

MUNDO OBRERO

Declaración de Mundo Obrero sobre la campaña electoral 12

We salute the MWM!

We extend our heartfelt solidarity to all who are marching in the historic Million Worker March, a beautiful demonstration of class unity. And we especially salute Local 10 of the International Longshore & Warehouse Union in San Francisco, for their tenacity, vision and courage in initiating this march.

Part of the power of the MWM is its strategic timing, coming before the Nov. 2 elections. The choice of Oct. 17 was not primarily based on trying to politically influence either of the big-business candidates, George W. Bush or John Kerry.

While the top leadership of the AFL-CIO is spending tens of millions

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Kerry, Bush silent as

Pentagon targets Iraqi civilians

Workers join anti-war forces to say 'NO'

By Fred Goldstein

Behind the smokescreen of minimal coverage by the media and silence in the political establishment, the Bush administration is carrying out a new strategy: trying to pacify Iraq with a bloody offensive against the resistance and the civilian population.

Washington is attempting to overcome the enormous international humiliation it has suffered because of the continued resistance of the Iraqi people to the colonial conquest of their country and the brutal occupation. The Iraqis have been fighting valiantly against the strongest, most well-armed military power on earth.

In a classic people's guerrilla war of national resistance, the Iraqis have fought with small arms against the most lethally armed and ruthless military force on earth—the Pentagon. Without any armored vehicles, aircraft, cannons or any high-tech weaponry, the Iraqis have opposed the U.S.-led occupation forces that are trying to take over their country's oil, establish 14 permanent military bases, privatize the state-run economy and turn it over to U.S. and other transnational corporations.

The implementation of the new U.S. government strategy began weeks ago with the bombing of Falluja. It was then escalated to a series of air attacks on the city of Samarra, followed by a ground invasion of 3,000 U.S. troops, accompanied by 2,000 Iraqi puppet troops.

This has been followed by an escalation of the bombing raids on Falluja and has been extended to raids on mosques in Ramadi.

The Pentagon's tactics are illustrated by the air war on Falluja.

U.S. planes have been bombing Falluja for weeks, saying their target is a "terrorist network" led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Home after home is bombed, followed by claims of striking at "safehouses." But this is a cover for a brutal strategy of trying to punish the population until it gives up supporting the resistance.

A report from Washington in the Oct. 12 New York Times said that U.S. Navy planes alone are carrying out about 20 combat missions a day in Iraq. The Pentagon is using 1,000-lb. and 2,000-lb. satellite-guided bombs. Recently, they have added a smaller 500-lb. bomb to their arsenal, more suitable for bombing civilians.

All talk of trying to avoid civilian casualties with precision bombing and so on is to conceal the actual method.



YOUTH AREN'T FOOLED mobilize vs. draft

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According to the Times article, after a recent so-called "precision" strike, "Falluja residents and doctors said there that 17 people—neither insurgents nor foreign terrorists—had been wounded, including nine women and children.

"One person identified by Reuters as a witness said that a wedding party had been held in the house the evening before the attack, and that the bridegroom had been killed and the bride wounded in the raid."

The article relates the Pentagon's response. "We know what the strike was supposed to hit, and we hit it," said a senior Pentagon official who monitors the daily assessments of the bombing campaign. 'If a wedding was going on, well, it was in concert with

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'IMMIGRANT RIGHTS: crucial battle of our times!'



Atlanta immigrant march, Oct. 1.

WW PHOTO: TOM DORAN

COLOMBIA, NIGERIA

General strikes!

9-10

OCCUPIED HAITI

Why U.S. still fears Dessalines

8

Workers World candidates bring struggle message to L.A.

By Adrian Garcia
Los Angeles

Workers World Party's presidential and vice-presidential candidates, John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez, along with LeiLani Dowell, Peace and Freedom candidate for Congress in San Francisco's 8th district, kicked off a string of West Coast events with a strong campaign rally here on Oct. 9.

All three candidates presented the WWP's anti-imperialist platform—highlighting the decrepit conditions that plague working-class and oppressed people here and abroad, and challenging the “anybody but Bush” approach to the upcoming elections.

“The class-divided economic system is only a small part of humanity's existence,” said presidential candidate Parker. “Most of humanity's history has been communal.” His dialectical analysis gave perspective and hope against the overwhelming opposition to revolutionary change.

“We have to struggle,” Parker stressed. He presented the demands made by the Million Worker March, scheduled for Oct. 17 in Washington, D.C., as a means for creating a movement to counter the reactionary agendas of both the George W. Bush and John Kerry campaigns.

Dowell spoke about the current crisis in Haiti in relation to the U.S. hand in the February “coup-napping” of popularly elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Dowell reported on her September fact-finding tour of Haiti. She said the impoverished masses there live in fear of the illegitimate U.S.-imposed government. Dowell also spoke about meeting with political prisoners in Haiti.

She concluded that the youth-led revolutionary organization FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—is one tool to fight against capitalist ills.

Vice-presidential candidate Gutierrez commented that “Bush is a reactionary, but that does not make Kerry a progressive.” She pointed out that both Bush and Kerry are simply talking about how best to continue the occupation of Iraq.

She described the WWP's platform as one of revolutionary optimism which “is shared by other revolutionaries around the world,” among them Che Guevara, whom Gutierrez recognized on the 27th anniversary of his death at the hands of the CIA.

Gutierrez concluded by asking people to envision socialism—a world where there is no more imperialist war, where universal health care is a right and free, where the liberation of Palestine has been successful and reparations have been paid to African Americans for the institution of slavery.

Walter Lippmann, editor of CubaNews, sent a message to the meeting congratulating Workers World Party for its “great work, politically and organizationally” in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell will continue their struggle campaign, participating in the Oct. 16 immigrant rights march in Los Angeles and the Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C. □



John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez & LeiLani Dowell
WW PHOTOS: JULIA LA RIVA

On the road with WWP candidates

Coming to your city, soon!

CHULA VISTA

THURS., OCT. 14, 11 a.m.
Free Speech Area,
Southwestern College
900 Otay Lakes Rd

SAN DIEGO

* THURS., OCT. 14, 6:30 p.m.
San Diego City College
1313 Twelfth Avenue
* FRI., OCT. 15, 7 p.m.
San Diego IAC
3930 Oregon St., Su. 230

Southern California
For information:
call 619-692-4496

**IMMIGRANT RIGHTS
MILLION WORKER MARCH**
They will join the march
for immigrants' rights in
Los Angeles Oct. 16 before
flying to Washington, D.C.,
for the Million Worker March
Oct. 17.

SOUTHERN TOUR

RICHMOND, VA

MON., OCT. 18, 6:30 p.m.
Pace Center
700 W. Franklin St.

RALEIGH, N.C.

TUES., OCT. 19, 3 pm -5 pm
Talley Student Center
N.C. State Univ.
Teach-in on the Sudan-the
Crisis in Sudan Blue Room

TUES. OCT. 19, 7-9:30 p.m.
Community Forum on MWM
Blacknificent Book Store
2011 Poole Rd
For Raleigh information,
call 917-334-1253

ROCK HILL, S.C.

Oct. 20, 7:30 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Forum open to public & school
Plowden Auditorium
Winthrop College
For information,
call 803-323-4669

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

OCT. 21, 7 PM till-
Univ. of N.C.

1513 Sunnyside Ave.
Charlotte, NC 28204
For information,
call 704-618-1320

SAT., OCT. 23, 3-5 p.m.
Metro Atlanta Task Force
for the Homeless
477 Peachtree St. NE
(corner of Peachtree & Pine).
For Atlanta information call:
404-235-5704

SOUTHWEST

HOUSTON

SUN., OCT. 24

ALBUQUERQUE N.M.

TUES., OCT. 26

MIDWEST

CHICAGO

Thurs., Oct. 28, 7 p.m.
New World Resource Center
1300 N. Western Ave.
For information
call: 773-381-5839.

DETROIT

Oct. 30, 5 p.m.,
dinner served
5920 Second Ave.
For information call:
313-831-0750.

They will be in
the Mid-Atlantic cities
of Washington, D.C.,

Baltimore & Philadelphia
in mid-late October.

Campaign representatives
will participate in
third-party presidential
debates on Oct. 9 at
Washington University in St.
Louis; Oct. 15 in Johnson
City, Tenn.; and
Oct. 29 at Swarthmore
College in Pennsylvania.

For updates, visit the
campaign website at
www.vote4workers.org
or call the campaign offices
in NYC at 212-627-2994
or Los Angeles at
(323) 936-1416.

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WW CALENDAR

LOS ANGELES

Sat., Nov. 6
No matter who wins the election—Bring the troops home now! Protest the war and colonial occupation in Iraq, Palestine, Haiti and everywhere! Gather at noon at CNN Bldg at Wilcox & Sunset Blvd. March through Hollywood to military recruiting station at Sunset and LaBrea. Initiated by the International Action Center, phone (323) 936-7266 for information and to volunteer.

NEW YORK

Sat.-Sun., Nov. 13-14
A National Fightback Conference, sponsored by Workers World Party. After the elections, no matter who wins—How can the struggle move forward? Do you want to really end the war, bring the troops home, fight for workers' rights, and build a movement against capitalism and racism? Then come to a serious discussion on strategies. In New York City. For info go to www.workers.org.

Workers World

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If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.
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DENVER

230 protesters arrested for blocking Columbus Day parade

By Larry Hales
Denver

Two hundred thirty students, activists and workers took the street here Oct. 9 to peacefully protest the celebration of Columbus Day and the portrayal of the man behind the genocide of Native peoples as a hero—and were arrested by a force of 600 police officers, many in full riot gear.

Altogether, some 600 people came out early on the crisp Saturday morning. They gathered on the steps of the State Capitol to listen to speakers from the American Indian Movement and various other indigenous organizations, as well as leaders from the Black and Latino communities.

Leaders from AIM and the Denver Black Ministerial Alliance vowed to take the streets to block the Columbus Day

parade, and a call was made for other volunteers. More than 200 people pledged to go into the streets and block the procession. They remained resolute when told that they'd probably be arrested.

The protesters, carrying signs that called for an end to the worship of Columbus and colonialism, marched down to Blake and 19th streets in downtown Denver. The sacred drum of the anti-Columbus Day event led the way, and Native people followed closely with the drum.

As they walked into the streets, they were met by police officers waiting with prison buses and police wagons.

All those who did not wish to be arrested were told to leave the street. But many remained, defiant in the face of the police with their many instruments of repression.

Most of those who remained in the streets were Native activists. They were the last to be arrested and put into vans.

All those arrested were released two hours later.

The Transform Columbus Day weekend, which began on Oct. 8, started with a Four Directions March. The previous weekend there had been forums on racism and the legacy of Columbus. It was all an attempt to build community and to show that the Transform Columbus Day Alliance, began in 1989, was not formed to be anti-Italian, but to show respect for all cultures.

Thus, it calls for an end to the national holiday for a rapist, murderer and the man who began the slave trade in this part of the world. Since Columbus Day was initiated in Colorado in 1905, by Gov. Alva Adams, some of the biggest demonstrations against the holiday have

taken place here.

With the conflicts that U.S. rulers have embroiled this country in now, the fight against historical lies grows ever more poignant, and will by the day, as resistance to imperialist aggression increases. The drive for wars—500 years ago, and still today—has been for conquest and profit, but more than a tinge of racism and bigotry is behind it all.

Indeed, there has been a rise in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hatred coming from the rulers in this country and the media they control.

