



## Free Them Now!

Campaigns launched for death row prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal & Nanon Williams

### Legal lynching

A legacy of slavery and genocide

3

## HALLIBURTON

Corporate bandits loot U.S. and Iraq

6

## IMMIGRANT STUDENTS

Say no to Patriot Act

4

## HAITI

PPN leader speaks on socialism

New book examines 200 years of struggle

Today's threat of U.S.-backed coup

8

### Talks from Dec 6-7 Conference

**SOCIALISM: the working class's historic task**

5

**The great challenges facing CHINA today**

9

**Which road to SOCIALISM?**

11

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# U.S. workers ignite struggle Union membership is a human right

### Special to Workers World

"Workers' rights are human rights" was the theme of actions held across the United States to mark International Human Rights Day, Dec. 10.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed on that date in 1948. This year, the AFL-CIO and its member unions used the occasion to push for changes in undemocratic U.S. labor laws, focusing on the right to join unions.

Specifically, the actions promoted passage of the Employee Free Choice Act introduced by Sen. Edward Kennedy. The act seeks to establish workers' basic rights to join unions and bargain collectively around the world, as a measure to rein in worker abuses under U.S.-sanctioned "free market" agreements like NAFTA and FTAA.

Though the act was introduced with a view to other countries, workers in the United States know how difficult it is to organize right here—where corporations attempt to discourage unionization by terrorizing workers with the fear of losing their jobs. The AFL-CIO hopes to use the legislation to protect and extend the right to organize within U.S. borders.

EFCA would sanction card-check union campaigns. Once the majority of workers at a company have signed cards, contract negotiations must begin. This would deny employers the chance to run stall-and-scare tactics to keep workers from unionizing.

### New York, D.C.

In New York City, some 700 unionists joined a Dec. 10 rally on Wall Street. There were strong contingents from UNITE, the

Service Employees and Laborers Local 79, along with doctors and teachers.

Members of the group Jobs with Justice carried a puppet depicting the National Labor Relations Board's pro-boss bias. The group led a contingent to sit in at the NLRB office to demand unbiased decisions in labor disputes.

Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., some 1,200 workers rallied in front of the

*Continued on page 2*



Washington, D.C., Dec. 10.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK

## WWP STATEMENT Imperialism and the capture of Saddam Hussein

The Bush administration's claim that the capture of Saddam Hussein is a great step in bringing democracy and freedom to Iraq should be denounced by all those who opposed the war, oppose the occupation and are against the entire enterprise of U.S. imperialism in Iraq.

The capture of Saddam Hussein by U.S. military forces is an act carried out solely in pursuit of strengthening the criminal colonial occupation and weakening the Iraqi resistance. Whatever the immediate outcome of his capture, however, it cannot alter in any fundamental way the historic anti-colonial sentiment of the Iraqi people and their will to struggle for independence.

The only "democracy and freedom" that Washington intends for Iraq is the freedom to sell off all the state and privately owned enterprises to powerful multinational corporate exploiters; to allow 100-percent imperialist ownership; to allow the imperialists to take over the 110 billion barrels of oil reserves and repatriate the profits squeezed out of the Iraqi people; to set up bases for the Pentagon; and to install a puppet government beholden to Washington.

It is in pursuit of these objectives that Washington waged its illegal, "pre-emptive" war of aggression against Iraq. These are the motives behind the administration's fraudulent charges about weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, and so on. It is in pursuit of purely imperialist objectives that U.S. forces have rampaged across Iraq trying to crush the resistance—raiding homes, imprisoning thousands of suspects, taking hostages and rounding up leaders. It was for

these reactionary objectives that Washington hunted down Saddam Hussein.

The gloating triumphalism of the Bush administration, its systematic attempts to humiliate the former head of the Iraqi state, and its preparation for an imperialist-run show trial are meant to send a message to everyone who refuses to bow down to the dictates of U.S. imperialism: "If you resist, we will get you." It is reminiscent of Rome's imperial armies, that brought back rebellious leaders in chains or put their heads on pikes, and of the U.S. Cavalry, which displayed the bodies of Native leaders who resisted them.

To the dismay of Bush, Bremer and the military, the initial response to the capture of Saddam Hussein has been car bombings, rocket attacks and protest demonstrations. Bush himself has been cautious in touting this event as some sort of decisive victory.

He and his advisers undoubtedly are mindful of recent history. Shortly after taking Baghdad, U.S. generals sat in the newly captured Republican Palace and gloated over their "amazing victory," virtually claiming that Iraq was theirs. Then came Bush's photo-op on the aircraft carrier when he pronounced the war over. And again, after the execution of Saddam Hussein's sons, Qusay and Uday, photos of their bullet-ridden bodies were put on world display.

Each of these moments of "triumph" was followed by renewed resistance from the Iraqi people.

The administrations in Washington, Republican and

*Continued on page 6*

# Union membership is a human right

Continued from page 1

Department of Labor. Area workers are engaged in some tough battles that were highlighted at the rally.

Government Employees President John Cage condemned the Bush administration's attacks on federal workers, highlighting the fight to stop the privatization of 700,000 federal jobs.

AFSCME President Gerald McEntee pointed out, "The administration is trying to take away overtime for 8 million workers, a right we fought and died for."

Washington Metropolitan AFL-CIO President Josh Williams embraced Evelyn Thomas, a 10-year veteran of Sterling Laundry. Thomas spoke about the battle of her fellow workers to win union recognition. Several hundred laundry workers in D.C. have been on strike for over eight weeks. Thomas said the company's owner had vowed "to burn the laundry" rather than allow the workers union rights.

Food and Commercial Workers signs in solidarity with striking and locked-out grocery workers in Southern California asked people not to shop at Safeway stores.

## California: Latin@s mobilize

Activists in San Francisco and throughout California held rallies Dec. 10 in support of labor rights and many other human-rights struggles, including disabled rights and prisoners' rights. The Bay Area hosted a daylong succession of protests.



Most of these rallies focused their attention on Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who after less than a month in office has already proposed Draconian cuts to services affecting some of the most oppressed communities.

Then, on Dec. 12, Latin@s throughout California participated in an economic boycott to protest Schwarzenegger's repeal of a law allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses. The boycott, planned to coincide with the Feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, asked Latin@s to refrain from shopping and to stay home from work or school.

In San Francisco, many restaurants and businesses shut down for the day. Others were forced to limit their services due to lack of workers. A large group of Latin@s marched through the Mission District for hours to bring attention to their cause.

Sharon Black, Greg Butterfield, LeiLani Dowell and Patricia Hilliard contributed to this article. □

# Response to attack on immigrant rights

## Calif. boycott sends message of resistance

By Adrian Garcia  
Los Angeles

Despite reprisals at the hands of the bosses, thousands of immigrants, workers and students in Southern California stayed away from work, stores and schools on Dec. 12. The boycott was organized by immigrants' rights groups after Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor of California in October and announced he would lead the repeal of Senate Bill 60.

This law would have allowed undocumented workers to obtain a driver's license. It was supposed to go into effect on Jan. 1, 2004. The repeal occurred on Dec. 1 with the collaboration of Democrats in the State Assembly who had previously championed its cause.

The boycott also prompted Latino-owned small businesses and businesses with a largely immigrant work force and clientele to close shop for the day.

"At the very least, we have provoked a debate at work places, commercial establishments, in school districts, and at the political level," Nativo Lopez, president of the Mexican American Political Association, told the newspaper La Opinion. The boycott was a signal to bosses in the state and the country that immigrant workers are a vital component of the work force and will no longer sit idly while reactionary attacks on their livelihood are ruthlessly perpetrated.

Although it is difficult to quantify exactly how many people participated in the statewide economic boycott, Noe Hernandez, coordinator for the Communitarian

Union Project, estimated that some 200,000 people abstained from going to work in Fresno, Calif., alone. Farm workers refused to cut trees or perform many gardening chores, despite bosses' threats to their jobs. (La Opinion, Dec. 13)

Schools throughout California's predominantly immigrant communities were faced with unprecedented rates of absenteeism by both students and teachers. Parents kept their children home as a sign of solidarity with immigrant workers and their families. Some schools reported an absentee rate as high as three-quarters.

Unexcused absences cost the state \$40 per student. The Los Angeles Unified School District sent a memo to teachers and parents in an attempt to dissuade teacher and student participation in the boycott.

"What is being done to us immigrants is unjust and I will do my part by keeping my child from going to school," remarked a woman whose three children attend an elementary school in East Los Angeles.

The economic boycott is just the beginning of resistance by California workers against a reactionary agenda that targets the undocumented. Immigrants' rights groups are positioning themselves for a struggle that is gaining momentum. Latino Movement USA has scheduled major demonstrations in February, March and October of next year.

The success of the economic boycott indicates that workers in general are recognizing that immigrant workers' struggle against capitalist divide-and-conquer tactics is their struggle. □

This week ...



### ★ National

- Union membership is a human right . . . . . 1
- Calif. boycott sends message of resistance . . . . . 2
- Activists prepare spring offensive for Mumia . . . . . 3
- Free Nanon Williams Week. . . . . 3
- Gloria Rubac: Death penalty is a crime . . . . . 3
- On the picket line . . . . . 4
- Int'l students fight 'fee for spy' plan . . . . . 4
- Larry Holmes on socialism . . . . . 5
- Halliburton, a well-connected war profiteer . . . . . 6
- Los Angeles anti-war protest . . . . . 7
- Deirdre Sinnott: Which road to socialism? . . . . . 11

### ★ International

- WWP statement on Saddam Hussein capture. . . . . 1
- Puerto Rican coalition against Iraq war . . . . . 7
- U.S. funding raises Haiti coup danger . . . . . 8
- Haitian leader on socialism. . . . . 8
- Book review: The slave revolution. . . . . 8
- The great challenges facing China today . . . . . 9
- War criminal Clark testifies . . . . . 10
- Cultural program salutes Sison . . . . . 10

### ★ Editorials

- At year's end. . . . . 10

### ★ Noticias En Español

- La Unión Soviética y la lucha por el Socialismo . . . . . 12

### WW CALENDAR

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# Activists prepare spring offensive for Mumia Abu-Jamal

By Sue Harris and Monica Moorehead  
Philadelphia

Despite freezing temperatures, several hundred activists from around the Northeast marched outdoors Dec. 13, then met indoors at Benjamin Franklin High School, all to demand the release of African American political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal hosted the event.

Dec. 9 was the 22nd anniversary of Abu-Jamal's arrest for the alleged murder of police officer Daniel Faulkner. The indoor meeting included a talk by Philadelphia attorney Michael Coard, who gave a comprehensive overview of Abu-Jamal's legal case. Coard presented factual evidence to demonstrate the prisoner's innocence and also to expose the sham of a trial that sent him to death row.

Other speakers included Pam Africa from ICFMMAJ and Terri-Maurer Carter,

a former court stenographer who overheard racist remarks about Abu-Jamal made in 1982 by hanging-Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over the original trial.

After the presentations, activists converged into various workgroups to begin strategizing on how to build for a major spring mobilization for Abu-Jamal on April 24, the imprisoned journalist's 50th birthday.

One suggestion from the work groups was to provide a wider distribution of Abu-Jamal's own recorded talks via e-mail and the internet. Another was to broadcast his political commentaries at upcoming anti-war demonstrations, especially the March 20 worldwide mobilization on the first anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

Mumia Abu-Jamal's case has come to symbolize the worldwide struggle against



PHOTO: PVN/KEY MARTIN

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

the death penalty as well as racist and class repression.

A very wide range of organizations were represented at the event, including the Cuba Solidarity Network, the Free the Cuban Five Committee, International Action Center, the New York Free Mumia Coalition, Uhuru, various anarchist networks, Refuse and Resist, Labor for Mumia, Pro Libertad, Green Party, Jericho Movement and the Republic of New Africa. □

## Free Nanon Williams Week

# A political home run

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Texas death-row activist Nanon Williams' latest book, "Still Surviving," was released in Houston and New York City recently with standing-room-only readings, signings and other public events. Williams' wrongful conviction had people in both cities asking for his immediate release from death row and pledging to support his cause.

