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**WHILE TALKING 'SELF-RULE'**

**Bush escalates bombing  
of Iraqi civilian areas**

By Leslie Feinberg

Secretary of State Colin Powell and other representatives of U.S. imperialist interests are admitting publicly that their fortunes are sagging in Iraq. While talking about "self-rule" as the path to stability there, they are pounding the population with "Operation Iron Hammer."

But the full-scale, high-tech warfare only appears to be forging the resolve of guerrilla resistance and arousing broad and deep outrage against the imperialist occupation.

The Pentagon's military offensive was unleashed on Nov. 12 with more force than at any time since the end of major Pentagon combat operations.

The Air Force is raining down some of the largest ordnance in its stockpile of weapons of mass destruction on the Iraqi population—including a pair of 2,000-pound, satellite-guided bombs dropped near Baquda, 30 miles northeast of Baghdad, on Nov. 18. Bombers also dropped 500-pound explosives there while U.S. jets and gunships blasted buildings and countryside.

Fighter-bombers also dropped half-ton bombs near the northern city of Kirkuk.

During the operation, sites in and around downtown Baghdad were hit with a massive bombardment of 105-mm cannon fire launched from warplanes or helicopters. F-16 fighter jets dropped two huge bombs near the town of Samara, north of Baghdad. 4th Infantry Division soldiers detonated two 500-pound, satellite-guided warheads in Tikrit, leveling buildings. U.S. jet strikes battered central Iraq.

Families are caught in mortar and tank fire. Homes are being ransacked and an indeterminate number of individuals are being rousted from their beds, hooded and taken away by U.S. troops. No Pentagon statistics are being offered about how many Iraqis have been injured or killed.

Yet despite this sheer overwhelming force, the insurgency is intensifying and U.S. occupation forces have taken some of the heaviest casualties since the war began.

"Using modern communication, insurgents show signs of nationwide reach and networked control," U.S. officials say. And Pentagon military experts admit that faced with guerrilla resistance, they are losing some of the high-tech advantage they enjoyed in combat against conventional Iraqi forces. (Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 18)

On Nov. 15, 17 Fort Campbell soldiers died in a fiery crash when two Black Hawk helicopters collided over Mosul after one of the helicopters reportedly maneuvered to get out of the line of ground fire.

Newly ferreted out Pentagon data reveals the number of U.S. casualties since the invasion of Iraq—including troops killed, wounded or evacuated due to injury or illness—at more than 9,000, according to United Press International's Mark Benjamin. (Democracynow.org, Nov. 18)

The Bush administration is taking political flak for this military morass at home and abroad.

Domestically, according to a new poll, a majority—55 percent—in the U.S. believe Washington "went to war on the basis of incorrect assumptions"; 87 percent say the White House portrayed Iraq as an imminent threat before the war, and 58 percent believe the administration did not have evidence for this. (AlterNet.org)

Domestic approval for U.S. handling of the war has plummeted to 42 percent from a high of 80 percent when U.S. tanks rolled into Baghdad in late April. Overall, 55 percent of those polled disapproved of Washington's handling of the post-combat phase of the war. In the Vietnam War, U.S. troops had

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Grocery workers in Los Angeles are fighting the giant supermarket chains to save their health care.

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## Another sweet victory

# Mass. court lifts ban on same-sex marriage

By Preston Wood

Just months after a milestone decision in the U.S. Supreme Court striking down anti-sodomy laws, the highest court in Massachusetts ruled on Nov. 18 that the state's ban on same-sex marriage is unconstitutional. The court gave state lawmakers 180 days to come up with a way for same-sex couples to marry.

This landmark victory is the result of decades of struggle by the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement for equality and fundamental democratic rights. The decision strikes a blow against bigotry and represents a major setback for the whole racist, sexist, anti-gay and anti-labor right-wing movement in the U.S., which enjoys the full backing of the Bush administration.

The court's ruling cannot be appealed. Its strong words speak for themselves: "Whether and whom to marry, how to express sexual intimacy, and whether and how to establish a family—these are among the most basic of every individual's liberty and due process rights."

In addition, the court also specified that creating a separate class of marriage, such as "civil unions," would not be valid and is unacceptable.

The ruling will be far reaching and opens the door for advancing the fight for equality for LGBT people. Unless somehow defeated by right-wing forces in Massachusetts, same-sex couples would be able to marry in that state, then fight for recognition of their union outside of Massachusetts, thus setting the stage for more struggles around the country.

While marriage is usually portrayed in movies and on television as pure romance and love, many civil and human rights are involved. Can the male lover of a man dying inside a hospital remain at his side till the end? Can a lesbian mother have her children taken away by the courts simply because of her sexuality? Will a transgender couple be allowed to buy a home together or rent an apartment? Can same-sex couples share company benefits, such as health insurance and retirement funds? Can

one partner leave a house to the other partner when he or she dies?

These and other questions are at stake around the issue of same-sex marriage.

The reaction of the Bush administration to the ruling was as fast as it was predictable. "Marriage is a sacred institution between a man and a woman," Bush said, and vowed to work with Congress to "defend the sanctity of marriage."

Right-wing zealots, who have been pressuring the White House to support a constitutional amendment outlawing same-sex marriage, were also quick to call the decision an assault on the "American way of life" that threatens "the history and very soul of the country." (BBC News, Nov. 18)

Typically, the Bush administration characterizes this and other issues in sanctimonious religious terms, and even most liberal Democrats love to refer to the "sanctity" of marriage.

In reality, though, marriage is a civil union that exists under the principle of separation of church and state. The intentional blurring of this confuses many who support LGBT rights and abhor right-wing violence against LGBT people. Upcoming struggles to defend the meaning of this ruling, though, will demonstrate that supporting same-sex marriage rights helps build unity and thus strengthens all progressive and working-class struggles against the bosses.

It is well known that many of the wealthiest U.S. corporations donate millions to right-wing organizations each year, just to hammer away at working-class unity and the progressive movement by sponsoring bigotry, racism, sexism and anti-labor campaigns.

While this ruling will no doubt provoke a right-wing campaign against it, it will also spur others to unite in favor of equal rights for all. Just as women everywhere are mobilizing to fight back against attacks on a woman's right to choose, the LGBT movement and its allies will continue to push back the right wing. □

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## As strike lockout of grocery workers continues

# Anti-war activists launch solidarity food drive

By Preston Wood  
Los Angeles

In a militant show of solidarity, over 200 striking workers and their families joined community activists here for a rally and press conference Nov. 15 to support striking and locked-out grocery workers. These chain-store workers, members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, have been fighting back against the millionaire bosses' attacks on their wages and benefits. They are particularly opposed to cutbacks in health care coverage and a two-tier wage system.

The Community Action Project to Support Labor called the action. CAPSL was launched by the International ANSWER Coalition, a major anti-war and civil rights organization. The event took place at a Vons store in a working-class area of Los Angeles that is predominantly Black and Latino, and where community solidarity with the strikers is especially strong.

Except for pickets and their supporters, plus a large turn-out by local media, the store's parking lot was nearly empty. Shoppers are staying away in droves.

Speakers represented a broad outpouring of support from community activists and organizations. This support has been a crucial factor in the struggle against Vons, Ralphs and Albertsons. The corporate greed of three giant grocery chains is the issue here. Vons is the local affiliate of the Safeway chain; Ralphs is a division of Kroger.

John Parker of CAPSL, who is also a coordinator of the ANSWER Coalition in Los Angeles, led off the rally by calling for unwavering solidarity with the UFCW workers in their just struggle to defend wages and health care benefits. Parker announced the kickoff of a food drive with drop-off centers at several locations throughout the city.

"We have to remember that while they are waging war against the people of Iraq, they are waging a war against the working people here at home," he added. "Just

think about how losing healthcare will affect the families. We need to intensify our solidarity with these workers against the giant corporations that are trying to starve the workers out, even as the holidays approach."

He and other speakers were often interrupted with cheers, raised fists and chants like "One day longer, one day stronger!"

Ralph Franklin, vice president and business agent of UFCW Local 770 and a member of the Inglewood City Council, thanked the organizers for their solidarity. "We're not gonna give up! We work for corporations who make millions of dollars off our backs." Chanting "No justice, no peace," Franklin described what giving up would mean for the future of union families and for retirees.

While cameras from a large number of television stations zoomed in and cameras flashed, Parker then gave Franklin the first bag of food from truckloads donated to the striking workers by the community.

Also speaking were Juan Jose Gutierrez, a prominent leader in the struggle for immigrant rights and an organizer of Latino Movement USA. "We know if the corporations beat back our struggle, we all lose," said Gutierrez, "The name of the game is solidarity. An injury to one is an injury to all. We, the immigrant community, will be with you until the end."

Rev. Richard Byrd, a long-time progressive activist from KRST Unity Center for African Spirituality, saluted the strength of the workers. "It's getting to the point where they are forcing us to choose between feeding families and health care, and we cannot allow this to happen. This struggle will continue and we will be victorious."

Other speakers included Margaret Prescod from Global Women's Strike, who described in vivid terms the effects of poverty on women and children; Cindy Cho from the Korean Immigrant Workers Advocate, a group that organizes low-wage workers in Koreatown; Linda Brewer, a community activist and welfare mother from Every Mother Is a Working Mother;



WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

Striking grocery worker leads chant: 'One day longer, one day stronger!'

and Ciel Sorenson, a well-known community activist and retiree.

Music from hip-hop artist Will Be roused the spirits of the crowd. As the trucks full of food drove away to deliver it to the union hall, the workers and all the

participants chanted together "Si se puede!" (It can be done!) and "No justice, no peace!"

The CAPSL organization is continuing the food drive. Another mass rally and food distribution will be held on Nov. 26, before

## San Diego march supports strikers

Approximately 100 demonstrators in San Diego, Calif., answered the call for a march on Nov. 15 in solidarity with the striking/locked out grocery workers. The march was initiated by San Diego Act Now to Stop War & End Racism (ANSWER) and the California Coalition Against Poverty.

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union have been struggling in negotiations with three giant corporations to simply maintain current pay and benefits, a modest position in light of the fact that corporate profits have risen 91 percent over the last four years.

Rally speaker Carl Muhammad, a leader of San Diego ANSWER, expressed



Carl Muhammad

WW PHOTO: RYAN McCLARY

solidarity with the picketing workers. "In this country, workers have never struggled and won their rights by playing inside the lines," he said. "It has always been hard struggles, it has always been serious struggles, it has always been these things that have won the rights of workers." Two protesters were arrested when the march took to the streets.

—David Tworowski

## In rich New Jersey county

# Mayor declares war on low-paid immigrants

By Gavrielle Gemma  
Freehold, N.J.

Monmouth County is one of the wealthiest in the U.S., with immense mansions, oceanside palaces and lavish malls. But tens of thousands of low-paid workers of all nationalities haul the garbage, build the homes, fix phones, staff stores and restaurants, clean houses, mind the children, rake the lawns and plant the flowers.

Among them are thousands of day laborers. The majority are immigrants, mostly from Mexico, driven here by U.S. imperialist destruction of their home economy. Many have been joined by their families in recent years.

While capital—money invested in exploitation of labor to reap profits—can cross any border, human beings without citizenship are branded as illegal. Many day laborers in this precarious situation never know if they will be deported.

The county seat is Freehold borough, whose mayor has declared war on these

workers. Mayor Wilson boasted recently of Freehold's "renaissance" with new homes and stores. The hard toil of workers, many of them day laborers, was responsible. But now Mayor Michael Wilson says that day laborers are ruining the quality of life in Freehold by gathering for work each morning at 5 a.m.

