choose their own leader

Palestinians reject Bush's dictates

Richard Becker

"Bush urges Palestinians to reject Arafat," read the headline in the Boston Globe. "Mr. Arafat has failed as a leader," proclaimed the U.S. president, standing next to Jordan's King Abdullah at Camp David, Md., on Sept. 18. A startlingly arrogant statement even by the standards of the Connecticut cowboy, whose administration's policies, especially those related to Iraq and Palestine, are disintegrating along with his poll numbers.

The puppet monarch of Jordan, whose kingdom's population is more than 60 percent Palestinian, must have shuddered. Imperious demands that the Palestinians choose new leaders acceptable to Washington—by clear implication, like the compliant king—don't play very well in the Middle East these days.

The next day, the United Nations General Assembly voted 133 to 4 for a resolution that called for Israel to halt its threats to kill or expel Palestine National Authority (PNA) president Yasser Arafat. The "no" votes were cast by the U.S., Israel, and two small U.S. dependencies, Micronesia and the Marshall Islands.

The U.S. could not veto this resolution, as it had done with a similar measure in the Security Council a few days earlier that sparked anger in Arab and Islamic countries. The actions at the UN came in response to a vote by the Israeli cabinet to "remove," possibly by assassination, the Palestinian leader, who has been

confined in his largely destroyed compound, the Muqata, in Ramallah.

Huge demonstrations all over the West Bank and Gaza, and as far away as Jakarta, Indonesia, protested the Israeli threat. Tens of thousands surrounded the Muqata itself, promising to fight to the death against an Israeli attack.

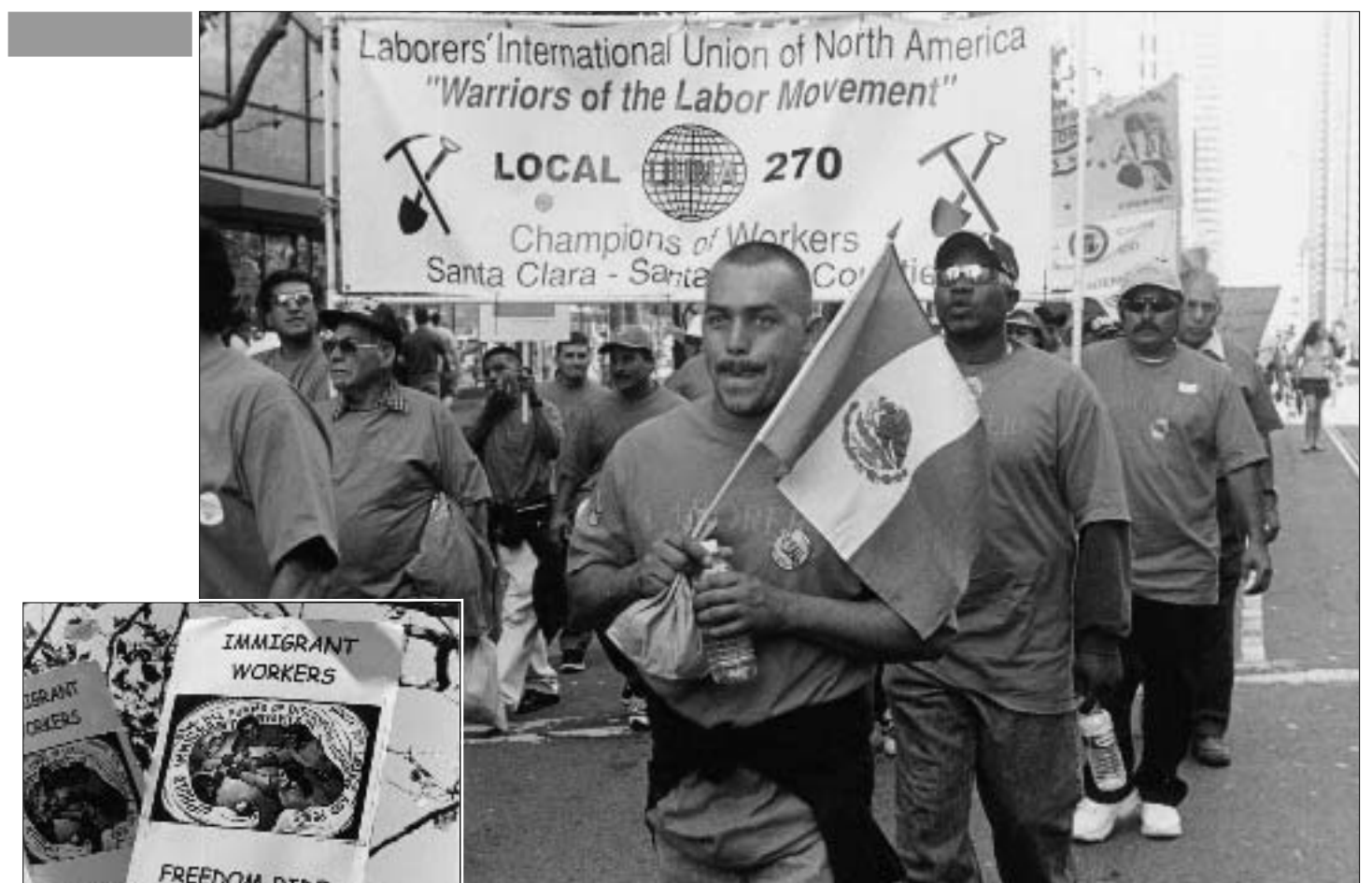
Why has the U.S. adopted a stance of extreme hostility toward Arafat over the past two years? After all, from 1993 until early 2001, he was the Palestinian representative in the U.S.-sponsored negotiations known as the Oslo "peace process." During

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that time, the PNA president was invited to the White House, met with leading U.S. officials including the president, and was generally treated as the Palestinian "voice of moderation."

The Oslo process came to an end in 2000—for reasons that have been greatly distorted in the corporate media—when weeks of talks at Camp David between the U.S., Israel and the PNA broke off. The Israelis had reneged on every stage of the Oslo Accord, particularly involving the turnover of territory to the PNA. After seven years, Palestinians had tenuous control of only 20 percent of the West Bank and Gaza, which together comprise

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Freedom Rides begin for immigrant rights

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Millions of immigrant workers toil at low-wage jobs without benefits in the U.S. Now they are saying "Enough!" Caravans are leaving from all over the country for a huge rally in New York on Oct. 4. Here, caravan gets big send-off in San Francisco.

WW PHOTOS: BILL HACKWELL

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A tribute to Safiya Bukhari

By Mumia Abu-Jamal



She had not long passed the half-century mark when her great and powerful heart gave out. Fifty-three years young, with a spirit that was ageless in its love and courage, Sister Safiya Asya Bukhari has returned to the ancestors.

She was many things to many people: daughter, mother, grandmother; teacher, disciplinarian, soldier and comrade; former Black Panther, former combatant in the Black Liberation Army, thinker, truth-teller, activist and organizer. These were some of the many things she did in her short yet extraordinary life. These things, while undoubtedly significant, do not really begin to tell those who did not know her who she really was.

For many, especially many of the nameless and unknown soldiers from various movements still behind bars, she was a lifeline. They knew that she would do whatever was necessary to defend and, if possible, liberate them. They knew that her great, loving Black heart would not turn away from them, as they dwelled in bondage. She worked tirelessly for Black political prisoners, like the New York 3, like Mutulu Shakur, and others whose names may be little more than distant memories.

She was herself a former political prisoner, and spent almost a decade in the dungeons of Virginia, and also spent several years on that state's notorious death row. When she couldn't get the medical treatment that she knew she deserved, she escaped to find the life-saving treatment that Virginia denied her. But like her spiritual grandmother, Harriet Tubman, freedom was not hers alone. She worked long and strong for the liberation of her beloved Black people.

What may surprise many, however, was her original political orientation. She came from a deeply religious, and—she would hate the word—conservative family. As a bourgeois sorority sister, she came to Harlem to study the needs of the Black poor while completing her studies. She thought people were poor because they were too lazy to work. What she saw in Harlem, the poverty and hopelessness of the people, as well as the deceit of the cops, radicalized her, and led her to the gates of the Harlem Black Panther Party. She, who was once a conservative, became a revolutionary. And she never, ever stopped!

... Remember her, by making her dream reality!

Lioness for liberation—presente!



PHOTOS: PAT CHIN AND G. DUNKEL

Safiya Bukhari (top) speaking at Madison Square Garden at a massive support rally for Mumia Abu-Jamal in May 2000.

Visit www.Millions4Mumia.org

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LOS ANGELES

Sun., Sept. 28
No to colonialism in Iraq, Palestine, and everywhere. Gather at noon Hollywood & Vine. March to Hollywood and Highland for 2 p.m. rally.

Every Friday
Workers World Party weekly meetings at 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 7. At 422 S. Western. Phone (213) 500-0529 for info.

NEW YORK

Friday, Oct. 3
Workers World Party weekly meeting. Topic: "Should the movement look to the UN to counter the U.S.?" 7 p.m. (Dinner at 6:30) 55 W. 17th St., 5th fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sun., Sept. 28
No to colonialism in Iraq, Palestine, and everywhere. At Dolores Park at noon, march to Civic Center for 2 p.m.

Every Sunday
Workers World Party weekly meetings. These educational meetings cover current events as well as struggles of peoples from all over the world. 5 p.m. At 2489 Mission St, room 28. For info (415) 826-4828.

SAN DIEGO

Sat., Sept. 27
No to colonialism in Iraq, Palestine, and everywhere. Gather at noon on the University Avenue bridge over I-15 in City Heights. March at 1 p.m.

Workers World

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
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Editor: Deirdre Griswold;
Technical Editor: Lal Roohk;
Managing Editors: Greg Butterfield, John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson;
West Coast Editors: Richard Becker, Gloria La Riva;
Contributing Editors: Joyce Chediak, Pat Chin, Naomi Cohen, Shelley Ettinger, Teresa Gutierrez;
Technical Staff: John Beacham, Joe Delaplaine, Rebecca Finkel, Hank Sambach;
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Carlos Vargas;
Internet: Janet Mayes

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National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, Ga. 30301
(404) 235-5704

Baltimore 426 E. 31 St.,
Baltimore, Md. 21218
(410) 235-7040
baltimore@workers.org

Boston 31 Germania St.,
Boston, Mass. 02130
(Enter at 284 Amory St.)
(617) 983-3835;
Fax (617) 983-3836
boston@workers.org

Buffalo, N.Y.
P.O. Box 1204
Buffalo NY 14213
(716) 857-2112
buffalo@workers.org

Chicago P.O. Box 06178,
Wacker Drive Station,
Chicago, Ill. 60606
(773) 381-5839;
Fax (773) 761-9330;
chicago@workers.org

Cleveland
P.O. Box 5963
Cleveland, OH 44101
phone (216) 531-4004
cleveland@workers.org

Detroit
5920 Second Ave.,
Detroit, Mich. 48202
(313) 831-0750;
detroit@workers.org

Houston
P.O. Box 130322,
Houston, Texas
77219 (713) 861-5965
houston@workers.org

Los Angeles
269 S. Western Ave.,
Room 110,
Los Angeles, Calif. 90004
(213) 500-0529
la@workers.org

Philadelphia
P.O. Box 9202,
Philadelphia, Pa. 19139
(610) 352-3625;
phila@workers.org

Richmond, Va.
P.O. Box 14602,
Richmond, Va. 23221
richmond@workers.org

Rochester, N.Y.
2117 Buffalo Rd., PMB.
303, Rochester, N.Y. 14624
(716) 436-6458;

San Diego, Calif.
3930 Oregon St., Suite 230
San Diego, Calif. 92104
(619) 692-4496

San Francisco
2489 Mission St.
Rm. 28,
San Francisco,
Calif. 94110
(415) 826-4828;
fax (415) 821-5782;
sf@workers.org

Seattle
1218 E. Cherry #201,
Seattle, Wash. 98122
(206) 325-0085;
seattle@workers.org

State College, Pa.
100 Grandview Rd.,
State College,
Pa. 16801
(814) 237-8695

Washington, D.C.
P.O. Box 57300,
Washington, DC 20037,
dc@workers.org

Grassroots coalition tells Bush

'We don't want your convention'

By Monica Moorehead
New York

The warmongering Bush administration and its looting corporate supporters arrogantly think they can waltz into New York, a city with a majority of immigrants and people of color, to hold their 2004 Republican convention without any organized opposition.

