

MUNDO OBRERO

Soldados EEUU rehúsan 'misión suicida' en Irak

Resistencia Indígena en América Latina 12

ELECTION 2004 EDITORIAL

No more Floridas

As we go into the 2004 election, the United States ranks absolutely the lowest of the world's industrialized countries in the percentage of people voting. In the presidential election of 2000, only 49.3 percent of the voting-age population made it to the polls—and this in a country the ruling class declares to be a model of democracy for the whole world.

The poorest sections of the working class are the most affected. Rules that make registration and voting difficult for working people and that disenfranchise those who have been in prison—aimed especially at

Continued on page 10

HOTEL WORKERS

On the march 5

FLU VACCINE

Capitalism: bad for health 3

OCCUPIED HAITI

Repression mounts, resistance grows 7

DEC. 3-10

'Stop the War' week! 3

PUERTO RICO

Workers call for massive actions 8

As Iraqi resistance stiffens

U.S. plans military assault on Falluja

By Fred Goldstein

The media focus on the U.S. presidential campaign has sidelined vital information about two dramatic developments taking place in Iraq: the further growth of the resistance and preparations for an all-out U.S. attack on Falluja.

As aircraft roar overhead, the U.S. has moved tanks and armored vehicles into position around the city and cut off the main road leading west to Jordan. Britain's Black Watch battalion has left Basra for the Baghdad area to free up U.S. military units for an assault on Falluja.

The head negotiating team in Falluja announced that peace talks with the U.S.-appointed "interim government" had reached a deadlock. "The peace talks have stopped because there are parties in the government which do not want a political solution for Falluja," Sheik Khaled al-Jumaiyli told the Xinhua news agency on Oct. 25. (Xinhuanet)

Prime Minister Ayad Allawi, a U.S. puppet, has demanded as part of the negotiations that the people hand over Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, a leader of the group Tawhid and Jihad. The people of Falluja say they cannot hand him over because he is not there. (See accompanying appeal of people of Falluja to Kofi Annan.) They say they will permit Iraqi police to come into the city but will not permit any U.S. forces to set foot in Falluja.

"Jumaiyli called on the people of Falluja to stand shoulder to shoulder and to prepare themselves to face a U.S. offensive if the peace talks failed," continued Xinhua. Meanwhile, U.S. forces attacked in the Jolan district in western Falluja and the Askari district in the northwest.

The U.S. military continues to pound the city from the air and bombard the outskirts with tanks and artillery. The "softening up" process is carried out under the phony pretext of bombing "safe houses" of al-Zarqawi. After each raid the Pentagon announces the death of "aides to Zarqawi." Meanwhile, civilian deaths and injuries are piling up, houses are destroyed, and the population is being forced to emigrate to safety.

These raids against the so-called "terror network" are a car-

bon copy of Ariel Sharon's policy in Gaza and the West Bank, where Israel carries out raid after raid under the guise of going after a "major terrorist leader." Thousands of Palestinian men, women and children have been killed and wounded in an unsuccessful attempt to force an end to the Palestinian national resistance.

The so-called "precision strikes" on so-called "terrorists" are actually precision strikes against the civilian population. "U.S. warplanes pummeled Falluja on Sunday as intense battles raged on the outskirts of the insurgent-held city," wrote the Washington Post of Oct. 18. "Witnesses reported that U.S. forces fired on a vehicle carrying a family fleeing the fighting, killing all five passengers."

The Christian Science Monitor of Oct. 19 reported how the bombing is affecting the children of Falluja. "Classes began Oct. 1," wrote the Monitor, "and lasted just two days. Since then, the children have hardly slept, their parents say, kept awake by the constant crash and vibrations of explosions."

Ahmad Salim, a father taking his family from Falluja to Baghdad, told the Monitor about another so-called "precision strike" two weeks earlier "when a huge air-dropped bomb landed a few hundred yards from Salim's house at 2 a.m." After the attack Salim made his way to the two-family house that was targeted.

"He will never forget the image that greeted him, and never forgive. 'Most of them were children, all of them dead,' Salim says of the families he helped dig out of the rubble with bare hands.

"The targeted house often hosts weddings and other gatherings.

"What did this teach us about the Americans?" asked Mrs. Salim. "First we thought the Americans came to liberate our country, but now our conclusion is the opposite. We know they came to destroy our country."

