

This is anti-terrorism?

**Pentagon slaughters
 15 Afghan children**

**Dean, Gore,
 Clinton and
 the war**

EDITORIAL 10



**The seller
 & the sold**

By Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Heather Cottin

U.S. occupation forces in Afghanistan and Iraq are creating a nightmare for the population there as they step up military repression in the face of growing resistance.

On Dec. 5, a Pentagon air and ground assault killed six children and two adults after a wall fell on them on a farm compound in eastern Paktia Province in Afghanistan. U.S. military officials admitted the deaths on Dec. 10.

Another nine children were playing quietly on Dec. 6 near a small house in Hutala, a tiny village in southern Afghanistan. Two girls were fetching water from a stream. The boys were playing marbles. The girls' uncle stood nearby. Suddenly the roar of a huge armored plane shattered the silence of the country morning.

The U.S. A-10 Warthog launched 30 to 40 rockets into the village, murdering nine children along with the man, who had raced toward the creek to protect his nieces.

The massacre followed "stringent rules of engagement," according to Maj. Christopher West, U.S. military spokesperson. West proudly claimed that the attack "was precisely targeted—it hit one house without damaging others in the area."

Villagers said the man the U.S. was hunting, Mullah Wazir, was not in the village. But a U.S. spokesperson claimed that Abdul Muhammed Wahid, who had been killed, was the man they sought. (BBC, Dec. 7)

Wahid had recently returned to Afghanistan from Iran to get married. His mother, who also lost two granddaughters, Bibi Toara and Bibi Tamama, in the raid, identified his body.

Two brothers who had lost three children stood near little embroidered hats and bloodied galoshes. One said: "Look at their little shoes and hats. Are they terrorists?" (New York Times, Dec. 8)

Washington justified the attack because Wazir was allegedly involved in recent attacks on foreign workers constructing a

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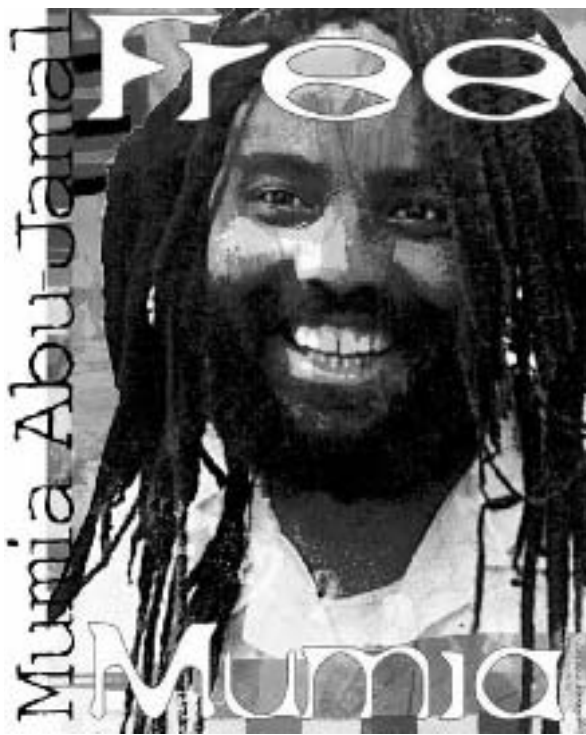


Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row:

This week ... **WW Calendar**

The seller & the sold

They saw themselves as others had seen them. They had been formed by the images made of them by those who had the deepest necessity to despise them.
—JAMES BALDWIN, "Notes of a Native Son"



Sometimes, an honest examination of the institutions of a society tells us deep truths about the nature of that society. Such an examination reveals raw, uncomfortable and hidden truths about what the unwritten rules are, and why.

When we examine the way that public schools have responded to the challenge of educating African-American children, we must conclude that the education of millions of such children is not the real priority of this society. Millions of such children emerge from public schools with little notion of their place in the world, or how to move through the society with sanity, with life-affirming rewards and some semblance of peace.

They leave, far too often, early and ungraduated. Others may graduate, but their achievements are slighted because of the light and undemanding nature of the studies. Whether one has graduated or not is not the mark of whether one is educated or not. Far too often, young Blacks are taught, if anything, how to get a menial job; how to work for others; how to "sell" some meager skill.

Meanwhile, in schools where the well-to-do live, the young are taught critical thinking; how to ask the right questions. Indeed, to question! They are taught not how to sell themselves, but how to produce things to be bought by others, to secure and amass wealth.

What the American school system is, is a class-bound structure that reproduces itself in the next generation.

One generation is being trained to follow; the other generation is being taught how to lead. In such a system, how can we wonder why things are unchanged, from generation to generation?

As the late educator Murray Levin suggested in one of his last books on the dearth of instruction in Black and Latino schools in Roxbury, "Oppression is the lesson."

Why shouldn't children, in a nation that claims to love liberty, be taught freedom?

Instead, they are conditioned to obey, to follow orders, to not rock the boat, to be ... passive.

True education awakens, it does not darken the windows of perception. True education enlivens, it does not dull the spirit.

This is what the elders of every civilization on Earth have struggled to do. They tried to build young people who could take on the tasks of defending, building and expanding the community.

In this new century, there are too many youngsters who are seen as expendable. They are presumed to be ignorant. They are left to rot on the vine of life, untaught and unproductive.

In a truly humanistic society, no person is seen as expendable.

In a society said to be based on "rugged individualism," each individual is valued, and given the materials necessary to make a valuable contribution to the whole.

That isn't happening now, and it is truly a scandal.

Young people should be given, "as a social duty," the wherewithal to grow in knowledge and understanding of the world in which we live. They are to be accorded a history that reflects their place in the world that is, and the world to come.

To fail to do so is to commit a kind of social suicide. It is cruel. It is stupid. It is wrong.

If public schools are not functioning in this country, then it is incumbent upon this country to provide the materials necessary to transform the problematic present into a system of promise.

Anyone who questions the conditions of urban school districts should only peruse a copy of Jonathan Kozol's "Savage Inequalities." Schools shouldn't reproduce social and class inequities, but work to eradicate them. If they fail to do this, then they merely reproduce the errors of the past, and leave serious work undone, for generations yet unborn. □

STAND with MUMIA on December 13

The evidence WILL be heard!
Rally, March & Conference

RALLY AT 10:00 a.m.
at 7th & Fairmount Streets,
at the Friends Neighborhood Guild. This is the neighborhood where Mumia grew up

MARCH AT 11:00 a.m.
to Benjamin Franklin High School, Broad and Green Streets. This was Abu-Jamal's high school, where he was given his name by his teacher Timone Ombina and waged a struggle to have the school's name changed to Malcolm X High School

At 1:00 p.m. there will be an indoor conference and rally at the high school. The audience will hear the evidence that the Pennsylvania Supreme Court refused to admit when it recently rejected the motions of Abu-Jamal's defense attorneys.

There will be legal presentations by attorneys Sam Jordan and Michael Coard, and reports from witnesses in the case, including Terri Maurer-Carter and Veronica Jones. There will also be a taped presentation from Arnold Beverly confessing to the killing of officer Daniel Faulkner—the crime for which Abu-Jamal was convicted. Beverly has passed two lie detector tests regarding his testimony—yet the courts refuse to hear his testimony and will not arrest him. ■

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WW CALENDAR

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Sat., Dec. 13
22 years is enough! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!!! Rally 10 a.m. at 7th & Fairmount Sts.; march 11 a.m. to Benjamin Franklin High School, Broad and Green Sts., Mumia's high school. Indoor conference and rally at 1 p.m.

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

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SEATTLE

The great Boeing plane robbery

By Jim McMahan
Seattle

Despite a big struggle between military chiefs and Boeing executives, the Boeing Co. seems poised to gain a new \$22 billion contract for 100 tanker planes. The planes would be Boeing 767s, used for mid-air refueling of warplanes that are sent long distances to bomb poorer countries.

They would replace 540 tanker planes called KC-135s. Initially, 20 of the planes would be leased by the Pentagon, which increases what taxpayers have to pay by about \$5 billion. Boeing had pushed hard all year to get all 100 planes leased.

The contract could easily balloon to 500 planes. To get congressional approval, Boeing browbeat, bashed and bribed its way through various laws and regulations. But the main fight is against the workers and oppressed, who face getting bombed or ripped off as a result of this debacle.

Boeing is set on becoming the provider of next-generation tankers. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House and a lobbyist

for Boeing, crowed to the Associated Press, "You're looking at adding at least a dozen wide-bodies per year to your books, almost in perpetuity."

This will cost at least \$100 billion, meaning Boeing will be on the government dole for a generation or two just for this one project.

This \$100 billion could be used to provide prescription drugs to seniors in the United States and AIDS drugs to all of Africa.

The tanker deal will constitute pillage of the U.S. workers who have to pay for it, now and in the future, just as the United States super-pillaged Iraq with massive bombing.

Boeing dominated the air war against Iraq: F-18s, F-15s, B-2 stealth and B-52 bombers, "Apache" and "Black Hawk" helicopters, JDAM smart bombs, KC-135 tankers and much, much more.

Earlier this year, Pentagon acquisition official Darleen Druyun disclosed to Boeing information on an Airbus bid for the tankers. Boeing Chief Financial Officer Mike Sears gave Druyun a Boeing vice-

president job in return for her favor. On Nov. 24, Boeing Chief Executive Officer Phil Condit sacked both Sears and Druyun. Ten days later Condit was pushed out the door. Harry Stonecipher, former CEO of McDonnell-Douglas and a Boeing executive, replaced Condit.

Stonecipher is more closely associated with the Pentagon. He has been a leader at Boeing in pushing for brutal layoffs and replacing Boeing workers by outsourcing to lower-paying contractors around the world.

It is said that the tanker contract will mean steady jobs for the Everett, Wash., 767 line for years to come. But it is part of growing militarization—and Pentagon influence over the company. Some 55 percent of Boeing's \$49 billion in current revenues comes from the federal treasury. It used to be 20 percent. This influence has led to layoffs and the dismantling of some of the company's industrial infrastructure.

Boeing has laid off 65,000 workers since 1999. The 7E7, the next generation commercial airplane, will be built outside the country—replicating Stonecipher's

leadership with the 717, a business jet produced with very few workers, and a failure.

According to the Oct. 28 Washington Post, the tanker contract is the first in a series of big leases the Pentagon is contemplating at enormous overall cost. The contract was approved by a new Pentagon leasing panel that operates with far less oversight and regulatory control than previously, bypassing regulations enacted over the last three decades to forestall military contracting abuses.

The Air Force never conducted a formal study of alternatives to leasing the new tankers, as had been standard. It never conducted a formal competition before signing the contract. Nor did it arrange to test the new tankers before committing to lease all of them.

Boeing and Pentagon corporate titans need to be given a flight out of here. The transportation industry needs to travel in the direction of providing social and economic security for workers—the vast majority of the population—and not be continually hijacked by rich warmongers. □

CALIFORNIA

Immigrants fighting to regain driving rights

By Adrian Garcia
Los Angeles

In yet another reactionary assault against undocumented workers in California, the Democratic-controlled State Assembly voted overwhelmingly in early December to overturn a law that would have allowed undocumented workers to obtain driver's licenses.