A newly formed coalition of elected officials, union, anti-war and community activists is demanding that they reconsider this decision.

At a media conference held in City Hall on Sept. 23, the "Grassroots Protest of Bush's Convention" working group announced a citywide campaign to force the Republican convention out of New York. At the same time and location, billionaire New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg was hosting another media conference to announce the Republican convention. Bloomberg, just days earlier, had declared war on the city unions, stating that they dare not ask for wage increases or better benefits from his administration.

The convention is scheduled to begin on Aug. 30, 2004, at Madison Square Garden and will attract the likes of such criminals as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, John Ashcroft and Colin Powell, along with George W. Bush.

Participants at the anti-Bush press conference included Brooklyn City Council member Charles Barron, chairperson of the working group; Rev. Herbert Daughtry, pastor, Brooklyn's House of the



WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Speakers at press conference: Mike Gimbel, Larry Holmes, Herbert Daughtry, Charles Barron (holding petition) and Nellie Bailey. Bill Perkins is behind Barron.

Lord church; Nellie Bailey, Harlem Tenants Association; Larry Holmes, International ANSWER coalition; Bill Perkins, deputy majority leader, New York City Council; Uma Kutwal, former president of AFSCME Local 375; Teresa Gutierrez and Sara Flounders, co-directors of the International Action Center; Tim Eubanks of Cities for Peace; and Mike Gimbel, a delegate to the New York Central Labor Council.

The aims and objectives of this campaign are explained in a petition to be circulated in every neighborhood and borough. Headlined "NYC to George Bush: We Don't Want Your Convention! Send Us Jobs Instead!" the petition goes on:

"We the undersigned residents of NYC call upon President Bush to move the Republican convention ... and hold it somewhere else. We believe that it is dishonest, unfair and oppressive for you to impose a convention on the people of this city ... and are vehemently opposed to your policies at home and abroad. ... Instead of exploiting the 9/11 tragedy for your own political purposes, we would rather you rescind the enormous fortune you have handed to the wealthy through tax breaks and send NYC its share of that badly needed revenue. ... Bring our troops home. Restore the cuts to all of our vital services and programs that your policies have mandated. Send our city the funds we

need to deal with the growing crises of joblessness and poverty."

The speakers announced plans to forge a massive grassroots campaign by reaching out to millions of New Yorkers, citizens and non-citizens, in communities and barrios that have been impacted by rent hikes, layoffs, fare and tuition hikes, police repression, malnourishment, lack of health care and other cutbacks.

The year-long popular campaign will include organizing meetings, marches, work stoppages, boycotts, civil disobedience and much more around a group of demands that is independent of both capitalist parties, Democratic and Republican. □

SAN FRANCISCO

Father speaks out in death of Marine

By Bill Hackwell
San Francisco

Fernando Suarez del Solar is a man who measures his words. He does not appear particularly comfortable speaking in front of microphones and television cameras. But since March 27 that is what he has been doing. On Sept. 19, after traveling throughout Northern California speaking to community groups and students, he told his story to a meeting here of the Act Now to Stop War and End Racism coalition.

It was on March 27 that his son, Jesus Alberto del Solar Navarro, a Marine with Delta Company, was killed in Iraq near the Kuwaiti border. Since then the lives of his family members have completely changed.

When three Marine officers came to the family home in Escondido, Calif., with an official "We regret to inform you" letter, del Solar wanted to know what had happened, to get some closure.

"They lied to me," he says. "To this day they won't return my calls or give me straight answers about how my son died."

The Marines told del Solar that his son had been shot in the head in battle with Iraqi forces. Then, in a Marine ceremony for Jesus, aired on ABC, it was announced that he had died when he stepped on a cluster bomb.

Weeks later a soldier who had been there came to their house and told them that Jesus had been the lead scout in the unit. After the cluster bomb went off, the

commander told them to keep moving, there was nothing they could do. It took three hours for a helicopter to get to him. By that time the 20-year-old had bled to death in the sand.

He left behind a wife and infant son.

The military offered a free burial—but in a military cemetery. This was not in keeping with Mexican traditions of burying the dead close to the family. The funeral cost over \$4,000, which the military refused to pay.

All that changed, however, when the soldier's father started to speak out and money started to flood in from all over the world. The military said they would pay for the funeral if del Solar would stop speaking out against the war. In the end, the family took the money, but the father to this day continues to speak out against military recruitment and the war.

Fernando Suarez del Solar had moved his family from Tijuana, Mexico, in the early 1990s. Like thousands of other Mexican immigrants, they hoped to escape poverty and find opportunity. Before he was 18, Jesus started to get phone calls and literature from military recruiters, urging him to join for the adventure.

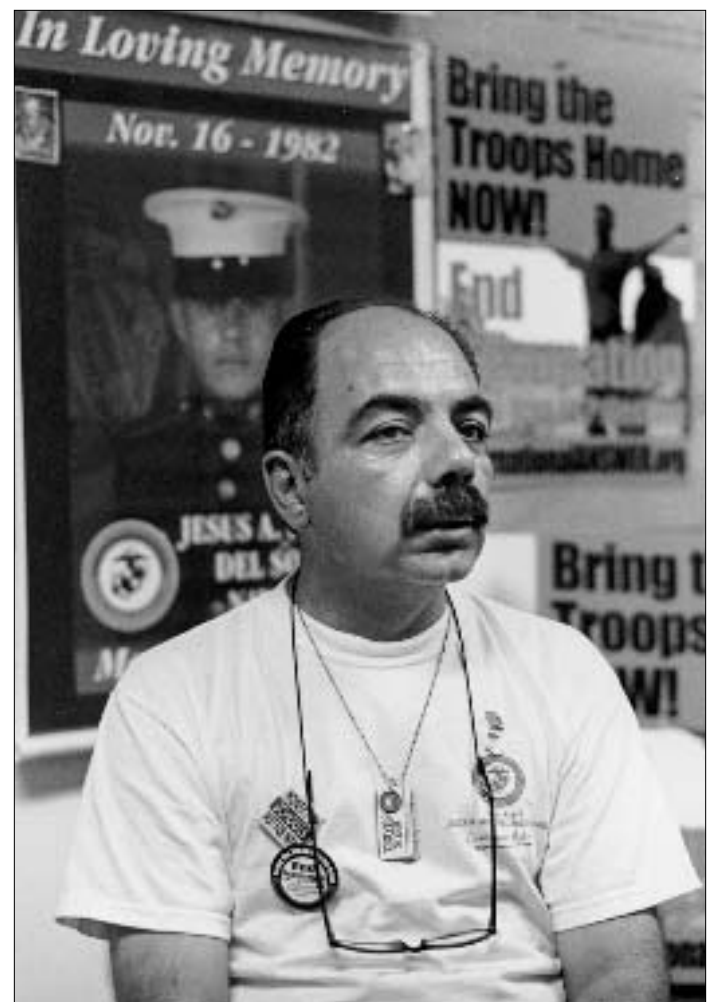
"It was relentless. It wasn't like they were lying, they just weren't telling him the truth," his father recalls. Jesus joined the Marines against his father's advice. His letters from boot camp told how racist the drill instructors were. "They would

constantly slander his Mexican heritage and this would make Jesus furious."

The Latino and Black soldiers constantly had to prove themselves by doing extra push-ups and early-morning duty. On Feb. 5, the day Jesus left for Iraq, he told his father to make sure that none of his cousins joined the military. "It's not for us."

Jesus, like 35,000 other immigrants with green card status who are fighting in Iraq, hoped to get U.S. citizenship by going to war. After his death he was awarded U.S. citizenship posthumously. His father didn't want to accept it. "It meant nothing to us and was an insult. It was like Bush saying, oh poor little boy, he died in my war, give him this." Later on, the family decided to accept the citizenship for Jesus's wife and son. "They change the immigration rules all the time. For us, you never know what can happen or when you might get deported. We felt this might be some protection for them."

What would this grieving father tell



WW PHOTO: BILL HACKWELL

Fernando Suarez del Solar

President Bush? "My son went to Iraq not for the reasons you told him but to watch over the oil fields. I would like to know, what is the magic number? How many deaths do you need to fill the tank in your car? How many gallons of oil are equal to the blood being spilled there by the American people? The people need to know the truth about this war.

"Send your two daughters to the front lines in Iraq, and see what they tell you when they get back." □

Labor siege wrests contract from Yale

By Leslie Feinberg

Yale clerical, maintenance and technical union workers wrested a contract from their upper-crust bosses on Sept. 18. The agreement was won in the streets of New Haven by the mobilization and determination of rank-and-file workers and their supporters.

The confrontation was characterized as blue collar vs. blue bloods. New Haven, with its large oppressed and impoverished workforce, is a company town ruled by the iron hand of Yale University—the powerful bastion of capitalist old-money education. In this town-and-gown conflict, Yale's management has provoked nine labor strikes since 1968—more than any other university.

The last contract for members of locals 34 and 35 of HERE—the hotel and restaurant employees international union—expired in January 2002. It was extended monthly until last March. Two strikes, bold actions, more than 200 arrests and a huge rally followed in the tempestuous months of negotiations with the arrogant and obdurate ivy-league bosses.

Locals 34 and 35 overwhelmingly ratified the new contract. It boosts wages each year 4 percent to 5 percent for Local 34 workers and 3 percent to 4 percent for Local 35 members. And it provides two-thirds of retroactive wages lost in the last 19 months. Workers hadn't had a raise since February 2001.

The new contract also reportedly hikes the pension formula by 35 percent. Unionized Yale workers who retired last year after 20 or more years of labor only received an annual pension of \$7,452. (New York Times, Sept. 20)

"The key issue had always been the pensions," John W. Wilhelm, international president of HERE, stressed. Close to a quarter of the union locals' 4,000 members are slated to retire before 2010.

In-your-face militancy

As supporters, including a large group of Yale students, cheered at a Sept. 18 media conference at City Hall to announce the settlement, Wilhelm said, "We are very grateful to those who have been helpful and supportive through all of this—we are mindful of our obligations to

the people in this community."

For the last 19 months, workers battling for a contract and those fighting for union recognition had demonstrated the power of unity and militant action.

In February, some 500 union workers marched to the doorstep of Yale University President Richard C. Levin's home to demand a contract.

Locals 34 and 35 held a five-day walk-out in March, joined by graduate employees struggling for union recognition. And they closed ranks with some 150 unorganized food service workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital.

In an extraordinary expression of solidarity, locals 34 and 35 were able to keep a demand on the negotiating table until August that Yale bosses recognize the demand for unions by hospital workers and graduate employees. (yaledailynews.com)

Thousands of Yale workers walked off their jobs on Aug. 27.

Fearing in-your-face disruptions, university heads canceled the annual convocation, the traditional frosh assembly and address by Levin.

When fall semester began, the strike by Yale's clerical, dining hall, janitorial and repair workers shut down dining halls and many departmental offices.

Unionists helped more than 110 professors and teaching assistants find alternative spaces for classes off campus in theaters, municipal buildings and churches so some 5,000 students would not have to



WW PHOTOS



Thousands of Yale workers and supporters shut down New Haven on Sept. 13.

cross picket lines. Those who tried to hold classes on campus found they couldn't get away from the strike: Workers chanted outside the classrooms with bullhorns. (Newsday, Sept. 23)

Fist of solidarity

Prominent student organizations showed support for the labor struggle. Organizers of the Black Solidarity Conference moved their event, held annually in October, to January. Scheduled speakers canceled or postponed events, including Alice Walker, prominent Black feminist author of "The Color Purple." (The Yale Herald, Sept. 19)

During the Sept. 1 Labor Day march in New Haven, more than 30 protesters were arrested, including civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, after strikers and supporters blocked traffic.