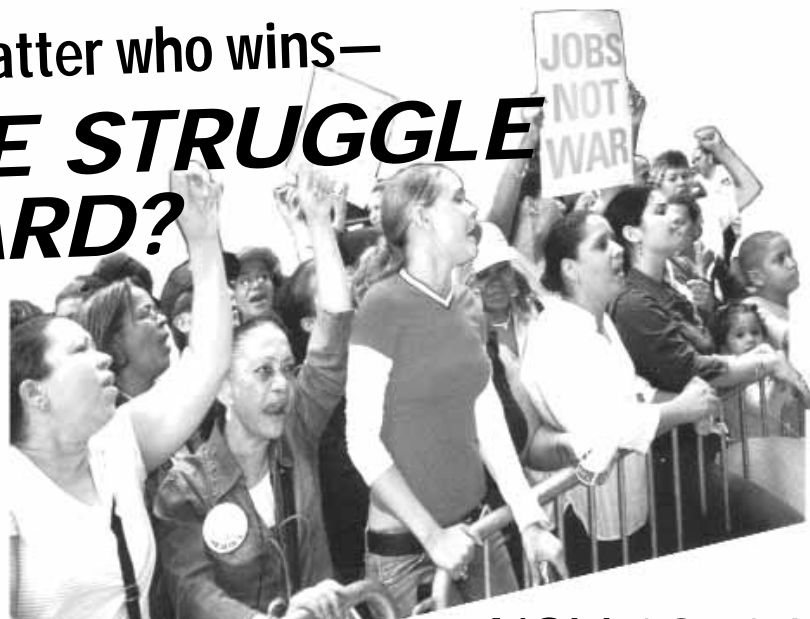
It is this hatred of the occupation that compels the people of Falluja to stand and fight rather than let colonial occupiers enter the city. Falluja has become the symbol of resistance, not only in

Continued on page 6

After the elections, no matter who wins—

HOW CAN THE STRUGGLE MOVE FORWARD?

A NATIONAL FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE



NOV 13•14

CHELSEA AUDITORIUM NYC
281 9th Ave. & West 27 St.

For info (212) 627-2994 or www.workers.org

Register now for Nov. 13-14
FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE! 10

WW CANDIDATES

Campaign in the South 11



Winthrop College, Rock Hill, S.C. panel features John Parker for President, Teresa Gutierrez for Vice President, LeiLani Dowell for Congressional 8th District in San Francisco.

Subscribe to Workers World

Trial subscription: \$2 for 8 weeks
One year subscription: \$25

NAME _____

PHONE _____

Workers World Newspaper

55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011

212-627-2994

www.workers.org read it online



NYC benefit for Roma

Ansambi Teodosievski performers.

The International Action Center and the Voice of Roma sponsored an event called "Music and Dance for the Survival of Roma" on Oct. 25 in New York. The highlight of the evening was the Romani sounds of Ansambi Teodosievski, a renowned band from the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia.

As some of the audience watched and others danced, the band members put heart, soul and 1,000 years of Romani history—oppression, resistance and survival—into their music.

The Romani left northern India about a thousand years ago, went to Egypt and then spread throughout Europe starting in the 15th century. Their sojourn in Egypt led them to be called "Gypsies," but they strongly prefer being called Romani.

Before the cultural performance, Sani Rifati, a leader of the Voice of Roma, described the plight of the Romani living in his home of Kosovo. One hundred thousand of their homes have been destroyed, as have the homes of some 200,000 Serbs.

Under the NATO occupation, some 14,000 Romani houses out of a total of 19,000 have been burned. No one has been charged with arson in connection with burning Romani houses.

Rifati charged that "Roma are not recognized for human rights by the U.S. and NATO."

NATO forces have occupied Kosovo since 1999. Because they are people of color, the Roma have been singled out for racist discrimination.

Rifati was introduced by Sara Flounders, co-director of the IAC. Ramsey Clark, former U.S. attorney general, also spoke on the significance of Romani history and the widespread ignorance of this history. Barry Lituchy, an activist and professor at the City University of New York, talked about a recent trip he took to Mitrovica in the northern part of Kosovo.