Last Oct. 7 Gov. Gray Davis had signed SB 60, the law that was overturned, before he was ousted in the infamous recall election that brought in Arnold Schwarzenegger as the new governor of California. Davis had failed to sign a similar bill in 2002 after promising to do so, claiming it did not provide "safeguards against terrorism."

The same scapegoating tactic, now used

by Gov. Schwarzenegger, was instrumental in overturning SB 60.

The law would have implemented less stringent requirements for receiving a license to drive. Anyone living in California could have obtained a driver's license by presenting a federal individual tax identification number and forms of identification other than a Social Security number, which is currently required.

The Social Security requirement was instituted in 1993 under the tutelage of Gov. Pete Wilson's campaign against California's undocumented workers. The tightening of driver's license requirements was a means of preventing undocumented families from receiving government benefits such as welfare and medical care. For decades before 1993, anyone residing and

working in California was eligible to receive a driver's license.

"Repeal of Senate Bill 60 with the direct assistance and collaboration of Gil Cedillo [the bill's author] and Fabian Nunez, members of the Assembly and representatives of immigrant communities in East Los Angeles, represents a serious setback for immigrants' rights," commented Juan Jose Gutierrez, coordinator of Latino Movement USA.

Gutierrez stressed that the repeal will serve to bolster reactionary forces in California to continue their exploitation of immigrants and workers. Gutierrez also warned that Republicans in the state are engineering a campaign to revive the egregious policies targeting immigrants promoted under Proposition 187, which

was overturned by California courts as unconstitutional.

Proposition 187 was meant to deny health care and education to the children of undocumented immigrants. According to Gutierrez, Republican strategists claim to have obtained 600,000 signatures to put a similar proposition on the ballot in November 2004.

Latino Movement USA and others are mounting an offensive against the reactionary forces. A march and rally is planned for Feb. 28, with another to follow on March 2. A third demonstration is being planned for October. The struggle will be taken to the streets.

"Immigrants will not accept being the modern-day slaves of the capitalist ruling class," said Gutierrez. □

THIS HOLIDAY GIVE SOMEONE A NEW BOOK FROM THE INTERNATIONAL ACTION CENTER

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION

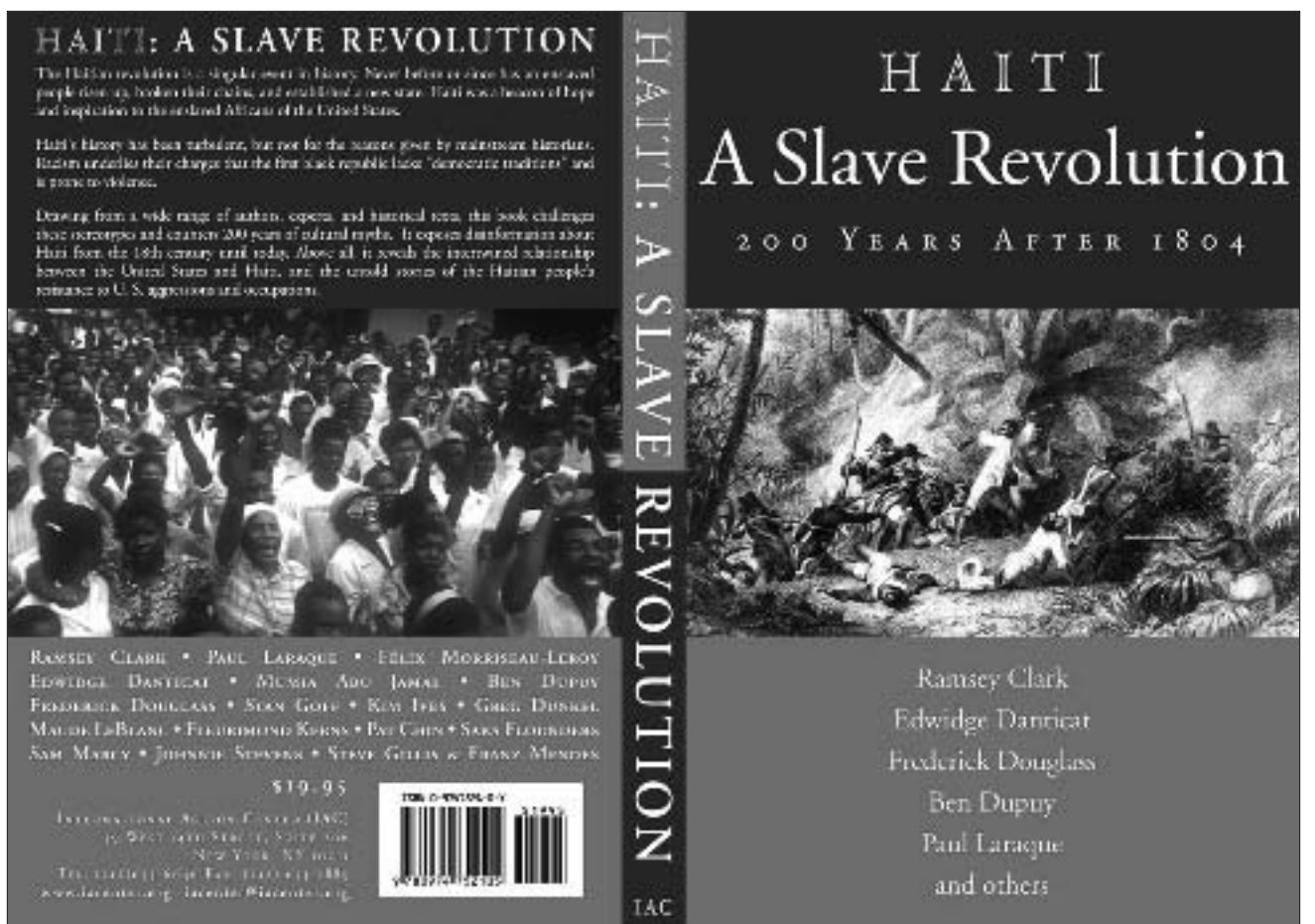
The Haitian Revolution is a singular event in history. Never before or since has an enslaved people risen up, broken their chains, and established a new state. Haiti was a beacon of hope and inspiration to the enslaved Africans of the United States.

Haiti's history has been turbulent, but not for the reasons given by mainstream historians. Racism underlies their charges that the first Black Republic lacks "democratic traditions and is prone to violence."

Drawing from a wide range of authors, experts, and historical texts, this book challenges these stereotypes and counters 200 years of cultural myths. It exposes disinformation about Haiti from the 18th century until today. Above all, it reveals the intertwined relationship between the U.S. and Haiti, and the untold stories of the Haitian people's resistance to the U.S. aggressions and occupations.

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What's ahead for U.S. working class

The following is based on a talk Milt Neidenberg prepared for the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

The trade unions have reached an historic turning point. The multinational work force they represent has become an appendage to the machinery—at the mercy of technology that speeds up production at an inhuman rate, eliminates skills and displaces millions of workers onto the unemployment lines.

The process extracts huge profits for the capitalist owners of the means of production. Productivity grew 9.2 percent in the third quarter this year, the biggest increase since the second quarter of 1983, according to the Labor Department.

The scientific-technological revolution, unlike the one that created the mass-production assembly line and expanded the work force, has torn workers away from the productive forces. It triggered a rate of exploitation that is increasing the unemployment rate and destroying the social network of the working class, particularly the poorest and most oppressed.

Officially, there are more than 9 million unemployed workers in this country. The count is much higher if you add teenagers, particularly Black, Latino and Asian, and the poorer sections of the white population, none of them included in the statistics because they have never had paying jobs.

This past year, 1.7 million people slipped below the poverty line. That brings the total to 34.6 million, or one in eight people, according to an AFL-CIO report. Here is an army, dispersed and confused, that desperately needs to be organized.

The quantum leap of the technological revolution has brought to the surface a sector of the workers—multinational, low-paid, women and immigrants, gay and straight—that is potentially the engine of revolutionary change. This is reflected within the service-oriented unions that represent these workers. The material conditions to achieve a merger of these forces for a fighting strategy—such as building unemployed councils—now exists.

Equally important, this phase of the technological revolution has brought a greater level of socialization of the means of production here and abroad. Objectively, the basis for a socialist perspective has surfaced. Monopoly capitalism has exported technology, capital, industries and jobs that connect the working class here with their sisters and brothers abroad. Steel workers here can talk to steel workers from other lands, not only about how steel is produced but how their transnational bosses exploit them. The same goes for the service sector.

Many immigrant workers have brought their experiences in class struggle to these shores.

But the explosive rate of exploitation

has taken its toll on the union movement. Only one out of every 10 new jobs is union.

Recently the Service Employees union introduced a comprehensive plan to reorganize and restructure the AFL-CIO. Their solution is to consolidate the smaller unions into bigger unions, based upon the sectors of capitalist industry.

This approach divides the U.S. economy into 15 sectors, covering over 100 million workers. The restructured unions would have the resources and focus to unite the workers and organize the unorganized. Instead of the current 66 amalgamated international unions with multiple overlapping jurisdiction, there would be fewer unions—larger unions, with more workers in each sector.

Is restructuring the union movement to organize the unorganized a commendable step? How serious can they be when these same leaders are committing so much of their resources to electing Democratic politicians who they hope will bail them out of the crisis? Will reshuffling the unions and their workers elevate the class struggle? Not likely.

Significantly, this initiative has come from an all-white, male-dominated leadership led by Service Employees President Andy Stern and other white leaders from the other service-oriented coalition unions. It is a top-down proposal, lacking input from the multinational work force.

The class struggle will determine any internal restructuring and reorganizing of the unions, not the other way around. It happened with the birth of the CIO from the craft unions of the AFL. Before that the Knights of Labor died and the AFL took its place to win the eight-hour day.

Today the organized labor movement is in the grip of a government that has built-in anti-labor laws. Breaking out of this mold is a huge challenge for the unions. It happened in the 1930s with the sit-down strikes and plant occupations that created a new set of class relationships and progressive labor laws.

Revolutionary Marxists contributed to that process. This must also be the perspective now for a working-class party dedicated to abolishing exploitation and building socialism.

In his book “Left-Wing Communism, an Infantile Disorder,” Lenin advised: “The development of the proletariat did not and could not, anywhere in the world, proceed otherwise than through the trade unions, through their interaction with the Party of the working class. ... The Party must more and more than ever, and in a new way ... educate and guide the trade unions; and must not forget that they are and will long remain a necessary ‘school of communism.’”

Our party has to be in the forefront of building this revolutionary perspective. □

Anti-war group joins labor struggle

Based on a talk by John Parker at the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

Today imperialism is in such a condition that in order to continue to maximize profits the bosses must intensify the eating from within. They can no longer afford to allow a certain percentage of workers to get decent health care and at the same time wage imperialist wars and maintain an acceptable level of profits.

If they're taking the gloves off, so must we.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) is now challenging the right of companies like Vons, Safeway and Ralph's to bring down working conditions to the lowest level possible with the excuse that companies need to remain competitive. Wal-Mart is the hope of the ruling class. Imagine how the class struggle would be advanced with the unionization of Wal-Mart. This strike once again provides that opportunity.

The Wal-Mart assault on the workers has drawn lawsuits against the retailing monopoly for outrageous anti-union, anti-worker illegal violations going on for over four years. That includes under the Clinton administration. Both the Democrats and the Republicans are complicit in this. They are the puppets of Wall Street and that's whom we must fight: Wall Street, the banks and monopolies—the ruling class. Bush is just their mouthpiece.