At a meeting between Wilson, the town council, police and so-called Homeland Security, members of the Human Rights Commission came to offer suggestions on improving the "muster zone" gathering area for the workers. Instead of hearing their ideas, the mayor issued an edict that as of Jan. 1, 2004, any day laborer standing in the muster zone or soliciting work anywhere in Freehold borough would face a \$500 fine or 30 days in jail.

Immigrant workers and people around the county are meeting with day-laborer organizers from towns that have successfully fought these types of measures. Monmouth County Residents for Immigrant Rights, initiated by the Central N.J.

Coalition for Peace & Justice, helps organize by reaching out to unions, religious and community groups and individuals in the area, and by leafletting in working-class areas.

Virginia McGlone, a Latina hospital worker and coalition organizer, says, "Throughout Monmouth County, workers of all races, Latino, African American and white, are being constantly pushed out of their towns through measures that restrict housing, and by rents and home prices out of reach. The millionaires who control Monmouth County are more than happy to have low-paid service workers provide all the luxuries of life for them, but do not want these workers living in 'their' towns.

"Towards this end Mayor Wilson is scapegoating immigrant workers in a blatantly racist way by promoting the idea that these responsible and hard-working men and their families threaten the jobs and lives of other workers, when in reality they add to the quality of our lives and make an enormous contribution to soci-

ety. It is the illegal abuse of immigrants by employers that brings down wages of all workers. Enforcing labor laws to protect immigrant workers will benefit the entire work force."

Rita Dentino, an organizer of the Monmouth committee representing the Combating Racism Taskforce of N.J. NOW, says, "Life is becoming increasingly difficult in Monmouth County. What we need are rent control laws, living wage laws, benefits, security and respect for all. If they can go through with this dangerous and unconstitutional order directed against one group of workers, our neighbors and friends, they can find ways to limit all of us who are not in their elite club. Working people in our county, of all races and nationalities, are struggling to make ends meet and we must unite together."

On Dec. 1 organizers are planning to attend a Freehold town meeting to demand the repeal of this racist, anti-working class edict. To contact the committee call (732) 409-3748 or email Ritaden@aol.com. □

## Protectionism or class struggle?

# With industry in crisis, steel retirees must choose

By Milt Neidenberg

It was once called the Steel Belt. A zone of fire-belching, sprawling plants stretched from industrial cities in Illinois and Ohio to Buffalo, N.Y., and Birmingham, Ala.

By 1998, the Steel Belt had become part of the Rust Belt, and now the industry has almost disappeared. Over 42 companies have declared bankruptcy and 50,000 steelworkers have lost their jobs. Nearly 240,000 retirees are struggling to survive—the victims of \$7 billion in unfunded pension plans wiped out by 17 of the steel companies. (United Steelworkers press release, Nov. 10)

Bethlehem Steel, once the second-largest steel corporation in the U.S., declared bankruptcy in October 2001. This year it was bought up by International Steel Group, which had earlier bought up LTV, at one time the sixth-largest steel company in the country. Wilbur Ross, owner of International Steel Group, is a speculator who could have picked up these plants only with capital provided by the big banks. In the old days, the Morgans and Rockefellers were the moneyed groups behind these smokestack industries, but then it was for the long haul.

### Trade war in the making

Who came galloping to the rescue of these companies? President George W. Bush. In March 2002, he ordered a protective wall built around the industry. His administration imposed a 30-percent tariff on steel imports for the following three years. Robert Zoellick, the U.S. global trade representative, told reporters that the “action the president is taking today can restore the strength and profitability of this very important American industry.” (cnn.com/europe, March 5, 2002)

What Zoellick left out was that Bush was offering a bribe to the steel bosses, guaranteeing their support for the 2004 election. In spite of warnings by his European imperialist allies, Britain in particular, as well as by South Korea, Brazil and others that they would retaliate against U.S. exports, Bush responded with contempt.

Now, 20 months later, his trade policies have taken a turn for the worse.

A day after the World Trade Organization ruled against Washington’s 30-percent steel tariff, threatening to slap about \$2.2 billion in duties on a number of U.S. exports, President Bush began to retreat. Karl Rove, his top political advisor and a strong proponent of the tariffs, now sees them as “more of a liability than a benefit,” said “one person familiar with administration thinking on the issue.” (Wall Street Journal, Nov. 12)

The retreat couldn’t have come at a worse time for the Bush administration, with the 2004 election getting closer. The steel corporations and their allies in such key states as Pennsylvania, Ohio and Illinois are whipping up opposition to any givebacks on the tariffs.

### Workers trapped by USWA protectionist policy

Lobbying in cooperation with the protectionist wing of the ruling class is a bankrupt strategy. Unfortunately, the



top leadership of the USWA, the steelworkers’ union, continues to join hands with the steel bosses and their conservative anti-union coalition in order to oppose reductions in the tariffs. They believe tariffs would provide some relief for their members, particularly the hundreds of thousands of retirees whose health care, insurance and pension benefits are being threatened and in some cases eliminated.

Not true. As far back as March 2002, when Bush imposed the tariffs, top administration officials stated they would not back a \$10-billion bailout that would cover retirees’ health care and life insurance costs. (cnn.com/europe, March 5, 2002) Yet the union continued to organize rallies and marches in support of the tariffs.

On Nov. 10, following the decision to roll back the tariffs, USWA President Leo W. Gerard issued a statement appealing to President Bush in which he said: “Will he exercise his sovereign rights as president to protect the jobs and survival of the entire American steel industry, or will he knuckle under to the threat of economic blackmail being leveled by the European Union.”

Appealing to the protectionist wing of the Bush administration won’t save a single steelworker’s job nor retiree’s pension and health care benefits. Gerard should know better.

### How workers got short-changed

The steelworkers were early victims of the high-tech revolution.

The longest strike in the history of the steelworkers was over new technology that would soon engulf the industry—the Basic Oxidizing Furnace (BOF). After the 116-day strike ended in 1960, the giant companies ushered in this technological revolution, which transformed the method of steelmaking. It eliminated a century-old process based on giant integrated steel plants. Today, the huge blast furnaces, which made pig iron from iron ore using filthy coal-burning coke ovens, are gone, along with the multitude of open-hearth furnaces that eliminated the impurities in the pig iron and cooked it into steel ingots. The steel was then cooled, reheated and shaped at the rolling mills into products for a multitude of industries.

This integrated process that made work for hundreds of thousands of steelworkers is a thing of the past.

With the new process, an iron-ore pellet is transported directly to the BOF, which produces steel ingots using bolts of intense heat and oxygen in a complex, computerized process.

In addition, mini-mills built by the Nucor Co. have competed effectively by producing steel cheaper. They make it from scrap iron with non-union labor.

Overproduction has produced a continuing worldwide glut in the steel industry. Plant closings, mergers and massive layoffs have accelerated to this day. This is what caused the crisis for the steelworkers. The USWA was once a powerful union and the leader in the trade union politics of the early 20th century. It has now become a barebones union.

While USWA President Gerard is correctly sending steelworkers to Miami to oppose the NAFTA and FTAA trade agreements and the WTO, he has fallen into the trap of supporting the steel tariffs as a solution. This is a disaster that will continue to leave steelworkers and retirees with a slimmed-down workforce and cuts in health, pension and insurance benefits for retirees and their families.

They deserve better for all the years of struggles and strikes having to do not only with wages and benefits but with working in intolerable heat, filth and dangerous conditions. Steelworker families molded their lives around the industry. Immigrants and descendants of immigrants from Europe first flooded into the steel plants. When African American workers were hired later, they were discriminated against and placed into the most difficult, dangerous and dirtiest jobs that paid less.

Living near these dirty, smoky areas and having to adjust to around-the-clock schedules was a tough lifestyle that broke up sleeping, eating and social arrangements.

Their labor is immortalized in the massive bridges, skyscrapers, railroads and other structures embedded in the infrastructure of this country. The steelworkers and retirees are entitled to live out their lives with decent health care and pension benefits. Retirees constitute a majority of steelworkers today. They can change the direction of the union.

The labor movement in general is now resisting health care cuts at the workplace—for example, the Los Angeles food workers’ strike/lockout. This struggle is spreading. Over 41 million people in this country are without medical coverage and need the support of the labor movement.

USWA President Leo Gerard has supported universal health care, but to rally the rank and file around this critical issue he must break with Bush and the steel bosses and take the independent, class-wide road.

History has confirmed for steelworkers who their class enemy is.

The USWA must offer international unity to sisters and brothers in the metal unions abroad and break the isolation that comes from its protectionist policy. Most important for a class-wide struggle is the indictment of the capitalist system that brutally rejects the rights and legacies of the working class.

Milt Neidenberg worked at Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, N.Y., from 1950 to 1965. At the peak of production, the plant employed 20,000 workers. It is now closed. □

# ON THE

## Mass. workers fight takeaways

More than 700 members of UAW Local 4069 at Saint-Gobain Abrasives Inc. in Worcester rejected the company’s contract proposal on Nov. 5. It tied future pay to raises in performance criteria that the workers called unfair. Workers are also demanding better health benefits and changes in work hours.

Saint-Gobain is part of the Paris-based Compagnie de Saint-Gobain, which owns 1,000 companies, employs more than 172,000 workers worldwide and banks more than \$31.7 billion in sales annually. As part of joining the UAW in August 2001, representatives of the union met with fellow workers in Paris and French unionists visited Worcester.

“We’ve been willing to give, and everything the company’s been doing has been takeaways,” Anthony Quitadamo, a 30-year employee and member of the union bargaining committee, told the Worcester Telegram & Gazette. (Nov. 6)

For example, Saint-Gobain changed workers’ health insurance options this year, despite three months of negotiations. The union asserts that the cut in benefits was illegal.

## Don’t cross Borders picket line

The unfair labor practice strike at the Borders flagship bookstore in Ann Arbor, Mich., is into its second week. Members of UFCWU Local 876 are demanding a living wage, affordable benefits and respect on the job.

According to the flyer strikers are handing out, the average worker makes \$8.50 an hour and many can’t afford health insurance on such substandard wages. In contrast, Borders president and CEO Gregory Josefowicz made over \$1.2 million last year. That’s \$586.50 an hour for a 50-hour week, which, notes the flyer, “is more than the top paid employee at the [store] makes in a week.”

The workers have been negotiating ever since they voted in the union in December 2002. But management hasn’t met any of their demands for benefit improvements, consultation with the workers before any cuts or changes in benefits, seniority rights, generally improved working conditions and increased wages—beyond an annual 3 percent raise.

The workers hit the bricks, says the flyer, “because Borders has repeatedly violated federal labor law and engaged in bad faith bargaining.” That the company refuses to treat the workers with respect is “an insult to its workers and their families.”

The workers ask supporters to boycott the more than 400 Borders bookstores nationwide, as well as Waldenbooks and Amazon.com, and to call the Ann Arbor store (734-668-7652) or the corporate headquarters (734-477-1100) to express support for the boycott. More information about the strike and an online petition can be found at [www.bordersunion.org](http://www.bordersunion.org).

## Michigan nurses on strike for one year

More than 500 nurses affiliated with the Teamsters union have held a work stoppage at Northern Michigan Hospital in Petoskey for the past year. They’re demanding higher wages, more benefits, an end to forced over-



# Protest hits cuts in education

By Cheryl LaBash  
 Detroit

time, overall better treatment and more staff. They say patients suffer because they're so short-handed and over-worked.

One striker, who worked in the hospital's cardiovascular unit for 19 years, told the New York Times, "We were literally a bunch of dogs that had been kicked by their owner for years and years." (Nov. 16)

The NMH management refuses to negotiate. That doesn't make it popular in the small resort on Lake Michigan. Signs on front lawns all over town demand "NMH negotiate."