Strikers showed up at Levin's home again on Sept. 4. This time they turned up the volume on their demand with drumming and loud chants.

And finally, in a magnificent show of solidarity, rank-and-file unionists and students from across the Northeast traveled to Connecticut to demonstrate with Yale's workers on Sept. 13. That day, 10,000 strikers and their supporters shut down downtown New Haven. Some 153 braved arrests, including five presidents of major unions.

This stormy struggle that drew support both deep and wide drove anti-union Yale bosses back to the table to sign on the dotted line.

It ain't over till it's over

Given Yale's notorious reputation for

anti-worker enmity, there's no reason to think that this eight-year contract alone will usher in an era of "labor peace."

The struggle is not resolved for the Graduate Employees Student Organization, which has fought to unionize more than 2,000 graduate teaching and research assistants. Yale has refused to streamline procedures for union recognition. (New York Times, Sept. 19)

And the 150 food service workers at Yale-New Haven Hospital, who were out on strike with locals 34 and 35, have returned to work without a contract.

The Service Employees International Union 1199 NE/SEIU took out a full-page New York Times ad on Sept. 22 about that struggle, entitled "There's a sickness at Yale-New Haven Hospital and it's spreading." The article congratulated Yale University workers. "But food service workers," the union ad continued, "voted to reject the hospital's latest offer because it was pitifully below what was won by the university workers."

Yale management claims that the university and hospital are not formally connected. However, there would be no Yale-New Haven Hospital if there were no Yale University.

The ad in support of the hospital workers also expresses active solidarity with patients who lack insurance—part of a health-care-delivery crisis sweeping the United States. (www.ctneweconomy.org)

However, the hospital and graduate student workers have emerged from the front lines of the recent labor battles in a stronger position, fortified by bonds of good will and the unity of workers who laid siege to the ivory tower of their bosses. □

SAN FRANCISCO

Immigrant workers begin Freedom Ride

By Bill Hackwell
San Francisco

In mid-September, following in the footsteps of the Freedom Riders of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, some 900 immigrant workers from nine cities began their bus journey to Washington, D.C. These modern-day Freedom Riders are in a struggle to bring national attention to the discriminatory and racist nature of immigration policies in the United States.

The various routes will converge in Washington on Oct. 1. Then the Freedom Riders will head for Queens, N.Y., for a mass rally on Oct. 4.

The Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride is pushing for an enforced immigration policy that would legalize all immigrant workers in the country; allow immigrant workers humane procedures to reunite with their families, improve work-place conditions and protect civil rights for all.

The Freedom Riders will hold rallies and meetings in over 100 communities in

42 states to build support for immigrant rights. The stops include one in Tucson, Ariz., to commemorate the deaths in the desert of hundreds of people from Mexico and other Latin American countries who try to get to the United States for work. Another stop will be in Anniston, Ala., where a civil rights Freedom Riders bus was forced off the road and firebombed in 1961.

It should be remembered that those Freedom Riders were instrumental in putting an end to Jim Crow practices in the South. At that time, Jim Crow was in force despite a Supreme Court ruling that segregation in bus terminals and restaurants was illegal.

On Sept. 20 in San Francisco, several thousand people from 76 community organizations and 69 unions marched to support the Freedom Riders. They walked down Market Street from Yerba Buena Gardens to Civic Center Plaza for a send-off rally. People carried signs written in Arabic, Spanish, Cantonese, Tagalog, Farsi and English, which

reflected the diverse, multinational character of the work force.

Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers, was at the front of the march. She commented on the significance of the Freedom Ride, saying: "The new civil rights movement is the struggle of the immigrant workers for equality. Immigrant workers riding on these buses bring us their personal stories of discrimination and they are inviting us to join them in this historical movement to bring about legalization of their contribution, many times in the lowest-paying jobs in the worst conditions." □



WW PHOTO BILL HACKWELL

Gap between rich and poor becomes chasm

By Greg Butterfield

Millions of workers in the United States are suffering from want and desperation stemming from prolonged unemployment and the longest period of sustained job cuts since the Great Depression.

But for the super-rich who reside in Manhattan penthouses, mansions outside Detroit and gated communities in California, it's a different story.

Forbes magazine's annual list of the 400 richest people in the U.S., released Sept. 18, showed that the economy is improving, at least for them. The total net worth of the super-rich rose 10 percent this year, to \$955 billion.

Just how much richer did they get?

Microsoft Chair Bill Gates—No. 1 on the Forbes list—saw his personal wealth swell from \$3 billion to \$46 billion in the space of a single year.

Other high-tech bosses, including the heads of Yahoo, Amazon.com, Oracle and Dell, were big winners.

Warren Buffett must be sad. The stock-market robber baron was number two on the list, but his wealth stayed about the same as last year—a mere \$36 billion.

Five members of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton's family tied at number four, each with a net worth of \$20.5 billion.

Meanwhile, reported the Census Bureau in September, an additional 1.3 million people fell into poverty last year, while some 3.3 million jobs have been permanently lost since 2001, according to the Economic Policy Institute.

The Forbes list is deceptive and distorted, focused as it is on an individual's net worth instead of on the monopoly corporations and banks, the real forces that

dominate the U.S. economy.

This individual focus also draws attention away from powerful old-money capitalist families like the Rockefellers and DuPonts, whose fortunes have been passed down through generations of heirs.

But it does shed light on the growing gap between rich and poor, and how the former are grabbing up the spoils at a time when war and occupation, cutbacks in vital services, and high unemployment are choking working-class families.

Masters of war: Halliburton, etc.

The New York Times confessed Sept. 16 that "The slumping American economy has proved to be a boon to the Army's efforts to recruit the 100,000 enlisted soldiers it says it needs this year to fill its active duty and reserve ranks, senior Army officials say, so far relieving concerns that the turmoil in Iraq could crimp new enlistments."

Desperation has been the military's main recruitment tool for nearly 30 years. Millions of youths, including a disproportionate number of Black, Latino/a, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, have succumbed to this economic draft after being promised job training and money for education. In reality, they become cannon fodder, defending the transnational interests of the same corporations that exploit their families at home.

While the Pentagon may be exaggerating its recruitment success, the fact that the economic draft is still working demonstrates the severity of the jobs crisis and its impact on millions of poor and working class families. After all, U.S. troops are dying every day in Iraq as resistance to U.S. occupation grows. And tours

of duty have been indefinitely extended for many GIs.

But if economic desperation drives youth here to join an occupying army, it is greed that drives the U.S. government/Pentagon/big business axis.

On Aug. 28, the Washington Post reported that "Halliburton, the company formerly headed by Vice President Dick Cheney, has won contracts worth more than \$1.7 billion out of Operation Iraqi Freedom and stands to make hundreds of millions more under a no-bid contract awarded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, according to newly available documents."

"The size and scope of the government contracts awarded to Halliburton in connection with the war in Iraq are significantly greater than previously disclosed," the Post continued, "and demonstrate the U.S. military's increasing reliance on for-profit corporations to run its logistical operations. Independent experts estimate that up to one-third of the monthly \$3.9 billion cost of keeping U.S. troops in Iraq is going to independent contractors."

Halliburton bills itself as an "oil field services" business. But according to the Post, the company's Kellogg, Brown & Root subsidiary plays a major supportive role to CIA operatives in Iraq—who are allegedly searching for "weapons of mass destruction." The company is also building and managing military bases. Its

employees dress in Army fatigues.

"The Halliburton contracts exceed even those won by San Francisco's Bechtel Group," noted the Aug. 28 Washington Post report. "The engineering firm was originally awarded an 18-month, \$680-million contract for reconstruction work—a figure U.S. officials in Baghdad have decided to boost by \$350 billion, the Wall Street Journal reported today."

The military contract bonanza isn't limited to Iraq. On Sept. 19 the Washington Post reported that the Department of Homeland Security plans to award a \$100-million contract to "explore the feasibility of outfitting commercial airliners with electronic devices that would protect that aircraft from missiles fired by terrorists on the ground."

That's \$40 million more than the White House had previously announced.

Since the technology in question is to be modified from existing systems on military transport aircraft that perform Special Forces missions, it's a sure bet the money will be going to big military contractors—who will also be awarded fresh gobs of cash to replenish billions of dollars worth of missiles and other high-tech weaponry used against civilian targets during the war in Iraq.

Meanwhile, polls show that most people in the U.S. are more worried about unemployment and health care costs than terrorist attacks. □

LOS ANGELES

Hopes of undocumented go with caravans

By John Beacham
Los Angeles

On Sept. 20, Los Angeles City Hall played backdrop to a rousing rally and send-off for local immigrant workers. In a replay of the historic Freedom Ride for civil rights in the 1960s, buses of immigrant workers are crossing the nation to demand easier paths to citizenship, legalization now and an end to attacks on civil liberties.

Over 2,000 immigrant rights activists and union members attended the rally. Chants of "¡Si se puede!"—"It can be done!"—rang out loud and often.

The garment and textile union UNITE, Service Employees, Hotel and Restaurant Employees, United Teachers of Los Angeles and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees were all represented by large contingents. Grassroots immigrant rights organizations—Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles, Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate, Pilipino Workers Center, Garment Workers Center and South Asian Network—were also there in large numbers.

Anti-war forces showed up in large numbers as well. The leaflet for ANSWER Los Angeles' Sept. 28 march and rally against occupation in Iraq and Palestine

was well received by workers and activists in the crowd.

James Lafferty, executive director of the local chapter of the National Lawyers Guild and a steering committee member of ANSWER Los Angeles, had these words of praise for the Freedom Riders as he spoke at the rally: "You, the immigrant workers, are our hope for the future. You have single-handedly reinvigorated the unions and you have given life to the progressive movement in this country. We now stand with you as you ride across this country to demand your rights."

In California, Gov. Gray Davis has recently been forced by the non-stop struggles of immigrant workers to sign legislation making it easier for them to get driver's licenses. In the 1990s California passed racist legislation—including Proposition 187 that severely cut government assistance to the children of immigrant workers—that has been virtually nullified by the consistent fightback of immigrant communities and the progressive forces in the state.

At the rally, Mayor James K. Hahn and five City Council members, forcibly moved by the tide of the immigrant workers' heroic Freedom Ride, proclaimed Sept. 20 to be Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride Day in Los Angeles. □

MICHIGAN

State workers say no to cutbacks

By David Sole
Detroit

Nearly 1,000 Michigan state workers, mostly African American women who are members of UAW Local 6000, demonstrated outside state offices here Sept. 18 to protest wage and program cuts planned by Gov. Jennifer Granholm.

Michigan officials have reported a multi-billion-dollar budget deficit this year. They have demanded that state workers make wage and benefit concessions amounting to \$4,100 per worker. The state also announced on Sept. 12 that it was preparing plans to lay off state workers in several departments.

Anger ran deep among the lunchtime crowd. It was no secret that state legislators had just received raises totaling 38 percent. The governor's pay has gone up 17 percent in recent years.

The crowd singled out Granholm, Michigan's new "liberal" Democratic governor, for demanding that they sacrifice so much. Granholm replaced John Engler, a right-wing Republican, as governor after getting the support of most of the state's unions.

Walking a picket line that filled the entire block, workers chanted, "Lay off politicians, not the workers!"

A leaflet handed out by members of UAW Local 6000 pointed out that the state has given away "billions of dollars in taxpayers' money to big corporations in the form of tax breaks, tax incentives, tax abatements and tax money giveaways." The union also noted that "the state

changed the tax system to favor the big corporations and now says it does not have enough money to fund the state budget."

Local 6000 members have seen their pay reduced by 11 percent since 1991 due to inflation. Their health-care costs have gone up. The state government has reduced pensions for those hired since 1997 by changing to a cheaper 401-K plan.