Any candidate who would deserve our support would have to say they are unconditionally for the working class and would have to show that by immediately supporting the grocery workers' fight for health care and against the big three grocery chains. This candidate would immediately call for bringing the troops home now, and further show solidarity with the working and poor of Iraq by calling for no new occupying force, UN or otherwise.

It is not enough to say that working-class struggle is important. The workers' struggle is intimately linked to the anti-



John Parker

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

war movement. It's not a separate thing that can be planned independent of class solidarity.

One of our historical tasks is to strengthen the anti-imperialist, anti-war movement. What has to be done to bring this movement to the next level? Does this movement reflect our multinational working class yet? Well, thanks to ANSWER, it's beginning to, but it still must improve to become more effective.

Does this movement reflect enough participation by workers, especially those with paychecks reflecting the majority? Again, because of our influence and the work of ANSWER, it's becoming more and more reflective of the working class in this country, but not enough to realize our potential.

How do we get there? How do we make this movement appear more relevant in workers' eyes and in the eyes of the oppressed nationalities? Maybe we need to make people in this country understand that anti-war means anti-injustice, anti-racism and pro-worker and this anti-imperialist movement is willing to stand with the workers here in their life-and-death struggles. How do we do that? By making every anti-war action incorporate its anti-injustice message, its anti-racism message and its pro-worker message.

The corporate folks call this “branding,” sending a consistent message across every communication with your target market. Except their message is to lie about the value of their product. Ours is to expose the relevance of ours. So every demo, every leaflet, banner and anti-war action should have that branded message of worker solidarity with the fight against imperialism and racism. For example, you could put out a leaflet calling for bringing the troops home and incorporate the connection to the fight for health care stolen by resources used for war. You could mention the heroic battle of the grocery workers to save health-care rights, thereby encouraging solidarity.

You could pass it out at a picket line while you are holding the union's placard and supporting their strike. A consistent branded message of domestic and international worker solidarity for every communication—that's how we'll change that perception. We have to be creative and convince ourselves that the best way to strengthen the anti-war movement, especially today in view of the current struggles, is to make a real dynamically linked message to our working class and nationally oppressed sisters and brothers.

Whatever we do, whether we like it or not, whether it's deserved or not, whatever we say or write defines us in workers' eyes. It sends a strong message saying this anti-imperialist, anti-war movement is or isn't

a part of the most fierce and strategic domestic battles of our working class today. And our message of relevance is a lot easier to carry since it is the truth. And doing all we can to be in solidarity with our locked-out sisters and brothers will only increase that truth.

In every city where there are informational pickets at a Safeway supermarket, we should be there. Every march should include a Vons or Safeway or Ralph's on the route if there is one.

Now let's talk about this grocery worker strike and lockout. Is this really a life-and-death struggle? Of course it is—they're trying to take over 50 percent of their health benefits away, set up a two-tier wage system and steal retirement benefits. If this happens, you can bet that a lot of people, especially the elderly and children, will die.

Lenin said that the most important lessons about class struggle come from a strike. This is a strike affecting over 71,000 workers in California alone with solidarity actions nationally. There are 859 stores in Southern California alone affected and that doesn't include the informational pickets going on in Northern California. Just imagine how many working-class people are affected by what's going on in the stores they once shopped at and the grocers they knew. Imagine how this is affecting their class-consciousness.

The empathy for these strikers is partly due to the makeup of the workforce—they look more like and share the same conditions as most workers in this country. It's no accident that the unprecedented Teamsters strike is happening in solidarity with these workers.

This struggle is most relevant and that is why we must grab hold of it and all workers' struggles like it to help bring out the soldiers for justice who will put into motion an unstoppable force against U.S. imperialism, racism, homophobia and for socialism. □

The pernicious role of the capitalist state

Based on a talk by Monica Moorehead at the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

Sisters and brothers, to apply effective strategies and tactics to achieve worldwide socialism, it is imperative to adhere to an independent Marxist, ideological, political world view. This perspective involves building class solidarity and what steps are needed to achieve this goal.

Vladimir Lenin raised the slogan, “Workers and oppressed of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains.”

Lenin was updating Karl Marx’s original formulation—workers of the world unite—based on the rise of worldwide imperialist plunder and colonialism spurred on during the late 1800s. During this period of imperialist expansion, the workers he was referring to were primarily in the large capitalist centers like the United States and Europe. The oppressed were the colonized peoples in Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and elsewhere. The chains that bind the workers and oppressed are rooted in capitalist slavery.

Some may think that Lenin’s words should be tossed into the dust bin of history because they were written so long ago, in 1899. But on the contrary, not only were Lenin’s words a necessary guide to revolutionary struggle back then but they have retained their relevance more than ever in the age of imperialism today.

Lenin stressed that you cannot succeed in carrying out a worldwide revolution without concretely forging ties and reaching out within the working class recognizing that inequalities exist within the working class. This is especially true regarding oppressed nationalities or people of color who have been super-exploited and super-oppressed by imperialism. Africa, with a population of 600 million people, is rich in mineral wealth but considered the poorest continent economically not only because of the legacy of slavery and colonialism but also because of the current enslavement by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and other imperialist banks.

Some may wonder, with the entire multitude of problems in society, shouldn’t it be easy for millions if not billions of people to come together and seize the reins of state power because the capitalists have made all of our lives so equally miserable?

Class oppression has certainly affected almost every inch of the globe. For example, there are officially over 800 million hungry people worldwide. There would be more than enough food to feed the world if the workers controlled food production and food distribution. Every person could have three square meals a day.

What many revolutionaries tend to gloss over is that the tiny minority of those who control the means of producing everything in society will commit any crime against humanity in order to safeguard their profits. It is the avaricious expand-or-die nature of capitalism that drives the capitalist to greed, not the other way around.

The ruling class uses a repressive apparatus not just in one country, or two or three countries, but all over the world. This apparatus exists to allow these cut-throat, greedy capitalists to privately own and control the economies and resources of billions of people.

Lenin referred to this network as the state. In his book “State and Revolution,”

The political basis for building class unity is being prepared by capitalism, which is bringing millions of workers closer together in the socialization of labor process throughout the developing and imperialist countries.

he helped to deepen the Marxist view that the state’s existence reflects irreconcilable class differences. Since these class conflicts cannot be reconciled, they are decided by the state in favor of the ruling class, because the state is not a neutral part of society. It stands above society and therefore is alienated from society as an instrument of class domination.

The ruling class relies on the police, the courts, the prisons, the government and the media at home, along with the military abroad, to try to keep the masses divided and diverted in order to maintain capitalist exploitation. The state’s existence stands in the way of society’s inevitable transformation from one economic system to another. And it puts a break on forging class solidarity under capitalism.

Other insidious aspects of class society that foster inequality and must be fought as a matter of the highest priority are the artificial divisions instilled by reactionary and backward ideas. The media help filter these ideas down from the ruling class to the working class. These ideas include racism or the ideology of white supremacy at home and abroad, sexism that promotes the myth that women are nothing more than the collective property of men, and lesbian, gay, bi and transgender oppression that criminalizes same-sex relationships. All these reactionary ideas and behaviors are reinforced by the presence of the state to keep the working class divided and passive.

Once you understand what the state is and what its function in society is, you can see clearly which side you are on. Which side are the police on during a workers’ strike? Just ask the Teamsters in Los Angeles who had SWAT teams spy on them once they began to honor the grocery workers’ picket lines.

When we talk about police brutality, it’s not just the individual victims who get beaten to death as Nathaniel Jones, a Black man, did in Cincinnati over the Nov. 29 weekend. There are the armed occupations of Black and Latino communities, which are a microcosm of the U.S. military occupation of Iraq.

When we talk about the cases of political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, the MOVE 9, the Cuban 5 and many others, we also have to look at the broader issue. There are more than 2 million prisoners in the United States, a disproportionate number of them nationally oppressed and the vast majority poor.

So in the United States, if you want to forge class unity in words and especially in practice, fighting racism and reaching out to people of color has to be a top priority because you can’t fight class oppression without equally fighting national oppression.

The political basis for building this type of unity is being prepared by the capitalist system. There is growing evidence to show that broader sectors of society are opening up to the prospect of building solidarity that will inevitably lead to the real-



Monica Moorehead

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

ization of the prognosis that Karl Marx and Frederick Engels made in “The Communist Manifesto,” published in 1848. That is, that capitalism is creating its own grave diggers: the working class.

Due to the technological revolution, the intensity of capitalist production is driven as never before by the insatiable quest for profits. This economic trend in turn has changed the character of the working class worldwide while increasing the socialization of labor. It is bringing millions of workers closer together in the global production process even though they are thousands of miles apart physically.

This reality is deeply felt in the United States where service workers have for the most part replaced industrial workers as the motor force of the economy. Corporations have shut down their factories and displaced millions of workers in their fierce competition with rivals here and worldwide. This economic trend has resulted in workers on the whole facing lower wages for more hours of work, loss of benefits and increased poverty. This process has affected poorer developing countries as well as the richer imperialist centers.

Millions of workers from the former colonial countries have been forced to migrate to the United States and imperialist countries to escape grinding poverty caused by the super-exploitation of their countries by global capital. These immigrants, many imbued with anti-imperialist consciousness, have subsequently energized the union movements. The intermingling of once privileged workers with poorer workers—especially those from oppressed countries—is making clearer the common reality that many of

the same corporate conglomerates are exploiting labor power worldwide to one degree or another.

One example of this kind of growing solidarity is what is happening in California where better-paid workers like the Teamsters are organizing important solidarity with lower-paid grocery workers. This is no act of charity on the Teamsters’ part, but reflects a deepening awareness that they have a common cause with the lower-paid, oppressed service workers against the bosses.

Sisters and brothers, the deepening Iraqi resistance against the Pentagon’s colonial occupation is moving millions of people around the world toward an anti-imperialist position, including those in the United States and other imperialist countries. Many young people first attracted to the anti-globalization movement’s view of a “kinder, gentler” free-enterprise system are now moving in a more anti-capitalist direction.

Many of us in this auditorium and millions worldwide know deep in our bones that only socialism can rid this planet of the scourge of racism, sexism, lesbian, gay, bi and transgender oppression, poverty and war. But we can’t sit back and wait for socialism to happen before organizing around all of these issues now. If we do nothing, unity and solidarity will be just empty words. Only the organized struggle can be decisive in raising class consciousness.

That in turn can lead to a total transformation of society from one based on the private ownership of production to the socialized ownership of production—and that will promote real equality, cooperation and harmony for all humanity. □

Hundreds gather for meeting on socialist struggle

By John Beacham & John Catalinotto
New York

On Dec. 6-7, Workers World Party sponsored a national conference in New York on "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism." Braving a two-day winter snowstorm that severely disrupted travel, especially in the Midwest and New England, almost 300 activists, revolutionaries and fighters for liberation arrived from as far away as the West Coast to join that discussion in the place it is needed most: the imperialist USA.

With struggles against occupation, war, racism, sexism, lesbian/gay/bi/trans oppression, capitalist bosses and more heating up all over the world, the conference launched a much-needed discussion about what is needed to win all these battles: the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

Larry Holmes set the political tone for the conference with special opening remarks. "Some people may ask, 'Do you have a plan? Do you know something we don't know?' No, we have no plan. But we have some serious ideas that we think serious revolutionaries will have to consider if we're going to take some important steps forward. ...