It was no different when Columbus and his supporters began their enslavement and genocide against Indigenous people in the Americas. So as we take to the streets to protest against more war, let us correctly remember Columbus for what he truly was. □

Colo. American Indian Movement denounces 'Convoy of Conquest'

The following is excerpted from an Oct. 9 news release from the American Indian Movement of Colorado:

Today, in the streets of downtown Denver, scores of American Indian Movement members, and our TCD [Transform Columbus Day] allies were arrested in a principled act of civil resistance to the "Convoy of Conquest" (aka: Columbus Day Parade). Despite any denials by its organizers, the Convoy is a celebration of genocide against the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and it elevates the theft of our homelands, and the murder of our people, to national holiday status. To Colorado AIM this is intolerable and unjustifiable.

Our arrests are designed to expose a corrupt educational, legal and political system that refuses to describe the destruction of millions of indigenous people at the hands of Columbus for what it is: genocide. In a legal and political system that rationalizes and justifies the murder, theft, and ongoing betrayal of our peoples and nations, we, as the victims of such a system, are under an obligation to expose such moral and legal bankruptcy, and we

actively refuse to cooperate with legalized murder and theft. Our arrests today lay bare the facts (they are not allegations) that Columbus was personally responsible for:

- Trading in African slaves prior to his voyage to the Americas in 1492.

- Columbus was personally responsible for overseeing a colonial administration that directly led to the deaths of millions of indigenous people. ...

- Columbus advanced and expanded the arrogant European "Doctrine of Discovery," claiming that superior, civilized Christian Europeans had the right to seize and appropriate indigenous peoples territories and resources. This doctrine has been embedded into racist Federal Indian Law, and is applied today in the case of the Western Shoshone in Nevada and the Lakota in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

- More importantly, the legacy of Columbus allows the U.S. government to "lose" between \$40 and 100 billion in money that the U.S. was to administer for the benefit of individual American Indians. The government has admitted that it deliberately destroyed evidence in the case, and it appears that the U.S. has no

intention of finding or accounting for the money that it has stolen.

See: www.indiantrust.com

- The Columbus legacy is reflected in the psychology of the War in Iraq, as the U.S. military continues to refer to any territory not under immediate U.S. control as "Indian Country." Anyone who expresses a view other than the accepted, official version is considered to be "off the reservation." Anyone who actually tries to understand the Iraqi people, as opposed to murdering them, is suspected of being a "race

Continued on page 11

LOS ANGELES

'End Gaza massacre'

The International Action Center-Los Angeles sponsored an emergency protest on the steps of the Israeli Consulate in Los Angeles on Oct. 7. The demonstration was called in response to the Israeli incursion and assault on the Palestinian Jabaliya refugee camp in Gaza, which left over 80 civilians, including many children, dead.

John Parker of the IAC-LA chaired the closing rally. Speakers included representatives of Women in Black, Bayan, Philippine Human Rights Watch and Minjok.com. Other endorsers of the protest were the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee-LA/OC, Michel Shehadeh, one of the LA 8 defendants, and the Council on Arab and Islamic Relations. —Maggie Vascassenno



PHOTO: MINJOK-TONGSHIN

Students defy racism at UMass



On Oct. 6 more than 500 University of Massachusetts at Amherst students, mostly students of color, and their allies protested the recent disclosure of photos depicting nine senior student government officials celebrating a Ku Klux Klan caricature during a party in the Student Center for Educational Research and Advocacy office. The students demanded an immediate end to the UMass administration's institutionalized racism and oppression of students of color, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students and women, which they charge provided a green light.

—Bryan G. Pfeifer

NEW YORK

Palestinian struggle defended

On Oct. 8, in response to the murderous Israeli assault on Gaza that killed more than 80 Palestinians in a week, pro-Palestinian and anti-war groups demonstrated outside the Israeli Consulate in New York City. Protesters demanded an end to massacre and occupation, and Palestinian refugees' right to return home. The protest was endorsed by Al-Awda New York-the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the International Action Center, the New Jersey Solidarity-Activists for the Liberation of Palestine, and the New York Committee to Defend Palestine.

—Photo & story by John Catalinotto



Strike shows potential power of hotel workers

By Sharon Black

In one of the most important developments in combating the relentless attacks from Corporate America, thousands of hotel and restaurant workers in three major cities are taking on the giant hotel chains that have consolidated in powerful transnational contracts.

These workers are represented by UNITE HERE, the national union that is coordinating this complex and difficult strategy.

UNITE HERE Local 2 President Mike Casey, whose members struck four San Francisco hotels and subsequently were locked out at 10 other chains, charged: "We're dealing with corporations that have consolidated and merged, and as a result have amassed tremendous amounts of power. The only way to protect our standards is to consolidate among North American unions. We can't take on global capitalism with local and regional strategies."

In Los Angeles on Oct. 5, UNITE HERE Local 11 members rallied in the heart of downtown Los Angeles to protest the San Francisco Multi-Employer Group's decision to lock out their sisters and brothers in Local 2. Some 1,500 workers and community supporters blocked the main arteries in Los Angeles during the height of rush hour.

UNITE HERE Hospitality Division President John Wilhelm and 44 protesters were arrested. Members from the 14 striking and locked-out hotels attended

the demonstration, and later they and thousands of supporters marched, picketed and chanted in front of the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

In Washington, D.C., the talks have broken down. Local 25 members voted by more than 94 percent to authorize a strike.

The key issues in all three cities is winning two-year contracts that would expire simultaneously. This struggle is a tremendous development in light of the massive mergers consolidating the industry.

It is a giant step in awakening the rest of the organized labor movement, because only with a broad class-wide struggle can the AFL-CIO can stop the hemorrhaging that has been going on for decades.

The hotel workers are also fighting to protect their health and pension benefits, reduce work loads and raise wages.

If the 10,000 UNITE HERE rank and filers fighting these giant hotel conglomerates win their demands, it would put future contracts in the three cities in sync with hotel contracts that expire at the same time in New York City, Boston, Chicago and Toronto.

This would build power, setting these low-paid, service-oriented, multinational and women workers in motion and putting them in a strategic position to change the very face of the labor movement.

The potential will be historic, which makes these workers' struggle on a par with the great struggles of industrial workers in the 1930s. □



Atlantic City rally.

PHOTO: UNITE HERE LOCAL 54

ATLANTIC CITY

Casino strike strong

By Joseph Piette
Member, Letter Carriers Branch 157

Two weeks into it, some 10,000 Atlantic City casino and hotel workers are still strong in the longest strike in the 26-year history of New Jersey's casino industry.

Bartenders, cooks, valets, food servers, cocktail servers, housekeepers and other service workers—all members of UNITE HERE Local 54—are out on strike. They walked out at Bally's, Caesar's, Resorts, Harrah's, the Hilton Casino Resort, the Showboat Casino Hotel and the Tropicana. Dealers, cashiers, and security workers who are not unionized remain at work.

The Marina, the Taj Mahal and the Plaza—all Donald Trump properties—and the Sands have settled on a three-year contract. They agreed to pay all health-care premiums, give a bonus in lieu of a wage increase and limit use of subcontracting. The new Borgata has a contract that expires in 2007 and is not affected.

Union workers want the casinos to stop subcontracting work at restaurants, clubs and other attractions to non-union employers. The Tropicana is a favorite target of the union for its plans to subcontract an immense new development of restaurants, shops and clubs this fall, all with non-union lease holders.

The union wants fully paid health-care benefits to continue, while the casinos want employees to share the costs.

And after years of corporate consolidation in the casino industry, workers want to level the playing field with a three-year contract. Such a deal would add Atlantic City's workers to the same contract negotiating cycle as casino workers in Las Vegas, Detroit, Chicago and riverboat-casino cities nationwide.

This would give all the workers more

clout at the bargaining table, including the power to call a nationwide casino strike, if necessary.

Atlantic City's struck casinos, in contrast, want a five-year contract.

The work force is multi-cultural, and so is union organizing. Chants in English are often followed by chants in Spanish. Many UNITE HERE T-shirts are in English and Spanish.

Organizers direct their members at rallies in both languages. At least one janitor carries a sign about Bally's "unfair labor practices"—the top in English, below that in Chinese.

The noise from daily picketing is deafening. Chants of "strike" are interspersed with the sound of whistles and wooden sticks hitting signs, plastic buckets, pots and pans to Caribbean rhythms. All of it is meant to reach those foolish enough to think they could sleep or gamble in the hotels despite the strike.

Oct. 10 was Family Day. Thousands of strikers brought their families to the boardwalk picket lines.

"We feel like the casinos put us in a position of trying to put food on the table while they make all the money. We want them to see our families' faces," said bartender Al Tabei.

On Oct 8, as 3,000 strikers chanted, "No justice, no peace," police arrested 100 unionists for blocking resort traffic at Atlantic and Missouri Avenues. This is where the Atlantic City Expressway empties into the narrow city streets.

As police hustled her away, Dolores Nolan, who said she has 11 grandchildren, said, "I am so proud to do this for my union because this is the only way those casinos will know we mean business." Nolan has worked as a housekeeper at the Tropicana Casino & Resort for 15 years.

Local 54 President Robert McDevitt was arrested first. After him came Vice President Al Cohen, UNITE HERE Hospitality Division President John Wilhelm, 65-year-old Chitu Patel and dozens more.

Arrestees were given summonses for blocking a roadway, a petty disorderly persons offense. Punishment could include up to one year's probation and a \$500 fine. None of the protesters was detained.

On Sept. 16, in preparation for the strike, more than 7,000 workers had staged a loud demonstration on the beach and boardwalk. It was the largest labor demonstration in Atlantic City history.

Union members qualify for \$200 a week in strike pay if they picket four hours a day. As of Oct. 10, no talks were scheduled. □

ON THE PICKET LINE

By Sue Davis

UAW struggle over anti-war resolution

At the Oct. 1-3 meeting of the Auto Workers' Technical, Office and Professional Department, Local 2334 proposed an anti-war resolution demanding "an end to the war in Iraq and immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops." In contrast, the official TOP anti-war resolution was more accommodating to the Democratic Party, while noting that "the UAW [is] on record against the war in Iraq."

Though the final vote was two to one in favor of the official TOP resolution, it's important to note that struggles like this are being waged all over the country as activists try to rally unions to take a militant anti-war stand.

Hotel workers fight for union

Claiming illegal labor practices, low wages and a hostile work environment, 320 workers at three hotels near New York City airports went on strike on Sept. 23. They voted to strike after hotel owners fired 10 workers who were leading the drive to join the New York Hotel Trades Council.

Workers have been subjected to interrogation and surveillance. Some were offered incentives to oppose unionization, while others were threatened with physical violence.

Picketers at the Crowne Plaza Hotel near La Guardia Airport rallied around a nationally recognized strike symbol: a huge inflatable gray rat.

Ky. teachers strike

Students in Kentucky got a lesson in labor struggle on Sept. 27 when 45,000 of the state's public-school teachers staged a one-day strike. Teachers were protesting Gov. Ernie Fletcher's proposal to nearly triple the cost of health benefits for teachers, other school employees and state workers.

Fletcher proposed to save the state \$150 million by forcing the workers to pay insurance deductibles of \$800 and tripling the cost of co-payments. Despite the governor's threat to invoke a 1970 no-strike law, the Kentucky Education Association, which represents the teachers, announced that unless health insurance costs remain in line with costs in nearby states, teachers may strike indefinitely starting Oct. 27.

