

## MUNDO OBRERO

Entrevista sobre la Marcha del Millón de Trabajadores 12

## ALERT: U.S. warships off Korea

While the attention of the anti-war movement continues to be riveted on the violence of the U.S. colonial occupation in Iraq, the danger of a military confrontation in north Asia involving the Pentagon has suddenly increased.

Ships of the U.S. 7th Fleet were to arrive in the waters east of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea—North Korea—on Oct. 1 in a provocative threat to that country's very existence. The flotilla includes destroyers equipped with Aegis missiles and the equipment to "monitor and track any ballistic missile launches from 'rogue

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# As Pentagon loses control in Iraq Workers to cast anti-war 'vote' Oct. 17 march to unite labor and anti-war movements

By Fred Goldstein

An "Open Letter to the Anti-War Movement from the Million Worker March" starts with this bold proclamation of the need to unite the anti-war struggle with the struggle for the rights of the working class:

*"With every day that passes, the crisis facing the American people deepens. Resistance to a brutal occupation escalates and spreads across Iraq as both major political parties march in lock-step to intensify this war, increase the numbers of troops, allocate yet further trillions of dollars to permanent war and devastate social services in America...."*

*"We have an historic responsibility to converge our forces, to come together as one great movement for social justice, to unite the rank and file of labor with the anti-war movement and all movements for social justice."*

This could not come at a more timely moment. The presidential election campaign has caused confusion and false hope among the ever-growing sections of the population who are both opposed to the U.S. occupation of Iraq and deeply concerned over the growth of poverty and the deteriorating economic situation.

The Million Worker March, to take place Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C., originated in the trade union movement and is calling on workers, organized and unorganized, to open up an independent fight for everything from universal health care to a living wage to an end to racism. It does not put its faith in either of the capitalist candidates. And it is linking this fight for economic and social justice to the fight against militarism, war and occupation.

Moving in the direction of class independence and mass mobilization in the midst of the current presidential election campaign is vital right now because it offers a genuine anti-war alternative to the futile choice posed by the elections. Those opposed to the Bush administration's brutal occupation of Iraq no longer have to feel confined to fruitlessly expressing their opposition to Bush by voting for John Kerry—who is determined to "stay the course" and carry out the occupation.

Despite the growing Iraqi resistance to the occupation, the Bush administration is determined to stage an election there in January 2005. This is part of the plan to legitimize the occupation and stabilize a puppet regime in the country. The election is in doubt because of the widening resistance, which is being fed by the brutality of the occupation. But, in order to try to pacify the situation and carry out the election, the U.S. military is planning to escalate its brutality.

### Plans for more troops, more war

Gen. John Abizaid, U.S. commander in Iraq, told Congress on Sept. 22 that "we will need more troops than we currently have to secure the election process in Iraq that will probably take place in the end of January." (New York Times Week in Review, Sept. 26) Abizaid spoke about a "temporary increase" of as many as 15,000 troops, which would be achieved during a rotation. Fresh troops would be brought in before those to be replaced could leave.

While Kerry has adjusted his election campaign message to the growing anti-war sentiment, declaring that the Iraq war was wrong, he has not uttered a word of opposition to the intended escalation of military force. In fact, a troop increase is part of his plan.

No one in the ruling class in the U.S. takes seriously Kerry's proposal to get the European imperialists to send their troops to Iraq. Kerry and Bush agree that the way to go is to train puppet Iraqi forces to take over.

But just last week the acting commander of the Iraqi National Guard for Diyala province, Gen. Talib al-Lahibi, was arrested by the U.S. for being part of the resistance. And a recently released U.S. hostage, Scott Taylor, told CNN on Sept. 28 that he had been abducted at an Iraqi police checkpoint in the north by police who turned him over to resistance forces! The police then rode with him to another location where the contingent that had abducted him was greeted with honors, including by local police.

Such developments leave Washington few alternatives other than to try to drown the resistance in blood or get out. And there is no one in the ruling class who wants to seriously discuss getting out. The question has never been raised during the election campaign—save for one weak reference by Kerry to possibly pulling out in four years.

### Destruction of Dean candidacy

In fact, the establishment made certain there never was a debate over the war during the election campaign. The only major capitalist politician who unequivocally opposed the war was Howard Dean. His anti-war appeal brought forth a groundswell of popular support and he raised millions of dollars on the

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Find out more: Million Worker March on pages 4 and 5

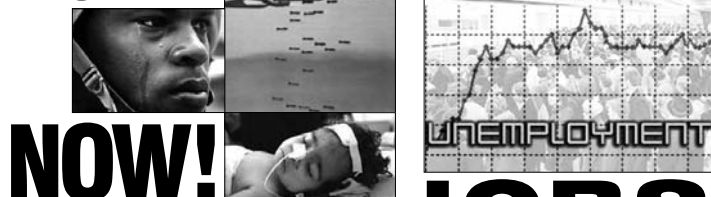
## THE MILLION WORKER MARCH

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# Talking socialism in New England

This week ...



Workers World Party candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell are in the midst of a national tour. Their campaign swing through New England included meetings in Hartford, Conn., on Sept. 22, Boston on Sept. 23 and Chatham, N.Y., on Sept. 27.



John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell speak at Boston meeting on Sept. 23

WW PHOTOS: LIZA GREEN

## VERMONT: 'Confidence in the workers'

Taking the message of socialism to Vermont, Workers World Party presidential candidate John Parker and vice-presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez met with activists in Brattleboro Sept. 25 and Barre Sept. 26.

Their visits were sponsored by the Liberty Union Party, which is sponsoring the WWP candidates on the state ballot.

"We're confident that it's inherent in the working class and oppressed to fight for a socialist society. History demands that we turn capitalism around," Gutierrez declared before a crowd at the River Garden, a community center in Brattleboro, a town of 6,000 in southeastern Vermont.

The candidates spoke before a colorful banner declaring, "Bring the troops home! People's needs, yes. Capitalist greed, no. All out for the Million Worker March, Oct. 17, Washington, D.C.!"

Queried about WWP's position on the U.S. war in Iraq, Parker said, "Our party stands unconditionally against the war in Iraq and for the resistance movement."

After the River Garden closed, candidates and audience members moved to a local progressive coffee bar to discuss a range of topics from Palestine to Iraq to the Million Worker March. And, of course, how to fight for socialism.

In Barre, popularly known as "Granite City" for its historic industry, the candidates spoke at the Socialist Labor Hall.

MWMT-shirts and literature were sold and distributed at both events.

—Bryan G. Pfeifer

## On the road with WWP candidates

## Rhode Island: Candidates join anti-war picket

The Workers World Party candidates spoke in Providence, R.I., on Sept. 24. WWP won ballot status in Rhode Island in early September.

The candidates began their Providence tour with talks at a weekly Friday anti-war demonstration in front of the Federal Building. Surrounded by supporters, a campaign banner and signs, John Parker, LeiLani Dowell and Teresa Gutierrez caught the attention of commuters waiting for public buses in the adjacent plaza. During the street meeting, Million Worker March flyers were passed out.

They also spoke at a forum in New Met School on Providence's South Side. Members of local anti-police brutality group DARE, high school students from Students for Social and Environmental Justice, and a local organizer for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee were among those who attended.

Parker, Dowell and Gutierrez talked about the need for workers and oppressed people to build an independent political movement. They said participating in the Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., and the Nov. 13-14 Workers World Party conference in New York City were important building blocks for that movement.

Parker congratulated DARE activists for being in the forefront of the struggle against racist police brutality.

—Mike Shaw

**NOVEMBER 13-14 • 2004 • NYC**  
**WORKERS WORLD PARTY**  
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## After the election, no matter who wins — THE STRUGGLE CONTINUES

AND IT'S GROWING! Are you one of the millions who want an END to brutal imperialist war and occupation—racism and national oppression—the oppression of women and of lesbians, gay men, bi and trans people—exploitation and impoverishment of the working class—repression by the capitalist state and deceit by the two parties that run it—corporate and military destruction of the environment?

Save the date—**NOV. 13-14** and plan NOW to participate in a weekend of dynamic discussions among well-informed activists on the vital questions before our movement.

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Check out our website: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).  
 Let us hear from you!

## WWP election campaign comes to California

### Workers World Party candidates

**John Parker** for President,  
**Teresa Gutierrez** for Vice-President and  
**Leilani Dowell**, for San Francisco Congressional representative on Peace & Freedom ticket, will be speaking in California on these dates:

**LOS ANGELES** Call 323-936-1416 for information  
**SAT., OCT. 9, 4:00 p.m.**

Workmen's Circle  
**SUN., OCT. 10, 4:00 p.m.**  
 KRST African Spirituality and Unity Center  
**MON., OCT. 11, 1:00 p.m.**  
 Sunset Hall Senior Center

**SAN FRANCISCO** Call 415-561-9752 for information.  
**WED., OCT. 13, 7:00 p.m.**

African American Art & Culture Complex

**CHULA VISTA** Call 619-692-4496 for information  
**THURS., OCT. 14, 11:00 a.m.**

Free Speech Area, Southwestern College

**SAN DIEGO** Call 619-692-4496 for information  
**THURS., OCT. 14, 6:30**

San Diego City College  
**FRI., OCT. 15, 7:00 p.m.**  
 San Diego IAC office

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## WW CALENDAR

### DETROIT

**Sat., Oct. 9**  
 Workers World Meeting.  
 The Russian school massacre—why did it happen? How the emergence of capitalism meant increased poverty, national oppression. Featured speaker Deirdre Griswold, editor of Workers World. 5 p.m. Dinner will be served. \$5.00 / \$1.00 for students and unemployed. At 5920 Second (at Antoinette).

### LOS ANGELES

**Sat., Oct. 9**  
 Workers World election campaign rally. Hear presidential candidates, John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell. Peace and Freedom Party candidate 8CD, San Francisco. 4 p.m. At the Workmen's Circle, 1525 S Robertson Blvd. For info (323) 936-1416.

### NEW YORK

**Fri., Oct. 1**  
 Workers World meeting: Hear John Catalinotto, WW managing editor, just returned from conference in Portugal on the impact of the Iraqi resistance worldwide. 7 pm. (Dinner at 6:30) At 55 W. 17 St., 5th Fl., Manhattan. For info (212) 627-2994.

### SAN FRANCISCO

**Fri., Oct. 1**  
 "U.S. Hands Off Haiti" and "Support the Million Worker March" A rep. of ILWU Local 10 will discuss the historic Million Worker March. Haitian activist Pierre Labossiere and LeiLani Dowell, Peace & Freedom Party candidate for Congress, to report on current situation in Haiti. Sponsored by the San Francisco AntiWar 4 the Million Worker March. For info (415) 561-9752.

## Workers World

55 West 17 Street  
 New York, N.Y. 10011  
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 Fax: (212) 675-7869  
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 Technical Editor: Lal Roohk  
 Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson  
 Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Pat Chin, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Milt Neidenberg  
 Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Adrian Garcia, Maggie Vascassenno  
 Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Carlos Vargas  
 Internet: Janet Mayes

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

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

**Boston**  
 284 Armory St., Boston,  
 Mass. 02130  
 (617) 983-3835;  
 Fax (617) 983-3836  
 boston@workers.org

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
 P.O. Box 1204  
 Buffalo NY 14213  
 (716) 566-1115  
 buffalo@workers.org

**Chicago**  
 27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
 Chicago, Ill. 60606  
 (773) 381-5839;  
 Fax (773) 761-9330;  
 chicago@workers.org

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

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

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

**Los Angeles**  
 5274 West Pico Blvd.,  
 Suite 203  
 Los Angeles, Calif. 90019  
 (323) 936-1416  
 la@workers.org

**Philadelphia**  
 P.O. Box 9202,  
 Philadelphia, Pa. 19139  
 (610) 453-0490;  
 phila@workers.org

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

**Rochester, N.Y.**  
 (585) 436-6458;  
 rochester@workers.org

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

**San Francisco**  
 2940 16th St  
 San Francisco,  
 Calif. 94103  
 (415) 561-9752  
 sf@workers.org

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

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



## SAN FRANCISCO

# Students, workers unite to fight attack on admissions

By Alexandra Phillips  
San Francisco

University of California students and union leaders rallied on Sept. 22 against a UC Board of Regents proposal to raise the minimum GPA requirement for admission from 2.8 to 3.2. The 50 protesters also demanded better wages for those who work in the UC system, many of whom are currently in, or approaching, contract negotiations.