## Don't rob workers of overtime pay

After an AFL-CIO campaign this summer, both houses of Congress voted recently to block the Department of Labor's new overtime regulations. Actually, there's nothing new about those regs. Designed to send workers back 70 years, the rules would strip more than 8 million workers of time-and-a-half pay for overtime.

But that vote hasn't stopped the administration from trying to rob the workers of what's rightfully theirs. Bush has vowed to veto any legislation protecting workers' rights.

The AFL-CIO has initiated a massive calling campaign to senators and representatives, demanding they not come home for the holidays unless they protect overtime pay ([www.unionvoice.org](http://www.unionvoice.org)).

What would really grab Bush's attention—and maybe make him back off—would be a demonstration of some of those fighting-mad 8 million workers at the White House demanding no cut in overtime pay.

Thanks to Cheryl LaBash and Bryan G. Pfeifer for source materials.

Elementary school students, anti-war activists and broadcast workers demonstrated outside WDIV Channel 4 on Nov. 11. On the dark street, they voiced issues that had been excluded from a meeting inside of a hand-picked studio audience with Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm. The demonstration was initiated by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice, whose banner read, "Rebuild our cities, don't destroy Iraq's—Money for schools, health care, housing and jobs, NOT WAR."

Faced with a \$900-million budget cut,

the governor had proposed lowering per-pupil school funding by \$200. This would further maim a public education system that lacks books, computers and safe and healthy school facilities, especially in African American, Latino and rural areas. The cuts starkly contrast with Granholm's election promise to make education her first priority. She even promised laptop computers to students—a promise not forgotten by the youth, who chanted, "What do we want—laptops!" and "T-E-C-H-N-O-L-O-G-Y, what does that spell?"

The televised special was part of a statewide tour touted by the governor as democratically consulting the people for their opinions on what services should be cut.



WW PHOTO: CHERYL LABASH

WDIV workers were wondering why the governor, elected with strong labor support, decided to use Channel 4 while it refuses to bargain in good faith with their union. □

## Mostly LGBT youth of color

# Cops attack anti-brutality activists

By Imani Henry  
 New York

By all eyewitness accounts, what happened in a Brooklyn neighborhood in the early morning hours of Sunday, Nov. 16, was a scene out of the newsreels of the 1950s. Young Black women, running from police, were knocked to the pavement and clubbed. Pepper gas was sprayed indiscriminately into a crowd on the sidewalk. You could hear a person's head being banged repeatedly on the hood of a police cruiser.

It was supposed to be a festive night. Up to 100 people attended a fundraiser at the office of Critical Resistance, a national grassroots organization dedicated to the abolition of the prison-industrial complex. This private fundraiser was attended by young adults from the social justice movements in New York. They were overwhelmingly people of color, and also mostly from the lesbian, gay, bi and trans movement.

At 2:00 a.m., three white plain-clothes police entered the office and began harass-

ing partygoers. Without identifying themselves, they confiscated several people's IDs and tried to take a guest list near the front door. The partygoers, the majority themselves activists against police brutality, remained calm but asserted their rights against unlawful search and seizures.

Within minutes, over 25 police vehicles arrived at 968 Atlantic Ave. and the police unleashed a wave of violence. In the end, eight activists were arrested, dozens more injured. According to a press release from Critical Resistance, "Over 20 people were experiencing effects of the pepper spray that was erratically sprayed into the air by the officers. One individual was treated for a hematoma on his frontal skull, another for lower back spasms." Other injuries included lacerations and contusions, bruised ribs and a spinal injury.

All eight of the arrestees were people of color and included lesbian, gay, bi and trans people. They were taken to the 77th precinct. Those left behind, despite their injuries, sprang into action.

Lawyers sent to the jail pressured the police to provide medical treatment to the

eight. Emails and phone lists were activated, alerting the progressive movement. Media and jail solidarity committees were formed in the wee hours of the morning. Of great concern to those on the outside was the situation of a trans activist who was held in isolation and taunted with anti-trans epithets for hours by police.

By midnight on Sunday, all eight were released and immediately seen by emergency medical service workers. Preliminary allegations against the eight include disorderly conduct, resisting arrest and inciting a riot, all of which are classified as misdemeanors.

At 11 a.m. on Monday, outside City Hall, close to 100 activists came to a press conference to show their solidarity and outrage. Speakers included two of the arrestees as well as Kai Barrows from Critical Resistance, Councilperson Charles Barron, and a representative from the LGBT youth-of-color group, FIERCE. All called for an end to racist, sexist, anti-LGBT police brutality. They demonstrated that unity across all forms of oppression is needed to win social justice. □

# Bush escalates bombing of Iraqi cities

Continued from page 1

been fighting and dying for more than three years before 53 percent of the people back home said the war was a mistake, observed USA Today, Nov. 18.

## Self-rule in Iraq: Made in USA

As wreckage of the Black Hawk helicopters burned on Nov. 15, U.S. occupation overlord L. Paul Bremer III announced that Washington had drawn up a blueprint to turn over authority to an Iraqi governing council in June 2004, and that elections would follow by the end of 2005. Bremer had just returned to Iraq after being hastily called back to Washington for an emergency meeting of the National Security Council about how to pull the occupation out of the quagmire.

Bremer is talking about handing over civilian authority, of course, not military authority. A hand-picked "sovereign" Iraqi government could then extend its "invitation" to the Pentagon to continue its military occupation.

The brass is not withdrawing militarily. According to the Nov. 13 Christian Science Monitor, "In nondescript offices inside the Pentagon, military planners are already projecting troop deployments to Iraq as far out as 10 years."

This political move is meant to blunt the rising tide of anti-war opposition, as well as signaling to its imperialist allies that Washington—the "unilateral" warlord—may be ready to make some concessions to win their support.

The European imperial powers would like the cover of an "invite" by a relatively stable Iraqi puppet government, too. France and Russia, however, are pressing Washington to fashion the semblance of "self-rule" within six weeks—before U.S. finance capital can fasten all its own strings to that puppet government.

Right after the National Security Council meeting, top officials of the Bush administration fanned out internationally for a full-court press. They undoubtedly wanted to blunt criticism of the latest escalation by signaling that the U.S. was ready to make some concessions, more than just verbal, to get out of the mess that they're in.

## Rolling up the welcome mat

Cannons were booming in London, too—a 41-gun salute at Buckingham Palace on Nov. 19 to honor the arrival of President George W. Bush in the first official state visit by a U.S. president. Pomp and ceremony had to be severely scaled

back, however, because popular anti-war outrage threatened to drown out the drone of pageantry.

The largest security force assembled in London since World War II locked down the capital. Yet anti-war protests, expected to grow immense, began as soon as Bush touched down on the isle of his staunchest ally. And protest leaders won their demand to march past Parliament.

On Nov. 16, Marco Calamai, Italian special counselor of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, publicly quit his post, criticizing Bremer for his handling of the occupation. Across Italy, virtually the entire population observed a national day of mourning on Nov. 17 for the 19 Italian soldiers killed Nov. 12 in Iraq, with strong anti-war overtones.

Powell went to Brussels to work on NATO support for the occupation, particularly Germany and France.

The imperialist governments of Europe, whether led by social democrats or parties further to the right, are under enormous pressure from the anti-war masses at the same time that competition among capitalist rivals worldwide is growing more intense. They are not allies of the liberation struggle of the Iraqi people, but they also don't want to see Wall Street and

the Pentagon rule the roost there.

Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder's Social Democrats have penned a resolution rejecting Washington's doctrine of "pre-emptive" military strikes. (Expatica Germany, Nov. 18)

In France, Francois Heisbourg, director of the Paris-based Foundation for Strategic Research, said of Washington's plan for Iraqi "self-rule": "This very basic change in American strategy can be summed up in two words: Too late." And French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin dodged questions about sending troops to Iraq. ([commondreams.org](http://commondreams.org), Nov. 17)

The Philippine government said it is considering pulling its troops out of Iraq if they are threatened. (Riyadh Daily, Nov. 18)

As the problems for the expansion of the U.S. empire multiply around the world, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made his first visit to Asian military allies.

"But the close Japanese elections last week, ongoing instability in Iraq after 19 Italians were killed, and a speedier timetable for Iraqi independence have quickly turned Asian allies much cooler about their involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom," the Nov. 18 Christian Science Monitor concluded. □

## Outside Camp Lejeune

# Pickets support imprisoned Marine resister

By Minnie Bruce Pratt  
Camp Lejeune, N.C.

A group of activists held up anti-war signs on a busy street corner on Nov. 15—an increasingly common sight as more and more people oppose the U.S. war on Iraq. But this street corner was in Jacksonville, N.C., home to Camp Lejeune, the largest Marine Corps base in the world. Marines have trained here to fight in Korea, Vietnam, Lebanon and now Iraq.

The thousands of people who drove by and saw the signs were connected in some way to a base that has an active-duty, dependent, retiree and civilian employee population of nearly 150,000 people.

Soldiers and their loved ones have been part of anti-war demonstrations since before the invasion of Iraq began. But the Nov. 15 day of action marked a new phase in the movement as anti-war activists brought the struggle against the war to a military-dominated base town in the South.

The demonstrators came to demand freedom for Stephen Eagle Funk, an openly gay Filipino Marine who is imprisoned in Camp Lejeune. He is the first known member of the U.S. armed services to be jailed for refusing to serve in Iraq.

Funk, a Marine Corps reservist, refused to deploy with his unit because of his opposition to the war. When his unit was activated, he continued his efforts to file for conscientious objector status and engaged in anti-war work, speaking out at rallies and marches.

On April 1, he turned himself in at his unit in San Jose, Calif., where he was charged with desertion and unauthorized absence.

In a statement about his actions, Funk said, "In the face of this unjust war based on deception by our leaders, I could not remain silent. In my mind that would have been true cowardice. ... I spoke out so that others in the military would realize that they also have a choice and a duty to resist immoral and illegitimate orders. You don't have to be a cog in the machinery of war."

On Sept. 6, in a victory for anti-war activism, he was acquitted of the desertion charge. But Funk was convicted of unauthorized absence.

He was sentenced to six months in the brig at Camp Lejeune.

### SNAFU: the answer to "Situation Normal All Fouled Up"

On Nov. 15, activists met with Stephen Funk, rallied in protest and held a teach-in on health issues related to depleted uranium weapons.

The day of action was initiated by SNAFU—Support Network for an Armed Forces Union—a group that provides "support for U.S. military personnel and their family members who have questions about or oppose unjust wars and military aggression." (www.join-snafu.org)

SNAFU offers information to military personnel and potential recruits about their rights. It also seeks to counteract military recruitment that manipulates vulnerable young people.

The International Action Center-New York and Queers for Peace and Justice both worked with SNAFU to bring two van-loads of participants to the day of action, including students, labor unionists and former members of the U.S. military,

Some Marines entering Camp Lejeune gave the thumbs-up to these supporters of Stephen Funk.

PVN PHOTO: BARBARA PACHECO

from the peace-time draft of the late 1950s to the volunteer army of the 1980s. Local activists from the Jacksonville area, students from the Raleigh/Durham-based North Carolina Campus Greens and the Student Peace Action Network (SPAN) also organized for the actions.

Gloria Pacis, Funk's mother, traveled with the delegation to North Carolina. Pacis had struggled against the U.S.-backed, neo-colonial Marcos regime in the Philippines.