Ford cafeteria workers win

The 120 cafeteria workers employed by Sodexo at Ford World Headquarters in Dearborn, Mich., were so fed up with constant harassment that they voted to strike in late September. But they didn't have to hit the bricks.

Though the contract inked Sept. 29 includes higher health-care premiums, the workers won wage and pension increases and eliminated clauses that would have allowed unjust write-ups and attendance points to be inserted in personnel files.

United Catering, Restaurant, Bar and Hotel Workers Local 1064 President Elena M. Herrada credited support from labor and the community in helping the workers win.

Michigan carpenters picket

The Michigan Regional Council of Carpenters staged an informational picket line in front of Riemer Floors in Bloomfield Hills in late September. Riemer Floors is a locally owned floor and carpet installation company that employs non-union laborers and salespeople. The picket line called on Riemer to provide good-paying union jobs and quality customer service.

Thanks to Cheryl LaBash and Susan Farquhar for reports on Michigan struggles.

What's next for labor?

Corporate bankruptcies and workers' control

By Milt Neidenberg

It's a spreading plague on the house of labor. More and larger corporations are filing for bankruptcy in federal courts. Chapter 11, the reorganization of companies in a bankruptcy court, has become the mechanism to break union contracts, default on health benefits and pensions and demand huge wage concessions.

Top executives, however, walk away with pensions, severance pay and health care that lasts a lifetime. Recently, the crisis has been highlighted by the bankruptcy of billionaire corporations like Enron, Worldcom, Bethlehem Steel, United Airlines and US Airways.

In response to huge concessions granted by the bankruptcy courts, there has been resistance. Deep in coal mining territory, a bitter struggle is being waged between the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the Horizon Natural Resources Coal Co. Horizon is the fourth-largest coal producer in the U.S. with 27 surface mines and 15 underground in Central Appalachia, the Illinois basin and the Rocky Mountains.

A cruel hoax

With the full compliance of the bankruptcy court, corporations often change names and form new entities to manipulate their assets and demand more concessions from the unions. Addington Enterprises, which had a contract with the UMWA, filed for bankruptcy in February 2002. Three months later it emerged as Horizon, which in turn filed for bankruptcy in November 2002. Horizon demanded that 2,300 retirees pay more for health care and began to default on their pensions.

Devastated by these cuts, miners from Kentucky, West Virginia, Illinois and Indiana fought back. Many are retirees suffering from high-cost medical bills caused by black lung and other chronic diseases. Others have long-term injuries. Then there are the widows who lost their loved ones to sickness or accidents in the dangerous mines.

The UMWA has long provided health care for its members. In 1946, it established the first union-sponsored cradle-to-grave health care. During the 1950s, the union built a chain of Miners Memorial Hospitals in southern West Virginia, eastern Kentucky and southwestern Virginia.

War abroad and at home

Last year, in a militant protest against the cuts on Nov. 6, hundreds of miners and steelworkers converged on Horizon headquarters, not far from the meeting place of the bankruptcy court. UMWA International President Cecil Roberts challenged Horizon's petition to abrogate the current labor agreement. The workers forced the company to delay its reorganization package.

A message from AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Richard Trumka, a former UMWA international president, pledged that "the 13 million members of the AFL-CIO stand with the UMWA and the Horizon workers and retirees in your fight to preserve health care insurance and to stand up against this corporate betrayal." The pledge turned out to be just words, as the AFL-CIO poured all its resources into the Kerry election campaign.

Roberts challenged the government: "If

we've got \$87 billion to bail out Iraq, let's bail out the UMWA ... 44 million Americans have no health care, 9 million are unemployed and another 6 million are underemployed. ... Let's get 44 million Americans health care for life."

For over two years, miners, their families and communities have demonstrated and rallied many times at Horizon's headquarters. On one occasion, led by Roberts, a number of them blocked the courthouse as thousands cheered. They got arrested, but they forced the company to renegotiate a contract through 2006.

In spite of the heroic efforts of the miners, on Aug. 31 bankruptcy court Judge William Howard bailed out Horizon. He declared Horizon's assets to be "free and clear" of any and all contractual obligations to the miners, represented by the UMWA. Now another company will take over the property.

Following this setback, the UMWA issued a press release on Sept. 4: "Horizon lawyers and lawyers for the entities who will soon own the bankrupt coal operators' properties, began laughing and high-fiving each other, knowing full well that the ruling meant that thousands of Horizon retirees and active coal miners, many suffering from chronic, high-cost medical problems, like black lung disease, would soon be without promised health care benefits and job rights." It continued that this showed how insignificant the needs of working people are to corporate America.

This battle was lost, but the class war is not over. Many lessons were learned in this protracted struggle.

Three days to remember

On Sept. 17, 1989, the UMWA had seized the property of the Pittston Coal Co.'s Moss 3 preparation plant in Carbo, Va. Ninety-eight miners and a minister, outfitted in camouflage, pushed aside shocked Vance security guards and occupied the property. A giant spotlight propelled by a generator focused on the Pittston walls, where a giant sign spelled out "United Mine Workers of America." When the light went on, over 200 miners and supporters cheered and thousands more came forward to bar state police from entering the grounds.

Cecil Roberts, then vice president of the UMWA, addressed the crowd: "Welcome to ... class warfare in southwestern Virginia." For over three days they held the property, until Pittston agreed to a contract protecting jobs and other benefits. Pittston feared that the miners were planning to run the Moss 3 plant.

Workers' control to protect union assets

Can this UMWA strategy be emulated? The major airline unions may have to make this difficult decision.

Today, the airline industry is in its biggest crisis since the 1978 deregulation. United Airlines, the second-largest U.S. carrier, has been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy since December 2002. US Airways, the seventh largest, has been in bankruptcy twice in the last two years. Delta is threatening bankruptcy. Continental, which had been in bankruptcy, and American and Northwest have been getting more concessions in wages, health care and pensions.

United Airlines muscled \$2.5 billion annually in concessions in its recent contract with the Association of Flight

Attendants and plans to terminate billions in pension contributions. U.S. Airways wants \$950 million in wage and benefit cuts. And Delta reported it will no longer continue company-paid health care benefits to retirees.

These airlines are also reducing vacation and sick time and plan to lay off as they increase the workload on the stressed-out workers.

This amounts to taking away billions in union assets won over years of struggle. These assets belong to the workers and their unions. The total amount entitles the unions to be the principal creditor, to assert their legal rights in bankruptcy court to be the trustees. It is hazardous to keep giving concessions to companies in bankruptcy. The record shows they will only ask for more. And the court will comply.

It is the creditors who must decide ownership—and the unions are the principal creditors.

Karl Marx wrote in "Capital": "That credit is not mere fiction is shown not only by the occasional loss of wages on the bankruptcy of the capitalist but also by a series of more enduring consequences."

Nothing's more important than jobs

By Deirdre Griswold

What's more important than being able to get a steady job with a living wage?

Can society be healthy if millions can't find enough work?

In the current election campaign, very little is being said about jobs. Both Bush and Kerry say they'll give tax cuts to bosses to hire more workers. That's no jobs program. That's just another giveaway to the rich.

This is supposed to be a period of economic recovery. Officially, 5.4 percent of the work force was unemployed in September—the same as the month before. But that figure doesn't tell the real story.

The economy is already slowing down. Fewer jobs were created last month—96,000—than had been forecast. It wasn't even enough to keep pace with the growth of the working-age population. So why didn't the statistics show a rise in unemployment?

Because more people have given up looking for jobs, and under this absurd method of counting the jobless, they don't count. The average time workers sought a job before finding one stretched from 19 to 19.6 weeks. Those who work part-time, even just one hour a week, are not considered unemployed, either.

This is not just a cyclical problem. Low-wage companies like WalMart are taking over retailing. Companies with union contracts outsource more and more jobs to non-union plants. Capital continues to flow to wherever in the world wages are lowest.

The owners have never wanted full employment. The existence of what Karl Marx called a "reserve army of the unemployed" lets them pit worker against worker in order to drive down both wages and other compensation like health benefits, vacations and pensions. Their profits come directly from the

Bankruptcy allows corporations to expropriate all the assets owed to the workers. Marx showed that the status of workers as creditors is not a fiction. How right he was.

It's time to take a cue from the 1989 UMWA occupation of the Pittston property, especially during the major attacks by the airline companies in Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The unions, as principal creditors, must take concrete steps to demand legal recognition of their de facto ownership by possession and occupation of the property. They are the only entity that can run the airlines and keep them afloat.

On Nov. 6, 2003, as hundreds of miners and steel workers rallied outside the headquarters of the bankrupt Horizon corporation to protest its collusion with the bankruptcy court, UMWA President Roberts, the organizer of the Pittston takeover, turned prophet, saying, "Sometimes it takes just the tiniest spark to lead to a great big fire." On Oct. 17, the Million Worker March in Washington can be that spark.

Neidenberg worked at Bethlehem Steel in Lackawanna, N.Y., from 1950 to 1965. Bethlehem has since declared bankruptcy.

unpaid labor of the workers.

Even after a period of so-called recovery, many households are "staggering under near-record debt loads. We have less equity in our homes and bigger balances on our credit cards than ever before. Bankruptcies continue to hit new highs, foreclosures are setting modern records and a big chunk of our disposable incomes pays for stuff we bought long ago." (Liz Pulliam Weston, MSN Money, Oct. 11)

Total household debt has been growing at an annual rate of about 10 percent, twice that of after-tax household income. The chain of debt slavery around the ankles of workers keeps getting heavier.

And economists expect things to get much worse after the election.

Bush says the economy's fine. Kerry says all it needs is a band-aid. Workers can't rely on either of them. What's needed is an independent fight for jobs.

The government has money—it's spending billions every day on the Pentagon. That money could be spent on a real jobs program, paying real money to millions of people to build good public housing, set up a national health program, clean up the cities and the environment. Kerry says he won't create jobs through "government make-work," but that's exactly what's needed.

Corporations can be forced to pay higher wages and add more jobs—even if just to provide relief to the overworked. So they have to dip into their bloated profits and executive salaries to pay for it. So what? That's their problem. And if they cry and threaten to shut down, the workers should cry out and threaten to take over.

It takes a militant, powerful movement of the workers and all progressive forces to bring about this kind of change. It will never come through politicians' flimsy promises. The Million Worker March holds the inspiration that such a movement is ready to be born. □

PUERTO RICO

Hunger strike aimed at ROTC, war in Iraq

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

With a hoarse voice showing the signs of hours of conversations, Héctor Rosario spoke with Workers World via telephone on Oct. 5 from the encampment where he started a hunger strike Sept. 26 in front of the Puerto Rican Capitol in San Juan.

Dr. Rosario is an assistant professor of Mathematics at the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez campus, where he has been very active in the struggle against militarization of the island. For health reasons, he was persuaded to conclude the hunger strike phase of his struggle on Oct. 5.

His consistent campaign against the U.S. war on Iraq and the ROTC program in the university, which he describes as the agenda to use Puerto Rican youths for the wars of conquest of the United States, this

time cost him six months of unpaid suspension from his classes.

On Sept. 3 he sent out a message informing supporters of the retaliatory measure taken by the chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico in Mayagüez: "As most of you know, I have been suspended from employment and salary effective yesterday, Sept. 2, 2004 until March 2, 2005."