"Socialism has been put on the defensive by the bourgeoisie for too long. It is time to go on the offensive."

AFSCME District Council 1707 President Brenda Stokeley got it right: "The first thing we have to do is remind ourselves that we are fighting for socialism."

Elias Rashmawi of the Free Palestine Alliance put it this way: "What is needed is a vision that brings us together. A vision of sharing. Where we fight together. Where victory is for socialism."

Enthusiastic participants—those steeped in decades of struggle and many younger activists eager to find solutions—heard about a wide range of subjects. There were talks and workshops in solidarity with the people of Palestine, Zimbabwe, Korea, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba and everywhere else where people are struggling against U.S. imperialism. A series of workshops over the two days took up the struggles to end injustice—from the oppression of the state to strengthening international solidarity to fighting against imperialist globalization and war to why Marxism is the most effective tool for class struggle.

The conference in turn received contributions to the discussion and solidarity statements from: the Communist Party of Cuba, the Workers Party of Korea, the Belgian Workers Party, the Corriente Roja tendency of the United Left movement in Spain, the Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain, the Party of Liberation of Argentina, the L'Ernesto tendency of the Party of Communist Refoundation in Italy, Ben Dupuy representing Haiti's National Popular Party, and the Anti-War Joint Action Committees of Japan. Excerpts of all were read aloud. Cultural performances were presented by singer Pam Parker along with hip-hop artists Movement in Motion and Jamie Roundtree from Primeridian.

International solidarity: the answer to militarism and greed

Many speakers hit on the need to provide direction inside the United States to the heartwarming and unprecedented emergence of a truly global anti-war movement that has arisen in response to U.S. imperialist aggression in Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine.

In her talk saluting the Iraqi resistance,



WW PHOTO: DEIRDRE GRISWOLD

Singing "The International."

Sara Flounders said: "We knew that they were bent on destroying Iraq. The capitalist class is ruthless. It is driven to expand, to blast open markets. And it is our Marxist analysis that gives us this edge. We know that only profits matter to them. But we also know that socialism and international solidarity are the only alternative to imperialist war."

Brian Becker explained how the ANSWER coalition—Act Now To Stop War and End Racism, founded in response to the imperialist war frenzy that followed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks—continued to support "the Iraqi struggle for self-determination and support the U.S. troops by demanding that they be brought home immediately." He contrasted that with those in the movement who call for "bringing in the United Nations" to take over the U.S. role, a move that he pointed out would "continue the brutal occupation of Iraq."

Berta Joubert-Ceci outlined the enormous uprising against privatization and imperialist globalization throughout Latin America and Caribbean, as seen for instance in the struggle against the Free Trade Area of the Americas and in defense of the Bolivarian circles in Venezuela.

The USSR, China, Cuba

Since the collapse of the USSR, the imperialists have been thumping their chests and claiming that socialism is in the "dustbin of history." But the conference had a different message.

Speaking on the historical importance of the Soviet Union for the global struggle against racism and imperialism, Fred Goldstein said he could only "propose a framework for what must be a thoroughgoing discussion and analysis. So the first thing to establish is that there is not one iota of historical evidence that the collapse of the USSR represents the failure of socialism as a social system.

"On the contrary," he asserted, "the extraordinary achievements of the first victorious workers' state in history is a living demonstration of the potential of socialism to lift the world out of the morass and nightmare imposed by private property once it can be built on a strong economic foundation and be freed from the destructive influences of world imperialism."

Deirdre Griswold told of how the socialist revolution enabled the People's Republic of China to feed, clothe, educate and provide health care to one-fifth of the world's population—all while holding off the attacks and intrigues of a U.S. imperialism bent on a counter-revolution in

China. Such a counter-revolution would leave the Chinese people in the staggering poverty and ruthless exploitation they suffered under imperialism before the 1949 revolution.

Using her talk also as an introduction to a more in-depth discussion in a workshop on Asia, Griswold placed the internal struggle in China in the context of the worldwide ebbs and flows of the struggle for socialism. She pointed out how successful battles by Marxist revolutionaries in developed countries like the United States would favorably affect the struggle within China.

The workshop on the USSR and the one on Asia attracted many conference participants. This reflects people's great interest in explaining the course of development of these two great social revolutions and how they influence the struggle for socialism today.

Gloria La Riva expressed the great solidarity of those present with the Cuban Revolution: "Cuba is our hope. This small country besieged by the greatest power in the history of the world has shown how a leadership guided by Marxist principles can bring vast changes to the people of the world, people who desperately need a better world. Cuba has created a country free of landlords, where the rent can be no more than 10 percent of a person's wages. Cuba sent 300,000 volunteers to Angola to help defeat racist South Africa. Cuba has sent doctors all over the world, and so much more."

Fighting the state and the bosses

Imperialism doesn't just use divide-and-conquer techniques in the rest of the world. It uses these same techniques within the United States. In her talk Teresa Gutierrez railed against the racist war on immigrants, the round-ups, the detentions, the deportations. But she also hailed the increasing solidarity of the working class in the United States, with the AFL-CIO supporting the 100,000-strong immigrant-rights march in October.

Noting the increase of multinational labor struggles in the United States, Gutierrez asked, "How can we elevate struggles like the immigrants' struggle for civil rights to the level of class struggle?"

Monica Moorehead spoke on some of the divisions that capitalism fosters in the working class, emphasizing the police and courts: "So in the United States, if you want to forge class unity in words and especially in practice, fighting racism and reaching out to people of color has to be a top priority because you can't fight class

oppression without equally fighting national oppression."

John Parker added to Moorehead's call for increasing class solidarity by informing the conference about the solidarity work that Los Angeles ANSWER is doing with the striking and locked-out members of the Food and Commercial Workers union. He said: "It really shows in our work on the picket lines, in our talks with the workers, the food drive that we've been very successful at, the rallies that we've held with the union and all the solidarity work that we've done. These diverse workers, mostly women, have really responded to the anti-war movement in a positive way."

Parker then introduced one of the strikers, Ely Orozco, who gave special greetings to the conference attendees. Sharon Black spoke about the need to broaden support for this important strike among other unions.

Imani Henry addressed the two fronts of the class struggle: "Though the progressive movement has had to go on the defensive in this period ... we are seeing a resurgence in the working-class movement in the forms of strikes, the immigrants' march on Oct. 4, or uprisings against police brutality like in Benton Harbor, Mich."

A workshop titled "The Repressive State: Linking the Struggles Against Racism, Sexism, and Lesbian/Gay/Bi/Transgender Oppression" covered affirmative action, reparations, the prisons, police brutality, the death penalty and much more.

Another workshop on GI and anti-military recruitment organizing drew 30 activists from a dozen U.S. cities. They went over experiences like the Nov. 15 trip to Camp Lejeune to visit Marine resister Stephen Funk to review ways of helping GIs realize their rights to discuss, organize and refuse to be turned into war criminals.

Part of a message of solidarity from Jesse Heiwa, a leader of Queers for Peace and Justice, read: "With so much productive capacity available, there is no reason why hundreds of millions of people go without enough food, housing, health care, education, jobs. But there's reason for hope; millions of people around the globe are in the streets against war, against corporate exploitation, against all forms of oppression."

The role of a revolutionary party

Both Leslie Feinberg and Richard Becker argued for a vanguard party steered in, disciplined by and committed

Continued on page 8

Iraq war awakens international solidarity

Based on a talk by Sara Flounders at the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

Today U.S. imperialism is in an absolute crisis of historic proportions in Iraq. Resistance in Iraq is unfolding on a scale that the Pentagon never dreamed possible.

We in Workers World Party salute that resistance, as we salute the Palestinian resistance and the resistance of all oppressed people facing colonial domination and subjugation—from Iraq to Palestine, from Colombia to Zimbabwe.

The rulers of the U.S. Empire staked everything on the military conquest of Iraq. They were willing to defy their imperialist rivals, international law, the U.S. Constitution and worldwide opposition.

They were determined to reverse all the efforts by the people of the region to control their own resources and destiny. With their vast military superiority, who could challenge them?

But they are being challenged, daily, hourly. The attacks now average an ambush every hour.

Everyone at today's Conference on Reviving Socialism is justifiably proud of the role that revolutionary socialists have been able to play in the movement against imperialist war in this country. Just think of the past year.

Numerically we are not a large force. A lot of red-baiters have used a lot of ink in many publications, claiming that our influence is a strange conspiracy. But it is no conspiracy.

The tools of revolutionary Marxism imbued with a spirit of internationalism have given us a decided edge. We understood that the U.S. drive to war on Iraq was relentless and it was essential to mobilize millions to oppose it because this war was not in their interest.

Marxism is a social science that enables us to understand global class forces and to mobilize our class to intervene, so that the workers are not just spectators of history.

As Marxists, we knew the war on Iraq was a war for control of oil, for markets, resources. We knew that capitalism is utterly ruthless—that profit, only profit, matters.

We knew it was one more effort to turn back the Iraq Revolution of 1958 that nationalized the oil. This war was part of countless coups, assassinations, war and sanctions adding up to almost 50 years of attempts to regain imperialism's hold on Iraq's vast wealth.

We understood that Washington's determination to wage war on Iraq had nothing to do with "weapons of mass destruction" or "inspections" or "terrorism." It had nothing to do with a desire to "liberate" Iraq, "bring democracy," or "ensure human rights" or any of the other fraudulent arguments.

Imperialism and militarism

It was Lenin who best explained this, on the eve of World War I, in a small booklet called "Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism."

Imperialism is the most advanced, brutal, ruthless stage of capitalism. The biggest, most aggressive corporations and giant bank merge into giant monopolies. They destroy all competition.

Militarism is essential to imperialist expansion. It is a system that is driven to war. Markets are blasted open. This is the "Big Stick" behind corporate globaliza-

tion. The U.S. Empire is driven to expand. Expansion is the only way out of capitalist stagnation.

Today we are seeing the most violent, destructive stage of imperialism. The military machine is now an indispensable part of the capitalist economy. It absorbs enormous resources in society. More than \$400 billion a year guarantee super profits to the biggest corporations. This undermines and bankrupts every social program that poor and working people need.

War is a high-stakes gamble. Even for the imperialists, it is a big risk. Because war shakes up, awakens and draws in millions, who are able to see that this brutal system puts them at risk.

In today's world, military solutions are inherently more dangerous, more perilous than ever before. The working class today is billions strong and increasingly class-conscious. Now a war pulls the whole world in, due to instant mass communication.

Communications and internationalism

Karl Marx explained that history moves with the speed of communication. In the age of instant communication that is very fast indeed—and very dangerous for the handful of billionaires who own everything. Today workers—the producers—can talk to each other.

This past year we saw a phenomenon never seen before. Millions of working people in a thousand cities demanded of the U.S. war machine: "No, no war." Such mobilized power actually held the war off for six months.

During this time millions of Iraqis were also marching, mobilizing and training. Iraqi people knew they were not alone. Objectively this helped the resistance in Iraq today. They felt that the people of the whole world stood with them against a criminal assault.

They also knew from the experience of Palestinian people that it is possible to build a popular resistance, even to an overwhelming military occupation. These are things the whole population knew before the war started.