Responding to the recent announcement that the Pentagon will mobilize up to 265,000 additional members of the Army Reserve and National Guard, Pacis issued a message to the people of Jacksonville: "We share a common weariness when we hear that President Bush has committed thousands of more troops to the Iraqi occupation. ... But you, the citizens of a military town ... more so than the rest of the nation, feel the anxiety when the news announces the latest reports of casualties in Iraq."

Funk was sentenced two days before the Pentagon announced the reservist call-up.

### Growing resistance

One soldier who had been on unauthorized leave for 11 years was recently sentenced to one month in jail. But Funk, absent for 47 days and in contact with his unit at all times, was sentenced to six months. SNAFU organizers believe his stiffer penalty was intended to discourage resistance among U.S. reservists growing increasingly unhappy with the U.S. war.

On Nov. 15, Pacis and others in the delegation met with Funk during crowded visiting hours at the Camp Lejeune brig.

Inside, prisoners sat opposite their visitors on benches at formica-covered tables while guards paced back and forth.

Funk, in an orange prison jumpsuit, was in strong spirits and talked of his continued resistance to the war. He has gotten over 700 letters of support from 11 countries and almost every state in the U.S. Because some of the prisoners in the brig don't get mail, he has offered them his letters to read. He said that the other Marines are intensely interested in hearing about the anti-war point of view from which they have been isolated during their time in service. Funk can receive letters addressed to him at: Bldg. 1041, PSC 20140, Camp Lejeune, NC 28542.

Funk explained that many of those locked up in the brig have been to Iraq and the majority of them are against the war. Some say that on their way to the war they had thought it was wrong, and being in Iraq made their opposition even stronger. Funk reported that when the prisoners see television coverage of the war, they react with skeptical jeers and comments like, "What they need is 'Operation Get Your Facts Straight!'"

Although guards have harassed him, he said that he has encountered virtually no anti-gay sentiment from other prisoners. At meal times he shares his photo album of protest marches with them. There were three "Freedom for Stephen Funk" lesbian, gay, bi and trans contingents at the recent October 25th national anti-war demonstrations, carrying banners with



slogans like "Money for Jobs, AIDS & Housing, Not for War and Occupation."

### Refusing to kill for biggest superpower

Others in the brig are also resisters, though not directly incarcerated for that reason. A friend has told Funk of being ordered to fire on an Iraqi family emerging from their house with their hands up. The private refused repeated orders to fire, and yelled out to the other soldiers to hold fire. Funk noted that this soldier was not disciplined for his refusal, perhaps for fear of drawing attention to his resistance. Instead the soldier ended up in the brig for a small offense. There he has repeatedly told Funk that he is so glad that he did not fire.

Funk's message to those now in the service is: "Military training is designed to overcome your human bond with other people. But nothing will be worse than doing what is wrong and then having to live with that."

To the reviving anti-war movement, Funk said: "We're up against the biggest superpower in the world, so of course we can get discouraged sometimes. Stay positive!"

He told Workers World he is eager to rejoin the anti-war demonstrations. His sentence is up in February 2004, in time for the March 20th Global Day of Action marking the first anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Leaving the brig, the visiting activists heard an African American woman say that she'd just moved to the base to take care of her brother, jailed there. He had committed relatively minor but repeated offenses, which would result in his discharge, and told her: "I did them because I wanted to come home."

Who knows how many soldiers and sailors are in U.S. armed service prisons because they have committed the same, invisible resistance? And on active duty, there may be many thousands trying in similar ways to "come home" out of an enlistment they were forced into by economic desperation and the poverty draft.

While some were visiting Stephen Funk, other activists stood in front of Wal-Mart and First Citizens Bank at the busiest intersection in Jacksonville.

Thousands of motorists saw more than a dozen people holding placards that bore slogans such as "\$ for vets and not for war," "Bring the troops home," "Big Oil gets rich while GIs die."

The strength of this protest, and of the growing movement against the war in the U.S., was reflected in the fact that a group of counter-protesters was asked by the police to leave. These off-duty Marines had a professionally designed, pro-war banner but no permit to demonstrate. That they were forced to leave was one small sign that the military and the Bush administration are on the defensive, and didn't want to chance a confrontation that would give even more visibility to anti-war forces.

Activists stayed at the intersection for five hours. There were some vociferous and hateful catcalls aimed at them. But these were outnumbered by a steady stream of supportive car honks and thumbs-up, and by the many people who read the signs and turned to each other in their cars with great seriousness to talk over what they saw.

Judi Cheng of SNAFU said: "On the picket line, we were able to present views that military personnel are generally trained not to hold. People reacted with curiosity, with some trepidation, and with support for our slogans. We made it known that dissent is possible even in a military culture of enforced obedience."

Asked what he made of the many positive responses to the rally, Peter Gilbert of SPAN said, "This protest gives people a chance to rethink a situation that may have been seen by them as unchangeable in their daily lives."

The protest line was significant in its multi-national character. Camp Lejeune was notorious during the Vietnam war for the presence of the Ku Klux Klan and other racist groups that rampaged there. More

Continued on page 10

## Even in impoverished Afghanistan

# U.S. occupiers face sea of hostility

By Leslie Feinberg

Gen. John P. Abizaid, top gun in charge of Pentagon forces in the Middle East, has summoned his senior commanders to a meeting the week of Nov. 18 at Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Fla. He's bringing together Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps generals and admirals to discuss strategy for combating resistance in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Abizaid admitted at a Pentagon media briefing a week earlier that daily combat operations in Afghanistan "are every bit as much and every bit as difficult as those that go on in Iraq." (Inter Press Service, Nov. 18)

Clashes between U.S.-led forces and insurgents reportedly take place daily in the south and east of the country.

At least one U.S. Special Forces soldier was killed and another injured on Nov. 14 when their vehicle was hit by explosives in northeastern Afghanistan. The same day, at least three U.S. soldiers were killed when their vehicle struck a mine in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar.

U.S. military bases in the southeastern provinces of Paktia and Paktika have been hit with repeated rocket attacks. The outgoing Pentagon spokesperson in Afghanistan, Col. Rodney Davis, said that on Nov. 14 alone two U.S. military bases were under siege more than six times in 24 hours from long-range rocket fire. David declined to discuss possible casualties.

A U.S. military base near the city of Khost in eastern Afghanistan was hit with a barrage of rocket and machine gun fire on Nov. 16. While the number of dead or wounded was not announced, "Witnesses reported seeing helicopters landing inside the base, possibly to airlift casualties." (Deutsche Press-Agentur, Nov. 16)

And U.S. soldiers on patrol in the center of Kandahar, the country's main southern city, came under fire on Nov. 16.

Many of the roughly 11,000 Pentagon troops stationed in Afghanistan are highly trained Special Forces commandos. Eleven soldiers have been killed by hostile fire since August—almost a third of the 35 shot down since the Pentagon unleashed war against this impoverished country in October 2001.

"The situation is much more serious than a year ago," concluded Vikram Parekh, a Kabul-based senior analyst with the International Crisis Group, in an interview in the Washington Post on Nov. 16.

### United Nations packs up and leaves

The United Nations has pulled most of its staff out of Afghanistan after three attacks on the organization's employees and officials over the period of one week. The withdrawal followed the killing of a French official of the UN refugee agency in the city of Ghazni, 60 miles southwest of the capital.

The same day, a bomb blew up a UN vehicle in eastern Paktia province. And on Nov. 11, a car bomb detonated outside UN offices in the southern city of Khandahar as a delegation from the Security Council was visiting Afghanistan.

A Western security official who spoke to the Associated Press on condition of anonymity said there were strong indications the three attacks were coordinated, marking a sea change in resistance. (Nov. 18)

The 15-member UN Security Council voted unanimously in mid-October to authorize deployment of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) beyond the capital city of Kabul, to which its juris-

diction has been restricted since the Taliban's ouster two years ago.

"But the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is leading ISAF, has failed to persuade member countries to add to the 5,500-strong force," according to Asia Times Online.

Germany and Norway have agreed on paper to send troops to a few specific areas outside Kabul. But the fragile Karzai government, hunkered down in Kabul, is still dependent on U.S. combat troops to keep it from being overwhelmed by the insurgency.

### Who turned back the clock?

The Pentagon is still relying on sheer terror and overwhelming high-tech force to maintain its strategic position in Afghanistan.

The most recent casualties of U.S. Special Forces resulted during the second week of an offensive in the eastern province of Kunar and neighboring Nuristan province that includes searching homes.

Six Afghan civilians, including children, lost their lives Nov. 16 when a U.S. warplane bombed their home in eastern Afghanistan.

U.S. troops also killed six Afghan men in eastern Afghanistan on Nov. 15. Provincial Police Chief Dawlat Khan said the men were unarmed and died when U.S. aircraft bombed their truck.

U.S. military commanders have begun to acknowledge that, despite this brutal campaign, the Taliban and other anti-occupation forces have made significant gains in recent months. (Asia Times Online, Nov. 18)

Despite the military and political challenges that its occupation faces, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell vowed that the United States would "stay the course" in Afghanistan, as well as in Iraq.

Powell charged that supporters of the Taliban "want to turn the clock back" in Afghanistan.

Actually, it was the CIA that "turned back the clock." Afghanistan had a progressive revolution in 1978 that tried to carry out land reform and free women from feudal bondage. In the early summer of 1979 the CIA began covertly financing and arming landlord bands against it, according to admissions by former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski.

Then, in December 1979, the Afghan government asked the Soviet Union for troops. Washington could now claim it

was helping the Afghans against a "Soviet invasion," and forked out billions of dollars to create an army of fundamentalists, including Osama bin Laden, that finally overturned the revolutionary government in 1992. After four years of warfare among competing Afghan factions, the Taliban won out in 1996. Now these former allies of Washington are in its crosshairs.

Today, as winter strengthens its grip on Afghanistan, two years of U.S.-led war have left the country ravaged. Hunger, homelessness and disease are rampant. Its infrastructure is destroyed. Some 2.5 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan—an estimated 1 million more are still in Pakistan—and an estimated 500,000 people are still classified as "internally displaced."

### Sovereigns, not sovereignty

The European Union on Nov. 17 publicly welcomed the adoption of a draft constitution in Afghanistan, saying it was "essential that the international community continue fully to support the Afghan authorities and enable them to exercise effective power over the entire Afghan territory and to meet the immense challenge of reconstruction and peace." (eubusiness.com, Nov. 18)

Afghanistan enjoys no independence. When 500 delegates from the grand assembly meet in Kabul on Dec. 10 to debate the draft constitution, Canadian troops will provide their security. (paktribune.com, Nov. 18)

The hand-picked president, Hamid Karzai, doesn't rely on Afghan bodyguards—it's the job of U.S. private military contractor DynCorp to keep him alive.

Karzai is a former consultant with Unocal, the U.S.-based energy giant, that had planned a multi-billion-dollar, 890-mile-long natural gas pipeline project across Afghanistan from Central Asia to Pakistan.

Karzai is a royalist from the same clan as the country's former king, Mohammed Zahir Shah. "Mr. Karzai's critics have accused him of being an American stooge," observed a Nov. 18 BBC report, "particularly after the way in which the U.S. intervened ahead of the recent loya jirga (grand council) to announce that the former king would not oppose Mr. Karzai as a candidate for head of state." That announcement was made by Zalmay Khalilzad—at that time the special U.S. envoy, and today the U.S. ambassador to the country—the "Paul Bremer" of the imperial occupation of Afghanistan, and another former

Unocal consultant.

"As things stand now," a Nov. 17 New York Times editorial laments, the draft constitution "is no more than the Kabul City Charter."

Who will keep the boot heel on the necks of 25 million people who do not want to be U.S. colonial "possessions"?

Some 11,000 U.S. troops with unlimited firepower haven't been enough. Nor have some 5,000 NATO troops huddled in Kabul.