The demonstration was held at the front entrance of the UC San Francisco Laurel Heights Campus. After the protest, organizers entered the building to speak out against the proposal as the 20 members of the Board of Regents returned from lunch.

Many students see raising the GPA as a direct attack on students of color who attend California's most dilapidated grades K-12 schools. These schools offer fewer advanced placement classes and lack many other college preparatory and student support services such as counseling. Many schools in the Bay Area's largely immigrant Richmond district don't even have libraries.

Josie Hyman, a senior from the University of California at Berkeley and organizer

with By Any Means Necessary, said, "The UC system is closing the door on Black and Latino students." She adds that previous attacks on affirmative action have caused the lowest rate of acceptances of Black and Latino students since the civil rights era.

According to Hyman and other student organizers, raising the GPA requirement is a final attack on the already destroyed affirmative action policies in California's educational system.

A raise in the GPA requirement will hit African American students hardest. Last year 3.1 percent of students eligible for the UC system were African American. And it is predicted that by 2007, when the heightened GPA requirement would take effect, the percentage of eligible African Americans would decline to 2.7 percent. Latino enrollment would drop .4 percent.

The Board of Regents proposal will also cut enrollment by 5,000 to 6,000 students per year.

## 'Unite and fight!'

The strong solidarity between the struggling students and union members could not be ignored. The prevailing chant of the afternoon was "Workers and students unite and fight—education is a right."

Representatives of the Coalition of University Employees (CUE) rallied behind the students.

Margy Wilkinson, CUE statewide chief steward, said, "Children of those who work for the UC can't even afford to send their children there."

Last year UC tuition went up 25 percent, leaving hundreds of thousands of poor and working students unable to fund their education. This year over 18,000 workers from the nine UC campuses and affiliates are fighting for a living wage.

The average annual salary of a CUE worker is \$30,000. A recent study of workers on the UC Berkeley campus found that 90 percent of custodial and food service employees do not make enough money to cover basic household expenses.

At the negotiation table, clerical workers have been offered a wage increase of 1.5 percent in two years while the UC Board of Regents has agreed to award the UCB Chancellor a wage increase of 19.1 percent for the year.

This fact reiterates what more than 10,000 student protesters made clear in a mass demonstration in the state capital of Sacramento last March to protest the tuition increases in University of Cali-



fornia and California State University systems. Not only do tuition increases of such magnitude make education less attainable for working and poor students; they also lead to little restoration of cut services. Even further, tuition increases rarely provide wage increases for those who keep student services up and running.

The next day, while the board's decision was being read, 30 students rose up chanting, "Education is a right, not just for the rich and white," and "Is diversity what you fear? We know you don't want us here."

By a vote of 14-6, the Board of Regents decided that incoming 2007 freshmen will not be considered for admission with a GPA that is less than a 3.0. Students with less than a B average are not welcome in the UC system. This means that students who fight racism, poverty, and discrimination in their daily lives are not welcome in the UC system.

*The writer is a local organizer of FIST—Fight Imperialism—Stand Together—youth & student organization. Contact FIST at fist@workers.org*



Family members of Billye Venable pose with San Diego IAC activists Sept. 22.

PHOTO: MAKALANI DINGANE

## One year after police shooting Family continues fight for justice

By Gloria Verdieu  
San Diego, Calif.

On Oct. 11, 2003, police stopped Billye Venable and his brother for a traffic violation in San Diego. Venable, a 26-year old African American, was pulled from the car. As he struggled with the police, Police Officer James Hunter shot him in the head.

Almost a year later after the shooting, Joe Williams, a community activist who has been working closely with Venable's family and friends, said he was re-opening this case in order to have an investigation by the community. He spoke at a Sept. 22 International Action Center meeting about the case.

Family and friends of Billye Venable also spoke at the meeting to tell the truth about how this tragic police killing took place.

In a letter dated Dec. 22, 2003, to Police Chief William Lansdowne, San Diego District Attorney Bonnie M. Dumanis concluded that Officer Hunter's "use of deadly force was reasonable under the circumstances, and he bears no criminal liability for defending himself or the officers by removing that threat." The "threat" refers to 150-pound Billye Venable.

The DA's report made no mention of eyewitnesses who said Venable was on the

ground face down when he was shot. Witnesses told the San Diego Voice & Viewpoint newspaper that the police tackled Venable and had him on the ground lying on his stomach with his hands behind his back. His brother, who was driving the car, was heard pleading with the police, "Please don't hurt my brother."

Three eyewitnesses spoke of at least one of the officers standing over Venable and kicking him hard. "We couldn't understand why the police kept kicking him while he was on the ground," said one witness. All the eyewitnesses stated that at no time did Venable try to take either officers' weapon. The witnesses said the officers stood over him and at least one was kneeling when the shot was fired.

The San Diego Union Tribune reported that the police department began recruiting community leaders to try to diffuse tension and preserve calm in the Black community. The Tribune later reported that there were no crowds of protesters in the streets after Venable was shot and killed by the police.

It wasn't because the people weren't angry, but because Venable's parents were among those who wanted to give San Diego's new police chief time to investigate

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## Leonard Peltier's birthday message

Following are excerpts from a Sept. 12 letter by Native political prisoner Leonard Peltier on the occasion of his 60th birthday. To read the letter in its entirety, go to [www.leonardpeltier.org](http://www.leonardpeltier.org).

Sisters, brothers, friends and supporters,

The concern you've shown me and to get together on my birthday touches my heart more than you could ever know. I know many of you probably were not born or were small children when this struggle began.

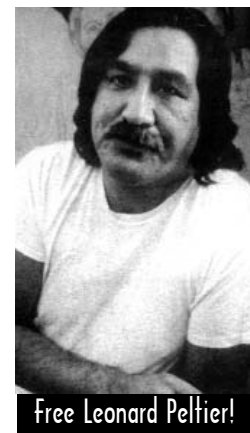
Many times people expect me to say something profound or enlightening, but I am just an ordinary man caught up in an unordinary battle, doing the best I can. All too often people get involved in something expecting it to be over quickly like a TV series, but the struggle against the powers that would enslave can be a lifetime endeavor.

There are books on top of books telling of what should be. I'm referring to religious material that I've come across lately. There are those who pit one against the other in the name of the creator, but these are just inspirations of men. If we look around, we can see the things that the creator has given us. I am not a religious person, but a spiritual person.

We see the abuse the world powers heap upon the common people and our Mother Earth. We must ever be vigilant of the deceivers who exploit the earth and us for they are in charge of the media. When you read something or hear something weigh it against the right or wrong of contributing to life or death as the creator has given us.

Many times, people called us revolutionaries. I like that, although it often seems used in a negative sense, by the deceivers. Revolution refers to something traveling in a circle. All the creator's work seems to be in a circle—the Earth, the Moon, the seasons, or a man's life.

As Native people of this land, we started in freedom and were receptive to



Free Leonard Peltier!

others who came here for the same. This portion of our Mother Earth was clean and nature was in balance. I wish to see things revolve back to a situation like that again. If, in my life, I am a part of that process ... If my imprisonment in any way has brought a view to

the public of how we should stand together, how we need to protect our freedoms and regain what we have lost ... then I feel honored. There is no reason why technology can't ultimately be used to protect our Mother Earth.

Let us be revolutionaries in such a way that we enhance the circle of life. Let us be revolutionaries that our children, generation after generation, shall enjoy freedom and a healthy clean Mother Earth. Let our lives be based in the circle, not some straight line that has a dead end.

There are speakers and doers. If you can speak, then speak. If you can carry out the work, do so. If you can do both, so much the better.

Again, I want to say I am deeply honored to be among you in spirit even though I am not there physically. The years roll by faster than you would realize. Life isn't all that long so be good to one another, be true to yourself, seek harmony with the creator and know that I appreciate you.

**Mitakuye Oyasin.**

In the Spirit of Crazy Horse, a famous Native doer...

Your friend always,

Leonard Peltier

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PO Box 1000

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# Build the MILLION WORKER MARCH!

## New England organizing gains strength

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Roslindale, Mass.

Million Worker March organizing is gaining momentum in the Northeast.

A well-attended New England regional MWM meeting took place in Roslindale, Mass., Sept. 25 at the office of Steel Workers Local 8751, the Boston school bus drivers and monitors union.

Boston-area rank-and-file leaders from the State, County and Municipal Employees, UNITE HERE, Steel Workers, Electrical Workers/Communications Workers, and Auto Workers reported on their respective locals' MWM activities. So did organizers from the Stonewall Warriors, Women's Fight Back Network, Western Massachusetts International Action Center and other community organizations.

John Parker, co-coordinator of the Los Angeles MWM Organizing Committee and Workers World Party presidential candidate, kicked off the meeting with a national update.

Parker said national endorsements are rolling in. The list is regularly updated at [www.millionworkermarch.org](http://www.millionworkermarch.org).

Endorsers include the Rev. Jesse Jackson, the Rev. Lucius Walker of Pastors for Peace, NCOBRA, Rep. Barbara Lee, Queers for Peace and Justice, the 300,000-member Postal Workers Union,

United for Peace and Justice, Latino Movement USA, American Indian Movement, and the 125,000-member AFSCME District Council 37 in New York City.

The meeting erupted in applause when Josue Renaud of the New England Coalition for Human Rights in Haiti announced an MWM solidarity demo to take place in Port-au-Prince on Oct. 17.

Renaud also described the arrests and imprisonment of various leaders of the Association of Haitian Workers (CTH) following meetings with a U.S. delegation to that country Sept. 3-6. "We need to do something to support them and to let them know they're not alone," Renaud said.

Local 8751 President Steve Gillis motioned for those present to sign a letter denouncing the arrests and demanding the release of all those imprisoned after the Feb. 29 U.S./French-backed coup. All present signed.

### Western Mass mobilizes

This writer reported on Western Massachusetts MWM activities.

Auto Workers Local 2322, a 17-member amalgamated union with 3,700 members in Western Mass, allocated \$500 towards transportation for the MWM at its Sept. 13 general membership meeting.

And at its Sept. 21 general membership meeting, the Graduate Employee Organization at UMass-Amherst, an amalgamated unit of 2322, unanimously endorsed a MWM resolution and committed \$500 for transportation. GEO represents 2,500 graduate student-workers.

The resolution reads in part: "GEO will encourage other union locals and members and working people generally to attend and/or participate in any way possible to support the reprioritization of federal spending to affirmative action programs, education, health care, housing and other social programs and to demand that politicians and the administration listen to the people who pay their salaries, rather than the voices of big business and the rich."

Youth and student organizers from Smith and Hampshire colleges in Western Massachusetts gave updates on activities there and at Mt. Holyoke College. These activists are busy reaching out to students and workers on their campuses, booking transportation, leafleting and more.

Seth Price, an MWM youth/student organizer, reported that one bus will roll out of Southeastern Massachusetts near Bridgewater.

Farther north, buses and other transportation are planned from Portsmouth, N.H., and Augusta, Me.

"I am having great success organizing marchers from mostly the peace community," wrote Jamilla, an MWM organizer from Maine, in an email to this writer.

In Brattleboro, Vt., at a Workers World Party candidates meeting Sept. 25, attendees expressed interest in joining the MWM and snapped up march t-shirts and leaflets.

Despite all the efforts thus far, there's still a lot of work to do in New England and nationally to build the MWM—most notably outreach and fundraising, stressed the organizers at the regional meeting.

"We have to commit ourselves to do all we can to build this movement," declared Maureen Skehan of the Women's Fightback Network.

In New England, call the MWM regional office at (617) 524-3507 or see [www.bostonschoolbusunion.org](http://www.bostonschoolbusunion.org) for more information, to purchase MWM bus tickets, t-shirts or buttons online and to access outreach material.

Also visit the new websites [www.lgbt4millionworkermarch.org](http://www.lgbt4millionworkermarch.org) and [www.antiwar4themillionworkermarch.org](http://www.antiwar4themillionworkermarch.org).

*Pfeifer is a Labor Studies graduate student at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and an organizer with the Western Mass MWM Organizing Committee.*

## MOTOR CITY BRIEFS

### Million Worker March leader greeted

Clarence Thomas, a co-convenor of the Million Worker March, spoke to the first Detroit organizing meeting on Sept. 22. The crowd took leaflets, signed up for bus seats and bought all the MWM t-shirts Thomas brought with him.

Sponsors included Nathan Head, president of Metro-Detroit Coalition of Black Trade Unionists; South East Michigan Committee on Safety and Health (SEM-COSH); Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice (MECAWI); U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange; Labor Notes; the International Action Center; and the presidents of Auto Workers Locals 2334 & 909.