—Story and photo: G. Dunkel

By Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row

The kindergarten elections

Following are excerpts from an Oct. 9 column:



It is virtually impossible to view the present U.S. presidential campaign and not leave with a sinking feeling for the future of the country, and indeed, the world as well.

One wonders, looking at the pale performances of both major presidential candidates, is this the best that can be marshaled in a nation of 300 million people?

What is striking, when one plumbs beneath the thin skins, is the similarities between both candidates of the corporate parties. Neither one of them can even remotely be called "anti-war." Neither one of them mentions, much less really engages, the concerns facing millions of people who are working-class or poor.

One would think that the only people who matter are "middle-class," for that is the group which receives most of the candidates' attention. At one point at the Washington University "debate," Democrat John Kerry would say, without a moment's hesitation, that the three richest people in the hall were on the stage: President George W. Bush, himself, and the network anchor, Charles Gibson of ABC, all of whom were in one of the highest-percentile tax brackets.

I wondered, how could he be so confident? How did he know this? And then it dawned on me that he could've said the same thing virtually anywhere, and it would still be true: It's the nature of the game.

Who's in the U.S. Senate but, for the most part, millionaires? Who else could afford such campaigns? Who are network anchors but extremely well-heeled people who make more than \$200,000 a year? It was a guess, but one based upon an understanding of the U.S. wealth structure.

This is not to say that there's no difference between both candidates—there are. But their similarities are based upon their class position; whom they serve. That doesn't change.

There is a reason why U.S. elections are so narrow, so class-closed, so insular. The corporate media, which makes a killing by selling commercial time, allocates its news time to those candidates who don't really threaten their own commercial interests. They deal in generalities, in simple themes, in trends. In a word, every election, big and small, is just a horse race.

Complex ideas, deep and serious questions, are mere obstructions to a more important goal: the bottom line. Let's not forget that the media business is, after all, a business.

This is not just the case when it comes to presidential or national elections. This trend holds in local elections as well.

In 1995, University of Pennsylvania Communications Professor Phyllis Kaniss published "The Media and the Mayor's Race" (Indianapolis: Indiana Univ. Press, 1995), an examination of the failure of urban political reporting. She documented how broadcast companies, in a rush to cut costs and improve profits, intentionally "dumbed down" political reporting by getting rid of experienced, better-educated, and higher-paid reporters to bring in younger, lower-paid, and lesser-educated pretty faces. . . .

News, like everything else, is just another commodity; reporters are but mere packaging. Why should communications differ from politics? Check out the debates. Packaging. If you turned down the sound, your mind would provide the insipid dialogue: "less filling" or "tastes great!" Packaging. What ever happened to democracy? □

This week ...



★ National

- NYC benefit for Roma 2
- Attend Lynne Stewart trial 2
- Mumia Abu-Jamal on 'The kindergarten elections' 2
- 'Stop the War Week' actions called 3
- Solidarity with soldiers who said no 3
- Flu vaccine shortage not an accident. 3
- Domestic workers demand 'No more slavery' 4
- The real issues behind WBAI local board elections 4
- Cops kill student celebrating Red Sox win 4
- Hotel workers take their message to City Hall 5
- George Harrison, Irish freedom fighter 8
- Palestinian lesbian tours U.S. 9
- National fightback conference 10
- Socialist campaign in the South 11
- On the road with WWP candidates 11

★ International

- U.S. plans military assault on Falluja 1
- Int'l solidarity with Million Worker March 5
- 100,000 march in London 6
- The people of Falluja appeal to the U.N. 6
- Haiti resistance and solidarity grows 7
- WWP leadership message to President Fidel Castro 7
- Puerto Rico water workers' strike 8
- Same-sex rights in East Germany 9

★ Editorials

- No more Floridas 1
- A vote for socialism counts 10

★ Noticias En Español

- Soldados rehúsa 'misión suicida' en Irak 12
- Día de Resistencia Indígena 12

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! Rally and march. Gather at Hollywood and Highland, noon. 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

55 West 17 Street
New York, N.Y. 10011
Phone: (212) 627-2994
Fax: (212) 675-7869
E-mail: editor@workers.org
Web: www.workers.org
Vol. 46, No. 44 • Nov. 4, 2004
Closing date: Oct. 27, 2004

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk
Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, Leslie Feinberg, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson
Contributing Editors: Greg Butterfield, Pat Chin, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Milt Neidenberg
Technical Staff: Shelley Ettinger, Adrian Garcia, Maggie Vascassenno
Mundo Obrero: Carl Glenn, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Carlos Vargas
Internet: Janet Mayes

Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; foreign and institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at www.workers.org.