The Pentagon brass say they and their allies are training a national Afghan army and police force. But that "national" army still numbers little more than 5,000.

"The army's first U.S.-trained battalion, meant to have about 600 soldiers, has shrunk to just over 200," reported the Nov. 18 hollandsentinel.com. Low pay and poor equipment and morale have been cited.

Meanwhile, a UN-backed program is attempting to disarm former combatants or mujahideen. But there are an estimated 1 million weapons among the population. (msnbc.com, Nov. 18)

And powerful Afghan narco-landlords all have their own well-trained, heavily armed local militia.

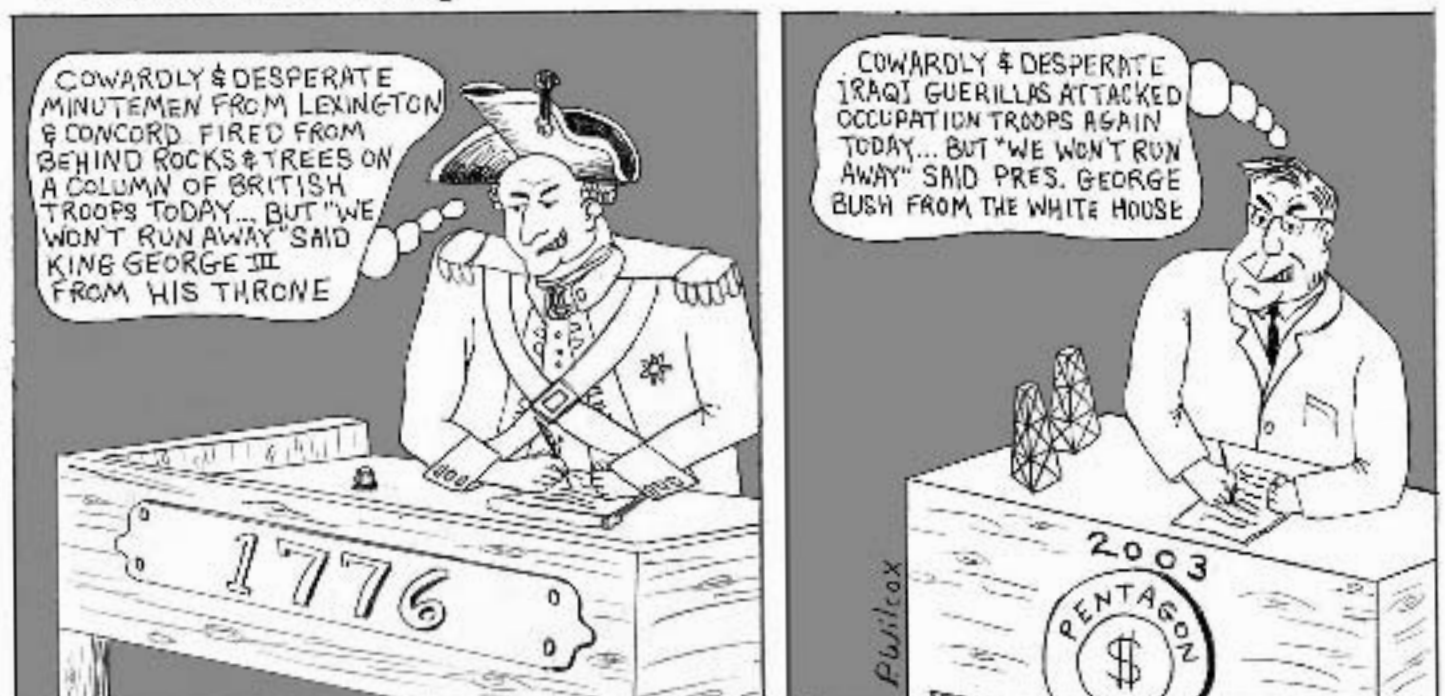
In the two years since the 2001 invasion began raining ordnance on the cities and countryside, opium production has skyrocketed 19-fold and the country has become the major source of the world's heroin. (Nicholas Kristof in the New York Times, Nov. 15) After the Taliban banned opium production in 2000, the 2001 crop was only 185 metric tons. The UN estimates that this year's crop weighed in at 3,600 tons—the second largest in the country's history.

The Karzai government is a fig leaf for the colonial-style occupation of Afghanistan.

Gary Leupp, an associate professor in Tufts University's Department of History, offers a lesson on imperial design. "Way back in 1857," he wrote, "Friedrich Engels (who made some very interesting observations about Afghanistan, then central to 'the Great Game' played out in Central Asia between Britain and Russia) described 'the attempt of the British to set up a prince of their own making in Afghanistan' in 1842, linking its failure to the Afghans' 'indomitable hatred of rule, and their love of independence.'"

"Like most of Marx and Engels' stuff," Leupp concluded, "it's probably on the net now; in his leisure time, in his Kabul office, surrounded by his Swiss Guard, Mr. Karzai might want to peruse it." □

### A little bit o' history





## 50,000 at European Social Forum

# Large youth turnout bolsters plans for anti-war, pro-labor struggles

Workers World managing editor John Catalinotto attended the European Social Forum held in Paris on Nov. 12-16. Over 50,000 people registered for the forum's discussions, many from outside France. According to organizers, some 100,000 people took part in a culminating march on Nov. 15.

### WW: For the U.S. movement, what was the most important result of the European Social Forum?

JC: The ESF decided in its final statement to call for a day of action on March 20, 2004, to end the occupation of Iraq and withdraw foreign troops. This means that the anti-globalization movements and all the other progressive movements making up the forum are on record to combat the continuing occupation of Iraq.

The ANSWER coalition in the U.S. on Nov. 10 and United for Peace & Justice a day or two later had announced plans for events that day in anticipation of ESF support. Most anti-war groups in the different countries had themselves made similar proposals. But now it is fully accepted. At the World Social Forum meeting in Mumbai (Bombay), India, in January 2004 this will again be discussed as a world day in the hope of spreading the action to Latin America, Asia and Africa.

The ESF also backed actions in defense of social programs now under attack in Europe. This means that the anti-globalization groups in Europe—which are far larger and more active than those in the U.S.—will work together with trade unions to protest against cuts to pensions, increased work hours, joblessness, and so on. Some of the trade unions are considering calling general strikes.

The ESF is a heterogeneous gathering of organizations, a “movement of movements.” Some of the more conservative groups would prefer the ESF to remain as a debating society and not take part in struggles. Those in groups more oriented toward struggle told me the approval of these two action initiatives was a victory for their current.

As the ESF unfolded, two outside events impacted the Iraq question. The British

Solidarity with U.S. death row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal in Paris march.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

Stop the War Coalition and its allies were mobilizing against Bush's visit Nov. 19-21. This had the potential of being a complete debacle for the Bush-Blair aggressive partnership. British MP George Galloway, now expelled from the Labor Party for his anti-war role, brought an ESF meeting of 1,000 people to excited cheering with his description of this coming event.

The other was the car bomb at the Italian base in Iraq. In Italy, the Silvio Berlusconi government used his monopoly of the media to try to whip up a patriotic fervor, with some success. But polls showed that 60 percent of Italians were for bringing the troops home and 40 percent said they were ready to join protests to achieve this.

Over a dozen Italy-based organizations attending the ESF, including the Refoundation Communist Party, joined to call for protest demonstrations on Nov. 22 all over Italy. They expect a strong turnout for the demand to bring the Italian troops back from Iraq now.

### Were you able to get an overall impression of the ESF, and what was it?

You have to realize how vast the event was and how difficult it was to get an overall impression. Tens of thousands of people were spread over five neighborhoods of the Paris suburbs—mostly the old “Red Belt,” that had elected Communist Party mayors for decades. Within each neighborhood were dozens of large and small meeting places, with large “plenary,” smaller “seminar” and even smaller “workshop” meetings scheduled sometimes a half-mile from each other.

People contrasted it to the Florence, Italy, meeting last year, where a single center in a much smaller city made access and travel easier.

The ANSWER steering committee had asked me to represent them at meetings of the European Anti-war Coordination. I



went to those and some related plenary sessions, plus a plenary on Latin America, a seminar on NATO's role, and a workshop on “The Energy Crisis and the War.” I took part in the Nov. 15 march and then the final “social movements” assembly Nov. 16. I also attended a spirited solidarity meeting with Cuba on Nov. 11 that was not officially part of the ESF.

Even this narrow selection of events with an anti-imperialist focus gives insight into the ESF, but there were over a thousand meetings of one sort or another that I couldn't attend, including all those on the environment, on union struggles, feminist, lesbian/gay/bi/transgender rights, immigrant and anti-racist struggles.

My overall impression is that there are vast numbers of young people, even in the imperialist countries, who want social justice and who hate war. A majority of them are ready to engage in some sort of struggle; they participated last winter in the mass anti-war actions and will fight the occupation of Iraq.

There is less clear solidarity with the struggle in Palestine for self-determination and the armed struggles, for example in Colombia, than with the more pacifist movements of what is called “civil society.”

There is some confusion about the role of the European imperialist countries, especially France and Germany, with many people believing this is a “kinder, gentler” imperialism.

Others argue that it only looks that way because the U.S. is such a military power and so aggressive. One of the few seminars raising this point strongly was one organized by the Communist Party of Greece, with participation of the CP of Turkey and the CP of Portugal and some other pro-

gressive forces. The speakers attacked both NATO and the idea of a European Union military force, showing it would be pro-imperialist.

The workshop's organizers invited me, as a representative of the International Action Center, to report on the Nov. 8 demonstration in The Hague supporting Slobodan Milosevic's defense of himself and of Yugoslavia in NATO's court. It was perhaps the only workshop where this issue would get a 100-percent friendly hearing.

Much of the political confusion on these issues stems from the position of the more social-democratic tendencies in the leadership of the ESF. These groupings used administrative maneuvers to limit discussions of Latin America—where there is revolutionary ferment—to only six significant meetings, and prevented Cuban participation in the ESF.

### You said there was a solidarity meeting with Cuba?

Last spring world imperialism carried out a broad propaganda attack on Cuba after the Cuban Revolution defended itself by cracking down on counter-revolutionaries. In Europe a bevy of lesser-known intellectuals attacked Cuba for its decisive defensive actions. Joining this attack were the leaders of the French Communist Party, of course every Socialist Party, and even the leader of the Refoundation CP in Italy and of the United Left in Spain, although many currents in these parties and many members would disagree.

In the end, the European Union put sanctions into effect against Cuba, a vicious imperialist attack on the Cuban people.

At a spirited, enthusiastic meeting in a packed union hall in the Pantin suburb on Nov. 11—prior to the official opening of the ESF—about 1,000 people heard groups from all over Europe and parts of Latin America express solidarity with Cuba. There were many French organizations, including former anti-Nazi partisans and some unions. But there was no official representative from any of the important French left parties, neither the Communist Party nor the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR-4th International), for example.

It was ironic that one of the best-selling items at the ESF was the Che Guevara T-shirt. Many young participants identified with Che as the heroic guerrilla fighter, and rightly so. Che's goal, though, was not to die fighting, but to win power for the workers and peasants, and he would expect the workers and peasants to defend this power with their new state.

People at the Latin American plenary were overjoyed to learn that there were forces within the United States—specifically in the International Action Center and the ANSWER Coalition—who organized solidarity with Cuba and with the five Cuban political prisoners held in the U.S. As one said, a struggle within the U.S. “gives us hope.”