Detroit buses for the Million Worker March will leave at 9 p.m. on Oct. 16 and return on Oct. 18 before 6:30 a.m. Call (313) 680-5508 for reservations. Contributions are needed for bus scholarships.

### Vote NO on Proposal E

Since the state takeover of Detroit Public Schools (DPS) in 1999, parents, teachers and students have relentlessly fought to regain a fully elected school board—a right equal to all other 549 school districts in Michigan. Yet the Chamber of Commerce and Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick had another idea and put it on the Nov. 2 ballot—Proposal E.

With a token elected board, Proposal E vests all contracting power in a CEO appointed by the mayor. The DPS budget for 2005 is more than \$1.5 billion. A leaflet by the "We the People Coalition to Take Back Detroit" points out Proposal E gives the mayor the power to continue the current appointed board's policies—"laying off thousands of teachers and support staff, turning a budget surplus into a massive deficit, closing schools, increasing



Clarence Thomas speaks at Detroit MWM meeting.

class size, failing to stop falling enrollment, increasing privatization and subcontracting and paving the way for more charter schools."

A broad grassroots campaign to "Vote No on E" geared up in late September. On Sept. 21 a Just Say No Coalition news conference lined up civil rights, labor and community organizations with most state and local officials representing Detroit. Yellow "Vote No on E" t-shirts, stickers and lawn signs are sprouting to counter the \$2 million big business war chest. A public tribunal on school conditions will be held Sept. 30.

### Tired of big business idea monopoly?

The fight is on to regain local control of Detroit Public Schools radio WRCJ (formerly WDTR) 90.9 FM. The DPS decision to lease the taxpayer-owned station was made without any public comment or hearing. Community-oriented programs like "Open Forum," hosted by Abayomi Azikiwe, were cancelled in advance of the transfer.

A statement by the Committee to Save Educational Radio can be read at the Michigan Indymedia website, [www.michiganimc.org/feature/display/6471/index.php](http://www.michiganimc.org/feature/display/6471/index.php). An informal complaint and

protest with the FCC can be made through [www.freepress.net](http://www.freepress.net). Demand that Dr. Kenneth S. Burnley reinstate community programming by writing to him c/o WRCJ 90.9 FM, 9345 Lawton, Detroit, MI 48206

### Nurses' strike wins increased staffing

On Sept. 13, Mt. Clemens General Hospital nurses voted 316-21 to approve a three-year contract, ending a strike that began Aug. 9. The nurses, members of Office and Professional Employees International Union Local 40, walked out over staffing ratios, paid time off and employee contributions to health-care benefits.

According to the Metro Detroit AFL-CIO website, "While the union compromised on the establishment of a numerical ratio, the company agreed to hire 25 additional full-time nurses, effectively improving the ratio. In return, the nurses agreed to a 2-percent annual wage increase instead of the 3 percent the company had offered before the strike.

"Our membership stated that it wasn't about economics," said Sandra Sulflow, vice president and secretary for OPEIU Local 40, who headed the bargaining committee. "It was about staffing. And although the contract doesn't establish a patient ratio, we got an increase in staffing. It's an acceptable compromise position. We will have more nurses."

### Proposal 2 = anti-gay + anti-union

The right wing in Michigan has placed Proposal 2 on the ballot for Nov. 2. It is a vicious proposed constitutional amendment that will promote discrimination against lesbians and gay men and outlaw civil unions. And it will also overturn and outlaw union contract provisions and local ordinances that grant domestic part-

ner benefits for unmarried couples.

Michigan unionists have put out the following statement: "Domestic partner benefits are recognized in the Big Three auto contracts. Many other unions have won, or are seeking to extend health care and other benefits to same and opposite sex unmarried partners. In many cities this has been enacted into law, including Detroit, where domestic partner benefits is only awaiting an additional ordinance defining the specific benefits to be covered.

"With plenty of money from the various racist, anti-union, anti-gay foundations and corporate sponsors, the right wing is trying to whip up a hysteria around the issue of 'gay marriage.' By appealing to prejudice and ignorance, they are seeking to confuse the general population and push through an attack on one part of the population while they also attack our union rights and benefits.

"Our unions have stood against racism, discrimination and bigotry in the past. We must come forward now to defeat Proposal 2 this November. Union members have a duty to live up to our old slogan: 'An injury to one is an injury to all.'

"Speak up now! To add your name to this appeal, call (313) 680-5508."

—Cheryl Labash

### COME TO THE MARCH



**WORKING PEOPLE: SPEAKING FOR THEMSELVES**

**Sunday OCTOBER 17 Wash. D.C. NOON AT THE LINCOLN MEMORIAL**

Guest speakers include: MILLION WORKER MARCH ENDORSERS: American Postal Workers Union • National Education Association (NEA) • South Carolina State AFL-CIO • Rev. Jesse Jackson • Transport Workers #100 (NY City) • Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (CLLAA) • California State Letter Carriers Assn. • AFSCME #1550 (Houston, TX) • Actor Danny Glover • Minneapolis City Council • Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign • Immigrant Solidarity Network • Congressman Barbara Lee • Transients National Black Caucus • Service Employees SEIU #1199 Joint Delegates Assembly (NYC) and many more.

# Build the MILLION WORKER MARCH!

## Community, anti-war support grows

# 100 CITIES MOBILIZE

By Greg Butterfield

From coast to coast, and even across the Pacific Ocean, momentum continues to grow for the historic Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17. In late September the number of local organizing centers in the United States topped 100—from Oakland, Calif., to Minneapolis-St. Paul to Richmond, Va.

The Million Worker March movement, initiated by International Longshore & Warehouse Union Local 10 in San Francisco, calls for universal health care, a national living wage to lift people out of poverty, an end to the attacks on Social Security, the repeal of the USA Patriot Act and anti-immigrant laws, and the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, among many other demands to benefit poor and working people.

Most notably, in this presidential election season dominated by the corporate-owned Republican and Democratic candidates, the MWM calls on workers to speak on their own behalf and fight independently for their rights.

This grassroots effort racks up new endorsements daily from local unions, noted activists and organizers, labor constituency groups, and anti-war, student and community organizations.

Dolores Huerta, co-founder of the United Farm Workers and a hero of organizing among the most oppressed, added her endorsement Sept. 23. The executive board of 1199-SEIU, the largest union local in New York with over 250,000 members, affirmed an earlier vote by delegates to support the march. The union will provide buses for its members.

Other recent endorsers include the Rev. Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow/PUSH coalition, Rep. Barbara Lee of California, Secretary-Treasurer Miguel Contreras of the Los Angeles Central Labor Council, the U.S. Green Party, Global Women's Strike and AFSCME District Council 37.

MWM organizers have also received numerous offers of support from diverse individuals, from artists and students to hip-hop musicians and medical workers—another sure sign that the call for workers "to speak in our own name" has struck a chord with many progressives.

Dr. R.S. Rosen, for example, wrote, "I am a longtime medical activist and for the last 40 years have helped plan and provide medical coverage for demonstrations, marches and protests all over North America and Europe." Rosen offered his services for the Oct. 17 event and planned to reach out to organizations of progressive medical workers.

Though largely boycotted by the corporate media, the Million Worker March campaign has received coverage in such diverse outlets as Scripps-Howard News Service, Pacifica Radio, Al-Jazeera, ZNet and Workers World.

### GET YOUR BUS TICKETS TODAY!

For bus information contact the following organizations. Union members should contact their union office for bus seats NYC

**TEAMSTERS 718.389.1900 x21**  
**AFSCME DC 1707 212.219.0022 x 5185**  
**INT'L ACTION CENTER 212.633.6646**  
 BOSTON

**c/o USWA Local 8751 617.524.7063**

for information about local MWM buses:  
**www.AntiWar4theMillionWorkerMarch.org**  
**www.MillionWorkerMarch.org**

Supporters of the Million Worker March in Japan are planning demonstrations in Tokyo and Osaka to coincide with the Washington, D.C., protest. The group Act and Unite to Stop the War! is organizing the actions.

### MWM goes worldwide

Yoshiyuki Akada says MWM's effort to unite labor and anti-war forces resonates in Japan, where organizers hope to bring together several ongoing struggles: against the deployment of Japanese forces to Iraq; opposition to a plan to force teachers and students to salute the flag and sing the national anthem; and to stop the construction of a new base for U.S. Marines in Okinawa.

Labor activists from India to Haiti have expressed their support for the MWM.

Back in the U.S., MWM organizers are planning ahead for solidarity with local unionists in the Washington, D.C., area—like the workers locked in difficult negotiations with some of the country's biggest hotel chains. Members of the Hotel

Employees & Restaurant Employees voted to authorize a strike after their contract expired Sept. 15. As of Sept. 27, negotiations were continuing.

Jennifer Shaw of HERE Local 25 responded to an inquiry from MWM leaders. "There are a number of hotels in Washington that are union but have signed 'me-too' agreements. In the event there is a labor dispute in October when you come to town ... they are remaining neutral during the negotiations. You can find them on this link here: [www.hotellaboradvisor.info/metoo.asp](http://www.hotellaboradvisor.info/metoo.asp)."

Fundraising is a big priority for the movement. Over 200 people came out to a rally and fundraiser at New York's SEIU Local 32BJ hall Sept. 24. Speakers included Clarence Thomas of ILWU Local 10, Brenda Stokely of AFSCME DC-1707, Chris Silvera of Teamsters Local 808, Larry Holmes of the International Action Center and others. Actor Danny Glover, an ardent supporter of the MWM, supported the event but was unable to attend.

At the fundraiser it was announced that

Oct. 2 has been declared "MWM Awareness Day" throughout New York City—which means it will be a major day of visibility and outreach throughout the five boroughs.

In Oakland, Calif., on Oct. 2, ASAP—All Star Artists Performing for the Million Worker March—will raise money and publicize the movement at a daylong cultural extravaganza. Asheba, Yancy Taylor, Annie and the Vets, Richard Howell, Destiny, Wayne Wallace, Judith Kate Friedman, EW Wainwright of the African Roots of Jazz, John Santos of Machete Ensemble, the ILWU Drill Team, Robert Temple, Rhythm Doctors, Dr. Anthony Brown, Street Sounds and UpSurge! are scheduled to perform.

The festivities begin at noon and last until 10 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 2501 Harrison St. at 27th Street.

For updates, transportation information or to get involved, visit the web sites [www.MillionWorkerMarch.org](http://www.MillionWorkerMarch.org) and [www.AntiWar4theMillionWorkerMarch.org](http://www.AntiWar4theMillionWorkerMarch.org). □

## A call to lesbian, gay, bisexual & transgender workers

*Following are excerpts from a call being circulated across the country:*

On Oct. 17, people from across the country will converge on Washington, D.C., for the Million Worker March under the slogan, "Organizing in our own name." March demands include jobs, health care, a national living wage, repeal of the USA Patriot Act, bring the troops home now, slash the military budget, and end all racist and discriminatory acts in the workplace and communities.

The voices and issues of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) workers will be raised at the Million Worker March. We will be there as union members and unorganized employees, unemployed, immigrants and youths, joining hundreds of thousands of other workers and supporters.

We will be there because we need what all workers need: jobs for all, higher wages, shorter hours and freedom to organize a union.

We will be at the Million Worker March because we need a movement that is inde-

pendent of the major parties.

The interest of LGBT communities is with other working-class people, not corporate greed or war abroad. We understand that our bosses, the corporate media and the president and Congress work overtime to try to divide us from our co-workers and friends by institutionalized discrimination, harassment and violence, so that all workers suffer by disunity. We understand the long history of racism, sexism, and bigotry in the U.S., and how the corporate divide-and-conquer strategy is designed to hurt all workers.

We demand dignity, safety, and respect for all peoples, including LGBT people and immigrants. We demand a comprehensive program against hate crimes and discrimination, and assert the right of people to define their own families. This includes the recognition of individuals and families to raise and adopt children without discrimination or deterrence.

We demand an end to the privatization of our jobs and of social security.

Human need should take priority over corporate greed, and we demand afford-

able housing for all and an end to private profit for health care and drugs. We demand full civil marriage rights, including health-care benefits for our partners. We demand increased funding for AIDS research and free AIDS medications for the people of Africa and other developing nations.