Revealing his commitment to the students, his response to the vindictive chancellor's action was: "The only thing that you can do against me is suspending my salary and my health insurance. However, ... I will continue my educational functions in any ways since they go beyond any material consideration. My students are worth it." Thirty-year-old Rosario is the father of a girl for whom he has to pay for

school, making six months without income a taxing experience to his family.

Since the 1970s a struggle has been waged on the University of Puerto Rico campuses to expel the ROTC. However, this program, Pentagon's treasure box of bright young people and Rosario's case underscore the limitations imposed by the island's colonial status. The servitude of some in the university establishment to the imperialist power is an example of one of the facets in the fight against colonialism on the island.

This struggle tremendously increased with the Vieques' anti-Navy militancy. In a setback for the Pentagon, the Navy was ousted from the island municipality on May 2003. It now seems that the U.S. Defense Department is viciously retaliating. Going after Rosario is a signal to the island's pro-independence and anti-war activists that should be taken seriously in this time of "antiterrorist" aggressions.

In 1917 U.S. citizenship was imposed on the Puerto Rican people, most importantly to recruit young people for imperialist wars. The 65th Infantry Brigade, now the name of a central highway in the north of the island, was the brigade of Puerto Rican soldiers in the Korean War. In the Vietnam war, more Puerto Rican youths died, in comparison to the population, than youths from the United States.

Now, in the U.S. genocide against the Iraqi people, youths from the island are being recruited with the promise of studies and future employment that the Puerto Rican economy cannot afford. The saddest fact is that already dozens of families are mourning the deaths of their future generations.

Rosario's main demand is legal restoration to his teaching post while the appeal he has filed is finished so he can continue the mathematics course he began teaching. He wants an end to the political persecution suffered by the anti-military and pro-independence forces at the hands of the university's administration.

In the conversation with WW, Rosario was very upbeat, mentioning the many solidarity actions and messages that his cause has received. His students initiated a parallel hunger strike in Mayagüez, and mobilizations to put pressure on the administration continue, with one scheduled for Sept. 6, when a march will be held from the Río Piedras campus to the administration office.

Letters of protest demanding Rosario's restitution can be sent to the UPR president Lcdo. Antonio García Padilla, email: presidente@upr.edu. Messages of solidarity can be sent to Rosario at his Email: hrosario@math.uprm.edu, or call his cell: (787) 538-3117. □

After the elections, no matter who wins—

HOW CAN THE STRUGGLE MOVE FORWARD? A NATIONAL FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE

Sponsored by Workers World Party

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Do you want to really end the war, bring the troops home, fight for workers' rights, and build a movement against capitalism and racism?

Then come to a serious discussion on strategies.

The election won't solve war or poverty. It's a shell game.

Both Bush and Kerry come from the wealthy elite and are for this imperialist, capitalist system. Most unions, women's groups and other mass organizations hate Bush for tricking the country into war and feel compelled to support the Democrats. But Kerry is also for the war and says he'll send more troops and spend billions more on the Pentagon! Depending on who wins, the popular mood will be different.

The conference will discuss:

- ▶ What the outcome of the elections means
- ▶ Significance of the Million Worker March for the class struggle
- ▶ What youth are doing to fight military recruiting and the draft
- ▶ Resistance among soldiers, reservists and their families
- ▶ How the war machine eats up our wages and social services
- ▶ Getting unions and community groups to take an anti-war stand
- ▶ Supporting national liberation—in Iraq, Palestine, Haiti and everywhere
- ▶ Fighting imperialism by building international solidarity

The social crisis keeps growing.

Wealth has never been so polarized. Extreme poverty is forcing tens of millions to leave their homelands in search of work. For many, the trip ends with death at sea or along the borders; for millions more it ends in sweatshops or sexual slavery. Meanwhile, the bosses have created a global market for labor so they can go anywhere in search of lower wages and higher profits. Rampaging corporations destroy the environment and exhaust precious resources. Band-aids on a dying system won't work.

The conference will discuss:

- ▶ How workers can resist capitalist globalization

- ▶ Strengthening labor by fighting for immigrant rights
- ▶ Imperialist expansion in the post-Soviet era
- ▶ To save the world, we need socialist planning, not capitalist chaos

Capitalism breeds racism, oppression and inequality.

The workers are many. The capitalists are few. But with their billions they control the state and the media. Politicians and talk-show hosts use ridicule and worse to promote racism, sexism, homophobia and fear of immigrants in order to divide us. Washington uses 9/11 as an excuse for more repressive laws and an "endless war" for oil.

The conference will discuss:

- ▶ Resisting the Patriot Act and other repressive measures
- ▶ Abolishing the racist prison system and death penalty
- ▶ Women's struggles for choice and economic equality
- ▶ Full rights for lesbians, gays, bi & trans people

We know what's wrong. What do we want?

Jobs, housing, health care, education—these should be the right of every person.

In this high-tech world, it's a crime that anyone should be hungry or homeless. We're for ousting the billionaires from power and helping to build a workers' world that puts people's needs before profits. It's called socialism.

The conference will discuss:

- ▶ U.S. capitalism's Achilles' heel—the multinational working class
- ▶ Moving from dissent to militant resistance
- ▶ How mass struggles can lead to revolutionary movements
- ▶ Support for socialist Cuba, Korea and Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution

Kerry, Bush silent as Pentagon targets Iraqi civilians

Continued from page 1

a meeting with a top Zarqawi lieutenant."

The Times continued, "Senior administration, Pentagon and military officials said the air campaign was in part intended to present a stark choice to the people of Falluja, especially those who may be supporting Iraqi insurgents or the foreign fighters' network.

"If there are civilians dying in connection with these attacks, and with the destruction, the locals at some point have to make a decision," one Pentagon official said. "Do they want to harbor the insurgents and suffer the consequences that come with that, or do they want to get rid of the insurgents and have the benefits of not having them there?"

Thus the strategy of raining terror from the air on the civilian population is a calculated political strategy to undermine support for the resistance. An imperialist campaign against what is really a people's war is being directed against the entire population.

Bush, Kerry: deafening silence

With these war crimes being committed daily, the silence of the capitalist candidates is deafening. Of course, Bush could be expected to cover it up. But John Kerry and his entire campaign establishment have said not one word about it. In fact, Kerry has followed the line of the ruling class to keep quiet about the atrocities and has been noticeably silent about the prison torture regime at Abu Ghraib and other crimes against the Iraqi people.

Why would Kerry pass up using such an

enormous political advantage against his reactionary opponent? The range of options available to Kerry in the presidential debates is circumscribed by his loyalty to the capitalist class. Because, first of all, Kerry is thoroughly committed to the defeat of the resistance and the establishment of imperialist domination of Iraq. However, he is more inclined to share the contracts, the loot of the conquest, with the European imperialists to get them on board.

Kerry's program is to salvage the Bush occupation.

Kerry is a staunch defender of U.S. imperialism and capitalism around the world and at home. One only has to see Kerry through the eyes of the Iraqi people or the Korean people or the Iranian people or the Palestinian people to understand how international solidarity demands a rejection of this "lesser of two evils."

He has attacked Bush for not taking a harder line against Iran and North Korea and their right to self-defense, focusing on their possible development of nuclear weapons. Kerry has not mentioned that the Pentagon has between 6,000 and 7,000 nuclear weapons and has engaged in nuclear terror for 60 years. This is the only government in the world that has used atomic weapons in warfare, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki—heavily populated cities.

It is the height of imperialist great-power chauvinism to demand that countries formerly oppressed by imperialism, which gained independence at the cost of enormous bloodshed, now surrender their right to defend themselves by whatever means they can devise.

The Korean people fought a revolution-

Fearing post-election surprise

Youths mobilize to resist draft

By Julie Fry

The U.S. military faces a growing crisis in Iraq. Confronted with a popular resistance movement among the Iraqi people, the 130,000 U.S. troops now stationed there can't control the country.

Watching this quagmire unfold across their television and computer screens, millions of young people here are worried that the military draft may be reinstated—and a growing number are working to stop it.

In Iraq, the U.S. military's murderous forays outside of Pentagon-controlled "green zones" are met with fierce opposition. The resistance movement regains control of cities as soon as the occupiers retreat.

For U.S. troops, most of them young and poor, and disproportionately people of color, the situation in Iraq is horrifying. They are being forced to kill thousands of Iraqis and they in turn have become the targets of the Iraqi resistance.

Their tours have been extended by many months. Some work shifts as long as 24 hours because the brass so fears the Iraqi population, which is almost entirely against them. The situation is becoming more impossible for U.S. troops every day.

Dustin Langley, a G.I. counselor for the

Support Network for an Armed Forces Union—SNAFU—reports that resistance to the occupation is growing inside the military. According to Langley: "We hear from young people every day who ask, 'How do I get out of the military?'"

A report issued in January 2004 by Jeffrey Record, a visiting professor at the Air War College, stated that the U.S. Army is "near the breaking point." Indeed, nine out of 10 Army Divisions are now deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Sixty-three percent of the Army's forces are deployed somewhere overseas, although military experts say that in order to maintain long-term occupations it needs twice as many troops at home as overseas.

At the same time, the U.S. military is not recruiting new troops. All four divisions have missed their recruitment quotas for this year. And 49 percent of soldiers stationed in Iraq say they will not re-enlist. (www.nodraftnoway.org)

Both Sen. John Kerry and President George W. Bush are committed to maintaining the occupation of Iraq. Both have said that more troops are needed on the ground. Where will they find them?

Many people believe a campaign to reinstate the draft is likely, no matter who wins the presidential election. Meanwhile,

extended tours, stop-loss orders and call-ups of inactive soldiers continue.

Post-election plans spilled?

In September, Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania, a member of the House Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said he learned through conversations with Pentagon officials that Bush plans to call up a huge number of new troops—most of them from the National Guard and Reserves—after the Nov. 2 election.

This is just another form of a draft, since National Guard members and reservists are essentially civilians who spend one weekend a month in military service. But the plan also shows that the U.S. government is desperate for more troops—and this is what is causing youths around the country to fear an impending official draft.

Youths inside and outside the military are already organizing to resist the threat. Many are listening to anti-war voices like 19-year-old Brandon Hughey and 20-year-old David Sanders, who left the United States rather than be forced to play a part in the occupation. Both face jail time if they return.

Students are organizing against military recruiting on their campuses, in an effort to stop the draft before it starts. Recently, activists from the youth organi-



zation Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—FIST—shut down an ROTC drill on the North Carolina State University campus. The group plans more activities to shut down the military at their school.

In New York City, FIST and No Draft, No Way are sponsoring a mass meeting Dec. 11, called "Youth and Resistance to Militarism," to organize young activists against a possible draft. Organizers stress that the participation of youths in the anti-war movement shows that if Washington tries to force them to participate in the unjust occupation of Iraq, it will face massive resistance.

SNAFU's Langley concluded, "Whether we're talking about young people who are already in the military or young people facing a potential draft, it is clear that youth are against the bi-partisan agenda of 'endless war,' and are taking the lead in resisting."

Fry is an organizer with FIST, a revolutionary youth organization. Contact FIST@workers.org for more information.



Workers join anti-war forces to say 'No'

Continued from previous page

ary war against Japanese imperialism and its allies, the domestic capitalists and landlords. In the north, where a Korean guerrilla army helped defeat the Japanese, they won socialism and independence. They then lost millions of people in a U.S.-led war in which every building more than one-story high in North Korea was bombed and destroyed. U.S. military forces have occupied, divided and surrounded Korea for decades without letup.