These workers, who provide critical services throughout the state, were also protesting the cuts in social services the same politicians have imposed on the public. Unemployment and Secretary of State offices have been closed. State college and university tuitions have gone up. Drastic cuts in Medicaid have been introduced. Case loads for state workers in areas like protective services have risen sharply because the state refuses to fill vacant positions.

Workers told Workers World that they are unable to do their jobs properly because of the overload.

Some workers carried signs reading, "Money for jobs, not war." One explained she was disgusted that the federal government is about to spend another \$87 billion for war in Iraq but has no money to help out the states, most of which are running deep deficits.

UAW Local 6000 has called for another protest, this one at the steps of the State Capitol in Lansing at 11:30 a.m. on Oct. 2. The mood was summed up in one leaflet that proclaimed: "We didn't cause the state budget problem. So don't make us pay for their mistakes." □

Atlanta meeting demands:

Repeal Patriot Act, release Dr. Al-Arian!

By Dianne Mathiowetz
Atlanta

The Justice Department's persecution of a Florida professor under the USA Patriot Act has outraged many communities, who see it as a political attack on civil liberties and the right of dissent.

On Sept. 20 a diverse audience of more than 150 people attended a program at Georgia State University here that highlighted the case of Dr. Sami Al-Arian. He is being held in maximum security at Coleman Federal Penitentiary in Florida.

They heard from a panel of prominent speakers that included Kellie Gasink, coordinator of the National Coalition to Repeal the USA Patriot Act; Beth Corrie, cousin of Rachel Corrie, who was killed by an Israeli soldier in occupied Palestine; Laila Al-Arian, daughter of the imprisoned Florida professor; Robert Jensen, professor of journalism, author and lecturer; and Cynthia McKinney, former Georgia representative in Congress.

The event was initiated by the International Action Center and Atlanta Palestine Solidarity.

Dr. Al-Arian was arrested in the early morning hours on Feb. 20 at his Tampa, Fla., home. The Bush administration was preparing to invade Iraq and was building a bogus case for it in the media. Attorney General John Ashcroft, at a news conference in Washington, D.C., declared Al-Arian's arrest a victory in the "war against terrorism."

This respected professor and Muslim leader was charged with being a leader of the Islamic Jihad in the United States. He was refused bail.

In maximum security, his small cell remains brightly lit all the time. With no clocks, it is very difficult for him to maintain his regimen of prayer. Loud noises often disturb his sleep and concentration. He is shackled hand and foot whenever taken out of his cell.

Al-Arian is allowed one 15-minute phone call a month to his family. His access to legal counsel has been severely limited. Even his requests for paper and pencils to use in working on his defense have been stonewalled.

Prison authorities stopped his lawyers from bringing more than half an inch of documents with them when they came to discuss his case, even though the indictment alone is over one inch thick.

Citing "national security," the government at first refused to allow Al-Arian and his lawyers to hear the over 20,000 hours of taped phone conversations that form the basis of the charges—until ordered to do so by a judge.

Federal prosecutors have said they won't have their case ready for trial until January 2005. That will be almost two years after Al-Arian's arrest.

Many of these violations of constitutional rights are allowed under the USA Patriot Act. Passed just two weeks after Sept. 11, 2001, it was a congressional rubber stamp of Bush administration legislation.



WW PHOTO: TOM DORAN

Speakers at Atlanta meeting: front row, Laila Al-Arian, Elizabeth Corrie, Kellie Gasink; second row, Robert Jensen, Cynthia McKinney.

Al-Arian's supporters believe his real crime was being determined to educate the U.S. public about the realities of the brutal oppression the Palestinian people suffer under Israeli military occupation. He spoke about Palestine around the country. He lobbied Congress to outlaw the use of "secret evidence." And he helped found research organizations as well as religious and community groups in the Tampa area.

In particular, he warned of the dangers of the USA Patriot Act and its purpose: to silence dissent, discussion and association.

The government's allegations that Al-Arian supported and raised funds for Islamic Jihad were completely refuted in a court proceeding held last year to pre-

vent the University of Southern Florida from firing the tenured professor.

Not deterred by lack of evidence, the Ashcroft justice department is using the Patriot Act to hold Al-Arian under inhuman conditions in an attempt to break him physically and mentally.

All the panel members at Georgia State urged the audience to speak up and organize to repeal the USA Patriot Act and to end racist attacks on immigrants and Muslims. Financial and political support are critically important to stop this injustice. Funds for Dr. Al-Arian's legal defense can be made through the National Liberty Fund, P.O. Box 22580, Alexandria, VA 22304. More information is available at www.nationallibertyfund.org. □

Palestinians reject Bush's dictates

Continued from page 1

just 22 percent of the land of Palestine. Of historical Palestine as a whole, the PNA had jurisdiction over just 4.4 percent.

The July 2000 Camp David talks broke down when Israel's "best offer ever—now or in the future" was a Palestinian "state" on just part of the West Bank and Gaza. The proposed "state" would have been broken up into pieces, with Israeli settlements, roads and army units maintained between the pieces of disconnected land in the West Bank. Under the plan, Israel would have retained control of Palestinian borders, airspace, water and subsoil rights.

In other words, it would have been a "state" unlike any other state in the world, lacking the attributes of what is universally considered necessary for independence.

Additionally, the PNA would have been required to sign away the right of return for the 4.5 million Palestinians living in exile.

When Arafat refused these terms, he and the PNA were roundly condemned by the Clinton administration and the big business media in the U.S. This atmosphere gave the Israeli government the go-ahead to step up its repression.

On Sept. 28, 2000, retired General Ariel Sharon, a member of the Israeli cabinet who oversaw the 1982 massacres of thousands of Palestinians in Lebanon, decided to "visit" the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Accompanied by 1,500 Israeli police, Sharon invaded one of the holiest sites of Islam. Palestinians in Jerusalem fought back and the second Intifada was underway.

Since the start of this Intifada, Israel has re-occupied Palestinian cities, towns and villages in the West Bank and Gaza. Economic life has been destroyed, unemployment has risen to 80 percent or higher in many areas, and poverty and hunger have skyrocketed.

In the past three years, more than three times as many Palestinians—over 2,800—as Israelis have been killed. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have been injured and more than 10,000 imprisoned. Those jailed are routinely tortured by the Israeli authorities.

But despite facing overwhelming firepower—the Israeli military is rated as the fifth most powerful in the world—and widespread suffering, the Palestinians have not been defeated.

Iraq war and the 'Road Map'

In the aftermath of the defeat of Iraq and the destruction of its government and state, the Bush administration began moving aggressively to reorganize and subjugate the entire Middle East. The "Road Map for Peace" was a key element in U.S. plans.

The crushing of the Iraqi state was seen by Washington as a necessary pre-condition for opening a new round of negotiations with the Palestinians.

Since the beginning of his administration, Bush had refused to even speak with the leadership of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). During that time, he hosted Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon at the White House on nine occasions, more than any other foreign leader.

The U.S. continued to funnel massive economic and military aid to Israel. This year, Israel is slated to receive \$3 billion in military and economic aid, and billions more in loan guarantees.

Is it really possible for anyone to believe that Washington is an "honest broker," when it gives one side unlimited funds and weapons?

With the military defeat of Iraq, Washington saw the Palestinians, and Arab people as a whole, as being in a weakened position. It was a similar combination of fac-

tors, along with the collapse of the Soviet Union, that impelled the first Bush administration to open the Oslo "peace process" after defeating Iraq in the 1991 Gulf war.

U.S. demands new Palestinian leaders

Before officially announcing the Road Map, the U.S. insisted that the PNA choose a prime minister acceptable to Washington, namely Mahmoud Abbas. The plan projects three phases leading to a final resolution by 2005. Overwhelming emphasis in Phase I is placed on "security," which translates as ending Palestinian "violence and terrorism." The words "violence" and "terror" are nowhere in the document linked to actions of the Israeli military.

The Israelis were to stop expanding their settlements in the West Bank, which have nearly doubled in population to 235,000 since the Oslo process began to be implemented in 1993, and dismantle its lightly populated "outpost" settlements.

Phase II is envisioned as beginning later this year—presumably after the Palestinian resistance has been terminated: "In the second phase, efforts are focused on the option of creating an independent Palestinian state with provisional borders and attributes of sovereignty. ..."

Phase III would be in 2004-2005. Only then will such fundamental issues as the Palestinian right of return and Jerusalem even be discussed.

The right of return

The right of Palestinians living in exile is especially critical. In 1948, to make way for the establishment of the state of Israel, 780,000 Palestinians were evicted from their homeland or fled the fighting. Their lands, shops and homes were seized without compensation. Hundreds of thou-

sands more were driven out in the 1967 war when Israel seized the West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai peninsula. Today an estimated 4.5 million Palestinians refugees and their descendants live in exile, many in extreme poverty in camps in Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere.

According to Israeli law, any Jewish person from anywhere in the world has the right to "return" to Israel and immediately claim citizenship. Yet not one Palestinian refugee has ever been allowed to return to their homeland. This despite UN Security Council Resolution 194, of 1949, that stipulated that all Palestinian refugees must be granted the right to return.

The Bush administration has conveniently left UNSC Res. 194 out of the resolutions mentioned in the Road Map. Moreover, the Sharon government has stated from the very beginning that it will never consider allowing the Palestinians back.

Sharon and the entire Israeli power structure are opposed to any Palestinian right to return, which they view as undermining the existence of Israel as an exclusivist state in which Jewish citizens are given special and superior rights.

The U.S. rulers support the apartheid-like character of the Israeli state, seeing it as a guarantee that Israel will remain an outpost of Western imperialism in the Middle East.

Under the road map, the Palestinians would be "self-governing" within small, controllable areas, resembling the bantustans of apartheid South Africa, that would become labor colonies for Israeli businesses.

Collapse of the Road Map

The Sharon government, heavily dependent on Washington's support, verbally agreed to the new negotiations but

As Bush seeks UN support

Momentum builds for Oct. 25 protest

By Sarah Sloan
Washington

President George W. Bush addressed the United Nations on Sept. 23 for the first time since launching the war on Iraq. A deepening mass resistance to colonial occupation on the part of the Iraqis has caused Bush's "popularity" to sink dramatically in U.S. polls.

"Bush is now asking the countries of the UN, most of whom opposed the war in the first place, to take responsibility for funding and supplying troops for an illegal occupation. Not only that, but he is asking them to make this contribution while the U.S. retains sole control of the operation," commented Richard Becker, a spokesperson for the International ANSWER coalition. "Involving the UN, if it is successful, may provide the Bush administration with a multi-lateral cover, but it will not change the fact that this is a colonial occupation."

On Saturday, Oct. 25, huge numbers of people will travel to Washington to join a National March demanding "End the occupation of Iraq and Palestine" and "Bring the troops home now." Protesters will also demand money for jobs, educa-

tion, housing, healthcare and to meet human needs—not for war.

"When Bush talked about a regime that spent money on armies and weapons rather than infrastructure, schools and hospitals, was he talking about Iraq or the U.S.? He wants to spend \$87 billion more of tax-payers' dollars on this colonial occupation while our schools are desperate for funding, our power grids need fixing, and millions have no health coverage," said LeiLani Dowell, San Francisco State student organizer.

The Oct. 25 demonstration was initiated by the Act Now to Stop War & End Racism coalition early in the summer. At the end of August, United for Peace and Justice became a co-sponsor of the event along with ANSWER.

"Organizing is moving full speed ahead," explained Sarah Friedman, ANSWER's National Outreach Coordinator for the mobilization. "There are now Organizing Centers sending buses from over 75 cities in 32 states. We expect over the next few weeks, based on our past experience, to hear from upwards of 300 cities. People are coming to D.C. from as far south as Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Texas, as far

north as Minnesota and Vermont, and from every state on the East Coast. Every day, we hear about groups of hundreds more people coming to D.C.

"All across the country the Organizing Centers are receiving hundreds of phone calls and email requests from people wanting to go to October 25. In D.C., we are receiving a high volume of emails from people organizing buses from their area. Many of them have already reserved anywhere from three buses, like in the Kensington, N.Y., area, to 100 buses from New York City. Activists around the country are hitting the streets to hand out leaflets, put up posters and stickers to help spread the word."