The New York event was held at the Housing Works Used Book Cafe on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day. Ray Krone of Arizona, the 100th person exonerated from death row in the United States, did the signing.

Williams' mother Lee Bolton flew from Los Angeles to Houston for seven days of interviews, demonstrations and speaking before the City Council. Bolton also protested outside the death house in Huntsville for the first time ever "while they killed another mother's son," Robert Henry, on Nov. 20.

Williams was just 17 years old when Houston police arrested him for capital murder in 1992. He was convicted based on the lies of a police ballistics expert, Robert Baldwin, and the false testimony of the actual killer, Vaal Guevara. Baldwin later admitted he made a mistake and the district attorney now says Guevara's testimony was likely not truthful.

Several jurors now say they wouldn't have convicted Williams if they had known the ballistics expert was not giving correct information. Yet Williams still sits on the Texas death row.

KPFT-FM, Houston's Pacifica radio station, has helped raise consciousness about Williams' case. His mother appeared on "The Prison Program," hosted by Ray Hill, "Connect the Dots," hosted by Nation of Islam Minister Robert Muhammad, and "CPR—Critical and Progressive Review," hosted by Obidike Kamau and Cleveland Gite. The KPFT News Department has given extensive coverage to Williams' case, covering all major protests as well as a birthday party for Williams held at Houston City Hall last August.

Bolton was a guest of City Council Member Ada Edwards on her talk show on popular radio station 97.9, The Box. She gave extensive information on the case and fielded questions and comments from callers for over an hour.

When members of the Nanon Williams Support Association (NAWISA) attended a City Council meeting, Bolton again spoke of the wrongful conviction of her son and asked that something be done about the Houston Police Crime Lab giv-

Texas death row political prisoner Nanon Williams.



WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

ing false testimony. Council Member Edwards asked the mayor to find out what recourse the city has when a cop is responsible for sending an innocent person to death row.

The book release celebration was held at an Afrocentric book store, Just Thinking. It featured readings done by Brother Equality, a spoken-word artist with the Blackout Artists collective, longtime activist Omowale Luthili, and NAWISA Coordinator Kay Babineaux. Bolton signed the books for her son.

One of the most touching events of Free Nanon Williams Week took place at a militant protest outside the Houston Police Headquarters. Bolton met and hugged Carol Batie, whose son Josiah Sutton spent four-and-a-half years in prison for a rape he did not commit because of the lies of the Houston Police Crime Lab's DNA expert. Sutton was only 16 when he was falsely arrested.

The two women embraced and spoke of the injustices their families had suffered due to the racism and the total disregard the cops have for Black youths.

The protest also focused on two youths recently shot and killed by the police: Jose Vargas Jr., age 15, and Eli Escovar, age 14. The protest flier featured a photo of Williams and Escovar with the headline "Our Youth—Victims of the Houston Police."

Other events included a reception for Bolton and Gloria La Riva, leader of the Committee to Free the Cuban Five who was in Texas visiting Ramon Labanino, one of the five.

Williams' case has just entered federal court. His appeal should be heard some time in 2004 in Houston Federal District Court.

For more information on Nanon Williams visit [www.nawisa.org](http://www.nawisa.org) or [www.breakoutpublishing.com](http://www.breakoutpublishing.com).

Send letters of support to: Nanon Williams #999163, Polunsky Unit 3872 FM 350 South, Livingston, TX 77351.

His book, "Still Surviving," can be ordered from [www.leftbooks.com](http://www.leftbooks.com). □

# 'The death penalty is a crime'

Based on a talk given by Gloria Rubac at the Dec. 6-7 "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism" conference.

Executions are a legacy of slavery.

In the 1800s slavery and a deep-seated racism flourished in this country, particularly in the South. The number of lynchings of slaves during the 1800s is unknown; however, lynchings of Black people continued well into the 20th century.

James Byrd Jr. was lynched in 1998 in Jasper, Texas, an area still known today for its Klan activities.

It is estimated that from 1890 to 1980 there were over 5,000 documented lynchings. The overwhelming majority took place in the South, with over 90 percent of the victims African American.

While there is no longer chattel slavery, we now have wage slavery, and racism has not disappeared.

Today the South still leads the country in the number of lynchings—only now they are called executions and they are legal.

Over 80 percent of executions have taken place in the South. Half of the United States death row population is in states of the former Confederacy.

Five of every six people executed in the United States have been put to death in the South. In 2000, Black people made up 12 percent of the Texas population—and 42 percent of those on Texas death row.

Black, Latino and other people of color are about 70 percent of Texas death row.

Seventy percent are people of color. That should be a shocking statistic. The figures for the United States as a whole: 46 percent of those on death row are white and 54 percent are people of color. Forty-two percent are Black.

Ninety percent of those on death row across the United States could not afford to hire a lawyer when they went to trial.

So the death penalty is reserved for people of color and for the poor. There are not any rich people on death row.

The death penalty, just like the prison-industrial complex, is a tool of repression used by the ruling class against the working class, and very disproportionately against people of color.

The ruling class uses racism to super-exploit workers of color. Also they try to pit white workers against workers of color.



Gloria Rubac on microphone protesting at the death house at Huntsville, Texas.

Working people are an expendable commodity for the bosses. They can work us to death on the job and when there are not enough jobs, they can imprison us. The quality of our lives is not of concern to the wealthy rulers. All they care about is a labor force that can produce profits for them.

Prisons and executions dehumanize and terrorize people. The false notion of white superiority that enabled slavery also enables executions. Just as slave owners considered slaves to be less than human, we are told today that because of the horrific nature of their crimes, those condemned to death row are "sub-human animals" who deserve to die.

The fact is that there are 20,000 murders committed a year in the United States. We live in a very violent society. But those who wind up on death row are those who cannot afford an attorney and therefore cannot put up a defense. It is not necessarily those who commit the most vicious crimes. And it's not even important if those on death row are actually guilty.

The figures now are that for about every five persons executed, one person is released for reasons of innocence. Of course the ruling class commits the most heinous crimes every day by perpetuating this capitalist system that forces so many of us to work at slave wages, to live in grinding poverty, to be denied access to decent

Continued on page 11



## ON THE PICKET LINE SUE DAVIS

### UMass undergrads ratify first contract

On Dec. 11 Resident Assistants at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst made labor history. The first undergraduate workers in the United States to unionize, they ratified their first contract by a vote of 97 to one.

The 365 workers, members of Auto Workers Local 2322, will receive a 31-percent raise over the course of the two-year contract. The contract also includes a binding grievance-and-arbitration procedure, improved parking privileges and language on working conditions.

Hired for 20 hours a week, the students are paid to live in the dormitories to enforce rules, counsel students and organize educational and social events. They decided to organize in February 2001 because they often work more than 20 hours, they're constantly on call and are physically at risk during boisterous dorm parties.

Even when a labor commission determined in January 2002 that the RAs had the right to organize, the university opposed it. After the RAs joined Local 2322 in March 2002, the university refused to bargain. Finally, after a series of demonstrations, including an April sit-in where 35 were arrested, the university agreed to negotiate a contract. "Student workers, just like all workers, have important work-place concerns that are best addressed through collective bargaining," said Local 2322 President James A.W. Shaw. "This is a great contract that improves and protects the working conditions of RAs. This contract proves the value of a union not for just for RAs, but for all workers." ([www.dailycollegian.com](http://www.dailycollegian.com))

### Borders strikers face off against bosses

When striking Borders workers sat down at the negotiating table on Dec. 10, they offered to accept the bookstore's previous contract proposal if the company would agree to "neutrality" and a card-check agreement. "No way" was the bosses' response.

By "neutrality" the strikers mean a "free exchange on union issues" with union members in the stores "without retribution, captive meetings, coercion, disinformation and other similar anti-worker tactics." ("Truth about the Strike" Forum on [www.bordersunion.org](http://www.bordersunion.org))

Though it may be tempting during the holidays to put in a rush order at Amazon.com, the best way to support the Borders workers' strike is by boycotting Borders bookstores nationwide, as well as Waldenbooks and Amazon. Contact Borders at [www.bordersstores.com](http://www.bordersstores.com) or call the Ann Arbor store at (734) 668-7652 or the corporate headquarters at (734) 477-1100 to demand they bargain in good faith. For updates on the strike visit [www.bordersunion.org](http://www.bordersunion.org) and sign the online petition.

### In whose interests?

Staff attorneys, paralegals and support staff at MFY Legal Services in New York, members of the Auto Workers Local 2320, the Legal Services Staff Association, voted unanimously to strike in mid-autumn. MFY Legal Services, however, has not budged. It's still demanding health-care givebacks and reduced leave rights. On top of that, their refusal to negotiate has had a disastrous effect on MFY's low-income clients. They've been forced to go without sorely needed services.

### Locked-out workers reject job cuts

Even though the 68 workers at Berkshire Gas Co. have been locked out of their jobs since April 1, on Dec. 10 they refused to accept the company's latest proposal to cut staffing to 33 jobs. They were scheduled to meet with a federal mediator on Dec. 12.

Michael E. Ferriter, president of Steel Workers Local 12325, said the company's latest proposal was worse than what the workers were offered last spring. Unless the mediation is successful and they go back, the workers face a difficult 2004. Their unemployment benefits are due to run out in January.

### Union represents NYC music teachers

Part-time music teachers at the Elaine Kaufman Cultural Center have sounded a new note in New York City's vibrant labor history. By joining Musicians Union Local 802, they became the first community arts school to unionize. After a year of negotiations and a four-day strike in October, the teachers now have a three-year contract that mandates 2-percent annual raises for the center's 130 teachers. The school will pay retirement benefits for those who teach 10 or more hours a week and a portion of health benefits for those who teach five or more hours. Though the teachers noted the contract wasn't ideal, they felt it was an important start. Morrie Sherry, one of those who initially contacted the union, says: "I have gotten questions from other teachers at other schools. Everybody's interested." (New York Times, Dec. 14)

### Boycott DKNY

Donna Karan may be on the celebrity "A" list, but the workers contracted by her posh clothing company DKNY give her an "F." Socked with lawsuits for various bad labor practices since 1998, the company recently settled two: a discrimination case brought by Latina needle workers and a class-action lawsuit for wage violations.

The Latina workers suffered under 19th-century-style sweatshop conditions. Forced to work long hours with no overtime pay, they often couldn't use the padlocked bathrooms. They were also searched daily before they left the factory.

What excuse did management give the women for paying them less for sewing by hand? It was because "their eyes were bigger than the Chinese." ([www.nmass.org](http://www.nmass.org)) This is nothing more than blatant racism on the part of DKNY.

The workers in these cases received close to \$1 million, but no apology. In the meantime DKNY has moved most of its manufacturing operations to other countries, into areas like Toronto, Canada, where worker organizing is relatively weak.

The boycott against DKNY, begun in 1998, will continue until all DKNY sewers, no matter where they work, are treated decently and paid equitably for the high-priced fashions they create. □

## AMHERST, MASS.

# Int'l students fight 'fee for spy' plan

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Amherst, Mass.

In a heartening display of anti-racist unity and solidarity Dec. 11, students and their allies denounced the University of Massachusetts-Amherst administration's plans to impose a new fee for international graduate students in the spring semester. There are approximately 6,000 graduate students attending UMass-Amherst, 50 percent of them international students.

A noon news conference during finals week organized by the Graduate Employees Organization, the union that represents over 2,500 graduate students on campus, drew a standing-room-only crowd of over 125 with only a few days' notice.

Those attending were in no mood to negotiate with the administration.

"I'm not going to pay the fee. I'm willing to take this as far as I can," said Zixul "George" Liu, a Chinese student majoring in communications and a GEO organizer.