### JOIN US ON OCT. 17!

**Leslie Feinberg**, co-chair, *National Queer Caucus, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981*

**Jesse Heiwa**, Pacifica Radio\*

**Queer People Of Color Action**

**Queers For Peace And Justice**

**Queer Caucus, National Writers**

**Union (UAW Local 1981)**

**Minnie Bruce Pratt**, *lesbian writer, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981\**

**Imani Henry**, *playwright/performer, National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981\**

**Martha Grevatt**, *Northeast Ohio Pride At Work, UAW L. 122\**

**Dian Killian**, *National Writers Union/UAW L. 1981; Pride at Work (AFL-CIO)\**

**Gerry Scoppettuolo**, co-founder, *Gay Men Fight AIDS, Portsmouth, N.H.\**

**LeiLani Dowell**, *candidate for Congress, Peace & Freedom Party*

**Teresa Gutierrez**, *vice-presidential candidate, Workers World Party*

**Stonewall Warriors**, Boston

**Steph Simard**, Boston area gender queer activist

**Gunner Scott**, [butchdykeboy.com](http://butchdykeboy.com)

**Solidarity Coalition for Equal Marriage Rights & Against All Forms of Discrimination, Bigotry & Racism**

([EqualMarriageSolidarity.org](http://EqualMarriageSolidarity.org))

[\* for identification purposes only]

For more information, to endorse or

become a local contact, visit [www.lgbt4millionworker.org](http://www.lgbt4millionworker.org) or

**email [lgbt4mwm@lgbt4million-worker.org](mailto:lgbt4mwm@lgbt4million-worker.org)**

## US Air bosses target pay, benefits

By David Dixon

US Airways chief executive Bruce Lakefield said he would ask a bankruptcy court judge to slash union workers' pay by 23 percent and reduce or eliminate employee retirement benefits. The company will also seek permission to hire outside workers in the event of a strike. The airline was expected to file the motion Sept. 24.

The pay and benefit cuts would affect 84 percent of the airline's 34,000 employees and their families.

The Airline Pilots Association, the

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers and the Association of Flight Attendants have said they will fight the cuts in court. The Communication Workers union, which represents reservation takers and other ground employees, is expected to do the same. Transport Workers Union Local 545 has reached a tentative agreement accepting the bosses' cuts. Meetings between US Airways and two other TWU locals will continue.

This is yet another reason to organize for the Million Worker March on Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C. □

## PHILA. CITY WORKERS:

# No contract, no peace!

By Betsey Piette  
Philadelphia

Shouting "No contract, no peace," hundreds of city workers staged a sit-in and forced a five-hour delay at the City Council's opening session on Sept. 23 to protest expired contracts. Members of AFSCME District Councils 33 and 47, who staged the protest, have worked without contracts since June 30.

City workers, fighting to protect their pensions, health and welfare benefits and for a fair wage, also challenged the council's plan to introduce tax-cut bills aimed at eliminating the city's business-privilege tax by 2017. This tax cut for the bosses, coming on top of deep cuts in federal spending for local governments, would devastate already meager city services and threaten the closure of fire stations, recreation centers, health care centers and more.

While major corporations like Comcast Cable are seeking tax-free office space in buildings being renovated under federal empowerment zone programs, many city residents, including the elderly and the poor, are paying higher property taxes this year in the aftermath of property reassessments around the city.

The pending cuts in Philadelphia's city services come at the same time when the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA) management announced fare increases and severe service cuts, including the elimination of weekend service, if their alleged \$62-million deficit is not offset by more public transit funds from the state of Pennsylvania.

Workers in the city's school district also face stalled contract negotiations. The current contract for the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers expired Aug. 31, but the district and the union agreed to extend its terms until Sept. 30. Key areas of contention include health insurance, the length of the workday and work rules,

including teacher assignment.

Teachers currently select the school in which they work, with preference for seniority. School Reform Commission Chair James Nevels wants the commission to control assignments and threatened to impose the new contract terms on teachers if no resolution is reached by the Sept. 30 deadline. Under a bill rushed through the Pennsylvania Legislature two years ago, which laid the basis for a state takeover of the city's schools, Philadelphia teachers are prohibited from striking.

At the council protest, city workers were joined by Electrical Workers from IBEW Local 98, UNITE, United Food and Commercial Workers, Graduate Employ-

ees Together-University of Pennsylvania, SEIU and the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

Members of the Philadelphia Million Worker March Committee, holding signs reading "Philadelphia Million Worker March supports city workers' right to fair contracts" distributed several hundred fliers for the Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C. The fliers were very well received by the city workers.

A specific demand of the protest was for Mayor John Street to address the workers and make a commitment to start negotiations. Some councilmembers tried to block this request. But workers shouted, "You got paid, what about us?" referring

to the council's recent pay increase. When asked to leave the chamber, the workers shouted, "Hell no, we won't go!"

Finally, in the early afternoon, Street was allowed to speak, and in response to the determination of the workers, made a commitment to hold round-the-clock negotiations over the weekend. Francesca Alvarado, an AFSCME DC 47 delegate and a local organizer for the Million Worker March, told Workers World that negotiations had resumed as of Sept. 27 and that members are expecting a contract before the next City Council meeting.

"If no progress occurs," Alvarado promised, "the workers will be back every Thursday." □

## LOS ANGELES

# Labor, community fight to save trauma center

By Jim McMahan  
Los Angeles

Chanting "Labor, community, we all stand in unity," 500 people from the Black community rallied in Los Angeles to save Martin Luther King/Drew Medical Center on Sept. 21.

Community organizations and Service Employees Local 660, representing the King/Drew workers, organized the protest at the Los Angeles County Administration Building.

The community is greatly angered by the moves of Los Angeles County officials to close the King/Drew trauma unit—a step toward closing the entire hospital.

The heroic 1965 Watts rebellion gave birth to King/Drew as an important concession in the ongoing struggle for health care, especially for the most oppressed.

King/Drew serves the poorest sections of Los Angeles County.

Its trauma unit served 2,150 patients last year. It treats violent injuries such as those incurred during shootings and car accidents. The trauma unit is nationally recognized.

It saves hundreds of lives annually. King/Drew also treats about 47,000 people a year in its emergency room.

The attack on King/Drew by the L.A. Board of Supervisors is part of a sweeping attack on health care, which will eventually bring mass resistance.

RFK Medical Center in nearby Hawthorne is slated to close at the end of the year. Since the mid-1980s, 18 emergency rooms and 10 trauma centers have closed in the L.A. area.

Alejandro Stevens, Local 660's president, chaired the protest rally. Other

speakers represented the Metro Alliance, the Nation of Islam, Action Grassroots Empowerment and Neighborhood Development Alternative and more.

Over 200 workers then invaded the Board of Supervisors and in a tumultuous meeting forced the board to admit they have to hold hearings before they can try to close the trauma unit.

Community, labor and other groups will continue to mobilize to save King/Drew. Progressive radio host Steve Harvey has made the issue a staple of his show.

The Million Worker March will descend on Washington, D.C., on Oct. 17. It has made affordable, universal health care a prime issue of its national mobilization. This can only be obtained by class-wide organizing and struggle—which is starting to happen at King/Drew. □

# COSATU leader in New York

By Sue Davis  
New York

"COSATU was founded during apartheid. Our overall approach was and still is social trade unionism," said Zwelinzima Vavi, general-secretary of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), at a standing-room-only meeting of the Cornell Global Labor Institute in New York City Sept. 24.

"We knew we would never be successful if we just focused on wages and working conditions and didn't defeat apartheid," Vavi explained. "We had to form broader alliances."

Explaining that the tripartite alliance of COSATU, the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party led the struggle against apartheid, Vavi continued, "We recognized that workers were members of society first before they were workers, so we had to lead the struggle for housing, education, health care, electricity and land in order to improve the living conditions for our people."

"Trade unions ought to fight for the needs of ordinary people, not focus only on narrow bread-and-butter issues."

In order to build a revolutionary union movement, Vavi urged labor unionists to never forget why workers join unions. "They join unions to be empowered, to protect their interests, to promote their rights. If unions don't do that, they'll find

themselves in the dustbin of history. We need to make the trade union movement relevant to workers every day."

Founded in 1985, COSATU currently has a membership of 2 million workers.

## Soaring unemployment

Since apartheid was legally defeated in 1994 and the ANC has headed the government, Vavi said that COSATU has attempted to "position the working class as a whole to lead all sectors of society." But that is extremely difficult when thousands of jobs have been lost as companies either left South Africa or downsized.

"There is 40-percent unemployment in

South Africa today," noted Vavi. "Two out of three people under the age of 30 don't have jobs." He added that some industries continue to flee to other African countries so they can pay lower wages.

"There have been some serious tensions between COSATU and the ANC government," Vavi stated. In the late 1990s, he explained, the government adopted a policy of privatizing the public sector, leading to more job loss. "But since 2000 the government has increased spending and created jobs. We believe the government should do more."

Vavi stressed that the South African state is one of only a few in the world that strongly supports workers with laws that protect the right to organize, bargain collectively and strike, and restrict child labor and discrimination.

He said, "Soaring unemployment makes it increasingly hard to enforce the laws because people are desperate to get work."

Noting that COSATU has not grown in the past three years, he said, "Unless we can overcome unemployment, having a sympathetic state and strong laws is not enough."

COSATU is holding a conference in South Africa in November to analyze the years since the end of apartheid and address the current problem of unemployment. "Our core commitment is to get government and industry to work with us to create jobs and lower trade barriers," Vavi



Zwelinzima Vavi Photo: COSATU.org.za



# SEIU victory in Western Mass

By Bryan G. Pfeifer  
Amherst, Mass.

After a three-year campaign, workers at the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) voted in Service Employees Local 509 as their representative by a 4-to-1 margin Sept. 23.

The pro-union vote marks the biggest private-sector union victory in Western Massachusetts in five years.

The final vote tally, supervised by the National Labor Relations Board at multiple work sites, was 216-52. This particular MSPCC covers about 300 workers, the majority of whom are women, in the cities of Springfield, Pittsfield, Greenfield, Athol, Holyoke and Chicopee.

Local 509 represents 10,000 workers in Massachusetts, including social workers and nurses, who provide human services to children and families in state agencies and private companies.

The local's progressive history includes supporting its lesbian, gay, bi and trans members by fighting for expanded workplace rights. Last spring Local 509 members joined over 200,000 workers in labor unions statewide to demand same-sex marriage rights.

The MSPCC is not a state agency but a private non-profit social service organization that provides intervention programs, mental health treatment to prevent child abuse, counseling support for abused children and public advocacy. The MSPCC receives state funds.

On its website, MSPCC says it is "dedicated to leadership in protecting and promoting the rights and well being of children and families."

According to the workers, this dedication doesn't extend to them.

## Family continues fight for justice

*Continued from page 3*

the shooting. The DA's investigation was later called a "disgrace to the community."

At the Sept. 22 IAC meeting, Venable's mother, Sister Imaam Salaam, shared with the audience her grief, her love for her son, the empty space inside of her and the fear for her grandchildren. She talked about the trauma of her other children and Billye Venable's children in trying to come to grips with the loss of their father.

Salaam said she wants to speak out because she knows that these same police are back out in the community and will kill again. She said that police terror has to stop.

As she spoke the audience reflected on many other similar stories of grief and sorrow.

Billye Venable's father, Daniel Venable, also spoke, and his sister, Nyibe Venable, read poetry that reflected memories of her brother. Also present was Robert Tambuzi, co-director of Children Having Children Inc. and Makalani Dingane, photographer for the San Diego Monitor, a local Black newspaper.

The shooting death took place almost a year ago. But the tears, pain and grief of friends and family still linger. An organization has emerged from this death called Mothers For Justice (MFJ). The group strives to keep the Venable case in the minds and hearts of San Diego residents as well as providing community education.

MFJ is working to have the case heard in civil court in the next two months. MFJ has begun to organize fundraisers since the legal costs will be a financial hardship on Venable's parents. □

"People have been very, very unhappy here," said Anne M. GeMusis, a clinical caseworker for families in crisis at the MSPCC Springfield office. (www.masslive.com)

According to GeMusis, the workers voted in the union because they received no raises for five years or cost-of-living increases for two years; their precarious at-will status; a boss-controlled grievance procedure; meager benefits; increasing caseloads; and more. Many workers, despite having bachelor's or master's degrees, make only \$30,000-\$35,000 annually.

After the pro-union vote, GeMusis expressed the workers' hope: "It's very frustrating because management doesn't address issues [but] they're going to have to now."