Among those marching on Oct. 25 will be thousands who demonstrated last year against the bombing and invasion of Iraq, long-time peace and anti-war activists, family members of U.S. soldiers and veterans, students, labor activists, religious communities and many more.

Student groups mobilizing include Northland Anti-War Coalition and Students Against War in Duluth, Minn.; Students for Justice in Palestine at Indiana University; the Muslim Student Association; Students for Social Justice in

Chicago; Students Movement for Justice at Wayne State University; and chapters of the ANSWER Youth & Student National Coalition from around the country.

Mobilizations are taking place from mosques, churches, synagogues and other religious communities. The Muslim American Society Freedom Foundation is organizing a feeder march. Ministers for Racial, Social and Economic Justice—United Church of Christ is organizing buses from several states.

1199/SEIU—New York's Health and Human Services Union, representing 200,000 workers—has voted to support the mobilization. The union is providing free bus transportation from New York City to the Washington protest for its members and their families. New York City Labor Against the War and the San Francisco Labor Council (AFL-CIO) are among many labor endorsers.

So far, there are over 2,000 endorsements of the demonstration.

People interested in getting on a bus or organizing transportation from their area, or who want to volunteer to spread the word, should go to www.InternationalANSWER.org or call (202) 544-3389. □



WW PHOTO: ANNE PRUDEN

Muslims and Jews support Palestinian rights in New York's Union Square Park.

soon made clear that it had no intention of adhering to even the Road Map's very minimal conditions.

Since the Palestinian resistance organizations began observing a three-month ceasefire on June 29, the Israeli government has reneged on virtually all conditions of the agreement. After pulling back from parts of Gaza and the city of Bethlehem in June, no further Israeli withdrawals have taken place. Palestinian economic activity remains at an all-time low, while poverty and malnutrition, particularly among children, are at record high levels.

Of the more than 7,000 Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli prisons, only 336 have been released, most of them individuals whose terms were nearly over.

Construction of the first phase of a 25-foot "apartheid wall" intended to cut the West Bank in half, annexing 58 percent of its territory to Israel, was completed in late July.

And rather than a freeze on settlements, more "outposts"—future settlements—have been established than dismantled. In Gaza, 40 percent of the land is allocated for Israeli settlers who number less than 5,000 people. More than 1.25 million Palestinians live in Gaza's vastly overcrowded refugee camps and cities.

Israeli incursions and attacks inside Palestinian cities and camps, moreover, escalated in August, resulting in the numerous casualties. A key event was the assassination of the Hebron leader of the Islamic Jihad organization, Mohammed Seder, by Israeli troops on Aug. 14.

On Aug. 18, talks between Israeli and

Palestinian negotiators broke off over the withdrawal of the Israeli army from West Bank cities. The refusal of the Israeli forces to dismantle isolating roadblocks that surround the cities—only 9 of 500 have been taken down since June—was the culmination of a string of broken Israeli pledges under the Road Map.

The next day, a bus bombing in Jerusalem—the predictable response to the assassination of an Islamic Jihad leader—killed 15 and wounded dozens more. No negotiations have been held since.

The assassination of Seder was clearly intended by the Sharon government to end the ceasefire and the Road Map process altogether, while attempting to put the onus for its collapse on the Palestinians.

To seal the deal, the Jerusalem bombing was followed by the assassination-by-missile of one of the top political leaders of Hamas, Ismail Abu-Shanab, and his bodyguards in Gaza on Aug. 21. Tens of thousands of people and representatives of all resistance organizations filled the streets of Gaza City the following day for Abu-Shanab's funeral. Later, Hamas and Islamic Jihad formally announced an end to the ceasefire.

In early September, Abbas resigned as prime minister.

The Bush administration, not surprisingly, places the blame for the breakdown of negotiations entirely on the Palestinian side.

Next: Is a "Two-State Solution" possible? □

LA 8 threatened with deportation—again

By Preston Wood
Los Angeles

In yet another ominous right-wing move, the Bush administration has let it be known that it has decided to continue the government's efforts to deport two Palestinian activists, members of the LA 8.

Never charged with any real crime, Michel Shehadeh and Khader Hamide were arrested in 1987 for their political activities in support of the Palestinian struggle for justice. The government tried and failed for 16 years to deport them. But now the Bush administration has declared it will use, retroactively, a reactionary provision of the 2001 Patriot Act that prohibits distributing materials supporting organizations that the U.S. government labels as "terrorist."

Shehadeh, currently a leader of the Free Palestine Alliance and a member of the steering committee of the ANSWER coalition in Los Angeles, told Workers World: "We have to understand that this is a political attack by the government aimed at all the activists and progressive people who are struggling on behalf of justice for the people of Palestine, Iraq and everywhere. Make no mistake about it—this assault on the progressive movement comes from high up in the Bush administration."

"We call on everyone to unite around this case to show Bush, [Attorney General John] Ashcroft and the others that we are united and will not be intimidated, and that we will keep struggling until the case against us is dropped." □

BRING the TROOPS HOME NOW

The U.S. is spending \$4 billion a month to occupy Iraq—more than \$130 million a day, that's \$5 million every hour. Remember these numbers when they say there is no money for education and healthcare or libraries, firehouses, childcare or other vital social services

Money for jobs, education & health care—NOT WAR! Defend civil rights & civil liberties Fightback against the Patriot Act

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Bush is pleased

Colombia offers amnesty to death squads

By Teresa Gutierrez

The administration of President Alvaro Uribe Velez of Colombia continues to implement a reactionary agenda in an attempt to consolidate a neo-fascist state.

As unionists, human rights organizations and popular sectors are brutally targeted by the deadly paramilitaries, Uribe is carrying out measures that will bring more bloodshed and turmoil.

In mid-September, Uribe proposed a law that would in effect grant amnesty to Colombian paramilitaries. It would allow members of the Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) to avoid jail for crimes they have committed if they agree to lay down their arms.

This recent proposal would, according to Uribe, compel the leaders of the death squads to admit their crimes, turn over some land, pay some fines and provide community services when they turn in their weapons.

According to the Sept. 15 New York Times, the Bush administration is backing the proposed legislation.

The prospect that the same people who decapitated, hung, raped, castrated or tortured their sons, daughters or neighbors will now be carrying out "community service" brings little solace to most Colombians.

There is overwhelming evidence that the paramilitaries are responsible for 80 percent or more of the killings in Colombia. This includes some of the most horrific crimes imaginable, including the massacre of countless peasant children, women and men.

Yet the Uribe administration not only has failed to round up or punish these criminals, it is now giving them a green

light to continue their bloody acts.

In Colombia's *Semana* magazine, Mauricio Vargas wrote, "The paramilitaries are running around unchecked because they know that the crimes they commit will be pardoned once they demobilize."

The proposed law is another sign that the Uribe administration is working day and night to strengthen the Colombian state for the benefit of U.S. imperialism and the Colombian oligarchy.

His policies are extremely dangerous for the progressive movements in Colombia and the people of the entire region. The strengthening of the right wing in Colombia, which aims to destroy the revolutionary movements there, would also affect the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela. The Cuban Revolution also cannot benefit from the consolidation of such a grouping.

At least 19 Colombians die violent deaths every day. Unemployment is at an all-time high. In Bogotá, the capital, 63 out of every 100 persons live in dire poverty.

Trade unionists who struggle for decent contracts run the risk of losing their lives. Recently, a major food and service union in Colombia was sued by the Colombian franchise of Coca-Cola simply for defending its members from repression.

And the Press Freedom Foundation declared that Colombia is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for practicing journalism.

The privatization of oil, utilities and other industries—a top priority of the Uribe administration—will mean further unemployment and the loss of sovereignty. Over 2.5 million people are now displaced in the country. These numbers have greatly escalated since Uribe came to power.

Instead of alleviating this urgent situation, the government has arrested and arbitrarily detained people demanding social justice. It has carried out wiretaps and illegal searches and seizures, banned demonstrations and established civilian militias organically linked to the paramilitaries.

President Uribe established "Democratic Security," a policy he explains as "security for everyone." According to a Colombian professor at Stanford, Alfredo Molano, many fear that this "formula is a modality to fortify the AUC, [since] the connections between the paramilitaries and the public forces are still intact."

Uribe has established Zones of Rehabilitation and Consolidation in the oil-rich parts of Colombia such as Arauca, a region bordering Venezuela. It is here that, according to Molano, the state is intercepting telephone lines, banning public demonstrations and organizing searches of offices of human rights groups.

In September, over 80 human rights organizations from Colombia issued a report on the human rights situation in the country. It concluded that Uribe's "authoritarian government has overseen a dramatic increase in extra-judicial killings, civilian massacres and other abuses."

In response, President Uribe lashed out at the groups and branded them "cowards" and "terrorist sympathizers." (London Guardian Sept. 11) Such an accusation is tantamount to a death threat in Colombia.

According to the Guardian, the chief of Colombia's armed forces, Gen. Jorge Enrique Mora, "joined in the intimidation" and accused the groups of "fabricating the extensively documented links" between the troops and the illegal para-

militaries "in order to justify their own existence."

The Uribe administration also labeled a Sweden-based news agency, ANNCOL—which reports primarily on Colombia—an arm of the guerrilla group FARC-EP. It demanded that the Swedish government close the web site.

President Uribe has bent over backwards to make peace with the paramilitaries. Despite the fact that these death squads have carried out some of the most genocidal acts in Latin America, the Uribe administration is attempting to bring them into the fold of Colombian society.

While governor, Uribe was known to be in collusion with the paramilitaries. Upon his election, many labeled him the "parapresident."

At the same time that Uribe has made friendly overtures to the paramilitaries, his administration has made negotiations with the armed wing of the movement, the ELN and the FARC-EP, next to impossible.

This critical situation demands that the movement in the U.S. and around the world step up solidarity work. More denunciations of the atrocities, forums, rallies and demonstrations are needed. And they are decisive. Many labor leaders in Colombia report that these acts have saved lives.

The finger must also be pointed at the Bush administration. Recently U.S. Black Hawk helicopters flew from Colombia into Venezuelan air space. U.S. oil corporations are being protected by the paramilitaries in Arauca.

While President Uribe administers the Colombian state for the benefit of the oligarchy, it is Washington that ultimately benefits from the right-wing turn there. □

ARGENTINA

IMF can't squeeze blood from a stone

By Alicia Jrapko

Eduardo Galeano, the Uruguayan writer, ironically defined "foreign debt" as "the commitment that each Latin American inherits when he is born. This modest amount of \$2,000 will some day finance the club that will be used to strike him."

Who is responsible for the economic crisis of the Third World countries? International corporations and their financial institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These institutions, together with compliant local governments, have masterminded the theft and ripoff of the entire region for decades through drawing the countries into debt.

The negotiations that decide how these loans are to be repaid are never held up to public scrutiny and debate, but rather are decided behind closed doors by way of threats and bribes. Once the deal is made, the workers, especially the most vulnerable, must suffer the austerity measures that are sure to follow.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the United States started to impose on Latin America what is called the neoliberal economic model. In Argentina, it led directly

to a bloody military coup by the murderous general Jorge Rafael Videla. At that time the foreign debt of this South American country was \$9.7 million.

In May 2003, when Nestor Kirchner took office as president of Argentina, the debt had risen to \$160 billion. Among other things, during his inaugural address, Kirchner promised, "The international financial agencies have to understand that the external debt cannot be paid at the cost of the Argentine people's suffering."

The people's hope that Kirchner would not pay the foreign debt dissipated in mid-September, however, when he negotiated an agreement with the International Monetary Fund just a day after Argentina defaulted on a \$2.9-billion debt payment. In the three-year pact, the country will pay only the interest due on the \$13 billion it owes the IMF. For some of the blood-sucking officials of the Group of Seven imperialist countries, this was attacked as a "cave-in" by the fund.

One of the reasons the IMF had to take a "soft" approach with Argentina is because the workers and poor are still in motion and are watching very closely every move of Kirchner's administration. At this point his popularity remains high,

because he has taken measures that for years have been the central demands of many Argentines.