The planned \$65-per-semester fee is only for international students. Its purpose is to fund a new program called the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, or SEVIS. This fee would be in addition to an already federally mandated \$100 tax on international students to pay for SEVIS.

SEVIS is a database that links colleges and universities to the Department of Homeland Security. It monitors the activities of all international students, including home location, classes taken, hours worked, status of bills, and any other information the department deems necessary. The university updates the database in real time.

If international students don't comply with SEVIS—for instance, by not updating where they are living or falling out of good standing with the university—they could be considered felons by the State Department and be arrested or deported.

SEVIS was in the federal planning stages for several years to track international students and staff. After Sept. 11, 2001, SEVIS was mandated under the USA Patriot Act. The means to fund it was not mandated.

International students, under various racist measures in the Patriot Act and other federal and state laws, are already restricted to 20 hours of work per week, only one job and other onerous measures. With cost-of-living expenses such as child care and housing rising every semester, international students face severe hurdles to simply stay afloat, much less obtain an education.

"Not only are international students, of

which I am one, being forced to pay for their own surveillance, but they are being discriminated against in the campus community," said Ibrahim Dahlstrom-Hakki, secretary treasurer of the GEO/UAW, a doctoral student in psychology and international student from Jordan.

In keeping with the spirit of those attending the press conference, GEO issued its "International Student Fee Statement" to the UMass community. Every member of the union's executive board signed the statement, which said in part, "In keeping with the vision statement of the University, we insist that the Chancellor immediately revoke the International Student Fee scheduled for next semester."

Liu and others also reminded the administration and those in attendance that the town of Amherst has passed a resolution opposing the Patriot Act and has requested that all city departments, businesses and organizations refuse to comply with any of the act's provisions.

Dahlstrom-Hakki and others outlined the increasingly brutal attacks on students of color, including international students, in the recent period. These include effectively dismantling the campus's affirmative action program, eliminating funding for English as a Second Language training, raising TOEFL (written English proficiency scores for incoming students) requirements, and eliminating advising offices and programs, which are often a life-sustaining component of an oppressed student's life.

After the news conference a committee of graduate students and their allies convened to organize a campaign composed of various strategies and tactics to have the fee repealed.

Similar struggles have been waged at the University of Chicago, University of Wisconsin-Madison and the State University of New York-Binghamton.

While fighting back against this most recent attack, most students have no illusions about the U.S. national security strategy and its historical evolution from the beginning of the 20th century through the McCarthy period up to the present.

Puerto Rican graduate student Rene Gonzalez, a leader in the African, Latino/a, Asian American, Native American and Arab American organization, summed up the most recent U.S. strategy: "It's part of a domestic component to an imperial foreign policy."

A petition to "Repeal the UMass Surveillance Fee" can be signed at: [www.geouaw.org](http://www.geouaw.org). For more information, visit [www.visareform.net](http://www.visareform.net). □

## Iraqi trade unions need U.S. troops out

Letter to the Editor:

An old trade union adage says that labor can't negotiate with the bosses when they hold a gun to your head. In Iraq, this is all too true.

On Dec. 6, U.S. occupation soldiers in 10 armored cars smashed the temporary headquarters of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, in the offices of the Transport and Communication Union. They arrested eight of its leaders and ransacked and destroyed the IFTU's possessions, tearing down banners and posters, smashing windows and defacing the building.

As trade unionists, we are outraged at this fascistic attack on this union—whatever its origins. We hold the Bush admin-

istration, the Pentagon and the military brass responsible for this unprovoked action and join the widening calls for full compensation for the damages inflicted, now that the detainees have been released.

It is crystal clear that the U.S. occupation forces were acting in collusion with Halliburton, Bechtel and other U.S. corporations whose contemptible, vicious, anti-worker and anti-union practices are despised here and abroad. Their main objective is to pauperize the Iraqi workers by privatizing and robbing the resources, particularly the oil reserves, to maximize war profits.

It remains for the Iraqi workers to ultimately determine the development of the

# SOCIALISM: historical task of the working class

Based on a talk given by Larry Holmes at the Dec. 6-7 "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism" conference.

The first thing we have to do is remind ourselves that we are fighting for socialism, [because] you can get lost when you have been fighting defensively year after year. Instead of expanding workers' rights and workers' control, we're just trying to hold on and stop the cutbacks the world over. Some in our movement might intelligently ask: "How can you be talking about socialism in 2003 when we are under attack? Bush is trying to use the military to establish a U.S. imperialist dictatorship in the world. We have to fight that. We have to subordinate everything to that." That's partly right, but we ask a question, too.

Doesn't Bush and the ruling class's war only make the struggle for socialism more urgent?

Our enemy has tried to tell all the suffering and struggling people of the world that socialism is no longer on the historical agenda. This is at a time in history when fabulous technology and wealth could provide the workers and poor with all they need.

We say no. Socialism is on the agenda and we will keep it on the front burner and turn up the flame.

This is not the end of history for the people who need another world so urgently. To give up on socialism means to give up on life itself, and we're not going to do that.

From an economic standpoint the world has never been more ripe for socialism. A huge, technologically developed, centrally organized economy could meet everyone's needs, and right away. But this economy is in the wrong hands, those of the capitalists. If we could just take it out of their hands and take it over, that would do it.

The anti-globalization movement that arose in 1999 was very progressive, filling a vacuum for struggle. Whatever its demands, it had an anti-capitalist momentum. We communists and socialists tried to participate in it, support those who were most progressive and give it as much direction as we could under the circumstances.

For us the question is not so much anti-globalization as globalization for whom? Imperialist-controlled globalization means disaster, suffering and war, deprivation and chaos. Globalization in the hands of socialists, or the working people—that is the road to the future.

## What is our goal?

We're not talking about electing people who call themselves socialists. That's

*Continued from page 4*

trade union movement at a time of almost 80-percent unemployment and widespread hunger. This is a far cry from conditions under the Saddam Hussein government, which supplied free food to 60 percent of the population, responding to the necessities imposed by the brutal U.S. sanctions.

There are today no union rights in Iraq, no self-determination and no democratic reforms, nor will the Bush administration be bound by international codes, rules and conventions under the United Nations International Labor Organization. To support Iraqi labor, we must demand: End the U.S. occupation and bring the troops home.

Milt Neidenberg, retired Teamster  
Sharon Ceci, Shop Steward,  
Local 27, UFCW

been done around the world and often they just run the society for the capitalists and give socialism a bad name. We're talking about socialism in and through the class struggle.

For every struggle we are in we should see: What is the goal of revolutionary socialists? How does what we aim at determine our demands and how we fight?

When we try to win our demands, even a streetlight, our challenge is to show that a socialist future is the only sensible, logical future, and do it strongly. Just as important, our goal is to prepare our sisters and brothers to act and think more independently of the system and all the organizations that tie them to the system. In this simple way our class prepares itself to act ultimately in a revolutionary way.

In the labor movement, for example, it is important for the rank and file workers to feel that their destiny is in their own hands, not that some leaders will resolve it for them in some office somewhere, not even good leaders. The workers themselves have to organize struggle committees, be personally involved and animated. They can't just wait for a mailing to get the news, or for an election to pick a more revolutionary and anti-imperialist leadership ready to fight.

This can be decisive with the unions here. If they are going to begin to organize by the millions all the super-oppressed workers, the immigrants, the youth, people from the community, the unemployed, they will have to shed all their conservative, narrow-minded, backward, not to mention racist traditions. They can't just be interested in the privileged sectors of the working class. They have to stop relying on the capitalist politicians.

Remember those words from "The Internationale": "No more tradition's chains shall bind us."

They have to break out of those bad traditions. But this can only happen with the infusion of revolutionaries and revolutionary ideas into the working-class movement. That infusion will not come from the top, it will come from below, and from people like us.

How do we get workers involved in the anti-war movement? Some think the idea is to get union leaders to pass an anti-war resolution. "If a leader says, 'I'm against the war,' even if it's not perfect, it could help," they say. "Maybe the best we can do is to get the trade unions to support a nominally anti-war candidate like Dean."

We say we can do better. Wouldn't it be better if we could get the workers out to the demonstrations? Why couldn't we get some of the money that the unions are going to waste on the elections and get them to buy buses to get thousands and thousands of workers to go to the demonstrations? Why not take some of that bus money and use it for poor people too in the oppressed neighborhoods? This could break down the barrier between the unions and the anti-war movement and the masses.

To revive internationalism and solidarity, we must first understand that these are not just based on good feelings and political correctness. There's a materialist basis for solidarity, unity and internationalism. You can't win your struggle without them.

If you are on strike, in a struggle against the police, against racism, get some unity on the most progressive revolutionary basis that you can. If you have broader goals like defeating imperialism and replacing it with something better, then you need internationalism.

**What is the goal of every revolutionary? To fight for worldwide socialism in and through the class struggle, including inside 'the belly of the beast,' the United States.**



Larry Holmes

WW PHOTO: BERNIE FOX

We say: Bring the troops home now. But there are others who say we can't do this because it's very dangerous and unstable in Iraq. We say, "Unstable for whom?" Instability for imperialism is not such a bad thing.

Are we fighting for peace under any circumstances? Or are we fighting to defeat imperialism? I say we are fighting to defeat imperialism. And if imperialism is defeated in Iraq it will help every liberation movement, every oppressed person and every worker in the world.

Right now the struggle to defeat U.S. imperialism in the Middle East is the key struggle in the world and the best elements in the world movement are dedicated to that.

Defeating imperialism in the Middle East is much more important than the upcoming national elections. Having a mass movement independent of the Democratic Party is way more important than the elections.

You know, I notice that the people of Iraq who are resisting the occupation aren't coming over here to talk about how they can help us defeat Bush in the elections. They're doing what they have to do and they're defeating him. Sometimes you have to look at things that way to put things in perspective in terms of the importance regarding the elections next year.

## In the heartland of imperialism

Most important, we have to be conscious of our role as revolutionaries in this country. When we ask how we can revive the struggle for socialism worldwide, we don't do this from a position of arrogance or elitism in relationship to the world movement. We have no such right. We pose this question to ourselves with the deepest humility, out of sense of responsibility, out of our internationalism.

We are here in the heart of imperialism, which has one hand on the world's throat and the other holding a gun to everyone's head. But imperialism depends on the loyalty of the workers and as many other people it can get support from to be able to do that. We're optimistic that this loyalty can fade away.

Look at the composition of the workers. Now our class has so many immigrants, Black and Latin@ and Asian workers. It was so great at the Oct. 4 march for immigrant rights. This makes us optimistic that the workers will see their own interests more clearly. But we know this is a big struggle, to break the workers and the masses away from any loyalty to this government and its imperialist deeds.

It's important for us to realize that now that the Soviet Union no longer exists to check the rampages of imperialism it is up to us.

We dedicated this conference to Che Guevara because he understood the need for world revolution. By virtue of what he said and did, he stood out. He literally tried to go everywhere and foment revolution. In his last speech in Cuba in 1967,

he said if you want to defend Vietnam, we need one, two, three Vietnams and one, two, three Cubas. If you want to defend the revolution, you keep making new revolutions.

Che's strategy for world revolution was based on how the world struggle developed in the second half of the 20th century: the colonies rose up against the heartland of imperialism. He understood that and his attitude was to continue these actions to cut off the veins and arteries of imperialism, cut off the supply and create a heart attack.

In Lenin's time, the expectation was that the proletariat in the more advanced imperialist countries of Europe and the United States would be the first to end capitalist rule and by doing so help free the rest of the world. Tragically, opportunities to do so in the first half of the last century were lost. Since that time, the socialist countries and the liberation movements in the colonies have carried the brunt of the struggle against imperialism.

If the present world crisis has taught us anything, it is that the decisive share of the responsibility for defeating U.S. and world imperialism must now shift back to the imperialist centers, and especially to right here. The working class inside the United States must rise to the occasion and take the lead in the world struggle.