Workers at MSPCC in Jamaica Plain, a borough of Boston, joined the Service Employees union three years ago. They now have guaranteed raises and protected grievance procedures, among other gains in their legally binding contract. But their win didn't come without struggle, despite the workers voting in Local 509 by a 4-to-1 margin in April 2001.

According to Local 509 organizers, the MSPCC bosses in Jamaica Plain refused for over 18 months to recognize the workers' union choice, in violation of Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act. MSPCC spent over \$140,000 of state and private donors' money to fight NLRB orders to bargain with the union and fired over 40 percent of the social workers that voted for Local 509, amid numerous other unfair labor practices.



Elation of Local 509 members shows after union vote.

Despite the workers' pro-union vote, Local 509 fully expects a similar anti-union battle to be waged in Western Massachusetts. Log on to [www.seiu509.org](http://www.seiu509.org) for more information on how to support the MSPCC workers. □

## Hotel workers go on strike

Special to Workers World  
San Francisco

The workers went on strike at four hotels in downtown San Francisco on Sept. 29. UNITE HERE Local 2 announced the two-week strike action in response to the hotel bosses' demands for reduced health benefits as well as increased workloads.

The hotels on strike are the Argent, the Hilton San Francisco, the Crowne Plaza Union Square and the Mark Hopkins Inter-Continental. Support rallies were held at all four hotels on the first day of the strike.

Hotel workers in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.—also in contract negotiations—declared their full support for the strike in San Francisco. These union workers have also authorized strikes if the hotel companies in their cities refuse to give them a fair contract.

The union says that "some in the hotel



PHOTO: UNITEHERE.ORG

San Francisco, Sept. 29.

industry are intent upon imposing WalMart-like working conditions. Already in Los Angeles, the hotel companies unilaterally cut the company-paid health plan, forcing hundreds of families into the uninsured population."

In San Francisco, the hotel bosses are

attempting to cut wages by charging the workers 20 times as much for their medical coverage.

That's why, in that city, more than 8,000 union workers are now on strike at more than 60 hotels and motels. This comes to about 85 percent of the hotel industry in the city, according to the union. Those organized in the union include cooks, room cleaners, bartenders, assistants (bellhops), food and beverage servers, bussers, maintenance workers and dishwashers.

Information on the strike can be found on the UNITE HERE Web site at [www.unitehere.org](http://www.unitehere.org) or at the hotel workers' site at [www.HotelWorkersUnited.org](http://www.HotelWorkersUnited.org). UNITE HERE Local 2 has its own Web site, which has current strike reports at [www.unitehere2.org](http://www.unitehere2.org). Local 2 also has a list of union hotels and motels that are not on strike at [www.unitehere2.org/hotels.html](http://www.unitehere2.org/hotels.html), for anyone needing accommodations in San Francisco. □

## Workers walk off job to demand health care

By Art Rosen  
New York

In a magnificent display of working-class unity, determination and militancy, thousands of building maintenance workers, janitors and building attendants in Local 32BJ of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) walked off their jobs on Sept. 23 at 2:00 in the afternoon. They converged on the Manhattan Center, on 34th Street between 8th and 9th Avenues, where they voted to give the union's bargaining committee authorization to call a strike if their demands were not met.

Local 32BJ represents 26,000 workers in commercial buildings in New York City and more than 14,000 workers in commercial buildings on Long Island, in Westchester County, in New Jersey and Connecticut. A day prior to the Manhattan rally, the 32BJ workers in the outlying areas also voted to give strike authorization to their union.

Those in attendance at the march/rally estimated that as many as 15,000 workers participated in the day's activities. Their signs and chants along the route of the march focused mainly on the building owners' attempt to cut out all medical benefits won by the workers in earlier hard-fought struggles. The message that the

32BJ workers brought to the thousands who jammed the streets of mid-town Manhattan was clear and simple: "Health care for all," "Health care now" and "Health care or strike."

The huge outpouring of the rank and file membership of 32BJ was in response to a call from the union for an "Emergency Strike Alert." It was like a mini-strike, a warm-up for the Oct. 1 contract deadline. The strike vote was taken inside the Manhattan Center and was overwhelmingly and enthusiastically endorsed by the membership. Following the vote in the meeting hall, the workers spilled out onto the sidewalk and into the street, where they began a march that wended its way across 34th Street and ended up opposite the Empire State Building for a closing rally.

Representing the building owners in the current contract talks with 32BJ is the Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations—a euphemism for the landlords and building owners. This group of vultures has placed on the bargaining table a set of proposals calling for: no wage increase for 3 years; a cut in the work force; an added workload for those remaining on the payroll; no health benefits for retirees; elimination of the present \$13-a-week payment to the 401K pension plan by the building owners, and a

demand that workers begin to pay part of the premium on their health policies.

Local 32BJ represents maintenance workers who service both commercial and residential buildings in the city. It includes porters, superintendents, janitors, concierges, door attendants and window washers. The contract for the commercial buildings expires Oct. 1 and the contract for the residential buildings ends in April 2006. Although bargaining on a residential contract doesn't begin for several months, many 32BJ members in residential buildings were contacted by their union and joined the march and rally in a splendid show of solidarity with their brothers and sisters in the commercial sector.

Workers from 32BJ eagerly took flyers and leaflets given out at the march and rally that announced the upcoming Million Worker March to take place in Washington, D.C., at the Lincoln Monument on Oct. 17. Included in the materials given out was one announcing a fund-raising event for the Million Worker March to be held the very next day at Local 32BJ's headquarters.

A Latino worker summed up the mood and feelings of many 32BJ members when he told Workers World, "We do all the dirty work and they make all the money." □

# Haiti, Hurricane Jeanne & class struggle

By Pat Chin

Flash floods and mudslides killed over 1,500 people when Tropical Storm Jeanne drenched the city of Gonaives and surrounding areas in north and northwest Haiti with torrential rain for two straight days. Many people are faced with starvation.

More than 1,000 remain missing, at least 300,000 are reportedly without shelter, and close to 3,000 have been injured. With many areas still inaccessible, the number of casualties is expected to rise.

In Gonaives alone over 600 people were killed.

"Piles of bodies grew in morgues as rescuers found more victims in mud and rubble. Carcasses of pigs, goats and dogs still floated in muddy waters slowly receding from the streets... No house escaped damage. The homeless sloshed through the streets carrying belongings on their heads, while people in homes that still had roofs tried to dry scavenged clothes... Flies buzzed around bloated corpses piled high at the city's three morgues. The electricity was off, and the stench of death hung over the city." (Associated Press, Sept. 21)

Venezuela has donated \$1 million in aid, along with other resources. The European Union is sending \$1.8 million. But the U.S.—the world's richest country—has offered a miserly \$60,000, while Cuba, a socialist country with fewer resources, continues to provide free medical care and other types of assistance to Haiti.

It's been only seven months since Washington kidnapped and exiled the popularly elected Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in collusion with the French government. And just four months since May floods killed some 3,000 people in southeastern Haiti.

Jeanne, which grew into a hurricane that churned on to ravage the Bahamas and Florida, has triggered yet another cataclysmic disaster in Haiti. This is due to widespread deforestation and soil erosion—symptoms of centuries of forced poverty under colonial and imperialist domination and capitalist super-exploitation.

A 1931 report explains part of the problem but distorts the overall reality: "The great local uses of the forests of Haiti are

for fuel and charcoal. These two are much more important than all other forest uses combined, since forests mean the only source of fuel for over 2 million people. Protection of forests is important for Haiti because of the heavy, sudden storms, and the fact that most of the large rivers are used for irrigation." ("Tropical Forests of the Caribbean")

The report, however—written while U.S. Marines occupied Haiti—failed to point out that the problem had also been caused when Haiti's forests "were razed in the 17th and 18th centuries by French colonists to fuel their booming sugar mills. Then during the 19th and 20th centuries, thousands of acres of precious wood, principally mahogany, were cut down to satisfy foreign appetites for furniture and tourist carvings." (Haiti Progres, Sept. 22)

A Sept. 21 Haiti Support Group press release, "Another disaster in Haiti: we name the guilty parties," points out that soil erosion is also caused by over-farming since most peasants are forced to work and rework very small parcels of land. Trees are cut not only for cooking food but to make charcoal to raise cash.

"The problems of soil-erosion and deforestation are well-known," it continues, "and so is the only possible remedy—land reform. Yet over the course of almost three decades, the country's economic policy has been dictated by international finance institutions, such as the World Bank, the IMF and the Inter-American Development Bank, and not only has land reform never appeared on their agenda, but no government that has proposed it has received any encouragement to carry it out.

"Instead, successive governments have been obliged to carry out neoliberal economic policies which give no priority to the countryside whatsoever, even though some two-thirds of the population live there. Billions and billions in international aid have been lent to Haitian governments, but the focus has remained on governance, security, elections and support for the private sector...."

These policies, dictated by U.S.-controlled capitalist financial institutions, have kept the great majority of Haitians mired in poverty. They prevent, among



Haitians forced to struggle over bottles of oil thrown from a food aid truck in Gonaives, Haiti Sept 24 during aftermath of Hurricane Jeanne.

many other things, the development of infrastructure that would provide resources and planning for natural disasters, as well as electricity and other energy sources to the masses. This, in turn, would obviate the need to fell trees for fuel and cash and would ultimately save lives.

Aristide's February overthrow only made matters worse as the country slid into further social and economic chaos. Then came the May floods. And now Jeanne.

## Unnatural disaster of capitalism

The U.S.-installed regime of interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue has unleashed a wave of repression—aided by the occupation forces—against Aristide's supporters and former government officials. The big-business friendly regime has also opened an economic war on the poor, reversing many of the progressive measures Aristide instituted.

The reversals include the armed retaking—by the big landowners who made up part of the "opposition"—of land distributed to peasants and the dropping of crucial subsidies to rice farmers, whose entire crops have since been decimated by Jeanne.

Latortue has hailed the armed terror gangs that helped overthrow the constitutional government and that run the peasants off their land as "freedom fighters." After the May floods killed thousands, he suggested the solution to deforestation was to hire soldiers of the disbanded Haitian army to shoot peasants who cut down trees for firewood.

Despite the repression, thousands

defied police intimidation and marched on Sept. 11 to protest Aristide's kidnapping. They also demanded an end to foreign occupation.

Called by the National Cell for Reflection of Popular Organizations of Aristide's Lavalas Family Party—and supported by other grassroots groups—protestors also "denounced the current offensive by former Haitian soldiers to re-establish the Armed Forces of Haiti, dissolved by Aristide in 1995." (Haiti Progres, Sept. 11) These ex-soldiers have been taking over police stations around Haiti.

Another demonstration is set for Sept. 30, the 13th anniversary of the first coup against Aristide and yet another on Oct. 17, the anniversary of the assassination of Gen. Jean Jacques Dessalines, who declared Haiti's independence in 1804. Ruling class forces opposed to land reform later killed this hero. Oct. 17 is also the date of the Million Worker March on Washington, D.C.

Donations are needed to help the Haitian victims of Tropical Storm Jeanne. Send checks payable to MUDHA or Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, 335 Maple Street, 2nd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11225. For tax deductible donations, make checks payable to IFCO/MUDHA or IFCO/HWHR. For more info, call (718) 735-4660.

You can also send checks to Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti, Box 806, Key Biscayne, FL 33149, with "Gonaives Hurricane Relief" in the memo line. For more information, contact IJDH at info@ijdh.org, or call (541) 432-0597. □

## As Pentagon loses control in Iraq

Continued from page 1

internet. The more his popular support grew, the more his anti-war message resonated, the more the entire Democratic Party establishment ganged up on him and the big business media declared him "unelectable."

The media delivered the coup de grâce with the repetitious playing of Dean's so-called "scream" after he lost an important primary. They played Dean's voice as he was trying to be heard over the din of a noisy election campaign crowd—but they dubbed out the background noise, giving the impression that he was hysterical. This clip was played hundreds of times until Dean was buried.

The aim was to eliminate any possibility that getting out of Iraq would be a legitimate question for debate during the national elections. This does not mean that Dean—who, in the last analysis, is a capitalist politician—would necessarily have continued to push his anti-war position had he been nominated. Nor does it

mean that if he had been elected, he would have pulled out of Iraq. It just means that the ruling class was committed to holding on to Iraq. Given the popular opposition to the war, a genuine debate over the occupation could have raised expectations, gotten out of control and stimulated the mass movement.

It was critically important, given the deepening quagmire, that the capitalist class have two openly pro-occupation candidates.