And the ESF gives us hope, in the sense that a large gathering of progressive forces, youthful, many opposed to imperialist war or ready to fight to defend social gains or both, gives hope to those around the world who know that only by fighting for socialism can these goals be won. By joining in the debates, and even more so by joining in their struggles against today's rulers, we can advance the cause of socialism. □

## Rumsfeld gets an earful from Okinawa official

By Monica Moorehead

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's trip to Okinawa took an unexpected, humiliating turn on Nov. 16. Dispensing with the usual protocol of airing any complaints in private, the governor of Okinawa, Keiichi Inamine, presented war criminal Rumsfeld with a petition of grievances regarding the oppressive behavior of the U.S. military, which has occupied the island of Okinawa since the end of World War II.

Rumsfeld was forced to endure a humiliating 40-minute session in which Inamine highlighted some of the deplorable acts carried out by U.S. forces against Okinawans and their right to sovereignty. This was done in full view of the Japanese and foreign press. The session would have gone on longer if the very uncomfortable Rumsfeld had not asked

Inamine to stop.

Inamine told Rumsfeld and the invited press that “incidents and accidents caused by U.S. military personnel, and environmental problems stemming from the bases, have created enormous impacts on people's lives, while the facilities became the outstanding hindrance to urban development and economic promotion.” (New York Times, Nov. 17)

The petition reportedly states that 5,157 crimes were committed between 1972 and last December by U.S. troops, including the Pentagon's civilian employees and their dependents. According to the petition, these crimes include murder, robbery and sexual assault. In one of the few cases of atrocities brought to the light of day, in 1995, U.S. soldiers kidnapped and raped an Okinawan schoolgirl. The petition also includes concerns about noise pollution caused by the warplanes, the

level of U.S. military training on the island and the U.S. Navy's disregard for marine wildlife.

Okinawa was totally controlled by the U.S. until 1972, when the island was reverted back to Japanese rule. About 58,000 U.S. troops are based throughout Japan, with the largest concentration stationed in Okinawa, including Marines.

Rumsfeld is visiting a number of Asian governments hoping to get their commitment to send troops to Iraq to bolster besieged U.S. forces bogged down by the growing resistance to colonial occupation there. Japan was to have sent troops, but announced a delay after major casualties were inflicted on Italian military police stationed in southern Iraq.

Due to a growing, militant, anti-occupation movement at home, the South Korean government has reduced the number of troops it plans to send to Iraq. □



## Latest eruption of Latin American struggle

# Strike shuts down Santo Domingo

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

One more brick of the U.S. neoliberal imperialist castle south of Rio Grande is crumbling, shaken by the same quake of misery and hunger that is sweeping through the region of Latin America and the Caribbean.

On Nov. 11 the people of the Dominican Republic staged a 24-hour general strike that paralyzed the country in repudiation of the neoliberal policies of President Hipólito Mejía, a social democrat. Ten people were killed, at least 60 wounded and more than a thousand detained. This strike, on the heels of the one in Bolivia that deposed President Sánchez de Lozada, must have the imperialists thinking hard.

Workers World spoke about this development with Narciso Isa Conde, spokesperson of Fuerza de la Revolución (Force of the Revolution) in Santo Domingo. His organization is part of the National Popular Organizations Collective, an umbrella grouping of labor, women's, peasant, student and other organizations—60 in total—that called for the strike.

According to Isa Conde, this strike was the continuation of actions, based on the collective's principles of unity and struggle, that had begun with two national days of protest back in July and August. "It was probably the most successful strike in the last few years. Besides its strong popular character and being led by the most consistent and combative popular organizations—it had a strong participation of the left, particularly of the FR—it was able to unite almost all of Dominican society. This

was so because of the great crisis afflicting the economy, the political institutions, the traditional parties and the government."

Even in the capital, which has always been difficult to paralyze due to its big population and diverse composition, the strike was successful.

Asked about an apparent discrepancy in the number of deaths—seven to eight deaths were reported during the strike—Isa Conde explained that the media left out the military's Operation Centella and the police Operation Güaragüao. House searches that started two years ago under President Mejía, both are geared to intimidate the population with the excuse of seizing illegal weapons. The night before the strike, houses and offices were searched, including the central office where the strike was being coordinated. Two deaths resulted from this "special operation" and several people were wounded, including FR members.

### Deplorable conditions in Dominican Republic

"The demands most felt by all the population were opposition to the impending Dominican Republic-IMF agreement, the increased cost of living, and the frequent blackouts that have lasted between 15 hours to two days; they want the recovery of privatized companies, particularly in the energy sector, and an increase of wages. All these are combined with a feeling of indignation against the government," said Isa Conde.

Unemployment is officially 27-30 percent in the Dominican Republic, but

underemployment is higher. Some 40 percent of the peasant are underemployed. Poverty is around 70 percent. In the two years since President Mejía took office, the peso has been devalued from 17 to a dollar to the current 40 pesos to a dollar. Prices of foodstuffs and other basic items have skyrocketed. Gasoline has increased tremendously also, with the national energy system at the brink of collapse.

In the precarious delivery of services, privatization has added more misery. Hospitals run out of materials and the price of medicines has tripled. There is an acute crisis in the system that provides drinkable water as the contamination and degradation of rivers worsens.

Aggravating this dire situation, the state has added the component of violent repression. Besides the military and police "operations" already mentioned, says Isa Conde, there are "extrajudicial executions, the people that the police assassinate daily. Under the 'battle against delinquency,' they also penalize the popular movement, killing poor community activists. They also capture, imprison and shoot young men in their legs, leaving them disabled. There have been cases of youth whose legs had to be amputated. We have denounced this and hope that the international community will help us raise this issue in every forum on human rights. This shows the intolerance of the government towards every open act of dissent. During the Pan American Games recently held here, the government violently suppressed legal demonstrations."

The government and the ruling class are

accomplices in dirty deals. Said Isa Conde, "This strike also repudiated the impunity of the state's crimes and corruption. There is complicity between private financial groups and government officials in protecting 'financial bankruptcies.' They have defaulted at least three banks, and the government wants the general population to pay for this robbery by imposing new taxes."

But the masses in the Dominican Republic do not want to give the government and the dominant class free rein. They are preparing for the next step.

"There was a strong sentiment in favor of the resignation of the president during the strike," Isa Conde pointed out. "Particularly after the experience in Bolivia. And in this case, Dominicans think nine more months with this government, which has increased the poverty of the population tremendously, is too much to endure. It is the expression of the discredited neoliberal model administrator that has immersed the country in a profound crisis."

More action is possible in the next few months to get the president out of office before the next elections in May. The strike's national coordinating committee gave the president 30 days, until Dec. 11, to rectify his politics and satisfy the strikers' demands. "Otherwise the Collective will conduct another strike that will be of a higher dimension and duration and with more political content," says Isa Conde.

In the meantime, local actions continue and a National Popular Assembly is scheduled for the end of November to decide on the character of the next strike. □

# Manila conference says war, globalization are health issues

By Hillel Cohen  
Manila, The Philippines

Delegates from 10 countries joined health workers and activists from the Philippines on Nov. 8-9 for an International Conference on Challenges in Health Work Amidst Globalization and War. Gathering in downtown Manila, over 150 delegates and observers exchanged information and experiences of organizing resistance to imperialist attacks on health.

In a keynote address, Congressperson Satur Ocampo from the Bayan Muna Party connected U.S. imperialist wars in Afghanistan and Iraq with the plight of workers and rural poor in the Philippines and many other former colonial countries.

The huge military spending diverts money from health and other human needs while the threat of military force backs up the economic domination of the U.S. through the World Trade Organization, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Ocampo said that 31 percent—nearly one third—of the national budget of the Philippines goes to debt service on IMF loans, while the proportion for health has gone down to 1.5 percent. Budget cuts have led to big cutbacks in health services and jobs for health workers.

Ocampo, recently elected to Congress, is a legendary figure in the Filipino people's movement, having served years in

President Emma Manuel (center) with other leaders of the Philippine Alliance of Health Workers. To her right is WW reporter Hillel Cohen.

prison during the martial-law regime of Ferdinand Marcos.

Dr. Mira Shiva of the All-India Drug Action Network explained how transnational pharmaceutical companies make enormous profits using international patent laws to prevent the manufacture or use of low-cost generic medicines. For example, patented anti-viral drugs for one AIDS patient can cost as much as \$10,000 per year, but Indian manufacturers can market the same drugs for \$300 per year. But they are prohibited by trade agreements like the one on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights, known as TRIPS.

Giant drug companies are even patenting traditional herbal medicines, such as Indian wheat. Dr. Shiva described a struggle to stop this bio-piracy.

Emma Manuel, national president of the Alliance of Health Workers, outlined the impact on health of the General Agreement on Trades in Services. GATS extends WTO agreements from covering manufactured and agricultural products to covering services like health. In practice, this means foreign investors can



enter the Philippines to establish for-profit hospitals, medical services and HMO-style insurance schemes. All of these mean even higher-priced services that are out of reach for most Filipinos, while the government cuts back and "corporatizes" public hospitals.

### 'Corporatizing' health care

"Corporatize" is supposed to be different than privatize, but in reality it means the same thing. Patients have to pay in advance for everything they need. Whether it is film for an X-ray, gloves for the doctor or any medication, the patient or patient's family must buy it or the patient will not get treatment.

Health care activists say the word should be "profitize," because all of health care is being made into a commodity rather than a service.

Cutbacks also mean fewer staff in the hospitals, with one nurse expected to care for as many as 80 or even 150 patients. Low wages and bad conditions in the health sector drive nurses and doctors to join the ranks of 8 million overseas Filipino workers. In some departments as many as half the nurses and doctors currently working have applied for overseas positions.

The government encourages this "export" of health professionals because they send

*Continued on page 10*



## Imperial trade

Trade ministers from 34 countries in the Western Hemisphere—all except socialist Cuba—have been invited to Miami in U.S. imperialism's latest attempt to open up this half of the world even wider to plunder by U.S.-based transnational monopolies.

Bush's drive to win consent for the so-called Free Trade Area of the Americas—FTAA, or ALCA in its Spanish and Portuguese initials—ran into obstacles first in Quebec City in 2001 and then last September in Cancun, Mexico. Demonstrators on the outside protested any imperialist takeover. Almost all the governments inside protested the terms the U.S. offered.

The workers and farmers of Latin America and the Caribbean, and any government with the least amount of independence, oppose Bush's version of "free trade." The FTAA, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) before it, gives U.S. agribusiness and industry the ability to overwhelm the national economies of countries that are less developed and therefore unable to withstand the onslaught of monopoly capital.

NAFTA already showed what this kind of "free trade" means for the hemisphere. The people of Chiapas, Mexico, for example, have already found that their corn, a staple of their economy for generations, is not competitive in this wider market. Mexico now imports much of its corn from the U.S.—forcing Mexican farmers to leave their homeland in search of work. Meanwhile, workers in unionized jobs in the U.S. and Canada have been squeezed out as management seeks the lowest costs of production within those two countries

and Mexico.

The FTAA would mean eliminating tariffs and barriers to foreign investment in most of this hemisphere. It also would eliminate worker-rights laws and environmental protections that are seen as obstacles to the maximization of profits.

FTAA rules would impose a formal equality between huge U.S. conglomerates and the economies of less developed countries. Or, as a Cuban economist once put it, it would lead to "the integration between a shark and sardines." ("The Shark and the Sardines" was also the title of a book by Juan Jose Arevalo, a former president of Guatemala overthrown in a CIA coup in 1954. That coup laid the basis for a military dictatorship and eventually widespread massacres of Guatemalan peasants and workers.)