When he became president, Kirchner almost immediately removed the upper command levels of the armed forces and announced that top commanders of the federal police would also be replaced. He took aim at the Supreme Court and asked Congress to impeach some justices on corruption charges. He also declared the "Full Stop" and "Due Obedience" laws null and void. Also known as amnesty laws, these have for many years kept victims of the brutal military leaders from obtaining truth and justice. Groups such as the Association of Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, whose children were "disappeared" by the military rulers, welcomed and applauded Kirchner's move. But all of that could change quickly, as the economic burden on the masses increases.

The IMF demands that Argentina compensate the banks for last year's collapse in the value of the peso, and that it raise utility prices. This would turn basic necessities like electricity, water and gas into luxuries for many Argentines. But no date has been set to carry this out.

On Sept. 9, while negotiations were taking place, many people took to the streets

to protest the presence of the IMF negotiator. The IMF knows that if the government of Argentina decides not to pay on the foreign debt, it would set an example with unpredictable consequences for the region.

But paying the foreign debt is not the only alternative open to Latin America. Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez recently called for a continental referendum on the question of whether South American countries should pay their external debt.

The people of Latin America owe nothing to any imperialist financial institution. They have never benefited from these loans. The capitalist myth that Argentina was a great economic model for Latin America has evaporated and hard reality has set in.

The elections of "Lula" da Silva in Brazil, Chávez in Venezuela and Kirchner in Argentina have brought some hope to the workers and poor. Cosmetic changes to reform capitalism or make it more humane are taking place in the region. But if the U.S. neoliberal model continues intact, nothing will solve the problem of the masses. Real changes will come only when the workers can finally take control of their own destiny. □

Miami rally

'Liberate Cuban 5 from U.S. prisons'

Special to Workers World
Miami

Miami has long been the center of anti-Cuba right-wing forces in the United States. But it is now also a city where a growing number of activists are standing up to denounce terrorist groups that threaten Cuba and its supporters with violence.

The Cuban Five were railroaded to prison here. And it is here that, on Sept. 14, the fifth anniversary of the imprisonment of these political prisoners was commemorated.

To hold a public meeting in Miami in defense of Cuba is a feat. Yet over 180 people attended the commemoration, including many from the Cuban progressive community. They came to honor the Cuban Five as heroes and to hear attorney Leonard Weinglass and others discuss the legal and political aspects of the case.

The five Cubans imprisoned in the U.S. are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, René González and Fernando González. They undertook a critical mission in southern Florida in the 1990s: to infiltrate and monitor fascist organizations in order to keep them from carrying out terrorist attacks on Cuba.

On Sept. 12, 1998, in an action that can only be described as supporting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the five and indicted them on false charges of conspiracy to commit espionage against the U.S. government and related crimes.

A seven-month trial in the biased venue of Miami led to their conviction on June 8, 2001. After sentencing in December of that year, they were separated and sent to five federal prisons.

The Free Speech Coalition of Greater Miami organized the recent commemoration, supported by Antonio Maceo Brigade, Marti Alliance, Association of Cuban Workers, National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, National Lawyers Guild, Socialist Workers Party and others.

Gerardo Hernández sent a greeting from Lumpoc prison in California on behalf of all five. "It has been five difficult years, far away from the homeland and our loved ones. ... It has been five long years of them [the U.S. government] not being able to get their wish that we renounce our principles, or betray the revolution and our people.

"Thanks to you, there is not one minute when we feel alone or discouraged, and thanks to you we are sure that some day we will achieve victory in this battle for truth and justice."

Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, which has organized Miami Cubans supportive of the revolution's achievements, explained: "It is in Miami where the federal government has for more than four decades practically suspended the fundamental rights and guarantees of the population, rights that exist



Ramón Labañino with family

in the rest of the country. It is in Miami where that government has financed and organized the ultra-right in order to further develop the permanent policy of aggression that for almost 50 years the U.S. has maintained against the people of Cuba."

Ira Kurzban, well-known immigration attorney in Miami, said, "Why was this trial held in Miami, if not to assure there would be a jury that would convict them without any hesitation. We did a survey in Miami 20 years ago, and only 17 percent of those polled believed that someone associated with Cuba could receive a fair trial."

Gloria La Riva, coordinator of the National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, urged all to get actively involved to "liberate these heroes from prison," and to win entry rights to the U.S. for Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández. The U.S. has prohibited them from entering to see their husbands.

Salanueva was expelled from the U.S. two years ago. It is widely understood that she was singled out for expulsion because her husband refused to collaborate with the FBI against his co-defendants.

Attorney Magda Montiel, whose firm represented Salanueva in the deportation hearing, ridiculed the government attorney's charge that the couple were bringing up their two-year-old daughter Ivette to be a spy. "When the trial attorney said, 'spy in training,' I thought I heard 'potty training,' it was so outrageous," she said.

Bruce Nestor, president of the National Lawyers Guild, said both Democrats and Republicans have pursued anti-Cuba policies for decades. "Remember that the indictment was brought under the Clinton administration and is being pursued by the Bush administration. And the assault on civil rights by the Patriot Act by Bush

did not start with 9/11 but with the Effective Death Penalty act signed by Clinton, which severely curtailed rights of habeas corpus."

The keynote speaker was Leonard Weinglass, one of five appeals attorneys on the case. He represents Antonio Guerrero.

Weinglass gave a comprehensive overview of the case, including the appeals process currently underway. Federal prosecutors have asked for an extension to Sept. 30 to respond to defense appeals briefs before the 11th Circuit Court. Then the defense will answer the government, and oral arguments will then be heard.

"The wheels of justice have ground gearless in the last several years," said Weinglass to the court's granting of only three minutes per defense attorney for their oral arguments.

"When we argued the appeal of the Chicago 8 trial in 1970, we were given two days. And in that case, the defendants faced a maximum of 10 years in prison. ... Now in the year 2003, what used to be a two-day argument becomes three minutes before a three-judge panel with 119 volumes of transcripts."

Weinglass stressed that the case is not about espionage, but the deliberately vague charge of conspiracy. "There is not a claim by the U.S. government that they were spies. Is that a surprise?"

"What the government did in this case is what it frequently does in cases that are political. If the government could fashion an argument on the theory in law known as conspiracy, a jury might be willing to convict even without evidence."

That sweeping frame-up charge, along with a hostile anti-Cuba atmosphere in Miami and biased jury, guaranteed a wrongful conviction on all counts. When the jury deliberated over more than 14,000 pages of transcript, they asked not one question of clarification.

He expressed optimism about the strength of the appeals arguments. But Weinglass added that the only way to assure victory is to carry out a political struggle to win public opinion.

The poem, "A Crucial Visit," written by Antonio Guerrero and dedicated to Weinglass, was read by Gómez at the end. For more information, see www.freethe-five.org. □

Threat of CIA terror cancels Chávez visit

By Leslie Feinberg

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez Frias has canceled his late-September trip to Washington, D.C., and to the United Nations. Members of Venezuela's security services charge they have "overwhelming evidence" of a CIA-backed plan to "bring down" the scheduled flight that would have brought the head of state of this oil-rich South American country to the United States.

Sources in Venezuela's Military Intelligence Directorate charge that "presented with overwhelming evidence of Washington's planned attack on the presidential flight, it was decided that the president's personal security was preeminent and that he should not go." VHeadline.com-Venezuela's Electronic News, which is affiliated to the Foreign Press Foundation, reported the news on Sept. 23.

Chávez was slated to give a speech in Harlem, address the United Nations in New York and visit Houston, Texas. The Venezuelan president said he regretted only that he would not be able to deliver the speech in Harlem. Chávez told international journalists on Sept. 18, "We have proof of the CIA's clandestine activities in Venezuela. (Venezuelanalysis.com)

In addition, a bomb exploded across from the Miraflores Presidential Palace on Sept. 19 while Chávez was working inside. The president was reportedly unharmed. But in order to take the suspected bomber into custody, Venezuelan police and National Guard officers had to fight a gun battle with reactionary police and former army officers who had been dismissed after participating in a U.S.-backed coup in April 2002. The suspect has been identified as a "security agent" working with anti-Chávez forces. (Vheadline.com)

It's no secret that Washington and Wall Street have tried to undermine Chávez ever since he unleashed a broad social movement called the "Bolivarian Revolution." His 1998 election was the

result of an alliance between his Fifth Republic Movement, based on progressive junior military officers and rank-and-file soldiers, and working-class and left-wing parties.

With a sweeping electoral mandate from the oppressed in 1998 and again in 2000, Chávez formed a National Assembly, wrote a new Constitution and won popular approval for it.

His government's international policy broke free of U.S. imperialism. Venezuela began providing Cuba with oil at terms favorable to Havana. Chávez encouraged an independent OPEC. He refused to participate in the Pentagon's military campaign against Colombia's Marxist insurgencies. In 2000 he became the first head of state to defy Washington by breaking the travel blockade to Iraq. On March 22, 2003, Chávez denounced the U.S.-led war against Iraq.

The U.S. had covertly intervened in April 2002 to topple the Chávez government in a coup after the Venezuelan leader attempted to carry out land redistribution. Some 60 percent of the arable land had been owned by 1 percent of the population. Chávez also restricted the power of the old oligarchy in the state oil company Petroleos de Venezuela.

The U.S. monopoly media publicly backed the coup. But workers, farmers and other sectors of the population rose up to restore their president to power. Recently the Bush administration again moved to support the counter-revolutionary aspirations of the Venezuelan wealthy elite by demanding that Chávez hold early elections.

U.S. imperialism knows the Bolivarian Revolution is being watched closely throughout Latin America—from Colombia to Argentina, Peru to Brazil—where anger and resistance to the domination of capital is rising. This same powerful capitalist class also had good reason to be apprehensive about Chávez bringing his message to Harlem. □

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Bush's 'man of peace'

The New York Times headline on Sept. 18 jumps out: "Dalai Lama says terror may need a violent reply."

The former monarch of Tibet, despite big advance publicity, drew a modest crowd to an event in New York's Central Park. Most who showed up were expecting to hear a message of peace. Perhaps they had heard George W. Bush call him a man of peace. Before the Dalai Lama went to New York he met with Bush at the White House where he was received with honors just one step below those given a head of state. In return, the Dalai Lama has giving his blessing to many of Bush's projects.

In an interview just days before the Central Park event, Tenzin Gyatso, the last monarch of Tibet, said he was for nonviolence "whenever possible," but war is justified at times. The particular wars that he thought okay were World War II and the U.S. war on Korea. He thinks the war on Vietnam started out right but ended up badly. Badly for whom, he doesn't say, but the Vietnamese thought it ended well when the U.S. finally withdrew.

Tenzin "Dalai Lama" Gyatso did not clarify what side he thought was right in World War II. He had spent most of that war in the company of a Nazi SS officer, Heinrich Harrer, whose book "My Seven Years in Tibet" is a fictionalized version of their time together in the 1940s.

The Dalai Lama also praised the bombing of Afghanistan by the United States Air Force, calling it a "liberation" of the Afghans. (World Tibet Network News, a support site for the Dalai Lama, has this headline: "Dalai Lama praises U.S. approach to bombing Afghanistan." www.tibet.ca) The Afghans have a very different view of the bombing.

As for the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Dalai Lama says it was

justified, though he hedged his support. Like Vietnam, it may end up going "badly"; the Iraqis may force the U.S. occupiers to leave.

These views may surprise some who've thought of the Dalai Lama as a pacifist. But Tenzin Gyatso is no pacifist.

As historian A. Tom Grunfeld, author of "The Making of Modern Tibet," says, "The Dalai Lama's description of the Tibet under his serfdom rule as 'Shangri-La' has led to an infatuation with Tibet, which is a fad that will ultimately fade. ... The fascination is not with the real Tibet but a fantasy version. A dose of the real Tibet would leave them deeply disillusioned."