Of course this process will take time. It cannot be willed by a vanguard party or formation. Still, we have faith that the workers of this country will take responsibility for their destiny.

Those who think that the working class inside the United States is hopelessly backward and historically limited are wrong and out of touch with reality. The working class is changing in a dynamic way that is favorable for the worldwide class struggle. The growing working-class presence in the powerful anti-war movement this past year has given us only a glimpse of what is possible.

However, in order to prepare for this new responsibility, it is essential that socialist, communist, revolutionary and progressive forces have a deep understanding of their role and the always decisive question of strong, unflinching leadership.

In what we used to call "the belly of the beast" our internationalism must be exemplary. Our solidarity with the struggling peoples of the world against imperialism and colonialism must be unequivocal in both position and action. For revolutionary socialism to live, we must continue to chart a course in all levels of the political struggle that is not reliant on any segment of the ruling class, but to the contrary, a separate and independent course.

Whether our program and tactics need be mass and popular, or sharper and ideological, doesn't matter as long as they are deliberately preparing a revolutionary course that leads to socialism. Long live the goal of worldwide socialist revolution! □

# Halliburton: a well-connected war profiteer

By Richard Becker

“War—what is it good for?” asked the Vietnam-War-era anti-war anthem by the late Edwin Starr. “Absolutely nothing” was the song’s response.

Not if you’re Halliburton, the Texas-based oil and military services corporation whose former CEO—just coincidentally, of course—happens to now be the vice-president of the United States of America.

For Halliburton, like many other U.S. companies, war—and the Iraq war in particular—is exceptionally profitable.

On Dec. 10 the New York Times revealed that Halliburton, which has been awarded open-ended, no-bid contracts by the Pentagon, was billing the federal government—the taxpayers—\$2.64 per gallon for gas imported into Iraq from neighboring Kuwait.

This writer visited Iraq in 2000 and was struck by the fact that gasoline, one of the few items in ample supply under the U.S./United Nations sanctions regime, sold for a few pennies a gallon. Iraq holds the second-biggest proven petroleum reserves in the world.

Today, the price of fuel sold at gas stations or through the informal economy in Iraq is four cents to 15 cents a gallon. That is between one-twentieth and one-sixtieth the price that Halliburton is charging U.S. taxpayers.

Why is gasoline being imported into one of the world’s biggest oil-producing countries? Much of Iraq’s oil industry was destroyed over the past 13 years by war and sanctions. Since the U.S. occupation

of Iraq began in April of this year, Iraqi guerrilla forces have repeatedly attacked the now-U.S.-controlled oil installations.

Even so, today the U.S. military is paying, for gasoline trucked in from Kuwait, less than half what Halliburton is charging. And the Iraqi state oil company is paying 96 cents a gallon for the same imported gas. The U.S. colonial rulers have kept the price below cost to prevent further inflaming the already-high level of popular opposition to the occupation.

Halliburton spokesperson Wendy Hall explained the company’s \$2.64-per-gallon price: “It is expensive to purchase, ship and deliver fuel into a wartime situation.” Hall said that at least 20 trucks had been damaged or destroyed, and several drivers killed or wounded. Interestingly, these attacks had not been previously reported in the corporate media.

However, all the imported gasoline coming from Kuwait is being transported in the same manner—by truck—over the same roads. So Halliburton’s rationale for why its fuel is twice as expensive doesn’t hold water.

## Halliburton: case study of a well-connected war profiteer

Halliburton is the world’s biggest oil services company. It ranks 71st among the Fortune 500 biggest corporations. It has oil drilling and maintenance operations all over the world, including Angola, Algeria, Brazil, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Russia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

In the early 1960s, Halliburton acquired Brown & Root, one of the biggest

military construction companies. Later it acquired another big construction firm, Kellogg.

Brown & Root profited immensely in Vietnam, building landing strips, roads, military bases and other infrastructure for the U.S. war. Today, Kellogg, Brown & Root is the subdivision of Halliburton that executes most of its military contracts.

In January 2001, Dick Cheney, who was secretary of defense during the first Gulf War, returned to Washington as George W. Bush’s vice president after five years as Halliburton’s chief executive officer. On Dec. 14 of the same year, Halliburton subsidiary KBR was awarded a unique contract, which the Pentagon called a “Logistics Civil Augmentation Program,” or LOGCAP.

The contract is described in Pentagon-speak as a “cost-plus-award-fee, indefinite-delivery/indefinite-quantity service.” Translation: a contract that has no time, material or dollar limits; guaranteed profits figured as a percentage—usually 9 percent—are added onto the amount spent.

In other words, the more that KBR spends, the more the company makes in profits. This is a common feature of Pentagon contracts.

Initially, the contract for the Navy is for five years; for the Army it’s a highly unusual 10 years. This makes KBR the only private supplier of Army logistic services over the next decade.

“It is close to unprecedented for the government to have given so much of the solution to one contractor,” is how Professor Steven Spooner of George

Washington University, who specializes in federal contracting, describes the Halliburton contract. (Boston Globe, Aug. 5, 2002)

The Pentagon did not consider any other bidders for LOGCAP. This might seem a little surprising given that KBR and Halliburton were under investigation for defrauding the military on earlier contracts. To settle that case, KBR paid \$2 million to the Army for work it billed but never carried out at Fort Ord, Calif.

And that’s just the tip of a gigantic iceberg. In February 1997, a General Accounting Office investigation revealed that, for a project in Hungary, KBR was billing the Army at \$85.98 per sheet for plywood that cost \$14 in the United States. KBR’s estimate for the contract in 1996 was \$191 million; by the next year it had risen to \$461 million. (Pratap Chatterjee, Corp Watch, May 2002)

Under contract with the U.S. Navy, Halliburton was paid \$37 million to build the 816 detention cells at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for prisoners captured in Afghanistan.

Last spring, in the immediate aftermath of the invasion and takeover of Iraq, Halliburton was awarded another open-ended, no-competition contract to rebuild Iraq’s oil industry. Halliburton has already received \$1.4 billion in payments.

While Iraqis and U.S. soldiers are killed and wounded daily, and the cost of the occupation is more than \$210 million per day, the patrons of the Bush regime like Halliburton and Bechtel are doing just fine. □

## Imperialism and the capture of Saddam Hussein

Continued from page 1

Democratic, have focused their wrath on Iraq for 12 years, including two wars, a genocidal sanctions regime and now a bloody occupation. During this time well over a million Iraqis have been killed and many more injured or sickened. No one should forget the admission by Clinton’s Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on CBS’s “60 Minutes” program on May 12, 1996.

Leslie Stahl asked Albright, referring to the sanctions: “We have heard that half a million children have died. I mean that’s more children than died at Hiroshima. And, you know, is the price worth it?”

Albright replied: “I think this is a very hard choice, but the price—we think the price is worth it.”

Can anyone make the case that the illegal capture of Saddam Hussein by U.S. forces has anything to do with concern for the Iraqi people? Indeed, one U.S. administration after another has tortured them. Washington’s invasion of Iraq was illegal. Its occupation is illegal. And any trial of Saddam Hussein or other Iraqi leaders that is set up by Bush, Rumsfeld, Bremer, Wolfowitz and company is illegal and calculated to further the oppression and exploitation of the Iraqi people.

The Iraqi people feel violated by this capture and parading of Saddam.

This is reflected in the fact that, try as they may, the U.S. television networks have been unable to produce any shots of mass demonstrations celebrating his capture, even by his most strenuous opponents. All their video takes are tight shots of small groups. While paid print journalists and television commentators fantasize about “demonstrations” of celebration everywhere, somehow the cameras are unable to find them.

### U.S. troops fire on demonstrators

In the meantime, U.S. troops are firing on and killing demonstrators protesting Saddam Hussein’s capture.

If anyone has any doubt about the reactionary character of this operation, they have only to listen to the proclamations of the other imperialist governments. The former colonizers of the world, from London to Paris to Berlin to Rome to Madrid to Tokyo, are all hailing the event. Can these robbers—the promoters of corporate “globalization” and neo-liberal schemes to trample on the sovereignty of governments and plunder the national economies of oppressed peoples in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East—be suddenly overjoyed because “democracy” and “freedom” are on their way to Iraq?

To be sure, within the framework of the Iraqi national revolution—which began with the ousting of the British colonialists in 1958—Saddam Hussein

has played a contradictory and often reactionary role. Among other things, he and the Baathists suppressed the Iraqi Communist Party and waged a reactionary bourgeois war of conquest against Iran, even accepting support from Washington for his efforts.

On the other hand, unlike the feudal oil monarchs of the Persian Gulf states, who became complete clients of oil imperialism, Saddam Hussein used Iraq’s oil wealth to build up the country’s economic infrastructure on a bourgeois basis, largely through state capitalism. During his regime, Iraq became one of the most developed countries in the Middle East. Significant social benefits accrued to the people, including free medical care, widespread education and literacy, rights of women and a social safety net. Above all, however, the Iraqi president refused to let imperialism take over the country.

The most aggressive sections of the U.S. ruling class, particularly the oil companies, long ago set out to destroy Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi national state exactly for these reasons: they held on to national independence and control over the oil, the fundamental conquests of the 1958 anti-colonial revolution.



Anti-U.S. rally in Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 16.

With the coming to office of Bush, these elements galvanized the entire U.S. ruling class who wholeheartedly supported their program of conquest.

It is only in the context of the struggle of U.S. and British imperialism on the one hand, and on the other the Iraqi people fighting to undermine the occupation, that the capture of Saddam Hussein can be assessed.

Under these conditions, anyone opposed to imperialism must reject the right of the U.S. to imprison him and of Washington’s “Governing Council” stooges to put him on trial.

Whatever role Saddam Hussein played in the resistance, if any, it is an illusion of the empire builders in Washington to think that the Iraqi people will ever reconcile themselves to colonial enslavement—either direct rule through an occupation, or indirect rule through a puppet government.

Justice for the Iraqi people will begin on the day that the war criminals in Washington are put on trial. □



# Iraq war awakens international solidarity

By Ian Thompson  
Los Angeles

With banners, placards and candles in hand, more than 400 protesters massed at the busiest street corner in Hollywood Dec. 13 to demonstrate against the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. They demanded that the Bush administration pull all troops out and bring them home now.

The spirited demonstration and rally was sponsored by the Los Angeles chapter of the International ANSWER coalition and endorsed by many immigrant and community groups.

Under banners reading, "End Occupation," "Palestine Will Be Free" and "Workers Need Health Care, Not War," protesters shouted in unison, "U.S. out of Iraq!" and "Bring the troops home now!" Passing motorists honked in support.

Expressions of solidarity with the occupied and oppressed peoples of the world dominated the demonstration. Volunteers armed with petitions and pens collected many signatures from protesters and passersby in support of ANSWER's national "Bring the Troops Home Now!" campaign.

John Parker, a coordinator of the ANSWER coalition in Los Angeles, kicked off the rally by pledging solidarity with the Iraqi people, who are suffering under the brutal U.S. occupation of their country. Parker pointed out how the Iraqi struggle against U.S. imperialism is similar to the struggle of 70,000 striking and locked-out grocery workers in Southern California against big corporations.

"The same people who get rich off of this war and plunder in Iraq are attempting to take away health care from immigrants and families right here in the U.S.," Parker said. "We can't allow them to do that. We must support self-determination for the Iraqi people and support the striking grocery workers in their fight against the greedy supermarkets to maintain health care and decent wages. Their fights are our fights."

Parker also mentioned the food and toy drive initiated by the Community Action Project to Support Labor, aimed at helping the striking grocery workers and their families during the holidays. ANSWER launched CAPSL in October. Parker urged protesters to donate food and toys, and to build broader support for the workers in their own communities.

"By doing what we can to support these workers, we are showing them that we are on their side, that we want them to win," he said. "And they will win!"