The Iranian people suffered a CIA-sponsored counter-revolution in 1953 with the ouster of the popular Premier Mohammed Mossadegh, who had nationalized the country's oil. They then endured the U.S.-installed Shah, who tortured the opposition, turned over the oil to U.S. companies, and purchased billions in U.S. military arms to put down rebellion and revolution in the Persian Gulf. Only a bloody revolution in which tens of thousands sacrificed their lives overthrew the Shah, ousted the U.S. oil companies and brought about national independence.

And what of the Palestinians, who have been fighting for nearly 60 years against occupation, facing a regime armed to the teeth by the U.S. year after year? The Israeli state is an outpost of the giant oil companies and the Pentagon, protecting imperialist interests in the Middle East. It has made war on Syria. It has made war on Egypt. It bombed Lebanon. It bombed a nuclear facility in Iraq. It has nuclear weapons. And every day it commits new levels of atrocities against the Palestinian people.

John Kerry has denounced Iran and North Korea in the vilest terms and is a firm supporter of the Israeli state. He has tried to outdo Bush in his belligerent rhetoric. He has said Bush made a "colossal error" in making war without planning for the peace. What is "planning for the peace" but planning for the consolidation of colonial conquest after the war? From the point of view of the world's oppressed people, this was no "error," it was an imperialist crime.

Kerry boasts that he is a supporter of the biggest Pentagon budgets in history. To

the oppressed peoples of the world, in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America, this is support for a 21st-century version of the "big stick" of old colonialism that enslaved hundreds of millions over a period of 500 years.

Basis for anti-war, workers' unity

It is impossible to uphold internationalism and solidarity and close one's eyes to these facts. Furthermore, to support such an imperialist foreign policy is to betray the working class at home.

There is a firm class basis for the anti-war movement to unite with the workers' movement to oppose the war. The corporate forces that want to enslave the 10 million Iraqi workers and drive the Pentagon to every corner of the globe are the same capitalist forces that are waging daily war against the working class in the U.S.

Of course, Bush is an ardent advocate of the corporations in every sphere of state policy. He is far more reactionary than John Kerry in social and economic policy.

But after Nov. 2, the corporate and financial power structure will still be in

place. There will still be a green light for union busting, layoffs, shutting down plants and sending them to Haiti, Mexico and Indonesia to undermine wages. There will still be health care cutbacks, pension robbery and the brutal exploitation of millions of immigrant workers.

There will still be racism, sexism, bigotry against lesbian, gay, bi and trans people, prisons overflowing with Black and Latin@ youth, the racist death penalty, police brutality and all the other evils made inevitable by capitalist exploitation—the system of production for profit.

The struggle against war and exploitation must be carried out by mass mobilization and class struggle and it must ultimately be an open struggle against capitalism—the system in which a tiny minority of rich owners of the means of production dictate what happens to billions of people around the globe, including those who create the wealth of society.

This is the system, represented by both Kerry and Bush alike, that breeds all the evils which progressive humanity is struggling to overcome. It must be destroyed. □

Haiti today

Why the U.S. fears the spirit of Dessalines

By G. Dunkel

An Oct. 10 Associated Press dispatch from Port-au-Prince reported that 26 people, including some police, had met violent deaths in Haiti since Sept. 30. Other sources put the figure at 60. A Brazilian soldier with the United Nations occupation troops was injured by gunfire.

The struggle continues to be sharp over the kidnapping of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the installation of a new regime chosen by Washington. There are rumors that a major demonstration will be held on the anniversary of the assassination of Jean-Jacques Dessalines.

Dessalines, the first head of state of the new Black republic, was assassinated in the first coup in Haiti's history, on Oct. 17, 1806.

Understanding what Dessalines did and the forces that conspired to stop him and his program for the newly freed slaves of Haiti helps illuminate what is happening today. It explains why the people of Haiti have not stopped struggling to end foreign occupation and the oppression it breeds.

While Toussaint Louverture was the Haitian leader who opened the door for freedom, it was Dessalines who led the people through it.

It is uncertain whether Dessalines was born in Africa or Haiti. In his youth he often ran away from his slavemasters, and his body was covered with scars from the whippings he received. Soon after the rev-

olution started in 1791, he joined and quickly became a leader.

He was courageous, leading from the front of his troops. He was disciplined and determined as well as skillful and wily. He became one of Toussaint Louverture's main generals. When Napoleon sent Gen. Victor Emmanuel Leclerc, his brother-in-law, with 40,000 veteran troops to re-enslave Haiti, it was only Dessalines and a handful of L'Ouverture's other generals who put up a stiff resistance.

After the battle of Crête-à-Pierrot, the French captured L'Ouverture with a ruse and shipped him off to France to die in the Jura Mountains. When the Haitian masses learned that the French had reimposed slavery in their colony of Guadeloupe, their low-intensity resistance changed into a mass uprising with the slogan, "Live free or die."

Haitians died by the tens of thousands, responding so heroically to the gruesome, inhuman tortures inflicted on them by the French that the morale of the French troops suffered while the Haitians became more resolute.

In his dispatches to Napoleon, Leclerc said he saw no solution to the stubborn Haitian resistance except genocide. Then an epidemic of yellow fever struck, particularly afflicting the French Army. The Haitian Army began to reorganize and re-equip. With many new volunteers swelling their ranks, their counter-offensive began to gain momentum. Polish and German soldiers, who had been brought to Haiti by

the French as mercenaries, began to desert to the Haitians' side.

On Jan. 1, 1804, Dessalines and his general staff proclaimed Haiti an independent state, where slavery would never be permitted.

The constitution of 1805 said all Haitians would now be called Black—the terms metis (mixed race) and affranchis (freed African) would no longer be used. Another article of the constitution made it clear that the Poles and Germans who had been naturalized because they fought for Haiti would also be full citizens.

Late in 1804, Dessalines ordered the execution of all the white French slave owners still remaining in Haiti. Priests, lawyers and skilled workers were spared. The 1,200 former slave owners had remained a threat to a country whose cities were in ashes, its people exhausted, embittered and decimated by a genocidal war, and that was surrounded by slave-owning states.

Haitian and progressive historians point to Dessalines' decision to move against speculators and generals who were trying to gain control of the vast tracts of land abandoned by the French slave owners as a reason for his assassination. These "grandons" (large land owners), together with the "metis" based in the cities who wanted to control Haiti's commerce, joined together to get rid of Dessalines.

The two wings of Haiti's ruling class—the merchants and land owners—continued to be in a struggle with the peasants,

who were armed until the first U.S. occupation in 1916. This explains a lot of Haitian history, which otherwise can seem a succession of coups and countercoups. Neocolonial subjugation, sometimes enforced by occupation or armed aggression, was another important factor.

The successful slave revolution that Dessalines led was a great shock to the racist and expansionist states of that time, especially the United States, Great Britain and France. How could an ill-equipped group of runaway slaves, relying on their own forces, defeat the mighty French Army? How could these descendants of enslaved Africans, who legally were not even considered people in most constitutions, run a country, conduct commerce, have a legal system and so on?

The election of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 1990 was another big shock to the United States, which felt it had Haiti safely under its neocolonial thumb. It was more a movement than an election, growing out of decades of popular struggle against the Duvalier dictatorship and its successors.

Eight months after Aristide took office, the Haitian Army staged yet another coup. The United States returned him as president three years later on the condition that he step down in 1996, at the end of his term.

Aristide himself asserted that he modeled himself on Toussaint L'Ouverture, the conciliator, rather than Dessalines, the revolutionary.

Continued on page 10

TIJUANA, MEXICO

Labor conference to feature Cuban leaders

By Bob McCubbin
San Diego

The U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange has completed initial arrangements for an important labor conference in the Mexican city of Tijuana, directly across the U.S.-Mexico border from San Diego. The U.S. government denied visas for the leaders of the Confederation of Cuban Workers to enter this country.

Many U.S. and Mexican labor union leaders and rank-and-file unionists are expected to attend the Tijuana conference.

Of particular note, however, are the Cuban leaders who will be featured speakers at this conference: Pedro Ross Leal, general secretary of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC); Heydée Montes Cabrera, member of the National Secretariat of the CTC; Osvaldo Martínez, director of the World Economic Research

Center; Leonel González González, director of Foreign Relations of the CTC; Manuel Montero Bistillero, director of the Americas Department of Foreign Relations of the CTC; and Edison Earl Brown, official interpreter of the CTC.

The conference will focus on U.S.-Cuba relations, the U.S.-dominated Free Trade Area of the Americas—known as the FTAA in English and ALCA in Spanish, and immigration issues.

The conference will be held on the week-end of Dec. 10-12 at the Palacio Azteca Hotel in downtown Tijuana. Registration will begin on Friday at 6 p.m. and a reception will welcome the Cuban guests at 7 p.m.

For more information or to pre-register—strongly recommended—write: U.S. Cuba Labor Exchange, P.O. Box 39188, Redford, MI 48239, U.S.A.; call 313-561-8330; or email laborexchange@aol.com. □

PUERTO RICO

Water workers walk out over health-care benefits

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad

When the government-run Aqueducts and Sewage Authority (AAA) tried to cut workers' health benefits and stopped negotiating on this issue, the Independent Genuine Union (UIA) walked out on strike Oct. 5 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

An Oct. 10 meeting of some 55 unions declared themselves ready for a national strike in solidarity with the UIA.

The AAA had refused to negotiate regarding contributions to the worker's health-care plan, and threatened to suspend the plan. It also had moved from the bargaining table 15 other clauses in the contract.

Behind the health-care cut is a multi-million-dollar contract with the insurance group Triple S. In August, without worker consent, the AAA decided to replace Blue Cross, the workers' insurance carrier, with Triple S, in an attempt to undermine the union's protection for its workers through a contract.

Hector René Lugo, president of UIA, which represents 4,000 of the 6,000 AAA workers, said the union was confronting a direct attack on "the lives of workers and their right to have a union." Lugo referred to the company's recent anti-union actions, including hiring scabs, who have crossed picket lines in an attempt to break up the strike.

This strike is reminiscent of the 70,000-strong grocery worker strike in California last year. There too the bosses' withdrawal of health-care rights from the bargaining contract provoked the strike.

The AAA has carried on a bitter daily

diatribe against the UIA in the local newspapers like El Nuevo Día. On Oct. 10, after two-plus marathon days of negotiating, the AAA appeared willing to accept the UIA demand that workers have the right to choose either their own health-care plan or the AAA plan.

The AAA argues that since the workers have chosen the union plan, the workers will now be responsible for subsidizing their own health-care plan. This would mean no retroactive payments into the workers' health plan by the bosses.

In response, Lugo said, "This would be retaliation [by the bosses] since the workers chose our medical plan" [instead of the AAA's plan]. He pointed out that the AAA's proposal stipulates that neither agency shall discriminate against the workers.

Some of Puerto Rico's militant unions like the Federation of Puerto Rican Teachers, the Union of the Electrical and Irrigation Workers, and the Association of Exempt Non-Teaching Employees, as well as the Socialist Front and the Socialist Workers Front, have declared their support with the UIA workers on strike.

On Oct. 10 in a packed meeting at the Teamsters Union headquarters in Santurce, representatives from 55 different unions announced their unanimous support for the UIA's strike. Seven statements of support included the possibility of a national strike as an act of solidarity.