Tenzin Gyatso has many views that would make him quite unpopular if they were more widely known. In "Cuddly Dalai Lama is our fantasy creation," the former director of the so-called Free Tibet Campaign, Patrick French, says, "The Dalai Lama is very different from the genial figure we see in the West." (www.smh.com.au) For example, the Dalai Lama's anti-lesbian/anti-gay views are so extreme his U.S. publisher removed them from the book "Ethics for the New Millennium" for fear they would make the book unsaleable.

French worries that the truth about the Dalai Lama is becoming more widely known and he wants to minimize its impact. The Dalai Lama has been pumped up by the imperialist West to near-god status because he has been useful for their campaign to break Tibet away from China.

Hopefully a dose of the real Dalai Lama will put an end to the illusion that this is someone who is a spokesperson for peace. The real voices for peace will be in the streets of Washington, D.C., on Oct. 25 making it clear that peace means ending the occupation of Iraq and bringing the troops home now, without any qualifications. □



This summer a group of young people from four U.S. cities visited Cuba as a delegation of the Peoples Video Network Youth Camp. The photo shows some of them in Havana with relatives of two of the Cuban Five, who are now political prisoners in the United States because they monitored the activities of anti-Cuba terrorist front groups in Florida and passed information back home, saving lives. For this the five were charged with espionage and are serving long sentences. Cuba has received worldwide solidarity for the demand that they be released and brought home. Now in its third year, the PVN Youth Camp allows activist families to organize educational vacations. The young people, who have ranged in age from 5 to 18, also learn aspects of video camera work and editing. Information about how to support the camp and learn about its plans is available at www.wvpnyouth.homestead.com.

—Sara Catalinotto

Are Schroeder & Chirac 'anti-war'?

Imperialist rivalry at the UN talks

By John Catalinotto

On Sept. 18 an intense week of negotiations on the future of Iraq's occupation began—without the Iraqis. First a Berlin summit of German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and French President Jacques Chirac, then the two of them with British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Sept. 20. Further talks between Bush, Chirac and Schroeder are set for New York as the United Nations opens.

In much of the capitalist media, these talks are described as negotiations between Bush and the "anti-war" forces regarding Iraq. This description is misleading about the role of the European leaders and the ruling classes they represent.

Chirac and Schroeder head two of the five most powerful imperialist countries and are the main spokespeople for the European bosses and bankers. They have class interests in common with U.S. billionaires as far as keeping the workers and oppressed nations of the world in chains. But they have sharply competing financial, trade and industrial interests.

They had no qualms about sending German and French planes to bomb Yugoslavia and its people. Both states grabbed a slice of Kosovo. German economic interests bought on the cheap much of the profitable industry in Serbia after the Milosevic government was ousted. Both also joined the occupation of Afghanistan.

But they saw the U.S.-British bloody aggression in Iraq as dangerous for them, in at least two ways.

One, it might arouse the entire people of the Middle East against all the imperialists and threaten disaster for them all.

Two, should it result in a quick U.S. victory, then 99 percent of the spoils of that victory would go to U.S. oil, construction and other transnational corporations. U.S. imperialism would control another 10 percent of the world's oil and be in a position to squeeze European—and Japanese—companies.

In addition, their populations wanted to avoid war. In Schroeder's case, his temporary anti-war stance was the only thing that saved his reelection in September 2002.

Bush and Company are aggressive warmongers. But Chirac and Schroeder are "anti-war" only where they fail to get a share of the spoils.

U.S. wanted to win alone

The plan of the Bush administration—especially of the clique led by Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and Paul Wolfowitz—was to have the U.S. use its overwhelming

firepower to win the war, only bringing in Britain as a junior partner. They had no desire to share spoils with their rivals in what Rumsfeld called the "old" Europe, but planned to use Iraq as a big step toward a U.S. empire.

By the end of April, they thought they had succeeded. Bush on May 1 declared that the war was over. The administration started dishing out contracts to Halliburton, Bechtel and other favorite corporations, and laid plans to distribute oil concessions.

They forgot that the Iraqi people might keep on fighting. Starting in May, about one GI was being killed each day. Another four would be wounded and 10 others would fall ill. Meanwhile, millions of Iraqis found ways to demonstrate their hatred for the occupiers.

They also forgot that the GIs and their families were not robots or slaves, but human workers who had been deceived about what the Iraq war was all about. Pressure started building among the troops themselves to go home.

The Iraqi people are suffering horribly. That is true. But it is also true that U.S. imperialism is in big trouble in Iraq. Everyone is talking about Vietnam and quagmires all over again.

Bush may sound self-assured and confident, even arrogant when he speaks to the UN. But in reality he is asking Chirac and Schroeder and the Japanese and other imperialists for help in carrying out the occupation of Iraq. To get that help he will have to make concessions. That is, he will have to offer France and Germany, and maybe Russia, part of the Iraq loot.

Neither Chirac nor Schroeder want the Iraqis to win a guerrilla war against U.S. imperialism. That would be too threatening to imperialist interests worldwide. Schroeder has said, "The U.S. superpower in the Persian Gulf remains in Germany's vital interest."

Schroeder acted on these words during the war on Iraq, when he allowed the U.S. free use of bases in Germany.

The imperialists rivals will be bargaining, and bargaining hard, over how Iraq will be divided.

Should they succeed in reaching an agreement, it will increase the dangers to German and French youth, increase hardships for the European working class, and most of all make it harder for the heroic Iraqis to drive the imperialists out.

Anti-war forces in the U.S., Germany, Britain and France should have nothing but solidarity with each other's struggles. And they should wish that their rulers continue to be at odds about intervention in Iraq. That would be best also for the Iraqi resistance movement. □

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As Bush falters on world stage

Enter the 'anti-war' war criminal

By Fred Goldstein

President George W. Bush, whose popularity is sagging along with the U.S. effort to subdue the Iraqi resistance, delivered a contradictory speech to the United Nations on Sept. 23. He both upheld Washington's position as the supreme master of the world, with the right to wage a "preemptive" war of colonial aggression against Iraq, and at the same time came asking for "multilateral" assistance from his imperialist rivals and other countries to bolster the faltering and increasingly costly occupation. But he didn't offer to cut them in anytime soon.

Meanwhile, the big business media was busy touting retired Gen. Wesley Clark as the new "anti-war" candidate. What they don't mention is that Clark's conduct as NATO commander during the 78-day aerial bombardment of Serbia and Kosovo in 1999, which was heavily directed at civilian targets, fully qualifies him for indictment as a major war criminal.

In his speech, Bush declared that "The Security Council was right to demand that Iraq destroy its illegal weapons and prove that it had done so. The Security Council was right to vow serious consequences if Iraq refused to comply.

"And because there were consequences, because a coalition of nations acted to defend the peace and credibility of the United Nations, Iraq is free. And today we are joined by representatives of a liberated country."

Freedom to sell the country

An announcement on Sept. 20 had clarified the new "freedom" to be enjoyed by the Iraqis. Finance Minister Kamel Keyhani, who is wholly subordinated to the U.S. overseer, Paul Bremer, announced a new law allowing foreign investment and 100 percent foreign ownership in all areas of the Iraqi economy, except for oil. This was described by Iraqi merchants as a permanent "world occupation" of the Iraqi economy, which would render the Iraqi people as "immigrants in their own land." (Los Angeles Times, Sept. 23)

Just before Bush delivered his speech, news had come that Iraqi "freedom" included the dictatorial outlawing of Al-Jazeera and Al Arabia news services. This measure bans a major source of news not controlled by the occupation and its puppets, strengthening the U.S. stranglehold on information.

On the same day came news that the 82nd Airborne Division had called in air strikes on a farmhouse in the town of Sichir after being ambushed. In the middle of the night fighter jets had poured missiles into the house, where 15 people were sleeping, killing three and wounding three. No arms were found. (International Herald Tribune, Sept. 24)

Multilateral plunder

The session at the UN took on the character of a debate between the French imperialists, represented by President Jacques Chirac, and Bush. The French are demanding that "sovereignty" be turned over to the Iraqis in "a matter of months" and that the UN be in charge of the political process. All this is in the name of multilateralism. The Bush administration, on the other hand, is saying that it will determine the timetable and that the Iraqis must go through a lengthy constitutional and electoral process before Washington is willing to relinquish its control.

But the truth is that Chirac and French

imperialism have no interest whatsoever in a truly sovereign Iraqi government. What concerns Chirac is that political representatives of French bankers and transnational corporations get in early enough on the political process to build influence in the new colonial regime. The French are in a hurry to create a UN cover so they can intervene in the process of plundering Iraq before the U.S. corporations get a complete lock on the process. This is the meaning of "multilateralism" to French imperialism.

'A failed address'

Washington is perfectly content to hold on to all the strings until it has a firm grasp on the new state apparatus. The problem is that the Iraqi resistance has deepened. U.S. soldiers are dying in increasing numbers and Bush has had to drop an \$87-billion price tag on the people at home, who are already suffering. U.S. imperialism needs help, but the Bush administration is loathe to take any steps that would imply any limitations on the supreme imperial authority of Washington and the Pentagon.

In an editorial entitled "A Failed Address," the Washington Post wrote on Sept. 24 that Bush "refused to dilute the present monopoly of power over the occupation administration, the reconstruction program or the contracts that have been awarded almost exclusively to U.S. firms. Not surprisingly, that formula doesn't appeal to any of the governments that have been discussing the possible contributions for Iraq, and one by one they have dropped out."

What the Post did not say is that the entire plan of the Bush administration has been overturned by the Iraqi resistance, which is the fundamental fact on the ground. The Post's appeal to multilateralism and to bring in the United Nations to help "stabilize" the situation in Iraq is an appeal to Bush to give some concessions to Wall Street's rivals in order to strengthen imperialism in Iraq before the whole colonial enterprise crashes.

The 'anti-war' war criminal

Retired Gen. Wesley Clark has plunged into the presidential race to try to take advantage of the sinking popularity of Bush, based on the Iraq crisis and the deepening economic hardship. Clark has been dubbed the "anti-war" candidate.

It is a measure of the cynicism of bourgeois politics in the U.S. that a four-star general who has commanded NATO forces in a murderous air war, did the military planning for the invasion of Haiti in 1994, and was a company commander during the colonial Vietnam War could be considered an "anti-war" candidate.

Clark is an arch militarist and his claim to be anti-war is the ultimate in election demagoguery. He commanded the air war in Yugoslavia, in which every target and plane and every missile or bomb was approved at the command level. Some 35,000 cluster bombs were dropped on cities and towns. The Chinese and Greek embassies were bombed after both countries opposed the war. Bridges and factories, schools, hospitals and churches were destroyed with people in them. The strategy of targeting civilians from the air in order to demoralize the people of Serbia was Clark's policy. (See the book "Hidden Agenda: U.S./NATO Takeover of Yugoslavia," International Action Center, 2002)

But what is also on the record is that

Clark got in trouble with his superiors because he fought with the Pentagon and demanded that the U.S. send in ground troops. In Clark's view, one of the negative after-effects of the Vietnam War was the reluctance to take casualties. ("Hidden Agenda," p. 162) He regarded the war in Yugoslavia as a chance to get over it.

He has dangerous, adventurist qualities, which flared up during the Yugoslav war when the Russians sent a tank contingent to occupy Pristina airport towards the end of the war. Clark issued the order to the British general in charge, Lt. Gen. Michael Jackson, to block the runway. "I'm not starting World War III for you," said Jackson, and refused the order.

Aside from Clark's history in other wars, his effort to project an anti-war record on Iraq is a complete fabrication. Before the war his most "anti-war" position was "Let's Wait to Attack," the title of a Time magazine article published last Oct. 14. Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting has dug up his earlier pronouncements.

On Jan. 21 he said on CNN, "I think the president is going to have to move ahead despite the fact that the allies have reservations." By Feb. 5 he told the same network that "the credibility of the United States is on the line, and Saddam Hussein has these weapons and so, ... we're going to go ahead and do this and the rest of the world's got to get with us." He told CNN's

Wesley Clark has dangerous, adventurist qualities, which flared up during the Yugoslav war. And his effort to project an anti-war record on Iraq is a complete fabrication.