Many boxes of food and toys were collected from the crowd.

Juan Jose Gutierrez, director of Latino Movement USA, expressed solidarity with the occupied people of Iraq from the huge Latino/a and immigrant communities of Los Angeles. "We immigrants in this country do not support the occupation of Iraq," said Gutierrez. "Our involvement in this movement to end the occupation and bring the troops home is deepening each day. Together, united, we will prevail."

Also speaking was Kathy Kelly, co-coordinator of Voices in the Wilderness, who has traveled to Iraq many times. Kelly described the unjust suffering Iraq has faced under genocidal United States/United Nations sanctions and stressed that the occupation must end now.

Support for the Palestinian people's just struggle against Israel's decades-long occupation was also an integral part of the demonstration.

Yael Korin of Women in Black harshly condemned the U.S. devastation of Iraq and Washington's support of Israel's racist occupation of Palestine. She called for people to support the Palestinians' right of return to their homeland, calling Israel a failed colonial project.

A speech by Arturo Garcia of BAYAN International USA, linking the struggle of Iraqis under U.S. occupation to the struggle in the Philippines against U.S. military intervention, prompted the crowd to chant loudly, "International solidarity!"



Los Angeles, Dec. 13.

WW PHOTO: J. LA RIVA

Other speakers included Jim Lafferty, executive director of the National Lawyers Guild-LA and local steering committee member of ANSWER, and Margaret Prescod of Global Women's Strike. All speakers demanded an immediate end to the occupation of Iraq and that the soldiers be brought home now.

Adding to the electric atmosphere were moving cultural performances by Korean drummers—members of the Korean American organization Mindullae—and indigenous Aztec dancers. Rapper Will B also performed several politically charged

songs for the crowd. These artists are well known in Los Angeles for their energetic performances at anti-war and social justice rallies.

The rally proved that the anti-war and anti-occupation movement in Los Angeles remains strong and vibrant, and that community support for the striking and locked-out grocery workers is stronger than ever. The people of Los Angeles, along with people all over the world, want self-determination and justice for Iraq, Palestine, the Philippines and everywhere. □



LA ANSWER anti-war protest.

WW PHOTO: J. LA RIVA

## Puerto Rican coalition against Iraq war

In response to the deaths of Puerto Rican youths in the Iraq war, an alliance of 58 organizations has joined together in a campaign demanding that all Puerto Rican units be withdrawn from the frontlines. The AFL-CIO, which represents some 100,000 government workers on the island of 3.8 million, the island's Council of Lawyers and several church groups and universities have joined the coalition.

—Sue Davis



The Grinch brings "democracy" to Iraq

# U.S. funding raises coup danger

By G. Dunkel

Political tensions in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, have moved from the stage of agitation and marches to rock-throwing skirmishes, with a few shots exchanged.

The escalation began on Dec. 11 when a crowd of young people, including a number of better-off students armed with batons and rocks, marched on the Presidential Palace. One death was reported.

Some 19 people have died since

September in Gonaïves, a major city in the north, in political struggles between supporters and opponents of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who was elected by the poor of Haiti.

Because Aristide has dissolved the Haitian army, which deposed him from 1991 to 1994, coups are not the sure thing they once were. The so-called Democratic Convergence, which morphed into the Group of 184 this fall, has been trying to pull one off for the past two years, with the full financial backing of the U.S. government.

Agence France Press reported Dec. 14 that Aristide supporters had seized one, perhaps more, of the Haitian National Police's weapons depots, and were distributing arms in poor neighborhoods in the northern districts of the capital.

La Presse, a French-language newspaper in Montreal, reported Dec. 15 that Nahum Marcellus, a deputy in Aristide's Fanmi Lavalas party, had issued a statement calling for armed struggle against those who want to force Aristide's departure. It was heard on Radio Africa, which covers the northern part of the country.

"Jean-Bertrand Aristide will not take a step. Take out your weapons, we are engaged in a battle," said Marcellus. He denounced the current crisis as "a bourgeois plot against the unfortunate."

Even if the opposition can't force Aristide out, they want to disrupt celebrations coming up on Jan. 1 to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Haiti's independence. And they want to weaken the president by making life harder for most Haitians, who already have the lowest standard of living by far of any people in the Western Hemisphere. □

## Haitian leader declares:

# Socialism is 'achievable and necessary'

Statement of Ben Dupuy, secretary general of the Haiti's National Popular Party (PPN), to the Dec. 6-7 "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism" conference.

Friends and comrades,

On behalf of the Haitian people, I salute you and regret that I could not be with you today. This conference is of great importance. It is only through the establishment of worldwide socialism that we can hope to rescue our fragile planet from the grips of a small class of profiteers who are destroying our environment, subverting sovereign governments, waging merciless wars, and plunging billions of people into deeper misery and despair.

Never before has socialism been so achievable, and never before so necessary.

Two hundred years ago today, our Haitian ancestors were also ushering in a new society, preparing to declare Haiti's independence on Jan. 1, 1804. They had just defeated Napoleon Bonaparte's army at the Battle of Vertières on Nov. 18, 1803.

Ours was not just the only successful slave revolution in history. Haiti was the

first nation in the Western Hemisphere, and indeed the world, where all men and women were truly free and equal, regardless of race.

The European colonialist powers and the slave-owning United States immediately ostracized and embargoed our new nation, much as they have done to revolutionary Cuba in recent times. Over these past two centuries, they have constantly attacked our nation militarily and with lies.

This offensive continues to this day. Washington and Paris are engaged in an all-out campaign to vilify and overthrow the popularly elected government of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. The two wings of our ruling class—the big landowners and the import-export bourgeoisie—have put aside their usual feuding to assist imperialism in destabilizing Haiti. Their representatives among the politicians and intellectuals have vowed to boycott and undermine the celebration of Haiti's bicentennial.

The essential elements of this campaign are an aid embargo, media disinformation and vilification campaign, diplo-

matic meddling, fomenting violence in Haiti's shantytowns, and a contra-style guerrilla war. The campaign bears many similarities to the secret wars waged against Allende's Chile, the Sandinistas' Nicaragua, and today, Hugo Chavez's Venezuela.

Despite tremendous hardships, the Haitian people continue to resist. Over the past two years, the National Popular Party has held several giant marches to denounce imperialism's offensive and to call on the Haitian government to more vigorously defend the Haitian people's democratic gains. Over 10,000 people participated in PPN's march in the capital this past Sept. 30, the 12th anniversary of the CIA-backed coup d'état against Aristide.

Imperialism and its lackeys are trying to engineer another coup and foreign military occupation of Haiti. This is the only way they can hope to take back control of the country.

But just like Napoleon in 1803, their plans are doomed. The Haitian people



Ben Dupuy speaking at a 1999 PPN Congress with Haitian and Cuban flags flying in front of him.

today refuse to return to the dictatorship we experienced under the 1991-1994 coup and during the Duvalier dictatorships, just as our ancestors refused to return into slavery.

In Creole, we have an expression. "Yo byen konte, yo mal kalkile." Imperialism has counted well, but calculated badly. They have miscalculated the Haitian people's resolve in defending our nation, our sovereignty and our bicentennial.

Long live the struggle of the Haitian people! Long live the struggle for justice, peace and socialism! □

# Haitian Revolution's impact after 200 years

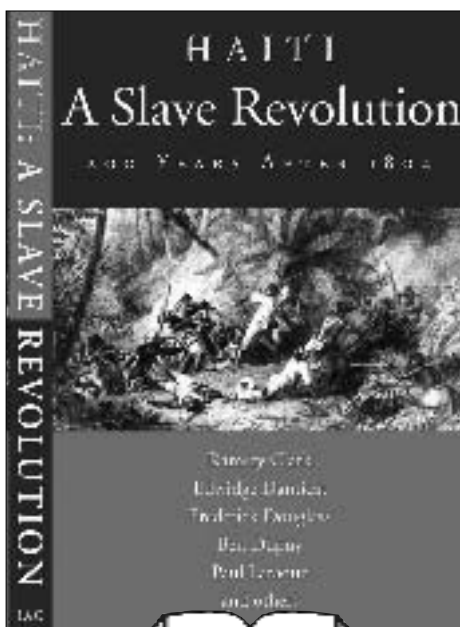
"Haiti, a Slave Revolution"  
International Action Center  
223 pp.; index, bibliography, timeline  
\$19.95 (see leftbooks.com for special discount price)

By Deirdre Griswold

In time for the 200th anniversary of the Haitian Revolution, the International Action Center has issued a book of essays, both historical and contemporary, about this Black nation in the Caribbean. They will be appreciated by all who oppose the institution of slavery, not just in the past but in its present form as the super-exploitation of oppressed nations.

The editors have compiled writings from a broad range of thinkers and fighters who have recognized Haiti's great significance for the freedom struggles of the last two centuries.

After the Civil War the great abolitionist Frederick Douglass became U.S. Minister to the Republic of Haiti—as he described it, "the only self-made Black Republic in the world." In an 1893 lecture reprinted here, he chastised the United States for not having "forgiven Haiti for being black. ... [A]fter Haiti had shaken off the fetters of bondage, and long after her freedom and independence had been recognized by all other civilized nations, we continued to refuse to acknowledge the



fact and treated her as outside the sisterhood of nations."

What had Haiti done to be treated like this? As Sara Flounders writes in "Cuba, Haiti and John Brown: to Rebel Is Justified," during most of the 19th century Haiti was "the only liberated territory—in a region where chattel slavery was still the dominant social relation."

The territory the French called St. Domingue got its liberation through a great revolutionary struggle that triumphed on Jan. 1, 1804. Before that, it was France's most lucrative colony for over a century. More than half a million Africans slaved to produce sugar, rum, cotton, tobacco and indigo.

When they rose up and demanded their freedom, and then defeated Napoleon's vaunted army, "President George Washington and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, both slave owners, supported France in its efforts to suppress the slaves," writes IAC founder Ramsey Clark in his essay, "Haiti's Agonies and Exaltations."

Greg Dunkel explains why the voodoo religion of the slaves is still hated by white racists. "It gave them the solidarity they needed to organize a mass uprising of enslaved people under the noses of the slave owners. ... The slaves in the north of St. Domingue ... organized for weeks beginning in early July, using the cover of the voodoo ceremonies that were held every weekend." In this essay, "Haiti's Impact on the United States," Dunkel points out that the term "voodoo" is still used with scorn by the ruling class here, as in the phrase "voodoo economics."

Pat Chin traces U.S. economic sanctions against Haiti and points out that its intense poverty today is because, as the title of her essay says, "Haiti Needs

Reparations, Not Sanctions."

A very important section of the book deals with how the U.S. government has used the threat of military coups and the paramilitary thugs the Tonton Macoutes to subvert and/or hijack the government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Aristide, to the surprise of the United States, was elected president by an overwhelming popular majority in 1990. Articles from the newspaper Haiti-Progrès and by Ben Dupuy trace the maneuvers of U.S. presidents like Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton that set the stage for U.S. military intervention in 1994. The continuing struggle in Haiti is brought up to date by Kim Ives in "Class Analysis of a Crisis."

The book also covers the struggles of Haitian workers in the United States and Haitian refugees held in U.S. detention centers. It includes a 1991 Workers World article by Sam Marcy on the failure of U.S. rhetoric to drown out the revolutionary consciousness of the Haitian masses.

There's a fascinating photo section that starts with portraits of the leaders of the 1804 Revolution and moves on to the progressive activists, women and men, in the United States and in Haiti, who carry on their work today. The revolution's impact on Haitian culture is conveyed by contemporary poets whose words add passion and humor to this deeply informative book. □



# The great challenges facing China today

Based on a talk given by Deirdre Griswold at the Dec. 6-7 "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism" conference.

At this conference on how the world needs socialism, how could we not talk about China?

It is the largest country still governed by a communist party and the largest country to call itself socialist, even though that term has been modified to "market socialist." Of course, it is the largest country in the world. One of every five human beings lives in China.