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Send an e-mail message to wwnews-subscribe@workersworld.net.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



Attend Lynne Stewart trial

Radical human-rights lawyer Lynne Stewart faces over 40 years in prison at her New York trial on trumped-up charges of "aiding terrorism" because of her vigorous legal defense of a Muslim cleric. Her case is really about the government's denial of due process to Muslims and Arabs in this country, especially in the repressive political climate of President George W. Bush's "war on terror." After four months of the trial, Stewart finally got a chance to begin testifying on Oct. 25. She is expected to be on the stand for some time. Court is in session Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. until 12:45 p.m., then from 2 p.m. until 4:30. Supporters of civil liberties are urged to attend. Location: U.S. District Court, 40 Foley Square (at Center Street), Courtroom 110. Closest subways: 4, 5 or 6 to Brooklyn Bridge; A, C or E to Chambers; 1 or 2 to Franklin; N or R to City Hall. □

JOIN US. Workers World Party (WWP) fights on all issues that face the working class and oppressed peoples—Black and white, Latino, Asian, Arab and Native peoples, women and men, young and old, lesbian, gay, bi, straight, trans, disabled, working, unemployed and students. If you would like to know more about WWP, or to join us in these struggles, contact the branch nearest you.

National Office
55 W. 17 St.,
New York, N.Y. 10011
(212) 627-2994;
Fax (212) 675-7869
wwp@workers.org

Atlanta
P.O. Box 424,
Atlanta, Ga. 30301
(404) 627-0815
atlanta@workers.org

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

DEC. 3-10

'Stop the War Week' actions called

By Dustin Langley

On Oct. 17 at the Million Worker March, activists with "Anti-War 4 the Million Worker March" called for a week of action against the war from Dec. 3 to Dec. 10. The next day participants in a meeting of the Million Worker March Committee supported this call.

The protest week is timed to coincide with the Pentagon's plans to launch another massive assault against the people of Iraq in order to secure enough of the country to hold sham presidential elections in January. The Oct. 11 Los Angeles Times reported that "administration and Pentagon officials say they will not try to retake cities such as Falluja and Ramadi—where insurgents' grip is strongest and U.S. military casualties could be the greatest—until after Americans vote in what is likely to be a close election."

Since spring, beginning with the uprising in Falluja, a growing number of Iraqi towns have become "no-go zones" for the U.S. occupation forces. These include Falluja, Ramadi and Samarra. The Oct. 8 New York Times reported that senior Pentagon officials, speaking anonymously,

said U.S. military planners had identified 20 to 30 towns and cities in Iraq that need to be "brought under control before elections can be held in the country in January."

On Oct. 7, Newsweek magazine's Middle East regional editor Christopher Dickey wrote: "There's going to be a whole lot more killing and maiming before the rebel cities can be retaken and held, and by then they may be ghost towns. ... Like Israel and the militias it employed in Lebanon after 1982, the United States and its Iraqi proxies will score several initial victories in a ferocious campaign to force the insurgents out of their strongholds. The collateral damage—the mothers wounded, the babies mutilated—will be lamentable, inevitable, and pass as acceptable for the U.S. administration."

'U.S. preparing full-scale war'

Larry Holmes, organizer with Anti-War 4 the Million Worker March, told Workers World: "The bombing raids on Falluja and other Iraqi cities have been intensifying, and after the U.S. presiden-

tial election the occupation forces are preparing a full-scale new war to 'pacify' Iraq in preparation for a phony U.S.-controlled election in January.

"This assault will not subdue the Iraqi people; they have made it clear that they want the U.S. and U.S.-led occupation forces to leave immediately. However, this new desperate and deadly plan to conquer a people who refused to be conquered will cause enormous death and destruction unless we make it clear that the war will no longer be tolerated.

"We are calling for anti-war activists across the U.S. and globally to make this a week to stop the war, to take action—student walkouts, job actions, boycotts, whatever it takes to stop the war now.