### 1968: Eugene McCarthy & Vietnam

This is a repetition of the scenario played out during the 1968 presidential election against the background of the Vietnam War. After President Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not run for a second term—he knew he was discredited with the masses because of his escalation of the war—Sen. Eugene McCarthy made a run for the Democratic Party nomination on an anti-war platform. McCarthy, like Dean, was a run-of-the-mill capitalist

politician. But his bid was widely popular and thousands of youth gathered at the Chicago Democratic National Convention to demand his nomination.

The ruling class sent the Chicago cops to club the demonstrators down outside the Hilton Hotel, while inside, the political machine of Mayor Richard Daley and the national political bosses made sure that Sen. Hubert Humphrey got the nomination. This insured that pulling out of Vietnam would not be a matter of presidential debate. There would be two pro-war candidates—the Democrat Humphrey and the Republican Richard Nixon.

However, there are strong misgivings in the ruling class about the way the occupation is moving deeper into a Vietnam-type quagmire. A despondent mood is beginning to surface. Both the Washington Post and the New York Times, in their Sunday Week in Review sections on Sept. 26, had major front-page articles ruminating over the question of pulling out. Both pieces pointed out the dilemma of a deteriorat-

ing situation with no solution. But both also ended up by concluding that the humiliation of U.S. power, should Washington pull out, is unacceptable.

Just days after Bush had his hand-picked "prime minister" of Iraq, Ayad Allawi, address a joint session of Congress to say how well things are going there, and Bush himself proclaimed that the situation was getting better, Secretary of State Colin Powell on Sept. 26 told ABC's This Week that, as the January election approaches in Iraq, "It's getting worse." It is significant that such a major challenge to Bush's rosy picture was buried in the middle pages of the capitalist press and hardly made a blip in the news cycle.

The Bush administration is in disarray over the occupation crisis. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared that even if some parts of the country don't participate in the vote, "you have the rest of the election. Life's not perfect." (International Herald Tribune, Sept. 25-26) Gen. Abizaid noted on NBC's Meet the



## 'Civilization or Barbarism?'

# International meeting in Portugal says: Fight for socialism



WWPHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO  
Professor Isabel Monal

Special to Workers World Serpa, Portugal

Marxist intellectuals, directors of cultural organizations and organizer-activists on the left from Europe and the Americas met in the small city of Serpa in Portugal's Alentejo region on Sept. 23-25 at a conference on "Civilization or Barbarism?" It was a discussion of contemporary world problems.

Held before some hundreds of Portuguese political activists, the discussion concerned the grave crisis imposed on humanity by world imperialism in the 21st century. About half the speakers were from Portugal, the rest mainly from Europe, Latin America and Africa, especially from the former Portuguese colonies of Brazil and Angola.

The conference's organizers considered that humanity was facing a global crisis that was simultaneously economic, social, financial, environmental and cultural and involved the likely exhaustion of the current energy sources. This crisis is inseparable from U.S. imperialism's project of "endless war" that is aimed at world domination and threatens the very existence of humanity.

Many presenters focused on the gravity of the current situation. Overall they not only underlined the crying need for a determined class struggle with a goal of a socialist world, they discussed with optimism the potential for that struggle.

The Portuguese Marxist website, Resistir.info, and the Portuguese magazine Vertice had called for the conference. It had the support of other cultural institutions in Europe and the Americas and of the municipalities of Serpa and nearby Moura, about 150 miles east-southeast of Lisbon near the Spanish border.

Among those participating were George Gastaud, Georges Labica, Henri Alleg and Remy Herrera from the French left, István Mészáros from Hungary—now in Sussex, Britain, Cubans Isabel Monal and Iroel Sanchez, Nestor Kohan from Argentina, from Chile Oscar Azocar, Brazilian Umberto Martins, from Angola Carlos Belli-Bello and former foreign minister Paolo Jorge,

and, from the United States, Brett Clark of Monthly Review and John Catalinotto of the International Action Center.

From Portugal those presenting papers included Gen. Vasco Gonçalves, who was prime minister in 1975, former member of the Revolutionary Council Gen. Pizarat Correia, journalist Carlos Lopes Pereira, Doctor Sergio Vinagre, Mayor Abilio Fernandes of Evora, and from the Resistir.info team Jose Gascao, economist Jorge Figueiredo, Rui Namorada Rosa and veteran revolutionary journalist and editor Miguel Urbano Rodrigues.

### Threats facing humanity

István Mészáros described the economic crisis of imperialism as a "structural crisis," not one that can be resolved by a cyclical economic upturn. "It is more like the one that occurred after 1929," only resolved after the enormous destruction of World War II. Mészáros argued with ardor that capitalism's effects, in its current phase, are destructive for human society and threaten the planet itself, and that only a transition to a socialist society can end this process.

Economist Jorge Figueiredo described the probable exhaustion of petroleum as the major energy source, with the likely peak of production coming as early as 2008 and then continually dwindling, while prices could triple to \$125 a barrel by that year. He argued that at this time any alternate sources of energy, especially renewable sources, are unrealistic.

From Angola, MPLA leader Paolo Jorge described the difficult economic choices facing the African continent and how conditions of life for the masses of the people had deteriorated under the neoliberal policies pushed by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Some of the Portuguese speakers, such as Gen. Gonçalves on the national level and Mayor Fernandes on the local level, spoke of the counter-revolutionary offensive in Portugal that is threatening to remove all the tremendous gains of the 1974-1975 revolution. They noted how the misnamed Socialist Party has been the conduit by which imperialist reaction has



Carlos Lopes Pereira, Sergio Vinagre, Placido do Sousa and John Catalinotto at workshop discussion in Serpa, Portugal Sept 24.

intervened in Portuguese society.

Many of the speakers called attention to the military threat from imperialism, especially from U.S. imperialism. They exposed the criminal character of the wars against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq and the blockade of Cuba, the threats against the Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela, and of Washington's attempt to use its military might to assert domination of the globe. They called this the "greatest threat since Hitler's Germany unleashed World War II" on the world's people.

### The heroes of Iraq

But this aggression has already led to a serious problem for the U.S. ruling class. Both Georges Labica and Miguel Urbano pointed to the struggle of the Iraqi people against the occupation as the first big setback for the imperialist plans. Urbano spoke of the inability of the Pentagon to supply an army large enough to control the situation in Iraq, let alone all over the world.

Regarding the potential for developing a struggle worldwide, Urbano said, "The objective conditions are favorable from the moment in which the people of Iraq, in a resistance that assumes the proportions of an insurrection aimed at driving out the occupiers, arises as an expression of collective heroism, struggling for all of humanity." Urbano also brought up the struggles in Colombia and Venezuela and the determination of the Cuban people to defend their socialist project, as other challenges to U.S. imperialist domination.

In form the conference was, on a smaller scale, not much different from the regional social forums. Unlike these, however, this forum rejected any possibility of reforming world imperialism, or of mak-

ing globalization more humane, more reasonable for the world's people. It considered the social democratic and pacifist alternatives to be fantasy solutions at best, and the struggle for socialism to be the only course that can rescue humanity.

But this didn't mean abstaining from the social forums or the anti-globalization struggles. Prof. Isabel Monal of the University of Havana urged those pro-communist and pro-socialist groups that might be critical of the ideology of the social forums to nevertheless "go there and participate, take part in all the debates, win over the anti-globalization movement to the class struggle."

In response to a comment, Monal again emphasized that "You should take part in the debates and the struggles of those youths. They will make mistakes. That is OK. They are involved in the struggle for humanity."

### Bringing the war home

In his contribution to the conference, John Catalinotto of the International Action Center asked if it was possible for the movement to break the ideological control that the U.S. ruling class has on the masses at home. In answer to this question, he discussed three areas that demonstrate the potential for class struggle inside the United States.

These were "the anti-war movement and youth movement, as shown by the week-long struggle at the Republican National Convention; the growing tension inside the U.S. armed forces with the potential for mass resistance, especially if a draft is reintroduced; and the changing character of the working class and its political expression in the Million Worker March set now on Oct. 17." □

## Workers to cast anti-war 'vote' Oct 17

Press, Sept. 26, that the election in the U.S. in 2000 "wasn't perfect either. ... We're going to have to fight our way all the way through elections, and there'll be a lot of violence between now and then."

A different view was put forward by the State Department. Undersecretary of State Richard Armitage told Congress that elections would be held throughout the country, and Powell rebutted Rumsfeld and Abizaid by saying that the elections must be held throughout the country to be credible.

Despite the disarray and the growing mood of defeatism and despondency over their situation, the imperialists are looking towards deepening the war. The anti-war movement must take this very seriously. The elections here are not relevant to the question of the occupation. This issue will be decided by the military, big business and the political insiders of the capitalist establishment.

The sinking of both the Dean and McCarthy candidacies showed the crass

manipulation of the electoral process by the bourgeoisie and also reflected the adventurous, militaristic nature of U.S. imperialism. The struggle to dominate the world, to expand their markets, to garner more territory for exploitation, propels the ruling class towards war, even when they face the most adverse circumstances.

Washington launched the Korean War in 1950 in an attempt to conquer the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and overthrow socialism. Millions of Koreans and 54,000 U.S. troops died. The U.S. agreed to a cease fire only after the north Korean people and the Chinese People's Liberation Army, with material assistance from the Soviet Union, drove them to the negotiating table. There is still no peace treaty.

The U.S. never "pulled out" of Vietnam but was driven out by the Vietnamese liberation forces, assisted by the socialist camp and the worldwide anti-war struggle. This was after 13 years of open U.S. intervention, millions of deaths among the

Vietnamese and 58,000 U.S. troops killed.

The Bush administration has led the U.S. into a dangerous and futile attempt to recolonize the Iraqi people and dominate the oil-rich Gulf area and the entire Middle East, in much the same way that the Korean and Vietnam wars were attempts to colonize Asia.

The efforts by the leadership of the Million Worker March to chart an independent working class opposition to the war and to connect this with the economic and social demands of the workers and the oppressed in this country must be seen as holding out a great potential.

During the Korean War, the witch-hunt was in full swing and the working class movement was submerged completely by political reaction.

The Vietnam War dragged on for so many years because the working class was quiet and the official trade union leadership was openly pro-war. Consequently, the anti-war movement was separated from the working class movement and the

class struggle.

Since the Vietnam War era, the working class has been transformed by capitalism. It is composed of more workers who are African American, Latino and from other oppressed nationalities, and more women. It is poorer as a whole; many white workers have also had their wages leveled down by capitalist technology.

The Million Worker March was initiated largely by militant Black trade unionists. The March demands are on a class basis and represent the needs and aspirations of the entire working class.

Chief among those needs is to be free from having to fight, kill or be killed in an imperialist war. The working class is beset by increasing poverty, unemployment and mountains of social and economic hardships. The call to mobilize independently to fight both the occupation and the crisis at home on Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C., is of vital importance to both the anti-war movement and the working class movement. □



## ALERT: U.S. warships off Korea

Continued from page 1

nations.” (navytimes.com)

The Aegis Ballistic Missile Defense, despite its name, is part of a new offensive system begun after the Bush administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2001. That treaty, signed by the Nixon administration and the USSR in 1972, viewed a missile defense system as essentially offensive, since it could lead to a situation where a country possessing such a shield would feel invulnerable enough to launch a missile attack with impunity.

At the time that Bush withdrew from the treaty, Tom Daschle, Democratic leader in the Senate, said he was concerned it could “rupture relations with key countries around the world” and raise serious questions about future arms races involving other countries. But he has since been silent on this issue.

This is the first time since Washington scuttled the treaty that U.S. Navy ships have been deployed for “missile defense.”

The Aegis missiles are just one project of the recently created Missile Defense Agency, whose budget has doubled in the past four years. Next year’s appropriation for the agency is \$10 billion, almost twice that of the U.S. Coast Guard. The MDA estimates its program will cost \$53 billion through 2009, “but it has underestimated costs in the past.” (The New Yorker, Oct. 4)

Lucrative contracts have gone to Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, Orbital Sciences Corp., Northrop Grumman and EADS Space Transportation, among other favored corporations.

This huge outlay of money and resources by the U.S. government is supposed to be in response to the “nuclear threat” posed by North Korea and Iran, primarily. But that is a total fraud.

There is no military threat to the United States. Quite the opposite. Most of humanity sees the threat of war as coming from the U.S., which has such a huge killing machine that its destructive capacity is greater than the military strength of most of the rest of the world combined.