Today the premier of China, Wen Jibao, is on his way to the United States to meet with Bush. He is not coming to denounce U.S. imperialism but to try to keep the peace while reiterating China's determination not to allow Taiwan to become a separate country, which would be nothing but a neo-colony of the United States.

Taiwan was where the counter-revolutionary army of Chiang Kai-shek fled at the time of the Chinese Revolution. The U.S. government at that time not only agreed that Taiwan was part of China, but insisted that Chiang was still the leader of all China and Taiwan was its temporary capital. That fiction persisted for 22 years, until 1971, when the People's Republic of China finally was able to take its rightful seat in the United Nations.

The struggle of the Chinese Revolution has been not only to transform China economically and socially, but to defend its territorial integrity and its very life as a nation. It's very interesting that an article in Pravda this week on why nuclear non-proliferation won't happen in today's world mentions that the United States threatened China with nuclear attack three times in the 1950s—once over Korea and twice over small islands in the South China Sea that Chiang's forces had occupied and that Red China threatened to take back. Once China developed its own nuclear weapons, such U.S. threats lost their punch—something that North Korea also would take note of today.

This is the kind of brutal world into which the Chinese Revolution was born, with its tremendous promise to liberate hundreds of millions of human beings from intense poverty, oppression and foreign colonial occupation.

Anyone in this room who lived through the radical period of the 1960s and 1970s knows how China inspired oppressed peoples everywhere. I met representatives from Vietnam in 1967 who were wearing Mao buttons. Think of that. China was leading the worldwide defiance of imperialism and challenging the Soviet leaders' policies that subordinated the national-liberation and class struggles to an illusory peaceful coexistence between socialism and capitalism.

However, China, while vast, was a poor and underdeveloped country. Its political break with the USSR cost it much-needed technological assistance. Even before the Vietnam War was over, and while Chairman Mao Zedong was still the leader, China invited U.S. President Richard Nixon on a state visit in an attempt to ease the threat from the main imperialist power in the world.

The China represented today by Premier Wen Jibao is still a developing country. But it has experienced phenomenal economic growth in recent years, due

very largely to billions of dollars in foreign investment. It is also a nuclear power and recently put an astronaut into space. No imperialist country helped them by investing in that. The imperialists want a China that is industrialized just enough to facilitate the exploitation of its cheap labor by foreign capital.

In today's New York Times (Dec. 7) you can read about how the child's toy Etch-a-Sketch is now being made in China by super-exploited workers—so it can be sold cheaply here at Wal-Mart; how the bosses coach the workers to lie to Chinese government inspectors about their wages and working conditions—or else lose their jobs; and about how the workers there have at times gone on strike over these conditions.

The class struggle has at times been intense in China since the revolution. Now it's in a new form.

"Market socialism" is a blend of two contradictory social phenomena—two modes of production based on opposing classes. The early Soviet Union under Lenin had to reintroduce the market in agriculture because of the total breakdown in the country caused by civil war. But Lenin wrote about its great dangers and saw it as only a temporary measure. Cuba also tried a farmers' market for a few years, but ended it during the rectification period of the early 1980s.

Why is the market so dangerous to a socialist country? Because it inevitably introduces gross inequalities that eat away at the morale of the workers and poorer farmers, who are the pillars of the socialist revolution.

Eventually, it becomes a danger to the very existence of the workers' state. It contributes to corruption within the state apparatus. China in recent years has executed a number of millionaires—probably the only country in the world to do so. When was there last an execution of a millionaire in the United States? That says something about the Chinese state. But it also says something about the capitalist economy growing up alongside the workers' state. Otherwise there wouldn't be millionaires to execute.

The turn toward the market began several decades ago. After a long internal struggle the Maoist leadership lost out to the forces around Deng Xiaoping, who had been labeled a "capitalist roader" by the left. We have an article in Workers World that briefly summarizes this turn. But to get a more in-depth understanding of the significance of this great struggle, I urge you to read the two pamphlets by Sam Marcy, "China—the Struggle Within" and "The Suppression of the Left."

Our analysis of these events is not just based on criticisms of the leadership, on calling them sell-outs and betrayers, which unfortunately many of those who once passionately defended China have done. We of course recognize the tremendous importance of revolutionary leadership. How could Cuba have survived to this day without the great leadership of Fidel Castro—or Che Guevara and other socialist heroes. Or take Korea, which continues to hold out against the pressures of capitalism and imperialism despite all odds. The Korean people revere the memory of Kim Il Sung because of his great revolutionary leadership during periods of incredible trial.

But China's problem is not just a subjective one, not just a lack of revolution-

**China's problem is one of feeding over a billion people, at a time when the world economic system is completely dominated by capitalism. This is something we in the U.S. must especially understand.**



Deirdre Griswold

WW PHOTO: BERNIE FOX

ary leaders. It is, above all, the problem of feeding over a billion people, of trying to move forward to a modern economy at a time when the world economic system is completely dominated by predatory monopoly capitalism.

We in the United States most of all have to understand this. This society takes so much for granted. We need socialism because it is the only system that works when you have abundance. That's what makes socialism a historic possibility in this day and age: abundance. Capitalism has developed the means of production to the point of producing goods in abundance, but then it goes haywire. Abundance under capitalism leads to overproduction, layoffs, people sleeping under bridges and going hungry when warehouses are full. Only socialism can lead the way out of this irrational morass by liberating the means of production from private ownership.

But what happens when you have the socialist revolution in parts of the world that have never known abundance; where, as in China, millions died of starvation every time there was a bad harvest; where everything needs to be built up—mining, manufacturing, transportation, communications, and the people's health, education and housing?

That's what the leaders of China's revolution faced. And they have faced it pretty much alone.

We see how capitalism has become a world system. It has integrated the world in a way that is often irrational—moving the production of Etch-a-Sketch toys to China just for the cheap labor, even though they have to be shipped back here for the U.S. market, for example—but it shows it can be done. Socialism will be truly a world system, not for the purpose of super-exploiting three-quarters of the world, but for the purpose of rationally and fairly sharing all the peoples' great intellectual and cultural contributions and all the planet's resources in a sustainable way.

Yes, it can be done and it must be done.

China's revolutionary generation had great hope that it would be done in time to help them solve their great problems.

We've heard that a favorite slogan in Latin America today is: "Iraq, hold on. The world is rising." All the world is looking, waiting, hoping that this is true not only in the oppressed countries but inside the imperialist countries as well, especially right here in the belly of the beast.

Would those in China who favored the market have won the political struggle if there had been a real challenge to imperi-

alism coming from the workers and revolutionary youths in the imperialist countries?

Wouldn't the more revolutionary elements, those who are fighting for the workers' interests, have been heartened and pressed harder? But in a period of reaction like the last few decades in this country, even leftists were afraid that turmoil in China would open the door to a real counter-revolution like in the USSR, and the destruction of the Chinese state.

The existence of a workers' state in China has made a huge difference. The only country comparable to China in size and history is India. While it achieved independence from British colonial rule, there was no social revolution in India, no setting up of a new state based on the workers and peasants. The vital statistics today show the difference: India's infant mortality rate is almost three times that of China. Its life expectancy is 10 years less. Illiteracy is much higher in India. Chinese women are much more integrated into economic and social life at all levels.

China's leaders today are pragmatic, not revolutionary. But how do they see the world? When even rich imperialist countries are cutting education, health care, pensions—all the social programs won by the workers—they say how can a poor, developing country like China afford them?

We could say this is shortsighted. Any socialist country's most important asset is its people. Well-educated, healthy people will contribute more to raising the country up. Cuba has shown that splendidly.

But they will reply: You don't understand our problems. We know how much money is in the state treasury. We don't have it. Once we have more rich people, we will tax them, the way you do. And then we'll have more money for these things.

Through our actions, we need to prove to the world that socialist development as we understand it—not the contradiction of building socialism through a market that fosters inequality—is possible. We can't do it with polemics alone. We can only do it by building the struggle here against imperialism, by winning more and more workers to this struggle because imperialist war and super-exploitation abroad are undermining their position, by fighting racism and national chauvinism and bigotry to unite our class and eventually bring down the capitalist exploiters and oppressors.

China's future needs it. The whole world needs it. □



## The year's end

At year's end, where do things stand? Has anything been proved or disproved by this year of brutal imperialist conquest and occupation?

The upholders of the capitalist system, and especially its leaders in the U.S., have had one more year to show what they have to offer in the post-Soviet era, now that they have only themselves to blame for the condition of the world.

The politicians and military leaders who serve Corporate America have never strutted higher on the world's stage. They have gone to the frozen mountain ranges of Afghanistan and the searing deserts of Iraq, flaunting their spectacular technology of death and destruction. How could anyone fail to bow down and submit before their unmatched air power, their 5,000-lb. oxygen-consuming bombs, their satellite-coordinated battle command posts?

And the images the monopoly media have brought into the humblest living rooms: Images of power—jets roaring into the night, missiles slicing their way through buildings. Images of an apple-cheeked president beloved of his troops and subjects leading a great crusade against terrorism and evil. Images of the recalcitrant “enemies,” caged, shackled, hands bound, gaunt, unshaven. A real Hollywood blockbuster.

So why has Bush been working so hard at trying to lighten his image? Why did he bring his overlord Paul Bremer back home in a sweat and start talking about a quick transition to an Iraqi authority?—hand-picked, of course.

And why did this famous “unilateralist” agree to try and bring France, Germany and Russia in on the exploitation of Iraq? Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz thought he had scotched the deal when he made public a Pentagon document limiting contracts for the “rebuilding” of Iraq to only those countries that have sent troops there. Wolfowitz acted just as James Baker III, a shrewd and well-connected (think Carlyle Group) dealmaker from the Reagan-Bush years, was on his way to Europe. But Baker was able to get the two imperialist governments, France and Germany, to agree to cancel much of Iraq's debt so the money can go to pay for the occupation.

Whatever the details, it was a sure sign that there is a deal, Wolfowitz and Co. notwithstanding, and the big money class in the U.S. has conceded for now that it really can't pull this off totally on its own.

One big reason has been the level of resistance. The Iraqi people don't want to return to being an Anglo-U.S. colony, and have shown it now for the better part of a year. Neither the puppet show called the

“Governing Council” nor the ruthless suppression of demonstrations can conceal the fact that all over Iraq, in the Shiite south, the Sunni center and the Kurdish north, there is hatred of the foreign occupation. The capture of Saddam Hussein didn't change that.

Then there is the powerful, worldwide anti-war movement that mushroomed up a year ago. It spoke for many, many millions of people and cannot be shrugged off. Sentiment against the war has even found its way into the usually barren electoral arena in the U.S., although most of that is demagoguery.

Increasingly, the ones who most want the occupation to end are the U.S. troops themselves, who were thrust into the role of hated colonial occupiers by their commanding officers. The only program that makes sense to them is to come home.

Many of them joined up in the first place because of the rotten prospects for young workers in so much of the United States. Work for minimum wage at an anti-union shop like Wal-Mart, or roll the military dice and hope they will take you to an education, job skills and a way out of depressed areas. But the dice were fixed, and the troops wound up facing not only the horrors of war but the mysterious illnesses—caused by depleted uranium, a cocktail of vaccines, who knows what?—that now plague tens of thousands of veterans.

Veterans' benefits are being steadily cut, too, just as so many other sectors of the working class are feeling the pinch turn into a stabbing pain. The capitalists are doing what they know best—making money, and keeping more of it because of the tax cuts—while steelworker pensions are drying up, health care is a luxury, and consumer prices are rising with the falling dollar.

Something is happening among low-wage workers, too. They're not all flocking into the military. Many thousands are standing up and fighting the huge corporations that lord it over this country. And this new labor movement gets much of its strength from those ordinarily considered the most vulnerable—immigrants, some of them undocumented, and women.