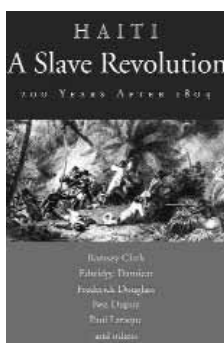
Victor Villalba, president of the Puerto Rican Central of Workers, announced that "we are evaluating the national strike" probability very closely, and that it can be declared "at any time." □

HAITI A SLAVE REVOLUTION - 200 years after 1804

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Colombia general strike unites workers, peasants

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

"And surrounded by threats that give us courage... we will all participate in the work stoppage without fear or cowardice ..."

Those are the only words in a beautiful poster announcing the Oct. 12 one-day general strike in Colombia. The main labor union associations—the General Confederation of Workers (CGT), the Unitary Workers' Central (CUT), and the Confederation of Retirees of Colombia (CPC)—together forming the Unitary Central Command, initiated the call for the strike.

Mobilizations and actions were planned throughout the country. The largest turnout was expected in the capital, Bogotá.

Walking 422 kilometers south from Bucaramanga, 300 health workers and labor unionists, more than 400 students of the Santander Industrial University, and several professors arrived in Bogotá Oct. 11 to join the strike. They had left on Oct. 4, and on their way they distributed 100,000 fliers explaining and calling attention to the critical situation of health services in the country. Privatization of the

health service denies the population essential care, leaving many hospitals shut down.

Teachers from Boyacá, also to the north of Bogotá, were marching to join the strike too. Also, from the municipality of Soacha, indigenous people and peasants were coming. They planned to join together with other marchers and converge on the historic Plaza Bolívar in the afternoon.

What unites all these sectors of Colombian society? Bank and court workers, rice farmers and panela makers, teachers and students, health workers, Indigenous and Afrocolombian communities?

The terrible political and economic crisis that Colombia is suffering unites them.

As Carlos Rodríguez Díaz, CUT president, said, there are five core issues behind the strike: the struggle against the immediate presidential re-election; against the Free Trade Agreement (with the United States); against a proposed package of laws; for the defense of civil liberties and for humanitarian accords; and for a political negotiated solution of the armed conflict.

Just to say "the defense of civil liberties"

sounds so understated considering its true meaning in this beleaguered country. Colombia's union leaders live under constant death threat. Nine of every 10 trade unionists killed in the world are killed in Colombia.

To survive, union and community leaders must be accompanied by bodyguards, ride in armored cars and be always aware. And yet, they can be assassinated at any moment, in front of their families or alone.

One example is the recent murder of Pedro Mosquera, the vice president of the Araucan Peasant Association. He was known for eloquent and consistent criticisms of Colombian President Álvaro Uribe's policies of "Democratic Security," which have increased repression against progressive activists. These statements brought him death threats and Mosquera attempted to flee to Venezuela.

Just this month Mosquera's dead body was found. There were signs of torture. No serious investigation has been conducted by the government.

Mosquera's assassins, most certainly paramilitaries—death squads that work

hand in hand with the Colombian police and military and that are the main perpetrators of the crimes and violence against the social and trade-union movements—might not be found. Close to 99 percent of these crimes remain completely unpunished, even after years.

Labor unions in Colombia not only fight for better wages and benefits. They fight for the lives of their members, for the mere survival of their unions and for the peace of the whole population.

Uribe's policies that are benefiting big businesses, many of them United States-based corporations like Coca Cola, are decimating the unions.

Sinaltrainal, the food industry workers' union representing the Coca Cola workers, has lost nine of its members at the hands of paramilitaries working for the company. With the help of the government and paramilitaries, Coca Cola has closed plants and threatened union members to make them disaffiliate.

The bosses have gone to such extremes as keeping the workers hostage in hotels

Continued on page 11

WWP vice-presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez:

'Immigrant rights – a crucial battle of our times'

The immigrant rights struggle is one of the most important civil rights and working-class issues of our times. That struggle is rising. And we are in it with you.

We hail, with complete support, the Oct. 16 marches in Los Angeles for immigrant rights. And we salute the Million Worker March which is raising so many critical issues. The MWM is not only showing solidarity with immigrants, it is also going to help elevate the struggle of immigrants by fighting to improve the lives of all workers.

This battle against increased repression, racism and dire social conditions—including some of the most abusive and exploitative working conditions—demands the utmost solidarity of all workers, particularly documented workers.

Last month an Associated Press dispatch, based on analyzing years of federal statistics, reported that on average, one Mexican worker dies every day on the job in the United States—impaled, crushed or in some other terrible accident. And overall, Central and South American immigrant laborers here died in record numbers in 2002. These accidents are often preventable with simple safety precautions, the report admitted, even in the most dangerous job categories.

But it will take a fight with the bosses to win these safety and health battles.

And for the last 10 years, Mexican workers trying to cross the border into the United States have been dying at the rate of one per day.

The militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border has meant more deaths because workers looking for jobs are forced to travel through even more remote desert and mountainous regions. Workers risk drowning, freezing, dehydrating and being shot down by "La Migra" immigration cops.

The urban areas that workers are attempting to reach are those most heavily guarded. The U.S. government has spent more than \$10 billion to seal off the crossing area between Tijuana and San Diego. It has beefed up the force of border patrol agents to more than 9,000. They are armed with motion and sound detectors, infrared telescopes, stadium lighting and military-style helicopters. This militarization also means further strengthening of state repression in this country.

The Department of "Homeland Security" has inherited the duties of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. This makes immigration a highly political issue tied directly to imperialism's so-called war on terror. And the round-ups, the disappearings of Arab, Muslim and South Asian immigrants, are part and parcel of this war.

The U.S. immigration policy is set by a capitalist government which acts as a representative of the capitalist ruling class. It is this class that ultimately sets policy—on immigration, on war in Iraq, on every question. And it is this class—from the boardrooms of transnational corporations

to the front offices of cockroach capitalists—that grows rich from profits they steal from the working class, including millions of immigrant workers, who create all the wealth of this country.

Sweatshops and poverty wages are a cornerstone of this profit system. And with their armies, the capitalist class tramples on borders all over the world in its drive for war and profits. They demand the freedom of "globalization"—the right of finance capital to cross any border in order to create the economic and social conditions that force workers to come to the U.S. in search of jobs.

The NAFTA trade agreement has driven Mexican farmers off their lands and into tax-free maquiladora factories along the border that produce super profits for U.S. imperialists.

And the U.S. capitalist class is trying to impose the Free Trade Area of the Americas—the FTAA, or ALCA in Spanish—on the region to force more countries to open their markets and borders to U.S. finance capital and privatize their most profitable national enterprises. FTAA/ALCA also demands removal of duties on U.S. goods. And at the same time, these governments are being ordered to slash domestic bud-

gets for social programs—health care, housing, education and so on.

But all of this is going to bring a massive fightback by immigrant workers—as we've already seen.

Just a year ago immigrant workers—documented and undocumented—said "Basta ya," enough is enough, and rallied 100,000 strong in the historic Oct. 4, 2003, demonstration in Queens, N.Y. following the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. Their main demand was amnesty for undocumented immigrants.

As never before, from California to New York, from Illinois to New Jersey, immigrants are changing the face of labor and organizing to defend their interests.

And this fightback will have a great impact on the overall class struggle.

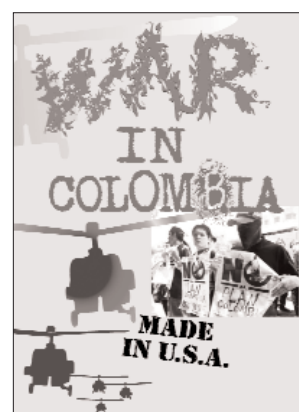
The erosion of living standards and increased repression are spurring political consciousness.

What is needed is an independent struggle against the capitalist bosses that is cemented by solidarity. The bosses try to divide the workers, with bigotry and with borders. But we say: There are no borders in the workers' struggle. We need to fight back, together. And together we will win! □



WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

Teresa Gutierrez
Vice Presidential
candidate for
Workers World Party.



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WW PHOTO: TOM DORAN

Oct. 12 Atlanta immigrants rally.

ATLANTA

Immigrants march for dignity

Latin@ community members march on Oct. 12—La Dia de la Raza—in Doraville, an Atlanta suburb. They demanded drivers' licenses for immigrants, an end to racist profiling and recognition of their contributions to Georgia's economy.

The Second Annual March for Dignity was organized by the Coordinating Council of Latin@ Community leaders. Speakers at the closing rally at UAW Local 10's union hall included African American and Latin@ elected officials, union leaders from the Atlanta Labor Council, UNITE HERE and UAW, and veteran civil rights activists.

—Dianne Mathiowetz

workers world editorial

We salute the MWM!

Continued from page 1

of dollars in union dues to elect “the lesser evil” candidate, Kerry, the message of the Million Worker March is that a new, dynamic workers’ movement is on the horizon—a movement that will speak and fight in its own name for full social justice.

The MWM is a clarion call for unity. The billionaire moneyed class, the real rulers of the United States, have grown rich off profits produced by the labor of the multinational working class. These bosses use racism, sexism and lesbian, gay, bi and trans oppression to divide the workers in order to keep them from coming together to organize for union jobs, health care, housing, education and other human needs.

These divisions help profits soar while impoverishment and disenfranchisement deepen. The tiny minority of the rich get even richer while the vast majority of the workers become even poorer.

This same ruling class uses its government and the mainstream media to justify its wars for empire abroad by pitting workers here against workers in other countries. The capitalist bosses mask their drive for super-profits under the guise of “fighting terrorism” or “defending national security.” This kind of jingoistic frenzy helped to justify the repressive Patriot Act after Sept. 11, 2001, targeting Arabs, South Asians and Muslims.

The initiators of the MWM have taken a clear stand against these dangerous divisions—in word and in action. They have stretched out a hand of solidarity to all currents of the anti-war movement that have been mobilizing in the streets against war and occupation in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, Palestine and elsewhere.

The MWM is a revolutionary concept.

The MWM has some similarities to the 1995 Million Man March in Washington, D.C., the 1997 Million Women’s March in Philadelphia, the 1998 Million Youth March in Harlem and the 1999 Millions for Mumia demonstration in Philadelphia. These mass demonstrations were not just about bringing out large numbers of people but about building unity based on a political program of fighting repression.

The 1995, 1997 and 1998 marches brought out predominantly African American masses with implicit demands for long-denied political representation and economic empowerment. Those in the leadership of these marches were grassroots Black community and political activists.

Local 10 is a Black-led union that has fought against apartheid in South Africa and supported a new trial for African American death-row political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The Black leadership of Local 10 is attempting with the MWM to build an independent, grassroots movement based on broad class-wide solidarity to embrace all nationalities—including immigrant workers, documented or undocumented.

This merging of anti-racist and class issues by the MWM shows the potential of this movement to ignite revolutionary struggle.

It is in the interests of the entire U.S. progressive movement to help strengthen this exciting new phase of the workers’ upsurge that we are witnessing by providing concrete solidarity. □



WW PHOTO: JULIA LA RIVA

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NIGERIA

General strike targets fuel prices, poverty

By Monica Moorehead

Nigeria is currently in the grip of a nationwide general strike that began Oct. 11.

The strike was called by the Nigeria Labor Congress to protest a 25-percent increase in fuel costs after fuel subsidies were eliminated last year.

Since the current government came into office in 1999, there have been nine increases in fuel prices.