The global demonstrations had enormous affect. They reawakened a spirit of internationalism.

U.S. imperialism knows from the Vietnam War the danger of people in this country and the rest of world seeing the ugly face of imperialist conquest.

In Iraq, the Pentagon tried to control all information and news. It desperately wanted to control every press report. Remember the embedded journalists in every military unit. They were all arrayed to give only the messages: "Shock and awe." "Fear us." "You are helpless." "U.S. imperialism is all-powerful."

That is not the message today. Today the whole world sees that U.S. imperialism is not all-powerful.

Consider the Dec. 1 battle in Samarra.

Two separate U.S. columns on opposite sides of the city were simultaneously ambushed by Iraqi resistance fighters. The Iraqis knew the locations of a big U.S. military maneuver that had been set only two hours before. This is a stunning accomplishment for a guerrilla army.

It confirms that this is a broad people's opposition with many, many sources of information and instant communication.

The Pentagon declared Samarra to be a great victory. Pentagon spokespeople claimed they had killed 48, then 56, Iraqi resistance fighters. But within hours countless journalists from the Arab world, from Europe, Asia and Latin America disputed the Pentagon's description.

The problem with controlling the media is much bigger than it was in the Vietnam war. Everyone in Iraq, including the guerrillas themselves, could hear news of the battle within hours.

Imperialism's problems in Iraq are compounded a thousand times from what they were even a year ago. The invaders can't get the oil—that enormous source of profit that for the imperialists justified all crimes—pumping. They can't reorganize and reshape the entire region, as they planned. Instead the entire region is changing in ways that they dread. Their nightmare has just begun.

War in Iraq has created a powerful international movement of opposition. A movement that feels empowered, angry and outraged. It is a movement that is increasingly radicalized by the war and by the problems and dislocations the war creates right here at home.

Resistance changes consciousness

This new movement needs a socialist perspective or it won't be able to understand the war that it so hates. This movement can't sustain itself without knowing that there is an alternative to endless imperialist war.

For this conference today, we asked a



Sara Flounders

hard question: "Can the struggle for socialism be revived?" We feel that it can, because of this new climate of growing internationalism and anti-imperialist resistance.

Why? Because resistance changes consciousness. It changes the understanding of what is possible and necessary. A spirit of internationalism and resistance to imperialism is a prerequisite to reviving socialism. That is why we are so profoundly optimistic.

After 1991 and the collapse of Soviet Union after 74 years of encirclement, sabotage, blockade and Cold War, socialists everywhere were on the defensive. It was a catastrophic setback for our whole class internationally. Corporate globalization could and did proceed unchecked.

But today it is capitalism that is reviled and hated as never before—from Bolivia to Zimbabwe to Nepal. Hunger, poverty, massive unemployment, escalating racism and environmental devastation have reached epidemic global proportions. Capitalism has proved unable to solve any social problem.

Yet the struggle for socialism does not arise spontaneously. Karl Marx explained that workers and the working-class movement won't by itself reach beyond trade-union consciousness. Scientific socialism must be consciously planted and developed.

Today, the seeds fall increasingly on fertile soil. This is an age, a time, when revolutionary socialists, who are also anti-imperialist to their bones, can play a great and historic role.

We can provide an alternative, at a time when millions are desperately seeking an alternative. We are unique, even among socialists and communists. Because we exist right here in the center of the empire, yet we stand with our class sisters and brothers resisting racism and resisting the empire around the globe.

We really need to absorb this new reality. During the past two years we have made a real contribution to the world movement. Of this we are proud. But by explaining and projecting a socialist alternative to imperialist war, we can make an even greater contribution to the advance of our class, the world working class. □



Workshop on GI resistance.

Laying the basis for a red May Day

Based on a talk by Teresa Gutierrez to the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

If we were to count how many times Workers World newspaper has written, "The upsurge is around the corner," it would probably be a million times.

If we also counted how many times that sentiment was expressed in our talks or literature, year after year, it could be the same as the amount of money the Bush administration stole for the war in Iraq.

Whether the math is accurate or not, we have said that "the upsurge is inevitable" a hell of a lot of times.

Now a cynical or tired person might say, "Hmm ... you said the upsurge was around the corner 20 or 40 years ago." And it hasn't happened, they'd smugly point out.

But our party is not cynical. And though some of us may be tired, we have not abandoned the class struggle.

If we were to say what the main tenet of our party is, it would be this basic Marxist concept: The dictatorship of the proletariat is not only still viable, it is necessary in order to emancipate the workers and oppressed from capitalist oppression.

More important, we haughtily believe that this fundamental change from a bourgeois to a proletarian dictatorship can and will occur right here in the United States of America.

We dedicate ourselves to that struggle.

Does this mean that we will call a demonstration next May Day and expect workers to come en masse with red flags ready to take over the White House?

Of course not.

But it does mean that we are confident that one day workers will descend on the White House en masse with red flags ready to take it over. Because it is a haunted house, built on slavery and genocide, and people will one day be more than willing to paint it deep red.

We know the problems. The limitations of the labor leadership, for example. But we are not counting on them to lead us to socialism. Unfortunately, they along with many in the communist movement are leading the workers straight to the Democratic Party.

But this conference is about reviving socialism. And we cannot talk about that without recognizing the role of the U.S. working class.

It is the working class that is the agent of change. Only they can fundamentally alter class relations.

This is the only class that can end not only the war in Iraq but all imperialist wars. Not only the wars abroad, but the war at home as well.

In the meantime—in what could perhaps be a long meantime—what do we as communists say and what do we do? What era are we in and how can we advance the class struggle?

It is a period where a whole generation has grown up under the shadow of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Young people did not witness a live Che, the Che who came to New York representing the first socialist revolution in this hemisphere. They've only known a pop Che.

The last two decades have been marked by reaction, dominated by Reaganism and Bushonomics. Bourgeois pundits declared Marxism dead.

The struggles in Latin America show this is not true.

But it is here in the United States that the movement must be the most revolutionary, the most class-conscious.

So what can we expect from the workers' struggle in this period?

There is a book with an excellent title:



Teresa Gutierrez WWP/PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

"Class is Primary, Racism is Not Secondary."

This states in a simple but profound way how intertwined the class struggle is with fighting racism. They go hand in hand. One cannot be elevated over the other.

It is the same with the role of the workers in relation to every single struggle we take on. The mass struggle is primary, the workers' struggle is not secondary.

What distinguishes us is that we place a great deal of importance on the mass struggle. We understand how crucial it is to any fight to build the biggest actions we can. This is the way to fight here and now.

Any communist worth her or his salt knows this.

Our party yearns to reach the working class. We wait eagerly for the moment when the workers and oppressed struggle on another level.

We are heartened by the rise of struggles in the United States such as the Oct. 4 march in defense of immigrants, the Los Angeles grocery workers' strike and other signs of revival.

But at the same time, the workers have been slow to oppose the war in Iraq in a major way. They are receptive to fighting Bush on the \$87 billion stolen from them, but have shied away from a wholesale fight against the war.

Much as we wish and desire for the workers to come forward ready to wage militant class struggle, our views are based on science, not wishful thinking.

We know an upsurge in the working-class struggle is on the horizon, because the scientific-technological revolution that has devastated the working class in the last 20 years lays the basis for it.

The shift from high-paid, high-skilled jobs to lower-paid service jobs has taken its toll. Plant closings have meant hundreds of thousands of layoffs. And more are expected as factories flee to oppressed nations where wages are lower.

There are irreconcilable differences between the workers and oppressed and the capitalist class. The only thing the corporate vultures want from the workers is their labor. Profits and more and more profits are their sole aim.

As long as the capitalist system exists, the class struggle will emerge. It can sometimes be hidden, sometimes ebb, but it never goes away. This is why we are confident that upsurge is inevitable.

But what do we do on Monday morning?

When the Soviet Union collapsed, our tendency did not veer from Marxism. Our ranks were not disoriented or demoralized.

Our party chairperson, Sam Marcy, had

A book's excellent title, *Class is Primary, Racism is Not Secondary*, states in a profound way how intertwined the class struggle is with fighting racism.

prepared us ahead of time for the collapse and was able to explain it in a way to defend, not denounce, our class camp.

Preparation and anticipation of what is to come is exactly what is in order Monday morning—and every day after.

The anti-war struggle is primary, the working class struggle is not secondary. One has risen, and thanks to the work of the anti-war coalition ANSWER, millions have been brought out to protest the war in Iraq.

It was the vision of ANSWER that turned the tide in building a movement against the war. The tragedy of 9/11 never derailed the political will to fight Bush at every turn. And that political will meant that millions could come out against the war.

Maybe that movement was not that radical, or that anti-imperialist. But it was in the streets and that was what counted at the moment. Those who rail against the movement on an ultra-left basis miss this fundamental lesson.

The fact that the anti-war movement took to the streets in such large numbers changed the political climate in the United States. What more could communists ask for in this period?

The anti-war movement was on the rise. Of course it must ascend even higher in order to end the occupation of Iraq and to get imperialism the hell out of the Middle East.

But the other struggle—the workers' struggle—is barely getting its legs. A militant class-conscious movement fighting for its interests and not class collaboration is only in embryonic form.

But Los Angeles shows what is on the horizon.

How can the movement in this country, still reeling from a reactionary period, do

everything it can to end the occupation of Iraq and also provide support and assistance to the burgeoning class struggle here at home?

That is the question of the day.

What can be done to move the immigrant-rights struggle, which is often limited to a civil-rights movement, to one with a fire for class warfare?

How can meager resources be stretched to do it all? How can we provide leadership so we can help advance the struggle?

By understanding and being prepared and knowing that the immigrants' movement may take the form of fighting for civil rights today, but that tomorrow the class and anti-imperialist lessons learned from their homelands can lead this movement in another direction.

Don't we think that the struggle of immigrants at the turn of the last century can also be repeated today? Of course we do. It is part of working-class history that Jewish and Italian and other workers fought pitched battles against every form of capitalist rule back then, often bringing the bosses to their knees.

For those outside the party who dismiss the U.S. working class, let us remind them that it was the struggle of workers in this country that led to May Day and International Women's Day.

Twenty years ago, workers, especially the more privileged workers, expected that the scientific-technological revolution would bring advances to their lives, more leisure time and security. Instead, it has brought incredible insecurity, less health care and more layoffs.

It has brought more sweatshops, more homelessness and slave labor from the farms to the factories.

Our productivity has risen, but our wages have fallen.

This is why we know that the workers—from the most oppressed to the most privileged—will soon wake up and realize: The capitalist system is out of date and must be brought down.

When that day comes, our party will be ready. We will do everything to make sure that the dictatorship of the proletariat occurs right here in the heart of imperialism.

The heroic people of Iraq and the entire world should expect no less from us. □

Meeting on socialist struggle

Continued from page 6

to leading the struggle for socialism. Becker commented: "As revolutionaries we can't control everything. What we do have control over is building a revolutionary party. Revolutionary Marxism requires a party that can polemicize against all other ideologies."

Preston Wood spoke on the need for the anti-war movement to stay independent of the elections and the pro-imperialist Democratic Party. Wood said, "We need grassroots resistance, more participation from organized labor, work stoppages, students shutting down schools, more resistance from GIs and so on class-wide."