North Korea—the DPRK—in particular has reason to fear U.S. aggression. Millions of Koreans were killed after the U.S. invaded the peninsula in the early 1950s. Korea remains divided because over 30,000 U.S. troops occupy the south.

The U.S. has never signed a peace treaty to officially end the Korean War. That means there is a constant threat that the White House could order an attack on the DPRK. It wouldn’t even require any special legislation. And the Bush administration has declared the DPRK to be a “terrorist nation,” a “rogue state” and part of an “axis of evil.” All of this is war propaganda to prepare the population for an act of aggression against the DPRK.

The Democratic Party is, if anything, even more belligerent than the Bush administration on Korea. Again and again in his election campaign, John Kerry has criticized Bush for being too preoccupied

with Iraq and not tough enough on North Korea.

Furthermore, the Bush administration has declared its right to take “preemptive action” if it deems there is a threat. It used just such an excuse for launching a war against Iraq, supposedly over weapons of mass destruction that everyone now knows did not exist. It could do so again over what it calls the “nuclear threat” from Korea.

Does the DPRK have nuclear weapons? Possibly. Vice Foreign Minister Choe Su Hon, in New York to attend the General Assembly of the United Nations, told reporters on Sept. 27 that the DPRK had “reprocessed 8,000 wasted fuel rods and transformed them into arms,” according to the Associated Press. He said these weapons were to “serve as a deterrent against a possible nuclear strike by the United States.”

Choe said “the ever-intensifying U.S. hostile policy and the clandestine nuclear-related experiments recently revealed in South Korea are constituting big stumbling blocks” and make it impossible for North Korea to participate in the continuation of six-nation talks on its nuclear program.

This statement by a high-ranking official of the DPRK got very little attention in the media, which seems to be waiting to see what the Bush administration is going to do. Will it pull an October Surprise by hitting out at the DPRK in order to look strong before the election? Anything is possible, and the DPRK must know that.

Thus it seems that the DPRK has become one more developing nation that has had to divert a significant portion of its scarce resources to building nuclear weapons because of the constant threat of a U.S. attack. When U.S. allies like Israel or South Africa—when it was under apartheid—develop these weapons, there is no hue and cry. But when a country that the U.S. has been trying to crush for decades takes similar action, it is presented as a grave threat to humanity by the corporate media.

The anti-globalization movement has popularized the slogan “Another world is possible.” A world where cooperation replaces confrontation, where all the nations can sit down together, discuss and solve the tremendous problems caused by modern technology on the basis of equality and mutual respect. It is the only hope. But the first step to changing the world is realizing where the problem lies.

It does not lie with those who have been oppressed, invaded, colonized and exploited. The problem is the imperialist ruling classes that are willing to unleash the dogs of war to protect their grip on the world’s wealth.

Progressives need to stand up and resist the demonization of Iraqis today, Koreans tomorrow, Iranians the day after that. We say no to imperialist war and aggression and extend a hand of friendship to all who are under attack. □

# Can a homosexual be a member of the Communist Party?

By Leslie Feinberg

Years before the actual 1933 law recriminalizing male homosexuality appeared on the books in the Soviet Union, the shift in official attitude within the ascendant political current was becoming apparent.

The political error evolved out of how scientists and jurists posed the “nature vs. nurture” debate in regard to homosexuality. But what fed the ideological problem were the deep prejudices left over from centuries of unequal and unjust economic relations, some of which were revived as the revolution, isolated and embattled, struggled to survive.

Furthermore, there were no cross-cultural, cross-historical annals of ancient evidence from which to draw a materialist view of how variance in human sexuality, gender expression and sexes has been present in all societies and was once accepted.

And, to be fair, the same debate about a biological vs. a social explanation for homosexuality was taking place on a world scale among progressive sexologists of that epoch. Some of the leading activist figures of the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement were arguing that homosexuality was a biological anomaly.

While the debate in the Soviet Union may have taken the same form, however, context is everything in politics.

In Germany, a significant segment of the biological determinist wing of science and medicine would go on to “justify” the fascist state’s extermination of millions of people based on a eugenics argument that these “birth defects” should be eradicated.

The opposite happened in the Soviet Union. The revolution brought increasing tolerance for those whose difference was believed to be a product of birth chemistry. At the same time, lawmakers and scientists worked to eradicate what they believed was harmful social conditioning left over from class society.

For example, in October 1917, revolutionary Bolsheviks abolished the tsarist anti-homosexual law. The Soviet Criminal Code established in 1922, and amended in 1926, did not include homosexuality as an offense. This reflected the belief that science, not law, should deal with matters of sexual difference.

Historian Laura Engelstein summarized: “Soviet sexologists in the 1920s participated in the international movement for sexual reform and criminologists deplored the use of penal sanctions to censor private sexual conduct.” (“Sexual History of the Political Left”)

But conversely, laws were passed against sodomy and the prostitution of young cross-dressed, feminine boy dancers in the Soviet republics of Azerbaijan in 1923, Uzbekistan in 1926 and Turkmenistan in 1927. While in part aimed against sexual exploitation, they were explained as trying to eradicate the prevalence and acceptance of homosexuality and trans expression that were “survivals of primitive custom.” (From “Homosexual Desire” by Dan Healey)

This attitude, steeped in unexamined national chauvinism, was summed up by P. Preobrazhenski in his appendix to the 1930 Great Soviet Encyclopedia, where he argued that the origins of homosexuality among the peoples of the Far North or the

Asian Republics “bear a social character,” not a biological root.

### Two-line struggle

The same two-line struggle surfaced in science. It was glaringly apparent in a 1929 conference of the leading Soviet medical body—the Expert Medical Council of the Commissariat of Health—held to discuss questions of homosexuality, cross-dressing, transsexuality and intersexuality.

Historian Dan Healey writes that underlying the 1929 council’s deliberations “was a sense that the male member of the ‘intermediate sex’ was the product of nurture, of conditions of *byt* [social life, lifestyle—L.F.] gone wrong. These were deviations that were evidently preventable (except in a small number of congenital cases).”

“Their sense of the female ‘transvestite’ was more deeply ‘biologized’ and intractable: no hormonal injections could apparently restore her femininity, and indeed, to doctors it appeared that society might

have to adjust to the female ‘transvestite’ by conceding same-sex marriage.”

In the “nature vs. nurture” scientific debate, however, those seeking a biological explanation for social phenomena were losing the ideological battle. According to Healey, a political struggle opened up against “biologizing” scientists, charging that to search for the basis of social ills in individual biology was a form of Menshevik idealism.

This campaign against “biologizing” was rooted in the economic needs of the Five Year Plan to rapidly industrialize and raise agricultural production, Healey explained. “The pragmatic turn in public health was signaled by a change of leadership and a shakeup in the provision of medical care. A reorganization of the Commissariat of Health was ordered by a decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party on 13 December 1929, directing the commissariat to place more emphasis on the needs of industrial workers and collectivized farmers.”

As a result, for instance, the interdepartmental commission, which came out of the 1929 medical conference and had planned to meet about transgender expression, no longer even existed by 1933.

And science increasingly lost its dominion over social questions like homosexuality, which became more relegated to the realm of the state.

### Gay-baiting class enemies

Extra-legal raids in Moscow and Leningrad in which 130 males were arrested in late summer 1933 were the harbinger of the re-criminalization of male homosexuality later that year. The men were accused of being “pederasts”—adult males who have sex with boys. Since no records of men having sex with boys at that time are available, it is possible this term was used broadly and crudely to label homosexuality.

Healey examined what was going on in the Soviet Union in 1932 and 1933 that led to these raids and the subsequent law. Large-scale attempts to collectivize agriculture were met by such resistance among the peasants that a mass famine developed in Ukraine and southern Russia, which reportedly claimed 3 to 5 million lives. Millions of peasants were

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# African leaders speak at United Nations

By G. Dunkel  
New York

Two important African presidents, Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, addressed the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 23. Both raised issues that affect poor and working people throughout the world, not just Africa.

Both leaders' remarks were thoroughly ignored in the corporate Western press.

Mugabe is under political and economic pressure from the governments of U.S. President George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who want to overthrow his regime for supporting land seizures from white colonial farmers by displaced Black war veterans.

Mugabe's speech drew applause from two-thirds of the audience, who gave lukewarm applause to Bush and Prime Minister Paul Martin of Canada, who spoke the same day.

Mugabe began by declaring, "We are now being coerced to accept and believe

that a new political-cum-religious doctrine has arisen, namely that "There is but one political god, George W. Bush, and Tony Blair is his prophet."

He went on to say that Zimbabwe was doing what it could "to find solutions to the scourge of HIV and AIDS that has ravaged our people and economies." Finding these solutions involves coordinating efforts with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Mugabe condemned "the unfortunate and futile tendency to use assistance in this area as reward for political compliance and malleability, making it unavailable to countries whose governments are deemed 'inconvenient.'"

Mugabe said, "Zimbabwe has also had to withstand unprovoked, declared and undeclared sanctions, imposed by Britain and its allies who are bent on bringing down our legitimately elected government.

"Once again, the lawless nature of this man [Tony Blair] who, along with his Washington master, believes he is god-

ordained to rule our world, has shown itself." Mugabe also tied U.S. actions in Iraq, which he strongly condemned, to its attitudes and policies in Africa.

Thabo Mbeki contrasted the way the wealthy and powerful feel "mortally threatened by the fanatical rage of the terrorists" with the "permanent hurricane of poverty" that is devastating poor communities.

Mbeki also made it clear that South Africa would not withdraw its support from Zimbabwe in response to the pressure that the U.S. and British administrations are exerting on his government to isolate Mugabe.

A Sept. 23 demonstration held at the UN by the December 12 Movement, welcoming Mugabe to New York, received no coverage in the U.S. or British media. The Zimbabwe Herald ([www.zimbabweherald.com](http://www.zimbabweherald.com)) reported on it thoroughly, as an important act of solidarity with Zimbabwe by the African American community. □

pouring into the cities from the countryside looking for work in the factories.

"The flow of new arrivals in the cities 'ruralized' them," Healey observed, "bringing thousands of new residents who knew little of urban and industrial ways."

Officials carried out a purge of the Communist Party in December 1932-1933, scrutinizing the ranks, which had seen an influx of worker and peasant members.

"In 1933, urban male homosexuals would fall within the larger net of these trends. In the case of this group, international developments also significantly contributed to justifications for the decision to recriminalize sodomy."

Massive military conscription campaigns for defense of the Soviet Union had been underway since 1928. They promoted the role of soldiers as hyper-masculine heroes.

Reports of homosexuality in the German fascist leadership had been made public in 1931 and 1932. The more conservative current in the Soviet party, which had by then assumed the reins of leadership, gay-baited the fascists, as did the imperialist powers.

On Sept. 15, 1933—shortly after German-Soviet relations were severed by the rise of Hitler to power—G. G. Iagoda, deputy chief of the Soviet political police, proposed the stricture against male homosexuality.

Iagoda reportedly wrote to Joseph Stalin that the legislation was a matter of state security because of the establishment of "networks of salons, centers, dens, groups and other organized formations of pederasts, with the eventual transformation of these organizations into outright espionage cells.... Pederast activists, using the castelike exclusivity of pederastic circles for plainly counterrevolutionary aims, had politically demoralized various social layers of young men, including young workers, and even attempted to penetrate the army and navy."

Stalin then allegedly forwarded this letter to his Politburo associate L. Kaganovich, saying that "these scoundrels must receive exemplary punishment, and a corresponding guiding decree must be introduced in our legislation."

At no point was lesbianism raised. Masculine lesbians in the ranks and leadership of the military were seen as strong and loyal. Feminine male homosexuals were viewed as weak and untrustworthy.

On Jan. 11, 1934, the Ukraine—the second-largest republic in the USSR—became the first republic to incorporate a statue against public homosexuality and male prostitution in its penal code. No minimum sentence was set.

And in 1933 and 1934, a prohibition against male homosexuality throughout the USSR—which created a 5-year prison penalty—was passed without public fanfare or explanation. In a study of eight Moscow trials of males accused of public homosexuality from 1935 to 1941, only one case in 1935 showed awareness of the new law.

## 'Can a homosexual be a party member?'

The most publicly raised voice of the left-wing opposition to this legal move was that of a British communist living in Moscow. Harry Whyte, an editorial employee of the Moscow Daily News, challenged Stalin on the decree in a long letter received in May 1934.

"Whyte's long missive opened with a question for Stalin: 'Can a homosexual be considered a person fit to become a member of the Communist Party?' The journalist laid out Marxist arguments against the blanket prohibition of sodomy, which, he claimed, introduced unwarranted contradictions in Soviet social life by imposing 'sexual leveling' on a harmless minority and by ignoring science on the issue."