"Our challenge," Holmes continued, "especially for those of us who have marched against the war and those of us who have worked hard to organize those marches, is to remind ourselves that the election is not going to stop the war, and

that waiting for something beyond our control to stop the war only weakens our movement. The majority of the people want the war and occupation to end immediately.

"It is up to us to act with a sense of urgency, immediacy, passion and determination. It's time to say, 'No more!'"

Organizers are calling for local actions throughout the United States and worldwide to demand an end to the war. Anti-War 4 the Million Worker March will be posting a list of local and international actions on its website (AntiWar4MWM.org).

FIST plans to resist war, draft

Youth activists are responding to the call by organizing student walkouts and demonstrations.

FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—organizer Julie Fry told WW: "The week of Dec. 3 through Dec. 10 will be a time for youth to escalate their resistance to the war in Iraq and to the U.S. military. Youth have a lot at stake in this. Youth are doing the killing and some of the dying in Iraq right now. If the occupation continues, there is a good chance we will be facing a nationwide draft. We have to stop the occupation now.

"Dec. 3 and 4 in particular will be important days for youth resistance. FIST is calling on youth to walk out of their classrooms and shut down their schools on Dec. 3 to show that we will not allow business as usual while the occupation in Iraq continues and the brutality against the Iraqi people escalates.

"The Dec. 4 meeting on youth resistance to the draft, sponsored by SNAFU and FIST, is an opportunity for youth to come together and build a strategy to fight against the growing threat of a generalized draft in the U.S."

For updates and to read the Call to Action, see www.AntiWar4MWM.org. □

Solidarity with soldiers who said 'No'

By John Catalinotto
New York

Anti-war activists came to the Times Square military recruiting station here Oct. 23 to show their solidarity with the soldiers of the 343rd Quartermaster Company who refused orders to go on what they called a "suicide mission" across 200 miles of insurgent Iraq.

The group action of at least 17 soldiers, most of them from Jackson, Miss., and other areas of the Deep South, had received worldwide publicity after some of the troops managed to contact their relatives inside the United States. They told them they had been arrested by military authorities after refusing to go out in "inadequate vehicles" and without an armored convoy.

Dustin Langley, an organizer from the GI support group Support Network for an Armed Forces Union—SNAFU—told Workers World that attorneys have been attempting to reach the arrested troops, following the instructions of relatives. As of Oct. 23 there had been no direct contact with the troops.

Langley, who spoke at the rally ending the picketing Oct. 23, said his group put high priority on the need to develop solidarity between the civilian anti-war movement and any GIs who refuse illegal orders to report to Iraq or to refuse such orders in Iraq.

"We are asking them to refuse to go along with war crimes," he said, "but we have to let them know we are watching their backs. We have to help them and protect them whatever they want to do to express their resistance."

Julie Fry of the youth organization, FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—expressed her solidarity with the 343rd Quartermaster Company. Her

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO
Kim Rosario speaks at anti-war rally on Oct. 23.



group is already organizing to fight against reinstatement of the military draft.

Kim Rosario, whose 18-year-old son is now in Iraq, read the statement from the International Action Center that called for the protest: "These soldiers have been placed in danger by the policies of the U.S. government that have created a climate of hatred throughout the Arab and Muslim world. Pentagon officials and the officer corps view front-line troops, drawn largely from poor and oppressed communities, as expendable, in the same way they view the Iraqi people as less than human.

"The war in Iraq is illegal. ... Resistance and refusal is not only justified, it is an obligation. We support the decision by these soldiers to refuse orders and we call upon others to also take action to stop the war."

The Army said Oct. 22 that more than 800 former soldiers, or over one-third of those called, have failed to comply with Army orders to get back in uniform and report for duty in Iraq or Afghanistan. This demonstrates how the soldiers' own attitudes—and actions—are key to ending the occupation of Iraq.

These are troops in the Individual Ready Reserve. They have completed their active duty and active reserve. Most consider themselves to be civilians. But the Army insists it still has the right to call them up.

It is becoming more and more apparent that reserve troops don't want to go to Iraq—and that the troops already there want nothing better than to come home. □

Flu vaccine shortage not an accident

By Hillel Cohen

Nobody wants to catch the flu. Fever, fatigue, and aches and pains will for most people mean missed days at work or school. But for many, flu can be much worse. The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 36,000 people in the United States die every year from flu-related illness. About 200,000 will have to be admitted to the hospital. And that's in "normal" times.