Assessing the anti-war movement's development over the last four years, Sarah Sloan argued that the time is right for directly appealing to workers to join the anti-war movement with the call to "bring the troops home now!" Sloan said: "People agree with our message. Our experience in Washington, D.C., is that somewhere between 80 and 95 percent are for it."

A significant number of attendees

attended a discussion called "Learning More about Workers World Party" to hear about the Party's rich history in the revolutionary struggle for socialism.

During this workshop, Larry Holmes remarked: "We need revolutionary soldiers. It's never too early to build a party of revolutionaries. If you're ready, really ready, join us. Let's—all of us—Black, Latino and Latina, Asian, bi, gay, women, trans, lesbian, straight, white, whatever—let's struggle together."

In closing remarks, Feinberg said: "No, capitalism is not the end of history. Socialism is the dawn of human history. Everything that has gone before will be recalled as human prehistory."

"Together, when the workers and oppressed peoples of the world unite, then we will be the plow that turns up fresh earth. We will unleash the storm of our righteous fury—our thunder and our lightning. And those who exploit and oppress us will be swept away in the awesome roar of our many waters. To quote Che Guevara: 'The present is struggle. The future is ours.'" □

A framework for discussion

The Soviet Union and the struggle for socialism

Based on a talk by Fred Goldstein to the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

Since the theme of this conference is reviving the struggle for socialism, I would like to turn to a subject that is ideologically and politically highly essential to that effort—that is, taking back our own history from the capitalist class on the question of the Soviet Union.

The socialist movement has long been laboring under a cloud of demoralization and doubt because of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Of course, the collapse was arguably the greatest setback for the working class movement in history. The political and economic gains were enormous for world imperialism. It required one sixth of the globe. It gained a free hand to make war and intensify its plunder among the oppressed countries, which used to rely on the USSR as a partial shield against imperialism. And it intensified imperialism's assault on the labor movement everywhere.

But the demoralization and weakening of the socialist movement is not confined to concern over material and political setbacks. It goes deeper than that. It is a matter of having lost confidence in the revolutionary socialist goal itself.

Much of the movement has consciously or unconsciously accepted the bourgeois interpretation of the collapse of the USSR as a proof that socialism—socialism in the communist sense of establishing the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat and organizing a planned economy—is fundamentally flawed. The movement has been in a defensive posture in the face of a bourgeois ideological onslaught. It has retreated on this question in the face of a mountain of bourgeois lies and distortions. The most common response of those who do not simply jump on the bourgeois bandwagon is to remain embarrassed and silent or ambiguous and apologetic on the whole subject.

Marxist approach to the Soviet Union

Thus, this question has everything to do with the future of the movement. The question of dealing forthrightly with the collapse of the USSR from a Marxist point of view is not merely a matter of setting the historical record straight for posterity, but rather it has become a measure of the degree of confidence in Marxism, historical materialism, the doctrine of the class struggle and the outlook for the struggle for world socialism and communism. The movement must retake the initiative on this question, dispel the clouds of confusion and doubt, and renew its confidence in Marxism and especially in the teachings of Lenin, the architect of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In a talk of this length it is only possible to propose a framework for what must be a thoroughgoing discussion and analysis. So the first thing to establish is that there is not one iota of historical evidence that the collapse of the USSR represents the failure of socialism as a social system. On the contrary, the extraordinary achievements of the first victorious workers' state in history are a living demonstration of the potential of socialism to lift the world out of the morass and nightmare imposed by private property, once socialism can be built on a strong economic foundation and be freed from the destruc-

tive influences of world imperialism.

The Bolshevik Revolution took place on a foundation of poverty in the poorest capitalist country in the West. It was isolated in its poverty and backwardness once the revolutionary attempts by the European working class to seize power were crushed by the European ruling classes after World War I. Yet, amidst the devastation caused by imperialist intervention and bloody civil war, the revolution finally expropriated the means of production from the capitalists and landlords, instituted the monopoly on foreign trade and inaugurated the planned economy.

Socialist accomplishments of the USSR

The revolution overcame the near-total collapse of the productive forces and raised Russia and its colonies from a semi-feudal region to the second industrial power in the world. The USSR led the world in steel and coal production. In the sphere of science and engineering, the USSR inaugurated the space age, built the largest construction projects in history, and, most importantly, from a class point of view, it did all this while lifting the peasants and workers out of poverty, bringing literacy, medicine, vacations, early retirement, and numerous other social benefits to the people.

The planned economy eliminated economic crises. Not once in its history, save during the Nazi invasion, did it suffer a decline in production. The five-year plans brought a steady growth in the economy while the capitalist world went through boom and bust, including a world depression in the 1930s. Unemployment was abolished. The present horrendous living conditions of the peoples of the former USSR are sufficient testimony to what was lost.

The revolution gave the oppressed nations who were in the tsar's "prison house of nations" the right to self-determination and created the first legislative house of nationalities in history. In its early years the Soviet government exposed the secret treaties of imperialism and called upon the oppressed peoples of the world to overthrow their colonial masters. It supported anti-imperialist governments and liberation struggles around the world and inaugurated a foreign policy of internationalism.

These accomplishments of the USSR took place in the face of a constant war by world imperialism, including intervention by 14 imperialist countries in 1918, the Nazi invasion which killed over 20 million people and wrought massive destruction on socialist industry and agriculture, and the 45-year military, economic and political Cold War by the U.S., NATO and Japanese imperialism.

Retreats, violations of socialist norms and imperialist pressure

To be sure, the demise of the USSR was immeasurably aided by the leadership's eventual abandonment of socialist norms and Leninist practices. The growth of excessive material privilege and social inequality under the guise of material incentives, the abandonment of revolutionary proletarian internationalism, and the use of repressive measures which went beyond the justifiable repression of the bourgeoisie and landlords to include the party and loyal communists, helped to undermine the revolutionary spirit of the

There is not one iota of historical evidence that the collapse of the USSR represents the failure of socialism as a social system.



Fred Goldstein WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

workers—the fundamental asset of the revolution. The disastrous split with the People's Republic of China during the PRC's revolutionary phase, caused by the Soviet leadership and fostered by U.S. imperialism, was one of the truly historic setbacks to building a strong, united socialist camp that could hold the imperialists at bay.

But these reactionary retreats from socialist norms took place under crisis conditions imposed by imperialism and under conditions of extreme material hardship. These setbacks had nothing whatever to do with socialism and everything to do with imperialist encirclement, a world imperialist embargo on technology, and a 24-hour-a-day threat of nuclear attack during the Cold War. This permanent state of war constantly disrupted socialist construction, exacerbated social tensions, promoted bourgeois elements fearful and conciliatory to imperialism, and undermined the development of socialism in the extreme.

None of the setbacks caused by bourgeois influence can nullify or disqualify the extraordinary world-shaking achievements in production, science, economic stability, rational planning for human need while raising the material and cultural level of the workers and peasants. The great strides forward in affirmative action for formerly oppressed peoples and support for the world liberation struggle were strictly due to the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class and socialist institutions.

On balance, it was the combined forces of material insufficiency and the campaign of aggression and pressure by imperialism that were the dominant factors in the demise of the USSR, not its attempts to build socialism.

In analyzing the development of the USSR, communists should take the approach of Lenin. After the collapse of the international working class movement known as the Second International, millions of workers were pitted against each other in a great imperialist war and the bourgeoisies of all the countries were riding high. In the midst of that war, in 1916, Lenin wrote his book "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," in which he showed that world imperialism was preparing the way for world socialism.

Lenin could do this amidst the horrendous collapse because he had a profound scientific understanding of capitalism and its historical development that led to his confidence in the decisiveness of the class struggle. Lenin viewed the immediate situation as so bleak that in January 1917 he gave a speech in Switzerland stating that he would probably not see the revolution in his lifetime. Yet he was confident in the inevitability of the revolution.

Lenin and Marx in face of defeat

Karl Marx himself never let victorious counterrevolution force him to abandon his scientific view of history, and consequently never lost faith in the struggle. After the revolution of 1848, in which he

and Frederick Engels were participants, the workers in Paris were slaughtered and the Prussian and Austrian monarchies, with the aid of the Russian tsar, crushed the revolutions in their realms. Revolutionaries all over Europe were executed, jailed or exiled. By 1852, reaction reigned supreme.

But in the midst of reaction, on March 5, 1852, Marx wrote a letter to a friend in New York, Joseph Wedemeyer, in which he calmly said that "... no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes in modern society or the struggle between them. ... What I did that was new was to prove: (1) that the existence of the classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production, (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, (3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes a transition to the abolition of all classes and to a classless society."

This was written 20 years before the Paris Commune and 65 years before the Bolsheviks established the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union.

The collapse of the USSR, as catastrophic as it was, has not changed the fact that capitalism creates its own grave diggers, the working class. A setback in the workers' struggle, no matter how bad, does not change the laws of historical development nor can it rescue capitalism from its fatal contradictions. To regard the Soviet Union as an historical anomaly would be to abandon materialism altogether. We must regard it as the first and crucial phase in the struggle for world socialism, which arose out of the fundamental contradiction between private property and socialized production.

The same forces of capitalist exploitation that drove the Russian workers to make the Bolshevik Revolution are now operative on an even broader global scale, and will eventually propel the entire working class to make the world socialist revolution and lay the basis for communism.

The achievements of the USSR in its attempts to build socialism showed that society could be planned in a rational way to meet human need and could make enormous progress without private property, without the profit motive and without bosses. In a word, when the socialist side of the USSR is separated out from the regressions induced by world capitalism, it showed that the capitalist class is historically unnecessary, parasitic and an obstruction to the progress of society.

The two fundamental impediments that distorted and strangled socialist development and brought the USSR down—the material insufficiency of the productive forces to support advanced socialist relations and the weight of world imperialism—would both be removed with the socialist revolution in the United States. It is the revolution in the developed imperialist countries that lays the basis for an era of true peace and solidarity to begin, that is, the beginning of human history. □



Gore, Dean & Clinton

The groundswell of mass opposition to the war in Iraq, that last winter filled the streets with the largest protests since the Vietnam War, is continuing to roil politics in the U.S. as the bloody occupation drags on.

This is what's behind former Vice President Al Gore's endorsement of the Dean campaign. To support Dean, Gore had to offend a lot of his erstwhile political allies.

Todd Purdum wrote in the New York Times of Dec. 9: "In moving to endorse Howard Dean, Al Gore embraced an insurgent candidate who has spent months railing against the brand of centrist-at-home, hawkish-abroad Democratic politics that Mr. Gore worked 20 years to help build. And in winning the endorsement, Dr. Dean has shown that he is now much more concerned about wooing the Washington establishment than whacking it.

"In pledging allegiance to Dr. Dean, Mr. Gore passed over Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, the man he chose three years ago as his own running mate; Gen. Wesley K. Clark, for whom several of his former aides are working; Rep. Richard A. Gephardt, a onetime rival who warmly endorsed him four years ago; and Sen. John Kerry, a former colleague who declined to challenge him for the nomination in 2000."

What pushed Gore—the person Bill Clinton brought onto his 1992 ticket to prove he had the support of the Democratic Party establishment—to now support Dean, considered a maverick on the war? It wasn't shining principles. It was the calculation that Dean is tapping into the energy of a lot of young Democrats, who in turn are motivated by very strong anti-war feelings in their communities and families. Gore's move shows that even centrists don't believe the argument that an anti-war stance will alienate voters and cost the Democrats the election.