If they can organize and fight for a living wage, benefits and the right to organize, why can't the rest? The courage and determination of the most oppressed can be a spark to ignite others in this largely unorganized and sorely abused multinational class of workers.

It all boils down to this: Without the workers, the imperialist bosses have nothing. Zip. Nil.

Happy New Year. □

## War criminal Wesley Clark testifies at Hague

By John Catalinotto

Ex-NATO commander and current U.S. presidential candidate Gen. Wesley Clark began testifying Dec. 15 at the trial of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic in The Hague, Netherlands.

Outside the courtroom of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, a group of demonstrators protested both Clark's appearance and the court's plans to keep his testimony secret, at least until Dec. 19. U.S. authorities will be allowed to censor any of the testimony they consider endangering U.S. “national interests” if made public.

Two of the protesters held a banner reading, “Yankee kangaroo court secretly fears the truth.”

At a news conference organized by the International Committee for the Defense of Slobodan Milosevic across from the court, Canadian attorney Tiphaine Dickson pointed out what lay behind the court's decision to keep the testimony secret. “Any doubt over the political nature of the ICTY has been erased after the judge let it be known that they accepted the conditions the U.S. regime demanded of them.”

Many lawyers and law professors have pointed out this court's political nature, and its illegal setup by the United Nations Security Council under U.S. pressure. Among the ICTY's critics have been former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark and Canadian attorney Chris Black.

The court only hears alleged crimes of Yugoslavs. It refuses to hear any charges brought against U.S. or other NATO military or political leaders.

Though he poses as a “peace candidate,” Gen. Wesley Clark directed the aggressive 78-day U.S.-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999 and admits responsibility for choosing civilian targets in Serbia during that bombing campaign.

At least three initiatives recognized Clark's responsibility for these crimes by naming him along with other NATO political and military leaders in war crimes indictments.

The three included a war-crimes case in a Belgrade, Yugoslavia, court that found him and the other leaders guilty on Sept. 22, 2000; a request, drafted in 1999 by Toronto law professors Michael Mandel and David Jacobs, that the prosecutor for the ICTY investigate and indict Gen. Clark and others for war crimes; and a June 10, 2000, People's Tribunal organized by the International Action Center and others that found Clark and others guilty of war crimes.

In another repressive move, the ICTY cut President Slobodan Milosevic off from contact with the public, using as an excuse his candidacy in the Dec. 28 national elections in Serbia. The Socialist Party of Serbia chose Milosevic to lead its ticket because the former president has gained in popularity by defending himself and his country expertly and with energy before the ICTY. □

## Cultural program salutes Sison

By Heather Cottin  
New York

The Filipino group Network In Solidarity with the People of the Philippines sponsored a Dec. 13 program of poetry, music, and drama in New York City to honor Jose Maria Sison. Sison, the revolutionary and poet, is the leader of the New Peoples Army of the Philippines. He lives in exile in the Netherlands.

The program was timely because Dec. 10 was officially International Human Rights Day. The U.S., Philippine and Dutch governments are threatening Sison's refugee status, which is legally protected under the United Nations Refugee Convention and by the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Sison said in a 2002 interview with Workers World: “The 1899-1902 U.S. war of aggression against the Filipino people and the subsequent pacification campaigns lasting up to 1914 killed 1.4 million Filipinos, suppressed Philippine independence and put the Filipino people under U.S. colonial rule.

“The U.S. also instigated, directed and propped up the Marcos fascist dictatorship for 14 years in order to retain all-around U.S. control over the Philippines in the face of a rising patriotic and progressive mass movement. In the process, the U.S. encouraged the Marcos fascist regime to torture and kill at least 200,000 people.” (WW Nov. 7, 2002)

Poverty and the ravages of imperialism have forced 10 percent of the population of the Philippines into exile in 186 countries. Sison said that the people of the

Philippine Diaspora are part of the revolutionary struggle for the liberation of the Philippines.

People at the Dec. 13 event watched a videotape of Sison discussing conditions in the Philippines, along with his years of torture in the prisons of the Philippines under the Marcos regime and his difficulties in exile.

The program began with Potri Rankamanis, a traditional Filipino dance troupe, re-enacting an 1898 U.S. attack on the Moro people. Doti Mendoza, secretary general of the Philippine women's organization Gabriela Network, read Sison's poetry.

The organizers of this event noted that the struggle to support Sison is at a critical moment. After Sept. 11, 2001, the Philippine government characterized Sison as a “terrorist” and demanded his return. The U.S. State Department designated the Communist Party of the Philippines/New Peoples Army as a “foreign terrorist organization” in 2002.

The government in Manila acts in the interest of the Philippine bourgeoisie and as a puppet of U.S. imperialism. U.S. and Japanese economic exploitation is rapidly making Filipino workers' and peasants' lives more miserable. But Filipinos, including those in the New Peoples Army, are resisting government repression and imperialism.

The Dutch government has threatened to revoke Sison's refugee status and return him to the Philippines—where he faces prison, torture and death. Only international solidarity and vigilance can protect Sison from the real terrorists in Washington. □

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# Which road to socialism?

Based on a talk given by Deirdre Sinnott at the Dec. 6-7 "Reviving the Worldwide Struggle for Socialism" conference.

How do we win socialism? Will it be voted in or will it be won in a revolution? Once you've got socialism, how do you protect it from being taken away?

There are several examples of the so-called peaceful transition to socialism. Take Sweden as an example. Recently a friend of mine said he was a life-long socialist and he wanted what Sweden has. At first glimpse, it seems pretty good—but.

First off, Sweden isn't really a socialist country because there is a class of people who own the corporations. Ninety percent of the businesses in Sweden are privately owned.

There are also mass layoffs in tough times of capitalist economic crisis. TeliaSonera and Nokia both laid off workers in 2003. At times the unemployment situation in Sweden is basically like here in the U.S. Both Ericsson and Volvo have moved some of their plants overseas and laid off workers.

There was a strike in 2003 of over 50,000 council workers—mostly women—for higher pay and to fight what has been a decade of cutbacks and privatizations. The workers in Sweden overwhelmingly supported the strike.

There is little doubt that a measure of workers' control and social programs is much better than what we are used to in the U.S., but it's still not socialism and still can be voted out of existence.

The Swedish economy is forced to compete in a capitalist world system. Whole industries like shipbuilding, which was the backbone of the economy and helped make the taxation system possible, have largely been closed down because of cheaper labor markets abroad. When workers are forced to compete with each other, wages fall.

This makes the social structure similar to the utopian communes set up in Europe and the U.S. during the 1800s. These utopian societies had better conditions for the workers than in the rest of the country. But they went under because they had to compete with capitalism. In capitalism businesses large and small fail and disappear. This is what happened to these communes.

I hope that the workers in Sweden are able to hold on to the gains they have, but I wouldn't want to pin my hopes on elections.

Workers' control of a capitalist government is not the same as workers having their own government. In the same way that the U.S. government is by and for the U.S. ruling class, where laws are enacted to preserve and protect the property relations of private ownership, workers could have their own government. A workers' government would be to the benefit of the working class. It would enact laws that protected workers' rights and defend those rights so that they couldn't be stolen.

Here in the U.S. there is a constant battle not to lose what we won in the struggle. Affirmative action and abortion rights are under extreme attack. The same thing



WW PHOTO

Deirdre Sinnott, on left, at an anti-war march in London.

is true for the right to overtime pay, the right to strike and other things we take for granted. But in our society, the second we win these victories, the right wing is thinking about how to rescind them.

If someone told me that they had a referendum that was going to give everyone a home, enough to eat, free healthcare, free education, guaranteed job, I'd say it sounds great. The problem is that even if it did get on the ballot, even if it did pass, it would never be enforced. That's because the state is set up to protect the assets of the very rich.

If you look into history you can see how the ruling class solves its problems. Whenever the ruling class has felt truly

threatened, by an uprising, by a person, by a country or by an economic system, it has reacted with violence. The ruling class is going to protect what it has. They will fight every inch of the way. If anyone here has ever been in a strike, you get to see a glimpse of it. The bosses will do everything in their power to win. They will threaten people, try to fire them, use intimidation, burn organizers' homes, or in the case of Coca-Cola in Colombia, have the trade unionists killed.

One of the lessons learned the hard way is Chile. On Sept. 11, 1973, a democratically elected government was violently overthrown. With help from the CIA, President Salvador Allende was killed in a coup that brought the fascist dictator Augusto Pinochet to power. Bloody repression followed and many good people were tortured and/or killed. Many of them had believed that if they had a fair election and voted for what they wanted, the ruling classes of Chile and the U.S. would say OK.

Being a realist means knowing that if the ruling class is not about to give up power without a struggle, then there is only the revolutionary path. Do I want violence? No. I have been part of the struggle against the violence of the ruling class, but I have the right to defend myself. And when the struggle for expanded rights heats up, particularly if it is truly effective in winning substantial rights for the working class as opposed to the ruling class, we can expect a fight. Malcolm X said it best when he said, "Self defense is not violence—it's intelligence." □

## 'The death penalty is a crime'

Continued from page 3

health care, education and housing.

There are a large number of people on death row who have very low IQs and are considered "mentally retarded." The U.S. Supreme Court reversed itself and ruled last year that mentally disabled people should not be executed. But they still are.

On the night of George W. Bush's inaugural ball when he was first elected governor of Texas, an execution took place. Mario Marquez had the adaptive skills of a 7-year-old. His trial counsel testified at a clemency hearing that he did not present any evidence of Mario's mental "retardation" because of a legal flaw in the Texas death penalty statute. Marquez was executed on Jan. 17, 1995.

There are even more people on death row who are mentally ill. Many states will give a prisoner drugs to make them okay mentally so that they can be executed, but

won't treat mental illnesses on a regular basis.

In fact, in Texas and other states that use super-maximum prisons for death row, the sensory deprivation is driving prisoners mad. Those who already had mental illnesses are being pushed over the edge. Many are giving up appeals and trying to commit suicide rather than live on death row.

The United States is one of four countries that still allow the execution of people who were under the age of 18 when the crime was committed. There are over 120 foreign nationals on death row who were never allowed to see a representative of their country when arrested, even though consular rights are guaranteed under the Vienna Convention. Of these, 55 are Mexicanos.

The death penalty is so racist and so anti-poor that it should be abolished immediately.

It not only terrorizes those living while waiting to die—it terrorizes their families and friends. I have known mothers who have died within weeks or months of their child's execution. I have known men who have gone mad from having execution dates set again and again, even though they haven't exhausted their appeals. Or men who are innocent and have waited for 15 or 20

years for justice and when it hasn't come, they lose their minds.

The death penalty is a crime against our class and we must fight it with the same energy we fight racism, prison slavery, lesbian/gay/bi/trans oppression, police brutality and other forms of repression. The cops, the courts and the whole criminal-justice system—the whole state apparatus—is a crime. □

## MARKET ELECTIONS:

How democracy serves the rich

By Vince Copeland

Every four years, big money chooses the presidential candidates. Their war chests filled to the brim, they are then packaged by the media as "the people's choice."

It's U.S.-style democracy—of the rich, by the rich and for the rich. But how do these chosen politicians win the votes of the millions as well as the millionaires?

Who has been excluded from voting? How were electoral politics used to betray Black freedom after the Civil War? How did two Roosevelts wield reform at home to facilitate empire-building abroad? Why did no 'normal' elections take place between 1960 and 1976? Market Elections takes us into smoke filled rooms and raucous conventions to tell the story.



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## la Unión Soviética y la lucha por el Socialismo

Continua de Pagina 12

fosa, la clase trabajadora. Un retroceso en la lucha obrera, no importa cuan severo, no cambia las leyes del desarrollo histórico ni tampoco puede rescatar al capitalismo de sus fatales contradicciones. Considerar a la Unión Soviética como una anomalía histórica sería abandonar completamente el materialismo. Tenemos que considerarla como la primera fase crucial en la lucha por el socialismo mundial, que surgió de la contradicción fundamental entre la propiedad privada y la producción socializada.