A mass mobilization throughout the continent is taking place Nov. 21 to do whatever can be done to stop an FTAA agreement. Organizers from the anti-globalization movements expect tens of thousands to protest in the streets of Miami, including delegations from unions and peasant organizations throughout the hemisphere. In Brazil—whose president, Ignacio "Lula" da Silva, has campaigned for better terms of trade—the mobilization will be country-wide, and protests will take place throughout Latin America.

The FTAA is nothing less than the economic equivalent of the open military takeover U.S. imperialism is trying to impose on Iraq. It is a long-term threat to the lives of the people of Latin America, it hurts working people in the U.S. and benefits only the U.S.-based billionaires that the Bush administration serves and their Latin American subcontractors. □

## Manila conference says war, globalization are health issues

Continued from page 9

money home, propping up the local economy. Although earning much more overseas than in the Philippines, these overseas workers are super-exploited in the host countries and often suffer racial discrimination and mistreatment.

Many other speakers representing Filipino and international health organizations discussed common problems stemming from the WTO-style globalization. Delegates also expressed opposition to U.S. military aggression around the world, to U.S.-Israeli attacks on the Palestinian people and to harassment by the Philippine military of indigenous people, the Moro ethnic minority and poor people in the countryside who are trying to eke out an existence, mostly as share croppers and tenant farmers.

The delegates were especially interested in learning about the growing anti-war movement in the United States and were excited about the large rallies held in Washington and San Francisco on Oct. 25.

In the week leading up to the conference, international delegates took part in "exposures" hosted by organizers of community-based health programs. These grass-roots programs train volunteers to

be community health workers with basic skills in herbal medicines, acupuncture/acupressure and sanitation.

In these desperately poor communities there is no electricity, no running water and no money for Western medications, let alone visits to health professionals in a distant urban center. The volunteer community health workers provide the only available health care.

Participants in the weeklong exposures met with community health workers and other community organizations and stayed in their houses overnight. These workers are struggling to substitute organization and dedication for the lack of resources, and see health care in the context of a broader struggle for basic rights.

On the last day of the conference, the delegates and observers gathered for a march down Manila's busiest streets for a protest at the U.S. Embassy. Chanting in English, Spanish and Tagalog, the indigenous language of the Philippines, the protest called for "Health, not war" and "WTO out of health."

A line of riot police blocked the march before it could reach the embassy, but the delegates continued the protest with a rally right at the police line, blocking traffic in both directions. □

## Outside Camp Lejeune

### Pickets support imprisoned Marine resister

Continued from page 6

recently, racist paratroopers at Ft. Bragg killed a Black couple as they were taking an evening walk on a street in Fayetteville, N.C. An investigation uncovered white supremacist organizations within the 82nd Airborne there. (Glen Ford, "Buffalo Soldiers," ColorLines, Summer 2003)

Imani Henry of the International Action Center commented on the anti-racist solidarity communicated by those at the protest: "The delegation included both white people and people of color, Black, Asian and Latino, women and men and transfolk, and lesbian, gay and bisexual people. Today was an opportunity to unite many struggles spanning many communities, not only to demand freedom for Stephen Funk, but to demand an end to the occupation of Iraq."

#### Depleted uranium: a serious health issue

Simultaneous with the street protest, other activists held an information session at Coastal Carolina Community College about the dangers of depleted uranium to military personnel and their families. Organized by Vernon Kelly, an instructor and anti-war activist, this forum attracted 40 participants. Most were students enrolled at CCCC for career re-training, either because they are former military personnel on disability or are active military preparing for civilian life. Almost half the people present were people of color, and slightly more than half were women.

Videographer Sue Harris of People's Video Network introduced the video, "Metal of Dishonor: the Pentagon's Secret Weapon," which exposes the terrible dangers of the depleted uranium weapons currently being used by the U.S., most recently in Iraq. ([www.peoplesvideo.org](http://www.peoplesvideo.org))

DU shells are extremely dense, and can easily penetrate steel armor. Burning on impact, they release radioactive and toxic particles that spread by wind, through water, and by contact with contaminated equipment. Geiger counter readings at several sites in Baghdad, taken by a staff writer for the Christian Science Monitor, show radiation readings at nearly 1,900 times the normal background radiation levels. (Flounders, "Iraq Cities 'Hot' with Depleted Uranium," IAC, August 2003)

Sharon Eolis, a health care worker who traveled to Iraq in 1998 and 2000, emphasized that radioactive DU weapons have compromised the health of tens of thousands of military personnel and civilians both in the U.S. and in the Gulf region. Uranium contamination weakens the immune system, and may cause acute respiratory conditions or neurological damage. Short-term symptoms might be headaches, dizziness or muscle fatigue. Long-term effects are cancers and other

radiation-related illnesses like chronic fatigue syndrome. Eolis noted that in Iraq she saw children with cancers that had been relatively rare and were accelerating—very possibly linked to the tons of DU weapons used by the U.S. during the first Gulf War.

Eolis said that, in addition to the direct exposure to DU of those living in and on duty in Iraq, there was the contamination of military families: "The GIs are required to bring their equipment home, so they are bringing the uranium exposure home to their families."

Participants at the forum actively discussed reasons why the U.S. government has not informed service members about the dangers of DU. Several participants who were veterans revealed that they had Gulf War Syndrome symptoms. One woman said: "My husband just came back from Iraq, and I know he got exposed from the shells, because that's what he does for a job. Now how does he get checked?"

One man left the forum hastily and stood outside crying. He had recently lost his wife, a Gulf War veteran who died of breast cancer. He expressed fear that her death could be the result of DU poisoning, and said, "All I have left of her is her ashes. Can we tell from them if she died because of DU?"

All present were profoundly affected by the discussion. Sharon Eolis ended by saying, "We want to empower people to fight for their rights if they have suffered exposure to depleted uranium."

#### Thumbs-up!

Back at the protest, two Marines in uniform drove by, gave a thumbs-up, and yelled out, "We wish our horn worked so we could honk!" They were responding to the sign that read: "Honk if Bush lies while GIs die!"

The Jacksonville Daily News reported on the action in its Sunday edition, spotlighting SNAFU and showing thousands more members of the military and their families where to go for information on resistance to the U.S. war on Iraq.

At the close of the day, Dustin Langley, a Navy veteran and organizer with SNAFU, said: "I think this action was a significant step forward in expanding the anti-war struggle to include people who are also victims of this war by the U.S.—specifically, members of the military, military families and veterans who are fighting, dying and suffering because of the lies, neglect and hypocrisy of the Pentagon. These individuals are also members of the working class and will be an important ally as we work to stop this war."

*Minnie Bruce Pratt, a lesbian writer and anti-racist activist, was an organizer in the women's liberation movement in Fayetteville in the 1970s. □*

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By Mumia Abu-Jamal  
from death row



## In the shadow of Rome

The crown o' the earth doth melt—My lord!—  
O! withered is the garland of the war,  
The soldier's pole is fall'n; young boys and girls  
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,  
And there is nothing left remarkable  
Beneath the visiting moon.

—Shakespeare, "Antony and Cleopatra"

The War, we are told, has been over for months in the sweltering desert of Iraq. As Bush "the Lesser" proclaimed several months ago, as he swaggered in his tailor-made flight suit: "Mission Accomplished!"

Yet, if wars are measured in death, destruction and conflict, the Iraq Adventure is many things, but "over" it ain't!

As these words are written there comes reports of conflicts with U.S. troops and Iraqis in the so-called "Sunni Triangle," sparked by protesters who are parading through an Iraq town with pictures depicting Iraq's former President, Saddam Hussein!

The body count of Americans (not to mention Iraqis!) who have died in the broadening conflict has equalled or exceeded that of the active war itself.

Also, by increasing numbers, the American people are becoming increasingly disenchanted with the Iraq Occupation. Some are beginning to question the claimed reasons for the war and occupation, as there is no indication that so-called weapons of mass destruction exist or have existed for years.

As the eloquent Black nationalist Malcolm X was fond of saying, "History best rewards our research."

When we look at the emergence of the U.S. Empire, we are tempted to look at historical precedents, like Rome. A man regarded as Rome's greatest historian, Tacitus, wrote of Roman wars for imperial looting, against the Britons, the Gauls, and other ancient peoples. Among his reports is of Calgacus of the Caledonians, who was rousing his British tribe against the Roman invaders. In his speech to the Caledonians, we see how an occupied people looked at the Romans:

"As often as I consider the causes of war and our dire straights, I have great confidence that this day and your union will be the beginning of freedom for all Britain; for you have all joined together, you who have not experienced slavery, for whom there are no lands further on and even the sea is not safe, with the Roman fleet threatening us. Thus battle and weapons, which are honorable for the brave, are likewise the greatest source of safety even for cowards... [N]ow the farthest boundary of Britain lies open, ... now there are no people further on, nothing except waves and rocks, and the Romans more hostile than these, whose arrogance you would in vain try to avoid by obedience and submission. Plunderers of the world, after they, laying everything waste, ran out of land, they search out the sea: if the enemy is wealthy, they are greedy; if he is poor they seek prestige; men whom neither the East nor the West has sated, they alone of all men desire wealth and poverty with equal enthusiasm. Robbery, butchery, rapine they call empire by euphemisms, and when they produce a wasteland, they call it peace."

To be sure, this is not a common reflection that history sends us of Rome. But it is a view held by many of the people who were held under the Roman imperial foot.

Years from now, perhaps centuries from this hour, what will people think of the acts of the American Empire? Will the justifications for war put out by Bush prevail, or will the voices of those who are under the American imperial boot be unearthed?

Because we are almost all consumers of the corporate, imperial press, such voices are hard to hear now, and will rarely be heard, for a while.

For networks, their newsdesks festooned with sets embracing "Operation Iraqi Freedom," it will take some time for the voice of Iraqi underdogs to carve through the marble.

But if Tacitus teaches us anything, it is that those voices will have their hearing.

History, at its best, reflects more upon the present than the past. It gives us some idea, not only of what came before, but of what is happening now, and why.

In 2,000 years we are still engaged in "empire by euphemisms," where war is peace, and warriors are peacekeepers. □

# CONFERENCE ON SOCIALISM

SATURDAY & SUNDAY  
DECEMBER 6–7

Martin Luther King, Jr. Auditorium  
New York City

Amsterdam Ave. & W. 65 St.

Take 1 or 9 train to 66 St.



Invited guests include representatives from national liberation movements, leaders and activists from the struggles representing workers, anti-war, communities, reparations, youth and student, women, lesbian, gay bi and trans and more.

## PROGRAM SCHEDULE

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

9:00 am	Registration
10:00 am–12:15 pm	<b>Opening Plenary</b> Auditorium • Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism • Strengthening Internationalism = Defeating Imperialism
12:15 pm–12:45 pm	Lunch in the Cafeteria
12:45 pm–2:45 pm	<b>First Set of Workshops</b> 1. Marxism/ABCs of Socialism 2. The Repressive State: Linking the Struggles Against Racism, Sexism and Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Transgender Oppression 3. Workers' Resistance: How to Build Class Solidarity Unity Against Imperialism in: 4. Latin America and Caribbean 5. Middle East 6. Asia
3:00 pm–5:00 pm	<b>Second Set of Workshops</b> 1. The Repressive State: Linking the Struggles Against Racism, Sexism and Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Transgender Oppression 2. The USSR: Its Achievements, Its Collapse, and Its Importance to the Struggle for Socialism 3. The Anti-war Agenda: Strategies and Tactics Unity Against Imperialism in: 4. Middle East 5. Asia
5:15 pm–6:30 pm	<b>Second Plenary</b> Auditorium • Reviving Socialism: Organizing Against Capitalist Oppression
6:30 pm–8:00 pm	Dinner Outside
8:00 pm–9:00 pm	<b>Cultural Performances</b> Cafeteria

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

9:00 am	Registration
10:00 am–11:15 am	<b>Third Plenary</b> Auditorium • Reviving Socialism: Stopping "Endless War" and Occupation
11:30 am–1:30 pm	<b>Third Set of Workshops</b> 1. Marxism/ABCs of Socialism 2. The Anti-war Agenda: Strategies and Tactics 3. Workers' Resistance: How to Build Class Solidarity 4. Unity Against Imperialism in Latin America and Caribbean 5. Revolutionary Internationalism vs. Capitalist Globalization
1:30 pm–2:30 pm	Lunch in the Cafeteria
2:30 pm–3:30 pm	<b>Closing Plenary</b> Auditorium

As of Nov. 19, 2003. Check [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org) for updates on the conference schedule and speakers.