But how anti-war is Dean?

He's not for pulling out of Iraq, that's for sure. But by focusing on the mess Bush is in, rather than on a program to end the war, he is trying to capture the bring-the-troops-home spirit that is growing—without actually saying he will bring them home.

Gore made his move on the same weekend that his former ally, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who had recently visited Baghdad, appeared on the influential NBC-TV Sunday morning program "Meet the Press." Its transcripts are available online.

Interviewer Tim Russert zeroed in on what Clinton would do in Iraq if she were president. Would she pull out?

Would she send more troops?

"Is failure an option?" he asked. "No, absolutely not," responded Clinton, meaning she would not bring U.S. troops home and let the Iraqi people just take over. Then she actually attacked Bush from the right, criticizing his "moving up the time table on sovereignty which I think struck a lot of people as, you know, a little bit hasty and improvised." Of course, she knows Bush did this to boost his election chances. But she's hoping to score a few points with his right-wing critics—like those who resonate to Sen. John McCain, for example, who accompanied her on the trip.

Clinton then talked about trying to get others involved in the occupation of Iraq, saying, "I support the administration's request to NATO that they become involved in Iraq. ... We can create some new entity, the Iraq, you know, Reconstruction Stability Authority. We can do something that then gives frankly cover to other countries to come in and support us."

Russert pressed her on the troops: "But if other countries say no, they just don't have the troops, would you, as the president, send more Americans to Iraq and Afghanistan?"

"Well, the highest priority is to stabilize Iraq and provide security," she replied.

Just to be sure, Russert asked: "So if the president came forward and said, 'We need another 50,000 American troops for Iraq,' you'd look at that favorably?"

"I would look at it very carefully and I would say, 'You know, let's get the job done.' ... I think we're in for a very difficult time. And we need to make sure we've got the troops there in whatever numbers are needed to do it," was Clinton's final word.

The election of a Democrat has never stopped a war. The anti-war movement should not relax and think that if Dean gets the nomination, the imperialist ruling class here will see the light and abandon their grandiose ambitions for total domination of the Middle East. But the movement should take notice of what's going on in the bourgeois elections, for it reveals the weakness and bankruptcy of those who have beaten the war drums.

The only light at the end of the tunnel will come when the efforts of the Iraqi resistance and of the worldwide anti-war movement, acting independently of the capitalist parties, force the Pentagon to beat a retreat and release U.S. soldiers from the hell of being an occupying army. □

Pentagon slaughters 15 Afghan children

Continued from page 1

"ring road." The "ring road" is a giant project that the United States, Saudi Arabia and Japan have undertaken to develop Afghanistan's infrastructure.

Since October 2002, the Louis Berger Group of East Orange, N.J., has been working on a \$180-million enterprise reconstructing the critical road connecting Kabul, Kandahar and Herat. The U.S. Agency for International Development sees Afghanistan's location and the development of its land routes as central to its "special geo-strategic and economic importance," according to a State Department publication.

The U.S. concern with protecting infrastructure over human lives is in keeping with its military priorities in what is, according to UNICEF, the fourth-poorest nation in the world. One in every five children still dies of disease and/or malnutrition before the age of five.

Afghanistan's children are Washington's least concern. But killing children by hunger or rockets isn't helping the United States win Afghan hearts and minds.

Losing hearts and minds in Iraq, too

The British daily, the Guardian, reported Dec. 9 that U.S. intelligence and military officials had admitted that the Israeli army sent warfare specialists to Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where U.S. special forces are based, to train them for operations in Iraq. The Guardian report said U.S. special forces units were also operating inside Syria.

"This is basically an assassination program. That is what is being conceptualized here. This is a hunter-killer team," a former senior U.S. intelligence official told the newspaper.

The U.S. occupation forces were carrying out raids throughout Iraq, including attacking union offices. According to a release from the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, the U.S. military, "using a force of about 10 armored cars and dozens of soldiers," attacked the temporary headquarters of IFTU at the offices of the Transport and Communications Union in Baghdad on Dec. 6 and arrested eight of its leaders. The troops then wrecked the offices, "without giving any reason or explanation."

The U.S. had made appeals for relief troops from NATO. But the Pentagon, in a directive from Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, has barred French, German and Russian companies from competing for \$18.6 billion in contracts for the "reconstruction" of Iraq, saying the step "is necessary for the protection of the essential security interests of the United States."

Of course, the Pentagon is keeping the lion's share of the contracts for U.S. corporations like Halliburton and Bechtel, which have contributed a long line of corporate officers to government posts in order to grease the wheels of military adventure and expansionism.

Paris, Berlin and Moscow, which opposed the U.S. moves toward war last year but were cooperating with the U.S.-led occupation, reacted angrily. The European Commission said it is investigating whether the move complies with global trade rules. Canada and China are also cut out of the contracts.

But the U.S. will dole out a few to those countries—like Britain—that sent soldiers to help the U.S. suppress the Iraqi people, and to Spain, Japan, Italy and Poland,

which have troops in Iraq or are about to send them.

Meanwhile, a car bomb near Mosul in northern Iraq wounded 51 U.S. troops. The official number of U.S. troops killed in action since Bush's triumphant speech at the beginning of May reached 194 on Dec. 10. So far, the Pentagon hasn't been able to overcome the Iraqi people's resistance and "rebuild" much of anything. But that isn't stopping Washington from using potential construction contracts as both carrot and stick.

U.S. empire having problems

The U.S. military is having a hard time waging endless war. On Nov. 26, Washington announced a decision to close down 20 percent of its military installations in Europe and parts of Asia to move to "geographic areas where U.S. forces have increasingly found themselves ... particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia." (Boston Globe, Nov. 26)

Meanwhile, the Nov. 18 Stars and Stripes reported that to keep more troops in the military, the Army has imposed a "stop-loss/stop-movement order" on all active-duty units preparing to deploy into Iraq. This means the Army is preventing service members from retiring or leaving the service at their scheduled time; stop movements prevent permanent change-of-station moves.

Even this is not enough. The Pentagon's military might cannot control Afghanistan any more than it can defeat Iraq. Both occupations are brutal, killing thousands of civilians, including children, and turning the populations into resistance fighters.

With U.S. forces inadequate to the task, Washington is turning to NATO for help. On Dec. 2, U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called for a shift of NATO forces into Afghanistan, saying, "NATO might take over military operations in Afghanistan some time in the future."

Eager to expand the NATO-led "peace-keeping" mission in Afghanistan beyond Kabul, the imperialist and comprador powers of NATO have committed themselves to "deliver ... real security from Kosovo to Kabul."

At a Dec. 3 meeting in Brussels, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson proposed shifting NATO forces from Bosnia to Afghanistan. NATO began its expansion in the war on Bosnia in 1992, but its 17,500 troops in Kosovo are still necessary for that occupation.

On Dec. 6 Rumsfeld roared into Mazar-e-Sharif with a cavalcade of 35 vehicles to announce an escalation of the war on Afghanistan: Operation Avalanche, which began with the slaughter of the innocents in Huta.

To the military occupiers, Afghanistan is still "the worst place in the world," according to U.S. Army Col. Rodney Davis. "This forgotten war is not about to end any day soon." (London Daily Telegraph, Nov. 30)

For the people of Afghanistan the recent U.S. offensive began with a war on their beloved children. As one Afghan man asked a reporter, "As a human, what would you think?" (New York Times, Dec. 8) □

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Bolivar, Marx and the liberation of Latin America

Based on a talk by Berta Joubert-Ceci at the Dec. 6-7 conference in New York.

When El Libertador—Simon Bolivar—died at age 47 in 1830, Karl Marx was barely 12 years old. Bolivar had liberated five countries from the Spanish Empire under the banner of his ideals of abolition of slavery, equal distribution of wealth, end of oppression and discrimination for the Indigenous people, and the unity of all South American countries against what he then saw would be a future threat to the region, the U.S. ruling class. He was far ahead of his time.

The response from the masses then was not sufficient to carry on Bolivarian ideals. However, more than one-and-a-half centuries after his death, Bolivar's ideas are now spreading like fire. And this time, there is the added benefit of Marxism.

The prevalent slogan—"Beware imperialists, Bolivar's sword is going throughout Latin America"—is not an empty threat. The people are moving.

It is not a homogenous movement, but it does share this: It's massive, popular, anti-capitalist and mostly pro-socialist.

Another important feature of this movement is solidarity—not only within Latin America and the Caribbean, but with people all over the world who are victims of oppression and occupation, like Iraq and Palestine. It can bring tears to your eyes when you hear people chant at demonstrations, "Iraq, aguanta, que el mundo se levanta" (Iraq, hold on, the world is rising). It's like saying, give us some time, we'll help you.

From awareness of the oppression stemming from the United States and its corporations, the people have moved to denounce it. And now they are organizing to change that reality. The actors are those who have been voiceless for too long—the Indigenous communities, the landless, women.

Since the Monroe Doctrine, the United

States has considered this region its backyard. U.S. capitalists have stolen labor and raw materials. Washington has invaded militarily multiple times, intervened politically and economically, deposed democratically elected heads of state in Chile and Guatemala, and imposed violent and criminal dictators like Pinochet, Somoza and Trujillo, to name just a few.

Neoliberalism is nothing but the intensification of imperialist exploitation with these added impositions: privatization of natural resources, key national enterprises, public and social services; reduction of the government apparatus, taxes on the private sector, and social safety nets; and removal of any trade regulation. This is necessary for the imposition of the Free Trade Area of the Americas and other so-called free trade agreements.

These economic measures go hand in hand with state repression and military preparations, mandated and assisted by the United States. Plan Colombia is the most widely known measure. It is aimed at the FARC and ELN insurgencies in Colombia—but also at other countries in the region, to the point that it is now known as the Andean Region Initiative.

'Everything is being debated'

There is no place in Latin America or the Caribbean without some progressive development—whether it's the election of popular, left-leaning presidents in Brazil, Ecuador and Argentina; the ouster of the U.S. Navy from Vieques; the tremendous mobilizations that brought down President Sanchez de Lozada in Bolivia; or the latest general strike in the Dominican Republic. Where newly elected officials have failed the people, as in Ecuador, the struggle of the masses has continued.

Everything is being debated. There are regional Social Forums, forums about the FTAA, Plan Colombia, issues concerning the Indigenous, Afro descendants, women, youths and so forth. It's no accident that the most well attended interna-



Berta Joubert-Ceci WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

tional forums—the World Social Forum and the Sao Paulo Forum—originated in South America, in Brazil.

Because of the lack of uniformity in the movement, many leaders and Marxist intellectuals of the region are also conducting debates. Their most pressing issues at the moment can be summed up as insurrection, anarchy and spontaneous social explosions vs. revolution and the defeat of the established power with the constitution of a new social order.

To put it another way, they are grappling with the divergence between the masses in motion on one hand, and having an organization that can bring cohesion to that movement in order to seize the moment, change the balance of forces and take power.

Many of the traditional left parties have failed to immerse themselves in the struggle of the masses. So one of the discussions is the role of a vanguard organization, how it cannot be a self-proclaimed vanguard, how it has to influence the masses through immersion in their struggle, bringing cohesion and unity. Only then will it be recognized by the masses as the vanguard.