These are not normal times. British authorities shut down flu vaccine production by the Chiron Corp. on Oct. 6 due to "breaches of good manufacturing practice leading to possible product contamination."

Chiron is a U.S. company whose vaccine factory is in Britain. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration had found problems in the plant in June 2003 but had done nothing about it until British inspectors acted in early October.

Chiron is one of only two companies that were producing flu vaccine for the U.S. market. It was also a supplier for Britain's vaccine needs.

British authorities had warned the U.S. government more than a month earlier that Chiron might fail inspection, and the British officials found other suppliers to

make up production in case Chiron was shut down.

The U.S. government, however, did nothing. Now half of the anticipated vaccine—up to 48 million doses—will not be available.

In other words, 48 million people in the United States who would have gotten the vaccine will not.

This could be a huge problem for the elderly, pregnant women, people with immune problems—people with AIDS, cancer, Lupus and others. Depending on how severe the flu season is, the number of deaths from flu this year could go way higher than 36,000.

The government's lack of attention and resources for flu vaccine can be considered deadly criminal negligence.

The Bush administration and other politicians are scrambling to explain how this happened, but it should not be any surprise. Problems in manufacturing and distribution led to inadequate flu vaccine supplies in three of the four previous flu seasons.

This shortage, however, is by far the worst. Since flu is passed from person to person, the more people who get the flu

Continued on page 5



Domestic workers demand 'No more slavery!'

On Oct. 23 close to 200 domestic workers, most of them women of color, marched from the Service Employees Local 32 BJ hall in lower Manhattan to Union Square. These extremely low-paid workers include nannies, housekeepers and caregivers for the elderly. They held a convention before the march to demand a domestic workers' bill of rights. This includes the right to a living wage of at least \$14 an hour, health insurance, paid vacation and public holidays, paid sick days and personal days, notice and severance pay, protection from unfair firing and discrimination, and the right to be treated with dignity and respect by their bosses.

This action was sponsored by Committee Against Anti-Asian Violence, Andolan Organizing South Asian Workers, Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees, and supported by the South Asian group DRUM and the Harlem-based coalition Still We Rise.

—Story and photo by Anne Pruden

The real issues behind WBAI local board election

By John Catalinotto
New York

Three years after a people's movement defeated a pro-corporate power grab at the Pacifica community radio network, New York station WBAI is again threatened with derailment.

Listener-members and staff are currently participating in an election to choose half the Local Station Board seats. A slate called Justice and Unity Campaign is opposed by Listeners and Staff for Progressive Elections (ListProg) and business associates of right-wing libertarian Gary Null, a WBAI producer and entrepreneur whose focus is health. Set to end Nov. 29, this vote can determine the station's direction.

WBAI broadcasts both political discussion and cultural shows representing a broad spectrum of New York ethnic and other communities, especially those most oppressed. The station is the only broadcast media that provides an opening for anti-imperialist analyses of important world events.

Especially noteworthy is its thorough coverage of police brutality and the struggle to free political prisoners like Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier and Lori Berenson. In addition, WBAI provides a tribune to mobilize for movement events that reaches most progressive activists in the New York metro area.

Members of the current Local Station Board majority—including ListProg members, Gary Null backers and independents—have stirred up a controversy by directing especially sharp criticism at WBAI general manager Don Rojas and program director Bernard White. Rojas has announced he is resigning as of the end of 2004 because of harassment.

Rojas is a respected journalist known for his leadership in the New Jewel Move-

ment of Grenada, the party overthrown by a U.S. invasion in 1983. White is popular with WBAI audiences for his decade-long role on WBAI's activist-oriented morning program.

Rojas says that WBAI is now ranked eighth in listenership among 800 or more public radio stations and is "the most ethnically diverse public radio station in the nation."

The Justice & Unity Campaign (JUC) slate defends the two station leaders and what they consider WBAI's basic mission. Among the candidates on this progressive slate is Sara Flounders—codirector of the International Action Center, a long-time political organizer against war and racism, an author, and often a guest commentator on WBAI.

The big picture

"I'm running on the Justice & Unity slate and I'm urging all WBAI members to pay close attention to the big picture in this election," Flounders told Workers World.