**Workers World Party** NYC 212-627-2994 • San Francisco 415-826-4828 See page 2 for local addresses



# La historia de dos soldados

Por Leilani Dowell

Muchos reportes sobre la soldado Pfc. Jessica Lynch han aparecido en los medios televisivos y escritos de los Estados Unidos. Ella se ha presentado en el programa "Dateline" de la cadena ABC y en el programa de David Letterman y aparecerá en la portada de las revistas Time y Vanity Fair. Además, una biografía autorizada con el título "Yo Soy Un Soldado También," será publicada para coincidir con la presentación de la película de la cadena NBC, una dramatización titulada "Salvando a Jessica Lynch," sobre lo que le pasó en Irak.

Sin embargo, elementos importantes de la historia contada por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos publicada después de que las tropas entraran al hospital iraquí donde Lynch recibía tratamiento para sus heridas, han sido denunciados nada menos que por ella misma. Ella les ha llamado fabricaciones y manipulaciones para promover la guerra. Además, no solo los relatos de otros soldados han sido ignorados, sino que la familia de una soldado africana-americana que fue capturada y herida a la misma vez que Lynch, ha hecho acusaciones de racismo.

El primero de abril, Lynch apareció en los titulares nacionales cuando el ejército publicó un vídeo de lo que parecía ser una dramática operación de alto riesgo por los soldados estadounidenses para "rescatarla" de un hospital en Nasiriyah.

En aquel momento, los titulares hablaban del heroísmo de Lynch, diciendo que ella había recibido heridas de cuchillos y balas mientras disparaba su arma hasta vaciarla contra sus atacantes antes de ser capturada.

Sin embargo, algunas investigaciones luego determinaron que las heridas de Lynch resultaron del choque que el vehículo del ejército donde ella iba tuvo contra un camión, y no de cuchillos y balas. Además, su arma se había trabado

antes de que ella pudiera disparar. Recibió heridas en la cabeza y fracturas en el brazo, pierna, cadera y tobillo derechos por el choque del automóvil y fue llevada al hospital por los iraquíes.

Además, Lynch niega los reportes que dicen que ella fue golpeada durante su estadía en el hospital. Se ha reportado haberle dicho a Diane Sawyer de la cadena ABC: "Desde el momento en que me desperté en el hospital, nadie me golpeó, ni abofeteó, nadie, nada. ...es más, en realidad yo tuve una enfermera, que me cantaba." (New York Times, Nov. 7)

Lynch también reveló que los soldados iraquíes habían abandonado el hospital el día antes del rescate. Cuando se le preguntó si le molestaba el reportaje del ejército, ella criticó al Pentágono diciendo, "Si, me molesta. Me molesta que me utilicen para simbolizar todo esto. Si, está mal."

En un artículo del Observer de Londres del 9 de diciembre, Edward Helmore escribió, "Lynch se ha convertido en una metáfora, no por el heroísmo de jóvenes bonitas americanas capturadas por un enemigo extranjero diabólico, sino por la confusión que ha marcado a la Operación Libertad Iraquí de Bush desde su comienzo."

## Poca mención de los miles de heridos

Mientras que la prensa de la clase gobernante le dedica una semana entera a un reporte falso de heroísmo y patriotismo, los reportes sobre otros soldados casi ni se mencionan.

Un artículo en el periódico Los Angeles Times del 9 de diciembre, discute la llegada de soldados heridos a los hospitales militares. El artículo afirma que cerca de 1.900 heridos han sido enviados al Centro Médico del Ejército Walter Reed en Washington, 1.500 al Centro Médico Nacional Naval en Bethesda, Maryland y varios miles a otros hospitales y clínicas. Uno de

esos soldados, el Sargento Tarik Jackson, quien es de la misma unidad de Lynch, fue herido cuatro veces y estará en tratamiento todo el año.

Los soldados heridos y enfermos que aguardan tratamiento en el fuerte Stewart en Georgia, se han estado quejando de las condiciones del lugar, diciendo que tienen que esperar meses por tratamiento médico en barracas sucias, con 60 de ellos por barraca y tienen que pagar hasta por sus propios rollos de papel higiénico.

En un programa en vivo de la cadena C-SPAN durante la primera semana de noviembre, la actriz Cher llamó después de haber visitado al Centro Médico de Walter Reed exigiendo que la situación de los soldados—50 de ellos con amputaciones—fuera publicada.

Los medios de comunicación no son los únicos objetos de atención selectiva. Hay comunidades airadas por el tratamiento tan diferente que otra soldado está recibiendo, Shoshana Johnson. Johnson fue capturada como prisionera de guerra al mismo tiempo que Lynch y estuvo detenida por seis días más. A diferencia de Lynch, ella si disparó a sus captores, y recibió disparos en ambos tobillos.

Sin embargo, mientras Lynch recibe un 80% de pensión por incapacidad, y recibe además dinero por la publicidad sobre su caso, Johnson fue informada que ella sólo recibirá un 30% de su pensión—una diferencia de \$600 a \$700 dólares al mes. Ella ha recibido muy poca cobertura de la prensa—y esto solo después de protestas.

¿Porqué menos beneficios para alguien que claramente mostró más "heroísmo y recibió más heridas? En una declaración, el Ejército dijo que las dos mujeres están recibiendo beneficios distintos porque un Comité de Evaluación Física ha colocado a las dos en categorías distintas.

Muchos creen que estas categorías fueron "Negra" y "Blanca".

Porque mientras que Lynch tiene 19 años de edad, es blanca y rubia y, en las

palabras de Robert Thompson, profesor de televisión y cultura popular de la Universidad de Syracuse, "conforma la manera que por años selecciona actores en la televisión americana", Shoshana Johnson es una mujer africana-americana de 30 años de edad.

Las dos mujeres y sus familias han publicado declaraciones apoyándose una a la otra.

## Guerra racista y ocupación militar

El movimiento antiguerra ha condenado esta guerra racista y su evolución a una ocupación racista. Tal racismo afecta hasta los mismos soldados reclutados para combatir en la guerra. Efectivos africano-americanos sirven en las Fuerzas Armadas en cantidades desproporcionadas a su número en la población de los Estados Unidos: conforman un 19 por ciento de las FF.AA. y un 13 por ciento de la población.

El líder de derechos civiles Jesse Jackson ha apoyado la causa de Johnson, ayudando a publicar al caso y demandando un trato justo. En una columna del periódico Sacramento Observer, Jackson escribió:

"Para Johnson y para miles de otros soldados en Irak, la verdadera indignidad viene cuando regresan. ... Al presidente Bush le gusta decir que el 11 de septiembre cambió todo. Pero no cambió la insensible indiferencia de esta administración a los rangos bajos—a los soldados y los trabajadores ... No cambió la política de intereses especiales que favorecen a unos pocos a costa del bien común de la mayoría".

Leilani Dowell, miembro del Partido Mundo Obrero (Workers World Party) se está postulando para correr como congresista en el 2004 en el Octavo Distrito Congresional (San Francisco) por el Partido Paz y Libertad (Peace and Freedom Party). □

# La lucha de los 8 de L.A. se ganará en las calles

Por Scott Scheffer  
Los Angeles, California

Michel Shehadeh, un activista palestino que fue acusado falsamente por el gobierno de los Estados Unidos al estilo del programa COINTELPRO de la era de Nixon, hizo una presentación personal muy conmovedora de la historia de su encarcelación y lucha de 16 años contra la deportación en un foro público en la universidad Mt. San Antonio en Walnut, California, el 9 de noviembre.

El éxito de la reunión fue aparente en la audiencia, más de 150 personas participaron. Esto reflejó el aumento en el conocimiento y el coraje sobre los intentos del gobierno de los EE.UU. de sofocar el movimiento contra la guerra y por la justicia social al atacar primero a las comunidades de inmigrantes. La reunión fue mayormente de estudiantes latinos y

árabe-americanos, reflejando la presencia de estas comunidades en los alrededores de la universidad.

Shehadeh, el mejor conocido entre el grupo llamado "Los 8 de Los Angeles", también es miembro de la junta directiva de la coalición ANSWER Internacional. También es miembro de la junta directiva de la Alianza Palestina Libre, y de la junta directiva del Comité Antidiscriminación Contra Arabes-Americanos.

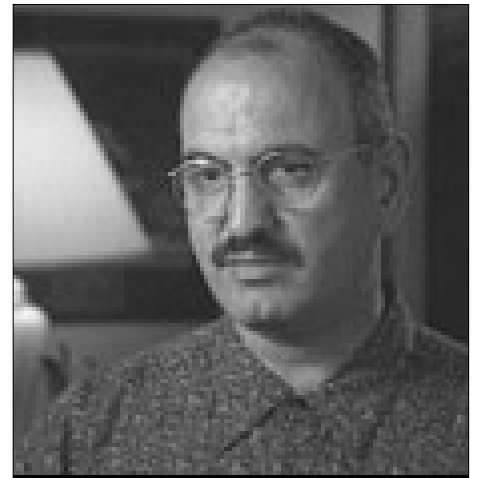
En el programa del 9 de noviembre participaron también David Cole, abogado voluntario del Centro de Derechos Constitucionales que ha trabajado incansablemente para defender a los 8 de Los Angeles desde 1987 y el igualmente acusado, Khader Hamide. Los dos, Hamide y Shehadeh todavía enfrentan la posibilidad de ser deportados bajo los estatutos de la Ley Patriótica.

Este año una corte de inmigración tomó

una decisión que parecía ser beneficiosa, alentando a los progresistas que han apoyado a estos líderes comunitarios. [Vea a "LA 8: One step closer to victory" por Muna Coobtee, en el número de este periódico del 24 de julio, 2003.]

Ahora crece la preocupación de que el gobierno intente tomar como ejemplo a estos dos que todavía enfrentan acusaciones, para así enviar un mensaje a los activistas políticos, especialmente a los inmigrantes.

En su charla, Shehadeh habló de la gran ironía en la situación de los 8 de Los Angeles: "Cuando vivía en la Franja Oeste era peligroso hablar abiertamente. La represión era constante y feroz. Me trasladé a los EE.UU. disfrutando de la idea que yo podría expresar mis opiniones. Estudié todas las cuestiones importantes por ejemplo la intervención de los EE.UU. en Centroamérica, los derechos civiles de



Michel Shehadeh

los homosexuales y las lesbianas, y hablé sobre todas esas cuestiones. Disfrutaba mucho la libertad de expresión que pensaba que tenía. No podía imaginar que 16 años después yo estaría defendiéndome contra la acusación de terrorista por haber ejercido ese derecho."

Shehadeh expresó confianza en que la lucha de los 8 de Los Angeles últimamente sería ganada por el movimiento en las calles, y dijo que se sintió inspirado por la reacción de la comunidad.

La reunión fue auspiciada por el Comité pro Justicia para los 8 de Los Angeles. □