This particular strike was scheduled to end by Oct. 14, but on Oct. 12 the NLC stated that due to violent attacks by police against student protesters and other supporters of the work stoppage, the strike would be extended beyond the original deadline. (Xinhuanet)

In Lagos, the capital, schools, banks, offices, government services and businesses were closed and streets were deserted, showing the effectiveness of the strike. Other cities such as Ibadan, Kano and Port Harcourt were virtually shut down by the strike as well. (businessafrica.net, Oct. 12)

The strike has gained the support of the National Union of Petroleum and Gas Workers of Nigeria and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria.

One out of four Africans lives in Nigeria, making it the most populous country on the continent. Nigeria is one of the biggest oil-producing countries, and the sixth-biggest exporter of oil.

The rise in fuel costs has exacerbated deteriorating living conditions. Nigerians depend on oil to cook the little food that they can afford to buy, and to get to work either by car or public transportation.

Who’s really to blame?

What is the main driving force behind the skyrocketing fuel costs? Is it solely governmental policy, or are there larger social forces that lurk beneath this crisis?

Nigeria has seen many governments come and go, especially since the 1980s. But these presidents, whether military- or civilian- dominated, have been nothing more than puppets. And who pulls the strings of any puppet government?

The transnational corporations and banks that rule the economy are the real policy

makers.

In the case of Nigeria, the forces that control the economy are those who control oil production: Shell, ExxonMobil and Chevron Texaco.

It is a misconception that the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries controls the price of oil worldwide. OPEC members include Nigeria and other oil-rich countries, especially in the Middle East.

OPEC also does not control the buying and selling of oil on the world capitalist market because it does not possess the overall technology to produce and refine the oil. The developing countries have been denied that right by the Big Oil conglomerates based in the richer, capitalist countries.

This is one reason why with all of its oil wealth, Nigeria does not have its own oil companies. In fact, Royal Dutch/Shell, which has ties to Wall Street, accounts for half of Nigeria’s oil production. ExxonMobil is the second-biggest oil producer Nigeria.

The exportation of Nigerian oil helps pay the interest on Nigeria’s debt to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Millions of dollars in profit are being extorted by exporting Nigerian oil while the Nigerian people are forced to pay high prices for oil being imported from elsewhere.

This is the real cause of the spiraling poverty in Nigeria.

While the poverty rate in Nigeria is currently 28 percent, and 45 percent of Nigerians are in poverty (www.phrasebase.com/countries), Shell’s gross revenues are in excess of \$175 billion a year. (www.shellfacts.com)

This powerful strike is but one example of the rich fight back off the Nigerian people resisting the super-exploitation of their resources. It was reported on Oct. 12 that as a result of a group of “unidentified saboteurs” setting fire to one of Shell’s pipelines that sends crude oil to its export terminal, Shell was cutting back on its oil production in the Niger Delta. (www.canada.com/businesscentre)

In 2001, women the Niger Delta region took Chevron-Texaco managers hostage for more than a week to demand that oil profits be spent to create meaningful jobs for their children and build hospitals and decent roads in their villages. □

Haiti: Why the U.S. fears the spirit

Continued from page 8

But Aristide ran for president again in 2000 and won, with 92 percent of the vote. This time it took three years for the coup to be organized, because Aristide had dissolved the army in 1995. To weaken the government, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, with U.S. complicity, cut off aid to the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere.

Having secretly got permission to use the Dominican Republic as a launching pad, Washington then implemented a plan to invade Haiti with a bunch of hired killers—the “Macoutes”—from the days of the Duvalier dictatorship, along with ex-militaries and a few outright bandits. Meanwhile, the Haitian bourgeoisie set up a “democratic” movement consisting of former students, union leaders and opportunists of every stripe to serve as a political cover for the invasion.

Even then, Aristide refused to leave his post. So on Feb. 29 of this year, the Marines assigned to U.S. Ambassador James Foley hustled Aristide onto a plane to Central Africa and effected a “regime change.”

Meanwhile, a plane from South Africa, loaded with arms and ammunition for defenders of the

Aristide government, was refueling in Kingston, Jamaica. Aristide had obviously intended to distribute the arms to the people to prevent the coup.

Ever since then, Fanmi Lavalas—Aristide’s political party—has been holding protests demanding the physical return of Aristide to his post, an end to repression, the end of foreign occupation, the release of all political prisoners, and reducing the cost of living. The National Popular Party, which calls for class struggle and national liberation, has also been in the streets.

On Sept. 30, the anniversary of the first coup against Aristide, these protests intensified, as did repression from the U.S.-picked government of Gérard Latortue. Police and UN “peacekeepers” have been going into poor neighborhoods in Port-au-Prince, where the support for Aristide is high, and taking young men away in trucks. This is meeting with resistance and sometimes gunfights break out.

Cap Haitien, Haiti’s second-biggest city, also saw a significant demonstration on Sept. 30. The city of Gonaïves, however, was too busy cleaning up after the disastrous floods from Hurricane Jeanne.

Huge mud slides cost over 2,500 Haitian

What women want from the election

By Minnie Bruce Pratt

The U.S. presidential campaign is settling into the usual October horse race, with President George W. Bush and Democratic challenger Sen. John Kerry in a statistical dead heat, according to an Oct. 8 Reuters/Zogby poll.

And what's the "swing" group both Bush and Kerry hope to capture and ride to victory? Women.

Andrew Kohut, director of the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, says that women "will be the story of this election: the way women make this choice." (New York Times, Sept. 22)

A Time magazine poll, also issued on Oct. 8, showed Bush still leading with male voters, getting 51 percent to Kerry's 35 percent. Time said Kerry's rebound, from September doldrums to the current tie in the polls, came from his increased "likability" among women.

Both Bush and Kerry are actively courting women in the most old-fashioned sense of that word, offering style rather than a plan of action to address the urgent problems of jobs, housing, health care, child care and education faced by most women in the United States.

According to Republican pollsters Lance Tarrance and Leslie Sanchez, Bush's acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention was doctored to give it "feminine appeal" relative to the war on Iraq. They noted that the addition of "emotional connection" and personal anecdotes about Bush holding "the children of the fallen" were there to reassure women he could keep them and their children safe.

Of course, this strategy is also based on the sexist assumption that women want emotion and protection, rather than fact, action and the resources to take care of themselves. It reflects Bush's consistently right-wing and reactionary stance on women's issues.

Kerry's contempt

Reform-oriented women's groups like the National Organization for Women are pushing Kerry as "the woman's candidate in 2004" and a real alternative to Bush. But a visit to Kerry's campaign web site reveals such failure to deal with the reality of women's lives that it borders on contempt.

of Dessalines

lives. Around 900 people are still listed as missing. The witch hunts for Lavalas supporters and the chaotic regime change sponsored by the United States had left emergency services completely broken down. The Latortue regime has done little more than provide back-hoes to dig mass graves.

After the hurricane, Venezuela loaded two ships with tons of supplies to help its neighbors. One went to Grenada and Cuba, the other to Jamaica and Haiti. Cuba, though hit earlier by Hurricane Ivan, sent a team of 60 medical personnel to Gonaïves, where the hospital had been destroyed in the floods. People, many injured, are living in the open, facing cholera and typhoid because the water system was destroyed.

The Haitian masses won a surprising victory against French colonialism in 1804. They surprised the U.S. in 1990 by electing the nationalist figure Aristide, even though Washington had given his opponent millions of dollars. Their amazing resilience in the face of terrible adversity can once again surprise the imperialists trying to re-enslave Haiti. □

What it shows, instead, is that Kerry is really a friend of big business, as he himself has said.

What's Kerry's answer to closing the pay gap between men and women that has women earning only 77 cents for every man's dollar? He'll ask companies to reveal more about their payment practices.

What's Kerry's suggestion for helping millions of women cope with the crushing demands of parenting along with work with no health benefits and less than living wages? Some additional after-school programs and a modest increase in the child-care tax credit.

Kerry pays lip service to women's reproductive choice, but what are his concrete proposals for women's health? They are limited to more funding for breast cancer research—a good thing but also a boon for big drug companies—and an update to the Patient's Bill of Rights about women's access to an obstetrician/gynecologist under managed-care programs. Nothing about how the millions of women without health insurance could afford such a doctor in the first place.

In an attempt to co-opt the opposition of many women to the brutal U.S. war on Iraq, the Kerry campaign has sent out a group of eight women who are wives and mothers of U.S. soldiers to tour as "Moms with a Mission." The mission is to elect Kerry as commander-in-chief.

Kerry's plan is to continue the war on Iraq and increase the number of U.S. troops there. He has indicated no intention to spare the lives of either working-class U.S. soldiers sent there by the economic draft or of Iraqi children, women and men now being wounded and dying in ever greater numbers.

The fraud of capitalist democracy

The Bush administration justified the current U.S. wars on both Afghanistan and Iraq by arguing that U.S. occupation aims to set up "democracies" under which women's lives would improve. On Oct. 9

Colombia general strike unites workers, peasants

Continued from page 9

or plants with armed guards outside the doors until they renounce to their union membership.

As a result of this repression the union has lost many members. Most unions have seen their leadership killed and membership reduced.

A conference summoned by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and the World Confederation of Labor took place in Bogotá in September. The conference report states that more than 670 union leaders have been threatened during Uribe's administration.

That is almost twice as many as the 357 threatened under the previous government. Sixty-three have suffered harassment; 98 have been displaced internally or are in exile.

The police carried out 14 illegal house searches as compared with two in a similar period under President Pastrana, and 104 arbitrary detentions as opposed to 10.

What is amazing is the workers' capacity to struggle in the face of this assault. President Uribe has even declared 29 of 33 strikes illegal. That is why among the Oct. 12 National Strike's demand is the return of rule of law that had been guaranteed by the constitution.

It's not only union leaders who are victims. Indigenous, Afrocolombian and peasant populations have been massacred



Boston reproductive rights demonstration, Oct. 3.

WW PHOTO: LIZA GREEN

in Afghanistan, all 15 opponents of the current U.S.-imposed president, Hamid Karzai, denounced the election held that day as fraudulent and illegitimate.

In the days leading up to the election, the U.S. media made much of women voting. But the New York Times coverage of election day revealed, perhaps inadvertently, the deeper problems of women in Afghanistan. Most at the polls in the poorest neighborhoods of Kabul were illiterate. Many had such deeply damaged eyesight that they could not make out the candidate photographs necessary to cast a ballot. (New York Times, Oct. 10)

This misery reflects years of devastating war imposed on Afghanistan by the United States. After a 1978 popular revolution there that championed women's rights and sent teams of teachers and medical workers into rural and urban areas, the CIA spent billions of dollars to overthrow it, constructing an army of the Taliban and other feudal forces. It was part of the Cold War against the Soviet Union, and millions of Afghan people were the victims. (Workers World, Oct. 10, 1996)

Now Washington is waging another war, this time against some of the same elements it sponsored earlier, but also tied

to U.S. imperialism's determination to control the vast resources of central Asia, which once belonged to the Soviet peoples.

In Iraq, U.S. sanctions and war have killed women and their loved ones while destroying their homes. Women under the occupation have also lost many benefits formerly provided by their national government—benefits that women in the United States have never had, such as free education through the university level, government-guaranteed jobs for women who wanted to work outside the home, equal pay for equal work, free health care, including pre- and post-natal care, six months paid maternity leave and subsidized child care in most work places, as well as subsidies for basic food and housing. ("Talking with Friends and Family About Iraq: A Madre Guide," madre.org)

Do any of the candidates running in the U.S. elections commit to ending the "endless war" waged by the U.S. ruling class? Are any working for a world where all women can blossom in their full humanity, including lesbian, bisexual and trans women, women of oppressed nationalities and/or immigrants, and women who are disabled?