One of these efforts was the first Bolivarian Congress of the Peoples held in November in Caracas, Venezuela. With national chapters in 20 countries, the Bolivarian Congress is an attempt to unite

The Indigenous communities, the landless, women, all those excluded for decades are pushing their governments to take stands against the policies of Washington.

the region's popular political and social forces to act in coordination and cooperation in fighting for liberation. To challenge the Free Trade Area of the Americas, known in Spanish as ALCA, there is a Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, or ALBA, first put forward by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

The groups represented on the Congress's Provisional Secretariat look like a Who's Who of the Latin American struggle today: Venezuela's Bolivarian Circles, Brazil's Landless Movement, the Cuban Communist Party, Ecuador's Indigenous Pachakutik Movement, Bolivia's Movement Toward Socialism, Argentina's Piquetero Movement and the FMLN of El Salvador.

The Continental Bolivarian Coordination is an attempt by the Latin American left to re-establish republics on the basis of true democracy and the sharing of wealth. This Coordinadora directly calls for rebellion against U.S. imperialism.

Venezuela and Cuba are key in providing venues and political space for many of these meetings. In fact, it is written in the new Venezuelan Bolivarian Constitution that "the Republic will promote and favor Latin American and Caribbean integration, to advance toward the creation of a Community of Nations, defending the economic, social, political and environmental interests of the region." □

Protest set to greet Gen. Clark at the Hague tribunal

By John Catalinotto

Organizations in the Netherlands and around the world plan to protest the appearance of Gen. Wesley Clark before the tribunal in The Hague on Dec. 15. He is scheduled to be a prosecution witness in the trial of former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic.

Clark was commander of NATO when, beginning on March 24, 1999, it waged a 78-day bombing campaign against Yugoslavia. The current U.S. presidential can-

didate was himself tried and convicted in Belgrade of war crimes. On June 10, 2000, right here in the United States, a people's tribunal found General Clark, along with then-President Bill Clinton and other U.S. and NATO leaders, guilty of war crimes.

A call for the protest distributed by the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic (ICDSM) expressed outrage over how the trial is being conducted:

"More clearly than ever before now the direct influence of the U.S. regime comes

to the surface. It is the U.S. that literally dictated to the tribunal the terms under which Wesley Clark will testify. Following the direct conditions from Washington, no public and no media will be allowed inside. The only people who will observe the proceedings will be two representatives of the U.S. government. And not only this: the U.S. government has the authority to decide which parts of the testimony will remain secret. The other parts will be presented to the U.S. government, which will then have a time

period of 48 hours to censor also this part."

The New Communist Party of the Netherlands has organized a protest for 8 a.m. in front of the tribunal building. At 9 a.m. there will be a press conference of the ICDSM in the Hotel Bel Air next to the tribunal. Canadian attorney Tiphaine Dickson, legal assistant to Milosevic, will speak to the media.

ICDSM chapters in other countries are also protesting General Clark's secret testimony. For information on the activity of the U.S. section, see www.icdsm-us.org. □

MARKET ELECTIONS:

How democracy serves the rich By Vince Copeland

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Sistema de Salud Comunitario salva vidas en Las Filipinas

Por Hillel Cohen
Mindanao, Las Filipinas

Nunca ha habido un apagón porque nunca ha habido electricidad. Las inundaciones no pueden dificultar el sistema de alcantarillado por no existe. El servicio de agua potable nunca se corta porque nunca se ha instalado un sistema de tubería.

El agua más cercana es un arrollo que está a por lo menos 20 minutos bajando por una escarpada colina y otros 20 minutos regresando.

En esta comunidad rural de la Península de Zamboanga ciudad de Mindanao, un viaje al centro del pueblo quiere decir una hora en “taxi” bajando la montaña. El “taxi” es una motocicleta que lleva hasta cuatro pasajeros. Las motocicletas son el único tipo de vehículo que puede subir y bajar por el camino lodoso de la montaña, y eso si no ha llovido recientemente y el lodazar no es muy hondo.

Si alguien está enfermo, no hay ni que pensar en una ambulancia. Ninguna puede subir la montaña, pero de todos modos, ninguna está disponible. Aún si alguien que estuviera enfermo pudiera llegar hasta el pueblo, ella o el no tendrían suficiente dinero para medicamentos, y mucho menos para pagar los servicios de la clínica o el hospital.

La mayoría de las familias cosecha maíz. Muy pocos son dueños de su tierra. Cada año los campesinos tienen que dar una gran parte de la cosecha a los dueños de las tierras como pago de alquiler. A menudo el maíz con el que se quedan para su alimentación no dura ni el año.

Los bueyes que se usan para arar, están escasos. Muchos hogares tienen unas pocas gallinas o un puerco que pueden ser vendidos o consumidos en ocasiones especiales.

Muy pocos habitantes en esta comunidad saben lo que es una enfermera, y mucho menos un doctor. Los nacimientos y la muerte suceden en la casa.

Estas condiciones son comunes a todas las áreas rurales de las Filipinas. Las cosechas y los terrenos pueden variar pero las dificultades del diario vivir son similares para 40 a 50 millones de los 80 millones de habitantes de las Filipinas.

Visité esta comunidad rural como parte de un viaje de “exposición” organizado por el Consejo de Salud y Desarrollo (CSD), junto con la Conferencia Internacional de Desafíos en el Trabajo de la Salud Frente a la Globalización y la Guerra. El CSD es una organización nacional de más de 50 programas de salud comunitarios no gubernamentales que trabaja en las Filipinas. Uno de ellos, El Programa de Extensión de Salud de la Península de Zamboanga hizo posible mi visita a esta parte de Mindanao.

Los programas comunitarios comenzaron en las Filipinas hace casi 30 años cuando el país estaba bajo el régimen apoyado por EEUU de Ferdinand Marcos. Los doctores, enfermeras, parteras y otros que tienen conocimientos sobre la salud trabajan voluntariamente con las comunidades rurales.

A diferencia de las misiones de salud de “ayuda humanitaria”, la filosofía del Proyecto de Salud Comunitaria (PSC) no enfatiza la práctica de proveer servicios de salud que no puedan auto sustentarse y que desaparecerían una vez que los voluntarios no pudieran continuar ayudando. Sino que el enfoque es en el entrenamiento de trabajadores en las comunidades—miembros de las comunidades que se entrenan voluntariamente a cambio de que provean servicios de salud a su comunidad.

Casi todos los voluntarios son mujeres. La mayor parte tiene educación a nivel de escuela elemental—seis años—aunque otras tienen menos. Las comunidades no pueden costear ni siquiera suministros médicos básicos, así que los entrenamientos se concentran en sanidad básica, primeros auxilios, extracción de dientes, partos, medicinas naturales y técnicas como la acupuntura y la acupresión, que no requieren equipos caros. Los trabajadores de la salud también aprenden a diagnosticar enfermedades peligrosas como la tifoidea que requeriría un viaje al hospital de la provincia si este se pudiera arreglar.

Aunque los voluntarios del PSC no son abiertamente políticos, urgen a los trabajadores de la salud a que piensen sobre las condiciones económicas y sociales que crean esas difíciles condiciones y cómo la salud requiere de necesidades básicas

como alimentos, vivienda, sanidad y agua potable libre de contaminantes. Ellos también discuten las situaciones políticas internacionales que les afectan directamente o indirectamente.

En una reunión con tres trabajadores de salud de la comunidad tuvimos una conversación sobre los últimos sucesos en la guerra de los Estados Unidos contra Irak así como el impacto de la Organización de Comercio Mundial.

Preocupación sobre intervención imperialista

Hace aproximadamente un año las tropas de los EE.UU. estuvieron en Mindanao, cerca de aquí Bush las había enviado como parte de la “guerra contra el terrorismo.” Los activistas filipinos creen que las tropas fueron un anticipo del reestablecimiento de las bases militares de los EE.UU. acá.

La lucha popular había forzado al Pentágono a cerrar dos bases militares una década anterior. El Pentágono quiere volver. Se han descubierto reservas petroleras sustanciales en Mindanao, y las Filipinas están ubicadas estratégicamente cerca de importantes rutas de comercio marítimo en el Mar Pacifico.

Los campesinos filipinos también están muy preocupados por la OMC y el Fondo Monetario Internacional. Los pagos de la deuda externa al FMI han resultado en recortes inmensos del presupuesto nacional. La OMC ha dificultado la venta de los productos de los campesinos en los mercados locales por la competencia de empresas agropecuarias internacionales. En esta remota comunidad rural, sin televisión, sin periódicos y con sólo unos pocos radios tipo transistor en el vecindario, estos trabajadores comunitarios de la salud parecen estar mejor informados y preocupados por los asuntos internacionales que muchos de mis compañeros de trabajo en Nueva York.

Los trabajadores comunitarios de la salud y muchos de los voluntarios de los Programas de Salud Comunitarios a veces son detenidos u hostigados por militares que dicen que los trabajadores de la salud son agentes de las insurgencias locales que existen en muchas zonas rurales. Un par de años antes de nuestra visita por lo menos dos trabajadores comunitarios fueron asesinados por el ejército o por

paramilitares derechistas.

A pesar de que los PSC son organizaciones legalmente reconocidas, frecuentemente el gobierno asume que cualquier persona que labora gratis para ayudar a sus vecinos tiene que ser una amenaza peligrosa al estatus quo.

La madre de nuestra anfitriona quien vive a unos pocos pasos, vino a platicar. Nos dijo que su hija era una de 13 hijos que ella había parido, pero que 10 de ellos murieron antes de la edad de cinco años.

Nuestra anfitriona está embarazada con su sexto hijo, pero hasta la fecha no ha perdido ninguno de ellos. Ella atribuyó la mejoría al modesto entrenamiento que ella y sus vecinas habían recibido por medio del programa de salud comunitaria.

Como sus vecinas, ella tenía una letrina. Tan simple como es, era algo raro en el vecindario cuando ella era niña, y los organizadores de la comunidad tuvieron que conducir una campaña de educación para explicar por qué cada hogar debía tener una letrina para controlar los excrementos humanos, que son fuente potencial de enfermedades.

Cuando anocheció y estuvimos preparándonos para dormir, yo pregunté sobre los mosquitos, porque no teníamos mosquiteros. Con mucho orgullo, nuestra anfitriona declaró, “Soy una trabajadora comunitaria de la salud. No hay mosquitos en mi casa.” Cuando le pregunté cómo había logrado esto, ella dijo que se aseguraba eliminar cualquier lugar con agua estancada en los alrededores de la casa, y que todos los días hacía una fogata con mucho humo en la cocina porque los mosquitos huyen del humo. Estas sencillas acciones ayudan a proteger las vidas y la salud de su familia.

Los mosquitos, por supuesto, no son el único problema para estos campesinos sin tierra. Los terratenientes y los capitalistas globalizantes de la OMC son problemas que no se pueden superar con medidas sencillas. Sin embargo, tuve la sensación de que nuestra anfitriona y sus vecinas están igualmente dedicadas a liberarse del legado del colonialismo.

Sus experiencias con un programa de salud con base en la comunidad reforzaron la conciencia de que cualquier cosa que quieran lograr será producto de sus propios esfuerzos, y esto les brinda la confianza de que encontrarán la manera de hacerlo. □



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