## ("Homosexual Desire")

Whyte also drew analogies with arbitrary discrimination against women, national minorities and people of color.

The letter, once received, was promptly archived. Yet it was a continuation of the history of left communist struggle for a progressive position.

While publicly ignoring Whyte's letter, Stalin apparently turned to cultural icon Maxim Gorky. An article by Gorky entitled "Proletarian Humanism" appeared in both Pravda and Izvestia on May 23, 1934. In that now oft-cited article, Gorky offered the "first public explanation of the recriminalization of male homosexuality, and it placed the question squarely within the terms of the propaganda war between Fascism and Communism." ("Homosexual Desire")

Gorky maintained that homosexuals were not a social minority that needed to be defended in a workers' state—an obvious polemic against Whyte: "In the land where the proletariat governs courageously (muzhestvenno; also translated as manfully) and successfully, homosexuality, with its corrupting effect on the young, is considered a social crime punishable under the law. By contrast, in the 'cultivated land' of the great philosophers, scholars and musicians [Gorky meant Germany—L.F.], it is practiced freely and with impunity. There is already a sarcastic saying: 'Destroy homosexuality and fascism will disappear.'" ("Soviet Policy Towards Male Homosexuality")

## Gay-baiting class enemies

In addition to gay-baiting fascists and fascist-baiting homosexuals, currents of officialdom also used epithets of "effeminacy" and "effete" homosexuality to label elements of the old ruling classes and to help build the image of the proletarian society and its soldiers as hyper-masculine.

Justice Commissar Nikolai Krylenko referred to the anti-gay law in his 1936 speech to the party's Central Executive Committee as aimed at "the remnants of enemies ... who do not wish to admit that they are doomed by history to finally concede their place to us."

These charges were also leveled at political opponents. Some, presumably, were not enemies of the revolution; some were. For example, Nikolai Kliuev, the unof-

**Two photographs of the same person. In 1937, a people's court gave "K"—born male-bodied—legal right to wear women's clothing, change her passport name and be removed from the military recruitment roster.**



ficial poet laureate of the peasantry who wrote openly about being a homosexual, was arrested on Feb. 2, 1934, and charged with counter-revolutionary agitation. He had earlier refused a demand by Ivan Gronski, chief editor of Izvestia, to "write normal verses." But his arrest, Healey wrote, was "probably because of the inflammatory invective of his poems denouncing collectivization."

Certainly the visible social current of the "people of the moonlight" in Russian history had always come from the upper classes and the intelligentsia—musicians, dancers, literati and others. But the point is not to untangle the knotted charges of homosexuality and subversion. The real matter is that it is flat-out wrong to link the issues.

Homosexuality and transgender expression appear in all economic classes in society. Communists need to be able to stand up against all forms of discrimination and prejudice in waging the class struggle.

## Strengthen the union, don't bust it

A great deal of information about the Stalin period has been lost today. The Soviet Union was ravaged by World War II, worker democracy was eroded and a counter-revolution finally overturned the workers' state in 1991.

But what is clear is that the left-wing leadership of Lenin and the Bolshevik Party carried out a profound revolution that uprooted private ownership of social wealth and laid the basis for socialist construction. It was immediately assailed by the whole capitalist world. When, after years of imperialist and civil war, which exacerbated the economic isolation and technological under-development, the revolutionary momentum waned and left-wing leaders were suppressed, what was needed was political renewal, not counter-revolution.

Every rank-and-file labor militant

today who is faced with bureaucratic leadership in their union knows that what's needed is not to bust up the union but to make it stronger.

The population of the Soviet Union did fight for its existence, and fought hard. More than 20 million gave their lives to defend the workers' state against the German imperialist invasion in World War II.

And despite all the problems and weaknesses of the USSR, and the errors of leaders, on March 17, 1991, some 75 percent of the Soviet people, representing the 15 republics of the USSR, went to the polls and voted not to allow the workers' state to be dismantled. The highest percentage of this vote came from the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, formerly oppressed under tsarism.

Yet world imperialism and the Russian moneyed class trampled on this exercise of worker democracy by dismantling the workers' state soon thereafter. Every error from the Soviet period—including the backward law against homosexuality—was used as an excuse and cover to overturn the state. But the aim was not liberation. It was to subject the vast population of the USSR to the exploitation of the capitalist world market.

Today, the modern struggle for world socialism can be strengthened through an honest analysis of the problems and weaknesses that developed in the first successful workers' state, but only if it thoroughly rejects the anti-communism behind so much of the existing criticism.

*Next: Defeat of fascism and birth of "East Germany."*

(Sources available online at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org))



## Entrevista con Clarence Thomas sobre la Marcha del Millón de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras

*Clarence Thomas del Sindicato Internacional de Estibadores Local 10 (ILWU por las siglas en inglés) es uno de los organizadores principales de la Marcha del Millón de Trabajador@s MMT, programada para el 17 de octubre en Washington, D.C. A fines de julio pasado, mientras Thomas estaba en Boston para las manifestaciones en contra de la Convención Nacional Demócrata, habló con el corresponsal de Mundo Obrero Bryan G. Pfeifer sobre las condiciones que impulsaron la decisión de llamar la MMT.*

**CLARENCE THOMAS:** Una resolución fue adoptada a principio del año 2004 por la junta ejecutiva del Local 10 del ILWU. Esa resolución fue presentada y adoptada porque el pueblo trabajador está bajo un ataque sin precedente. Es un ataque que no comienza con la administración de Bush sino que es la culminación de décadas de políticas que básicamente han priorizado las ganancias corporativas antes que las necesidades del pueblo.

Si examinas los años de la presidencia de Reagan, quizás puedas ver que en aquel entonces hubo una intensificación de las políticas que tuvieron que ver con la exportación de empleos, creando oportunidades para que los ricos evadieran impuestos y aumentando los impuestos del seguro social para la gente trabajadora. Pero más importante, fue una era que nos recuerda la política del "compromiso constructivo" ("constructive engagement") con el régimen de apartheid en Sudáfrica como fue definido por la administración de Reagan y Bush (padre). Y mucha gente en el movimiento sindical realmente no entiende que el movimiento en contra del apartheid de los años 1980 tuvo que ver con el impacto de la cuestión de la exportación de empleos. Esto es porque en ese tiempo había una cantidad de empleos siendo exportados a Sudáfrica. Fábricas de montaje de automóviles se estaban cerrando aquí y abriendo en Sudáfrica.

Y fue por esa razón que el Local 10 del ILWU rehusó descargar un barco con el nombre Nedloyd Kimberly en 1984 por varios días. Y eso provocó un grado muy alto de solidaridad laboral como parte del Movimiento por una Sudáfrica Libre.

Menciono esto porque creo que mucha gente se está enfocando demasiado en lo que está pasando con la administración de Bush. Lo que está pasando actualmente no es solamente una agenda neoconservadora sino que también es una agenda apoyada igualmente por ambos Partidos Republicano y Demócrata.

El Congreso ha sido cómplice en todo lo que está haciendo la administración de Bush, sólo hay que examinar el historial.

Para acortar una larga historia, la razón para la Marcha de un Millón de Trabajador@s es que estamos organizando la marcha en nuestro propio nombre porque la única vez que la gente tra-



Clarence Thomas.

WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

bajadora puede ganar cualquier concesión del sistema es cuando nos organizamos independientemente de los Demócratas y los Republicanos. Si consideramos el Movimiento por los Derechos Civiles, fue organizado fuera del control del Partido Demócrata y del Partido Republicano. Y el pueblo negro no obtuvo el voto en elecciones. El pueblo negro logró el derecho al voto organizándose en su propio nombre. Miremos al movimiento antiguerra de los años 1960 así como el movimiento antiguerra de hoy. Lo mismo se puede decir del movimiento feminista.

Entonces esto debe haber ocurrido hace mucho tiempo. Esto tiene que ver con trabajador@s uniéndose y componiendo una agenda que se dirige directamente a nuestras necesidades: cuidado de salud a nivel nacional y el recorte del presupuesto militar. No hay

manera de que podemos resolver los problemas sociales mientras mantenemos un enorme presupuesto militar. En otras palabras, si va a haber algún cambio en términos de las políticas domésticas del gobierno de los Estados Unidos, hay que recortar el presupuesto militar porque allí es donde está el dinero para pagar los gastos de los servicios sociales que tanto necesitamos y para reconstruir la infraestructura de los Estados Unidos.

La otra cuestión es que no importa las expectativas de la gente en relación a las elecciones nacionales, tenemos que pedirle responsabilidad por su quehacer gubernamental a todos los oficiales gubernamentales electos. Y esto significa que esta Marcha del Millón de Trabajador@s no va a terminar con la marcha. Estas demandas son importantes y queremos que tomen acción con ellas. Por años el Partido Demócrata ha tenido el apoyo de la comunidad negra, a pesar de que ellos no están representando a la comunidad negra. Por lo tanto consideramos que la gente trabajadora tiene que tomar una decisión, apoyar el estatus quo ó apoyar las cuestiones y programas que realmente responden a sus intereses.

Ha habido una tremenda oposición a la Marcha del Millón de Trabajador@s por parte de sindicalistas de corte corporativo a través del país que creen que el Partido Demócrata es el partido de la gente trabajadora, lo que no es cierto. También creen que no debe haber ningún movimiento autónomo del pueblo trabajador antes de las elecciones. En mi opinión, creo que ellos creen eso incluso después de las elecciones.

Entonces cuando recordamos las elecciones de Bill Clinton en su primer y segundo período, la gente que se define como políticamente liberal dijo 'vamos a darle a Bill una oportunidad'. Bueno, Bill tuvo su oportunidad —dos períodos— y

¿qué es lo que recibimos? Recibimos al TLC. Recibimos el GATT. Recibimos la reforma de welfare. Recibimos la OMC y una lista infinita de ejemplos que demuestran su desprecio real por la gente trabajadora, aunque era muy astuto en sus campañas electorales que por razón de sus orígenes en la clase trabajadora, pudo traducirlo en mucha admiración, especialmente de la comunidad negra. Pero la realidad de la situación es que los años de Bill Clinton fueron años muy dañinos para la gente trabajadora.

Si recordamos los años de Carter, por ejemplo, cuando Carter comenzó su período presidencial incrementó el presupuesto militar. Carter también otorgó privilegios presupuestarios a los ricos en las ganancias capitales y aumentó los impuestos en el seguro social para los trabajadores. Rescató a la Chrysler lo que desencadenó una tendencia hacia las concesiones en negociaciones colectivas por parte de los sindicatos. No sólo eso sino que invocó la ley Taft-Hartley que prohíbe huelgas, contra los mineros que estuvieron en huelga desde el 1997 hasta el 1998.

Entonces esos son algunos ejemplos de las prácticas adversas promulgadas durante una administración Demócrata, sacados de la historia reciente.

Entonces decimos que el motivo de esas prácticas dañinas es que el Partido Democrático no representa los intereses de la gente trabajadora. Representa la agenda de los negocios y de los bancos. La retórica puede ser algo diferente pero las prácticas son iguales . . .

Yo estuve en Irak como miembro de una delegación internacional sindical, en octubre 2002, organizada por la organización Trabajador@s Estadounidenses Contra la Guerra. Pero te puedo decir que hay una guerra en este país lo mismo que la hay en el extranjero.

Cuando uno mira a las compañías que están enriqueciéndose de la guerra en Irak, compañías como Stevedoring Services of America, la cual es uno de nuestros patrones, se puede ver que era uno de los segmentos más beligerantes de la Asociación Marítimo Pacífico durante las discusiones de nuestro contrato y ellos han ganado el contrato para operar el puerto de Umpasa en Irak.

Las políticas que han impuesto a l@s trabajador@s iraquíes desde la invasión son tales que l@s trabajador@s iraquíes ya no tienen el derecho a organizarse porque las autoridades están haciendo cumplir leyes promulgadas por Saddam Hussein que prohíben la organización en el sector público. Esos son l@s trabajador@s emplead@s por el gobierno.

Pero yo creo que básicamente la guerra en Irak y la guerra contra la gente trabajadora en los Estados Unidos están conectadas y es muy importante que nos unamos, el movimiento contra la guerra y el movimiento laboral se unan, para oponernos a la guerra, regresar las tropas, y mover adelante una agenda, un programa verdadero de l@s trabajador@s. □

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