Yes. The Workers World presidential and vice-presidential candidates, John Parker and Teresa Gutierrez, have a revolutionary program to address what women want from the future. Their web site is vote4workers.org. □

AIM denounces 'Conquest'

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traitor" for having "gone native." These small examples reveal a much larger and dangerous psychology of the ongoing war by the U.S. against indigenous peoples and other "infidels and heathens."

* With our arrest and our prosecution by the City of Denver, we intend to go on the offensive, to put Columbus on trial, to put his legacy on trial, to put the City of Denver, the state of Colorado, and the U.S. itself on trial. We will defend ourselves with an unapologetic political defense in court, and, just as we did in 1992, and in 2001, we will prevail.

Colorado AIM and our allies do not risk our liberty as a political ploy, or merely as a tactic; we believe that the time is overdue to challenge the most pervasive and the most deeply seated source of racism in the world: the oppression of indigenous peoples. Columbus Day continues to operate as a justification of racial superiority, and it, in fact, creates demonstrable and verifiable harm to our children, and to their children.

For further comments on these actions, or on the philosophy behind these statements, please contact Colorado AIM at (303) 871-0463 or coloradoaim.org. □

and victimized at the hands of the same paramilitaries.

Entire families, including children, are made to witness the torture, rape and assassination of their parents, creating a real reign of terror. Whole villages have been forcefully emptied by this violence.

Once emptied, these territories are then developed by big corporations. One example is Pedro Mosquera's home region of Arauca, previously an agricultural and cattle-raising region. Once oil was discovered, it was the beginning of the end for the peasant and indigenous residents.

Now in the hands of U.S.-based Occidental Petroleum, Arauca is the most militarized region of the country. There the U.S.-trained Colombian army has as its emblem an oil tower.

That is why one of the strike demands is against the Free Trade Agreement. Uribe's policies are to sell Colombia to private and mostly foreign capital. And to carry that out he is first trying to decimate and suppress the unions and the progressive movement.

But as the strike slogan says: "Threats give us courage." The fight of the workers and the poor in Colombia is thriving, now with more determination and unity.

It is up to the international labor movement and progressive social organizations to take up that struggle and offer it the most energetic and unconditional support. □

En la frontera mexicana

Una protesta confronta a la Operación Guardabarrera

Por Ruth Vela
San Ysidro, Calif.

Casi 1,000 trabajador@s, estudiantes, madres y niñ@s salieron a las calles de San Ysidro el 2 de octubre para manifestarse contra la Operación Guardabarrera. Su mensaje era claro: “¡Tres mil muertos no se olvidarán!”

Esta importante protesta fue organizada por la Coalición para los Derechos de la Raza y el Comité de Servicio de Amigos (Cuáqueros) Americanos (American Friends Service Comm.), y estaba apoyada por cientos de grupos e individuos de la localidad y de tan lejos como Los Ángeles, Santa Bárbara, y San Francisco, en California, y de Tucson en Arizona.

Activistas del Centro de Acción Internacional trajeron una bandera con la consigna, “¡La batalla de los obreros no tiene fronteras!”.

La Operación Guardabarrera es la constante e innecesaria militarización de la

frontera estadounidense/mexicana que fue iniciada por el Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización durante la administración de Clinton que argumentaba que era necesaria para librar “la guerra contra las drogas”.

Desde el comienzo del programa el primero de octubre de 1994, el gobierno ha gastado más de \$10 mil millones en su esfuerzo de cerrar el sector tradicional de travesía entre Tijuana, México y San Diego, Calif. El número de agentes patrulleros de la frontera se ha incrementado de 980 a más de 9,000.

Ahora ellos están provistos de detectores de movimiento y sonido, telescopios de luz infrarroja, iluminación potente, y helicópteros tipo-militar.

Cercas nuevas y reforzadas también forman parte del plan para cerrar la frontera. Antes de Guardabarrera había aproximadamente 19 millas de cercado de acero, de una altura de 10 pies, en San Diego. Ahora hay más de 50 millas de triple cercado que corre a todo lo largo

desde el pie de las Montañas Otay hasta el Océano Pacífico.

Las zonas urbanas a las cuáles los trabajadores tratan de llegar, son las más vigiladas. Este hecho empuja a l@s inmigrantes a lugares más remotos donde las temperaturas extremas y duras condiciones siegan muchas vidas.

El número actual de muertos en el sur de California es más de 3,000 pero éste no incluye los cadáveres que todavía no se han descubierto en el desierto desolado y en las partes montañosas peligrosas a donde los inmigrantes han sido forzados.

Miles de personas corren el riesgo de ahogarse, morir de frío, de deshidratación, o baleados por la policía de la Migra, solo para poder buscar trabajo. El acuerdo comercial ALCA le ha quitado sus terrenos a muchos pequeños rancheros mexicanos teniendo que irse a trabajar a las maquiladoras que están a lo largo de la frontera. Estas fábricas no pagan impuestos, produciendo ganancias

para los imperialistas estadounidenses. Las fábricas en Tijuana de propietarios extranjeros pagan a sus trabajador@s un promedio de 450 pesos a la semana, aproximadamente \$40 US.

Mientras tanto, el gobierno estadounidense tiene la audacia de insistir en impedir el movimiento libre de mano de obra mientras trata de aumentar el movimiento libre de capital.

Durante los últimos 10 años la gente que trata de cruzar la frontera ha estado muriéndose una por día. Se construyen tiendas en esta misma proporción en la plaza comercial que se ubica a menos de un cuarto de milla de la frontera en el lado de California.

La movilización de masas que tuvo lugar el 2 de octubre fue más que una marcha en la frontera. Fue una demanda para que se acaben los muertos, una conmemoración de esas vidas perdidas, una llamada pública por la justicia, y un recordatorio de que no hay fronteras en la lucha de l@s trabajador@s. □

Declaración de l@s candidat@s del PMO (WWP) No hay voz obrera en los debates entre Bush y Kerry

Declaración del Partido
sobre la campaña electoral

No hubo sorpresa alguna durante el primer debate entre el presidente Republicano George W. Bush y su retador el senador John Kerry, el 30 de septiembre. Aunque fue anunciado como una confrontación sobre la política internacional, solo sirvió para demostrar la poca diferencia que realmente existe entre ellos.

Estos dos candidatos de Monopolios Petroleros y Wall Street reiteraron su apoyo a la brutal ocupación militar de los Estados Unidos en Irak y a la permanente agresión imperialista mundial.

El criminal de guerra Bush prometió “terminar con el trabajo” que inició de recolonizar a Irak a beneficio de sus socios ricos y de llevar su “guerra sin fin” a otros países que se atrean a afirmar su independencia del imperio estadounidense. Afortunadamente la heroica resistencia iraquí, apoyada por la abrumadora mayoría de su pueblo, sigue haciendo una farsa de las palabras de Bush.

Solo unos pocos días antes, Kerry por fin –¡POR FIN!– había hecho una denuncia a Bush por sus mentiras sobre las razones para lanzar una guerra preventiva contra Irak. Sin embargo durante el debate, Kerry reiteró su intención de “seguir con lo comenzado” y hacer un mejor trabajo de dominar a Irak. Él solicitó tácticas aún más crueles contra la resistencia popular en Falluja y en otras ciudades, provocando que el columnista derechista del New York Times, William Safire, denominara a Kerry el “neoconservador más nuevo”.

Mientras que más gente en los EEUU



FOTO: JULIA LA RIVA
John Parker y Teresa Gutiérrez son candidat@s del para presidente y vice-presidenta; Leilani Dowell es candidata para el Congreso en San Francisco.

quiere que retornen las tropas ahora, ninguno de los candidatos habló de regresarlas a casa –ni ahora ni en cualquier momento. Kerry se aseguró a enfatizar que él, tanto como Bush, quiere “ganar” en Irak y no salirse. No se pronunció ni una sola palabra sobre las bajas civiles en Irak, las cuales según algunos estimados ya alcanzan la cifra de hasta 30.000 muertos.

Preguntado sobre su posición relacionada a la doctrina de guerra preventiva, Kerry respondió, “El presidente siempre tiene el derecho y siempre ha tenido el derecho de lanzar un golpe preventivo”. El prometió jamás abandonar el “derecho” a utilizar el colosal poder del Pentágono en contra de naciones soberanas.

De hecho Kerry regañó a Bush por no haber sido más agresivo con Corea del Norte por su supuesto desarrollo de armas nucleares defensivas, en el mismo momento en que barcos de la Marina de Guerra de EEUU estaban siendo enviados para amenazar a la península coreana. Pero ni Bush ni Kerry dijeron nada sobre el arsenal nuclear de Israel o su masacre continua del pueblo palestino.

Ellos propusieron las cuestiones

domésticas para otro debate. Pero ¿espera alguien que ellos realmente discutan cuestiones de vida o muerte que le conciernen a l@s trabajador@s y la gente oprimida, como el racismo, la brutalidad policial, el desempleo, los bajos salarios, la discriminación contra mujeres, lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y gente transgénera, el desprecio de l@s inmigrantes, la cifra escandalosa de personas sin seguro médico, el desmantelamiento de viviendas públicas y la privatización de escuelas?

Los llamados debates entre los candidatos capitalistas son puro teatro, con guiones escritos de antemano, y luego empaquetados y vendidos al público como si fueran algo real y sustantivo. Todo esto está hecho con la complicidad de las redes televisivas y otros medios corporativos de comunicación.

Los candidatos de terceros partidos que posiblemente introducirían cuestiones reales o controversiales están excluidos de estos foros “democráticos”, especialmente los candidatos que representen puntos de vista de la clase trabajadora, o perspectivas antibélicas o socialistas.

Estamos totalmente en acuerdo con los

organizadores de la Marcha de un Millón de Trabajadores y Trabajadoras que escribieron: “¡Necesitamos que se escuche nuestra propia voz en los debates! ¡El pueblo trabajador hablará por sí mismo, con voz propia, el 17 de octubre en la Marcha de un Millón de Trabajador@s”.

La Marcha de un Millón de Trabajador@s asume todas las cuestiones que Bush y Kerry no quieren tratar. La marcha dice con claridad y fuerza: ¡Qué regresen las tropas a casa ya!

Esto no es una actividad de un solo día en Washington. Este es un movimiento que envuelve a todos l@s trabajador@s, emplead@s y desempleado@s, sindicalistas y desafiliad@s, negr@s, latin@s, asiatic@s, gente indígena, y gente blanca, inmigrantes y gente nacida acá, mujeres y hombres, lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y gente transgénera, incapacidad@s, jóvenes y ancian@s. Estamos orgullos@s de abrazar este movimiento y considerarlo como una verdadera alternativa a los dos candidatos guerrillistas.

Nuestra campaña está llevando este mensaje a través del país, incluso en debates de candidatos de otros partidos el 9 de octubre en la Universidad Washington en San Luís; el 15 de octubre en Johnson City, Tennessee; y el 29 de octubre en Swarthmore College en Pennsylvania.

John Parker y Teresa Gutiérrez son candidat@s del Partido Mundo Obrero (Workers World Party) para presidente y vice-presidenta;

Leilani Dowell es candidata para el Congreso por el Partido Paz y Libertad.