Las mismas fuerzas de explotación capitalista que impulsaron a los trabajadores rusos a hacer la Revolución Bolchevique ahora funcionan en una escala aún más global, y eventualmente impulsarán a la clase trabajadora hacer la revolución socialista a nivel mundial y establecer así la base para el comunismo.

Los alcances de la URSS en su intento de forjar al socialismo demostraron que

la sociedad puede ser planificada de una manera racional para satisfacer las necesidades humanas y podría lograr un progreso enorme sin la propiedad privada, sin fines de lucro y sin patronos. En pocas palabras, cuando se separa el aspecto socialista de la URSS de las regresiones inducidas por el capitalismo mundial, se demuestra que la clase capitalista es innecesaria históricamente, es parasítica y es una obstrucción al progreso social.

Los dos obstáculos fundamentales que distorsionaron y estrangulaban el desarrollo socialista y tumbaron a la URSS—la escasez material de las fuerzas productivas para soportar las relaciones socialistas avanzadas y el peso del imperialismo mundial? serían eliminados con una revolución socialista en los Estados Unidos. Es la revolución en los países imperialistas desarrollados lo que prepara la base para que empiece una época de paz verdadera y solidaridad, es decir, el comienzo de la historia humana. □



# Un marco para discusión: la Unión Soviética y la lucha por el Socialismo

Basado en una charla por Fred Goldstein durante una conferencia en Nueva York el 6 y 7 de diciembre.

Ya que el tema de esta conferencia es el de revivir la lucha por el socialismo, me gustaría dirigirme a un tema que es ideológica y políticamente esencial para ese esfuerzo—o sea, retomar nuestra propia historia de manos de la clase capitalista en cuanto a la cuestión de la Unión Soviética.

El movimiento socialista ha estado trabajando por mucho tiempo bajo una nube de desmoralización y duda por el colapso de la Unión Soviética. Por supuesto, el colapso fue ciertamente uno de los grandes retrocesos para el movimiento obrero en la historia. Los logros políticos y económicos fueron enormes para el mundo imperialista. Este retomó un sexto del globo terrestre. Logró la libertad de hacer guerra e intensificar sus robos a países oprimidos, los cuales dependían de la URSS como un escudo parcial contra el imperialismo. Además intensificó el asalto del imperialismo contra el movimiento laboral en todas partes.

Pero la desmoralización y la debilitación del movimiento socialista no sólo se limita a los retrocesos materiales y políticos. Va mucho más allá. Se trata de haber perdido la confianza en la meta revolucionaria socialista.

Gran parte del movimiento, consciente o inconscientemente ha aceptado la interpretación burguesa del colapso de la URSS como constancia de que el socialismo—socialismo en el sentido comunista de establecer una dictadura revolucionaria del proletariado y la organización de una economía planificada—es fundamentalmente defectuoso. El movimiento ha estado a la defensiva frente a los ataques ideológicos de la burguesía. Ha dado paso atrás sobre esta cuestión frente a la ofensiva burguesa de mentiras y distorsiones. La respuesta más común de aquellos que no se adhieren a los argumentos burgueses es la de quedarse avergonzados y callados o ambiguos, disculpándose ante el tema.

## Punto de vista Marxista sobre la Unión Soviética

Por eso, esta cuestión tiene mucho que ver con el futuro del movimiento. La cuestión de hablar directamente sobre el colapso de la URSS desde un punto de vista Marxista no es simplemente un asunto de ubicar correctamente el récord histórico para la posteridad, sino que se ha convertido en una medida de la confianza que hay en el Marxismo, el materialismo histórico, la doctrina de la lucha de clases y la perspectiva para la lucha por el socialismo mundial y el comunismo. El movimiento debe retomar la iniciativa sobre esta cuestión, disipar las nubes de confusión y duda, y renovar su confianza en el Marxismo y especialmente en las enseñanzas de Lenin, el arquitecto de la Revolución Bolchevique.

En una charla corta como esta, sólo es posible proponer un marco para lo que debe ser una discusión y un análisis profundo. Entonces lo primero que se debe establecer es que no hay una migaja de evidencia histórica que pruebe que el colapso de la URSS represente el fallo



Fred Goldstein

FOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

del socialismo como sistema social. Al contrario, los logros extraordinarios del primer estado obrero victorioso en la historia son una demostración constante del potencial del socialismo para sacar al mundo de la oscuridad y la pesadilla impuesta por la propiedad privada, una vez que el socialismo se pueda construir sobre una base económica fuerte, libre de las influencias destructivas del imperialismo mundial.

La Revolución Bolchevique ocurrió en una base de pobreza en el país capitalista más pobre del oeste. Estaba aislado por su pobreza y retraso una vez que los intentos revolucionarios de la clase obrera europea de tomar el poder fueron abatidos por las clases gobernantes después de La Primera Guerra Mundial. Aún así dentro de esta devastación causada por la intervención imperialista y una guerra civil sangrienta, la revolución finalmente expropió los medios de producción de los capitalistas y los dueños de las tierras, instituyó un monopolio en el comercio extranjero e inauguró la economía planificada.

## Los logros socialistas de la URSS

La revolución superó el colapso casi total de las fuerzas productivas y levantó a Rusia y a sus colonias de un estatus semi feudal, hasta ser la segunda potencia industrial en el mundo. La URSS superaba en la producción de acero y carbón. En las esferas de la ciencia y la ingeniería, la URSS inauguró la era espacial, construyó los más grandes proyectos en la historia—y más importante aún, desde el punto de vista de clase—hizo todo esto mientras sacaba a los campesinos y obreros de la pobreza, enseñándoles a leer, dándoles medicinas, vacaciones, jubilación temprana y un sin número de beneficios sociales para el pueblo.

La economía planificada eliminó las crisis económicas. Ni una vez en su historia, excepto durante la invasión Nazi, sufrió bajas en la producción. Los planes de cinco años trajeron crecimiento económico mientras que el mundo capitalista pasaba por altas y bajas, incluyendo la depresión económica mundial de los años treinta. El desempleo fue abolido. Las actuales condiciones horribles en las que viven los ciudadanos de la ex URSS son suficiente testimonio de lo que se ha perdido.

La revolución dio a las naciones oprimidas que estaban bajo “la prisión de naciones” del zar el derecho a la autodeterminación y creó la primera cámara legislativa de nacionalidades en la historia. En los primeros años el gobierno soviético expuso los tratados secretos del imperialismo e hizo un llamado a todos los pueblos oprimidos del mundo a que derrocaran a sus amos coloniales. Apoyó a los gobiernos anti—imperialistas y las luchas de liberación en todo el mundo e inauguró una política exterior de internacionalismo.

Estos logros de la URSS se dieron bajo a una guerra constante del imperialismo mundial, incluyendo una intervención por 14 países imperialistas en 1918, la invasión Nazi que mató 20 millones de personas y causó destrucciones masivas en la industria socialista y en la agricultura, y 45 años de una Guerra Fría económica y política por la OTAN, el imperialismo de Estados Unidos y el Japón.

## Retrocesos, violaciones de normas socialistas y presiones imperialistas

Seguramente, la desaparición de la URSS fue grandemente ayudada por el eventual abandono de las normas socialistas y prácticas leninistas. El aumento de excesivos privilegios materiales y desigualdades sociales bajo el disfraz de incentivos materiales, el abandono del internacionalismo revolucionario proletario, y el uso de medidas represivas que pasaron más allá de la represión justificable de la burguesía y los terratenientes para incluir a miembros del partido y a comunistas leales, contribuyó a socavar el espíritu revolucionario de los trabajadores—el recurso principal de la revolución. La desastrosa ruptura con la República Popular China durante la fase revolucionaria de la RPC, provocada por el liderato soviético y promovida por el imperialismo estadounidense, fue uno de los grandes retrocesos históricos para la construcción de un campo socialista fuerte y unido, capaz de frenar al imperialismo.

Pero estos retrocesos reaccionarios en las normas socialistas se llevaron a cabo bajo condiciones de crisis impuestas por el imperialismo y bajo condiciones de privaciones materiales extremas. Estos retrocesos no tuvieron nada que ver con el socialismo y sí todo que ver con el acoso imperialista, un embargo imperialista mundial de la tecnología, y la amenaza 24 horas al día de un ataque nuclear durante la Guerra Fría. Este estado de guerra permanente trastornó constantemente la construcción socialista, agudizó las tensiones sociales, promovió a elementos burgueses temerosos y conciliatorios al imperialismo, y socavó el desarrollo del socialismo a un grado extremo.

Ninguno de los retrocesos causados por la influencia burguesa puede negar o descalificar los alcances extraordinarios que sacudieron al mundo en la producción, las ciencias, la estabilidad económica, planificación racional para la satisfacción de las necesidades humanas básicas mientras que subía el nivel de vida material y cultural de los trabajadores y campesinos. Los grandes pasos en acción afirmativa en beneficio de los pueblos anteriormente oprimidos y el apoyo a las

luchas por la liberación nacional en el mundo fueron el fruto del establecimiento de la dictadura de la clase trabajadora y las instituciones socialistas.

Fueron las fuerzas combinadas de escasez material y la campaña de presión y agresión por el imperialismo las que fueron los factores predominantes en la desaparición de la URSS, no los esfuerzos de forjar el socialismo.

Al analizar el desarrollo de la URSS, los comunistas debemos utilizar el método de Lenin. Después del colapso del movimiento internacional de la clase trabajadora conocido como la Segunda Internacional, millones de trabajadores fueron confrontados unos contra otros en una guerra imperialista terrible y las burguesías internacionales estaban regocijadas. En medio de esa guerra, en 1916, Lenin escribió su libro, “Imperialismo, la Fase Superior del Capitalismo”, en el que demostró que el imperialismo mundial estaba preparando el terreno para el socialismo mundial.

Lenin pudo hacer esto en medio del horrendo colapso porque tenía un entendimiento científico profundo del capitalismo y su desarrollo histórico lo que le produjo su confianza en el papel decisivo de la lucha de clases. Lenin consideró que la situación inmediata era tan difícil que en enero de 1917 dio una charla en Suiza diciendo que probablemente no vería la revolución durante su vida. A pesar de eso, tenía el convencimiento de que la revolución era inevitable.

## Lenin y Marx enfrentando la derrota

El mismo Carlos Marx nunca permitió que la contrarrevolución victoriosa le forzara a abandonar su concepto científico de la historia, y por consecuencia jamás perdió su confianza en la lucha. Después de la revolución del 1848, en la cual él y Federico Engels participaron, los trabajadores fueron masacrados y las monarquías de Prusia y Austria, con la ayuda del zar ruso, aplastaron las revoluciones en sus reinos. A través de Europa, los revolucionarios fueron ejecutados, encarcelados o exiliados. Para el año 1853, la reacción predominaba absoluta.

Pero en el medio de esa reacción, el 5 de marzo de 1852, Marx escribió una carta a un amigo en Nueva York, Joseph Weydemeyer, en la cual dijo calmadamente que “... no merezco ningún crédito por haber descubierto que existen clases sociales en la sociedad moderna o que hay luchas entre sí. ... Lo que era nuevo fue que se comprobó: (1) que la existencia de clases está relacionada solamente con fases particulares en el desarrollo de la producción, (2) que la lucha de clases necesariamente conduce a la dictadura del proletariado, (3) que esta dictadura en sí constituye sólo una transición hacia la abolición de todas las clases y hacia una sociedad sin clases”.

Esto fue escrito 20 años antes de la Comuna de París y 65 años antes de que los Bolcheviques establecieran la dictadura del proletariado en la Unión Soviética.

El colapso de la URSS, catastrófico como fue, no ha cambiado el hecho de que el capitalismo crea los excavadores de su

Continued on page 11