Miles O'Brien that Saddam Hussein "absolutely" had weapons of mass destruction.

By April 10, the day after the seizure of Baghdad, Clark wrote an ecstatic article for the London Times declaring that "already the scent of victory is in the air." George W. Bush and Tony Blair "should be proud of their resolve in the face of so much doubt," he continued, and the military planners had "made the right call" in moving fast and light.

By the next day, Clark was writing in the Times that "If there is a single overriding lesson, it must be this: American military power, especially when buttressed by Britain's, is virtually unchallengeable today. Take us on? Don't try! And that's not hubris, it's just plain fact."

Which only underscores the critical role of the independent, mass anti-war movement, which is mobilizing for another huge demonstration on Oct. 25. □

Protest in Belgrade hits NATO court

By John Catalinotto

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton visited the city of Srebrenica in Bosnia on Sept. 20 in an attempt to justify the 10 years of destabilization, subversion and outright war, starting in 1990, that the U.S. and NATO waged to break up the multinational country of Yugoslavia, which for years had been a peaceful federation of socialist republics.

The July 1995 battle of Srebrenica was allegedly the bloodiest of the brutal civil war in Bosnia. It would never have taken place, however, if Washington had not earlier sabotaged a peace agreement by urging the right-wing government of Alija Izetbegovic not to sign it. Then, in 1999, Clinton ordered an air war on what remained of Yugoslavia. Gen. Wesley Clark, now a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 2004, headed NATO's 78-day bombing campaign.

While Clinton was in Srebrenica, hundreds of people led by the Sloboda organization marched in downtown Belgrade, Serbia, which used to be the capital of Yugoslavia, to protest his visit and to demand that former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic be released from prison and given ample time to prepare his defense, and that he no longer be isolated from his family and supporters.

The NATO victors established a court in The Hague, Belgium, to try Yugoslav officials for alleged war crimes because they had resisted a Western takeover. That court has refused to release Milosevic from prison to prepare his defense. It also has allowed him only three months to go over almost 10,000 pages of prosecution documentation.

The Yugoslav leader had demanded he

be released for two years to go over the documents and prepare a defense. Despite poor health and the court-imposed isolation, he has been defending himself effectively since the trial started in February 2002. He has often been able to put the court and NATO on the defensive for NATO's aggression in the Balkans.

National sections of the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic in Russia, Serbia, Germany and the U.S. have issued statements supporting the former president's demands. Defense committees in Europe and organizations representing the Yugoslav diaspora there have called for a demonstration Nov. 8 in The Hague criticizing the court, the second such action this year.

Many Yugoslavs say the charges against Milosevic are really directed against the entire Serb people. Milosevic is targeted, they say, because he was the leader of Yugoslavia during much of the period when it was attempting to resist being destroyed as a multinational state.

They say Bill Clinton and Wesley Clark are the real war criminals in the Balkans, along with some European NATO leaders.

In addition, a group of 12 doctors from Germany have written a letter to the court in The Hague demanding that the court act responsibly regarding Milosevic's health. The former president has suffered from high blood pressure and from "the possibility of coronary disease, cerebrovascular accident, heart attack and death." Numerous times the court has had to suspend sessions because of these health problems.

The doctors' letter supports the request for an extended pause in the proceedings and for Milosevic's release and examination by doctors of his choice. □

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Países en vías de desarrollo resisten ser comprados

Por Deirdre Griswold

El sistema de lucro del capitalismo lo logró de nuevo. Ha expandido los medios de producción a tan tremendo paso que millones de habitantes sufren de necesidad extrema.

Un momento. ¿No es esta una contradicción? Pues sí, ciertamente. El capitalismo está lleno de contradicciones y estas son mortales.

Estas son mas obvias en este momento en la agricultura. La producción de más alimentos a escala mundial significa que millones de campesinos tienen menos alimentos, quienes además están perdiendo sus tierras y su modo de vida. La situación es tan aguda que un líder de los campesinos sur coreanos se suicidó en protesta durante la reunión de la Organización Mundial del Comercio (OMC), en Cancún, la cual se dispersó en confusión cuando los países en desarrollo se salieron de la conferencia.

Lee Kyung Hae se apuñaló el abdomen el 10 de septiembre mientras miles protestaban las reglas de "libre comercio" de la OMC que permiten a los países imperialistas industrializados gastar cerca de \$300 mil millones de dólares al año en subsidios agrícolas.

En los Estados Unidos, donde los pequeños campesinos son hoy casi cosa del pasado, la gran parte de los subsidios llega a las grandes corporaciones agrícolas. Estas gigantescas fincas industriales están exportando granos y otros alimentos, al igual que algodón, a países en todo el mundo, acabando así con sus campesinos criollos. Todo esto a costa de los contribuyentes.

En Corea del Sur, campesinos como Lee

están cayendo en banca rota a paso atemorizante, aunque ellos estén muy bien organizados.

Los campesinos coreanos han desarrollado una gran habilidad de utilizar al máximo la tierra. La mayor parte de sus granjas tiene largas filas de invernaderos hechos de plástico para alargar la temporada de cosecha, y así haya melones, verduras, calabazas y pepinos frescos la mayor parte del año en los mercados de las ciudades.

Los campesinos atienden sus cosechas a mano, plantando en cada posible pie cuadrado de tierra. Sin embargo cuando se trata de comestibles como el arroz, ellos no pueden competir con las grandes corporaciones estadounidenses que han establecido granjas mecanizadas en Hawai y Louisiana.

Una situación similar existe en gran parte de la América Central y del Sur, en África y en otras partes de Asia. Donde los campesinos fueron una vez la gran mayoría de la población, ahora están siendo reducidos a trabajar como ayudantes en las grandes corporaciones agropecuarias o a totalmente abandonar la tierra.

Muchas veces las tierras de estos campesinos arruinados son compradas por compañías extranjeras, las cuales plantan cultivos de exportación para ser vendidos a naciones más ricas. Los países más pobres pierden tanto la tierra como los campesinos criollos.

Todo el mundo sabe que ha habido un gran flujo de gente de las áreas rurales de América Central y Méjico hacia los Estados Unidos en años recientes. En las ciudades grandes de costa a costa, aquellos que limpian las cocinas de restaurantes y llenan las estanterías de los supermer-

cados por menos del salario mínimo fueron una vez campesinos del sur de la frontera. En gran parte indocumentados, ellos han sido forzados a dejar sus hogares por millares y arriesgarlo todo al cruzar la frontera. Este proceso se agudizó después que el Tratado de Libre Comercio Norteamericano inundó el área con maíz y granos más baratos de los Estados Unidos.

Años antes del TLC los Estados Unidos organizó y pagó sangrientas contra revoluciones en Nicaragua, Guatemala y El Salvador. La destrucción de los movimientos de liberación fue la llave para "abrir" sus economías a los productos estadounidenses.

Los imperialistas prometieron que "el libre comercio" traería desarrollo a los países azotados por la pobreza y el subdesarrollo, el legado del colonialismo. Sí, ahora hay lujosos complejos turísticos, como Cancún en México—pero esta zona tiene su propio puerto marítimo y aéreo para que los turistas puedan entrar y salir sin tener que pasar por el mar de pobreza que la rodea y que sigue empeorando.

Con la ruptura de la reunión en Cancún, los banqueros que controlan al comercio mundial están irritados. John Llewellyn, jefe economista mundial del banco de inversiones Lehman Brothers en Londres dijo, "El largo plazo es malo para el crecimiento mundial. Solo si los países en desarrollo crecen es que podrán comprar de nosotros." (New York Times, 15 de septiembre).

Un comentario elocuente. El crecimiento es para un sólo propósito. No para dar de comer al hambriento. No para albergar al desamparado. No, el crecimiento es para que otros países puedan comprar más de los imperialistas productores y así llenarles sus arcas bancarias con dinero.

La Habana fue como Cancún—una isla de privilegio sirviendo a los turistas afluentes—antes de la Revolución Cubana. La mayor prioridad de esa gran transformación social fue el llevar al campo maestros de alfabetización, médicos, viviendas decentes, agua potable e higiene, y el fin del sistema de plantación.

La era capitalista comenzó en el mundo con la desarticulación de los grandes latifundios en Europa al agarrar la burguesía el poder político y reducir el espacio de sus rivales, la nobleza. Hoy, los latifundios han vuelto, pero están organizados como fábricas y emplean trabajo asalariado en vez de siervos. Así como en la manufactura, los monopolios capitalistas que controlan la agricultura estadounidense de hoy—empresas gigantescas como ConAgra, Archer Daniels Midland y Cargill—ganan eficiencia por la aplicación de la revolución científico-tecnológica a la agricultura, al igual que mermando operaciones y dividiendo tareas.

Sin embargo, su motivación abrumadora es la de obtener ganancias, lo cual envenena todo lo que toca. La búsqueda incansable del capital por aumentar siempre sus ganancias lo impulsan a adoptar nuevas tecnologías como la de los pesticidas tóxicos y alimentos transgénicos, antes de que se haya comprobado adecuadamente su impacto en el medio ambiente y su efecto en la salud.

Lo impulsan a capturar y dominar los mercados en todos los rincones del mundo, de la misma manera que lo hace el capital industrial y financiero.

Lo impulsa a sembrar hectáreas y hectáreas de flores en América Central, donde los campesinos arruinados están mendigando pan, porque las flores se pueden enviar rápidamente desde allí durante todo el año a mercados para gente adinerada en los Estados Unidos.

Ha impulsado la destrucción de los bosques tropicales de Honduras porque las cadenas estadounidenses de restaurantes de comida rápida encuentran más económico cortar los bosques para crear espacio para pastar ganado, a pesar de que los terrenos que experimentan esta transformación duran solo pocos años antes de que las lluvias erosionen la frágil capa superficial del suelo, creando un desierto donde anteriormente había un tesoro de diversidad biológica.

La agricultura de pequeña escala está desapareciendo al igual que desaparecieron las forjas locales y los pequeños negocios familiares. La producción de alimentos sí debe establecerse sobre una base científica, con máquinas que hagan tanto del trabajo más duro como sea posible. La vida de un trabajador del campo es dura y peligrosa, y los agricultores pequeños y endeudados nunca saben si la próxima cosecha será suficiente para llegar hasta la estación siguiente.

Lo que se necesita es una solución socializada adaptada a los requisitos del pueblo como productores y consumidores de comestibles.

Toda revolución socialista hasta hoy ha tenido que llevar a cabo una reforma agraria que no había sido terminada bajo el régimen burgués. Gobiernos de trabajadores quitaron tierras a los terratenientes semi-feudales—en Rusia y en China— o a las empresas extranjeras agropecuarias, como en Cuba, y lo repartieron entre los campesinos. Pero el paso siguiente fue convertir la agricultura en una más productiva y eficiente.

En la Unión Soviética, la colectivización de la agricultura tomó lugar en los años 1920 cuando había un gran retraso material y una agitación política que condujo a la resistencia por parte de muchos de los campesinos. Por eso es aún más importante hoy, cuando muchas de las empresas estatales han sido desarticuladas y vendidas a capitalistas, que las fincas colectivizadas han seguido intactas en muchas partes de la ex Unión Soviética. A pesar de que promulgaron leyes ofreciendo incentivos a campesinos para que dejaran los colectivos—y algunos lo hicieron— el cultivo a pequeña escala fue tan difícil y poco productivo que el intento de desarticular los colectivos se ha estancado.

La pregunta que enfrenta la humanidad ahora no es si es o no posible producir suficiente alimento para toda la población mundial. Esto ya se puede hacer—a pesar de las predicciones terribles de Malthus. El problema es cómo deshacernos del capitalismo y crear un nuevo orden social justo, para que todo el mundo pueda tener los recursos para comer alimentos nutritivos y que nadie sea explotado o explotada para las ganancias de unos pocos. □

REGRESEN las TROPAS A CASA AHORA



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14 de julio del 2003

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