"ListProg and Gary Null's backers have put under attack the Black and Latino management, staff and board members who have anchored WBAI in the communities of color in New York City. These are communities that are themselves under attack and that have limited access to the airwaves.

"Listener-sponsored WBAI," Flounders continued, "has been a courageous voice against racism, police brutality and war. ListProg and their allies have used their board seats to maneuver for a fundamental change in the station's political direction."

Not only have they attacked Rojas and White, "they pushed for a slashed budget that would have resulted in serious cuts in equipment and staff layoffs," said Flounders. "They tried to override the station workers and their union."

Cops kill student after Red Sox win

By Stephanie Nichols
Boston

Early on the morning of Oct. 21, an estimated 80,000 Boston Red Sox fans gathered in Kenmore Square around Fenway Park to celebrate the local team's victory over the New York Yankees in a game for the American League baseball championship. Hundreds of police officers in riot gear lined the streets around the ballpark.

Equipped with specially designed pepper-pellet guns, purchased for the Democratic National Convention but not previously used except for training, the cops fired into the crowd of celebrating baseball fans, injuring at least 15 people and arresting eight. One of the injured, 21-year-old Emerson College student Victoria Snelgrove, died a few hours later. A pellet had collided with and burst into Snelgrove's left eye.

The Boston Globe reported that "The pepper guns, manufactured by FN Herstal, use a compressed-air system similar to paint-ball guns, to fire powder-filled plastic pellets that combust upon contact, hitting the target with an extract of pepper plants that causes severe, burning pain, as well as wheezing and gagging."

The officers are trained to fire the so-called "pepper balls" into a person's chest so a cloud of pepper powder will rise into

the target's face. One Boston police officer excused Snelgrove's death by saying the pepper-pellets are sometimes inaccurate, curving in flight.

Several injured celebrators were taken to Brigham and Women's Hospital. Paul Gately, 24, had been shot in the face while climbing the stadium's Green Monster Wall. "I just looked and held my face, and there was blood all over my hands," he said. "I had it ... all over my face and all over my shirt," he told the Globe.

Gately said he descended from near the top of the wall and approached an officer for help, his hands covered in blood. "Before I knew it, the officer turned around and opened fire on me," he said. He then endured several more shots to the stomach and chest.

Unlike Victoria Snelgrove, Gately survived the attack. Snelgrove's funeral was on Oct. 26. An aspiring broadcast reporter and journalism major at Emerson College, she would have celebrated her 22nd birthday the week after she was killed, on Oct. 29.

A few of the celebrating fans who were intoxicated had set some small fires. A few people out of 80,000 do not require hundreds of Boston Police in riot gear to fire dangerous weapons at innocent fans.

Vigils have been mourning Victoria Snelgrove's death. About 40 people were in Kenmore Square on Oct. 24 to protest the use of pepper-pellet guns for "crowd control." They marched across the bridge from the Kenmore Square train and bus station to Lansdowne Street where the ballpark is located. "No amount of burning cars or breaking windows can account for killing somebody," one protester said. "It's not OK to shoot and kill somebody over property."

Police Commissioner Kathleen O'Toole is investigating the weapons used and replacing them with lower-velocity ones. Officials and the media have not blamed the police for this incident, only the fans and the weapons.

The new Boston Police Command Center was first used during the Democratic National Convention this year in July. From inside this center, police reportedly watch 50 cameras set up around the city. Some of these cameras are installed on top of the Fenway ballpark.

These events in Boston and the mass arrests in New York City during the Republican National Convention reveal the growing use of police-state tactics. Unfortunately, many innocent young people have had to pay for this development.

The writer is an organizer of the youth group FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together.

After the elections, no matter who wins, join us for a serious discussion on strategies for revolutionary youth at

A F.I.S.T. NATIONAL YOUTH ORGANIZING MEETING!



Join the FIST Contingent at the Counter-Inaugural Demonstration! January 20 • Washington, DC

No matter who wins the election, youth will lose. Join FIST on Jan. 20 at the Counter-Inaugural demonstration to demand:

- No Draft!
- Bring the Troops Home Now!
- Stop the War on Youth from Here to Iraq!

CONTACT: FIST@WORKERS.ORG FOR MORE INFORMATION!
F.I.S.T. — FIGHT IMPERIALISM STAND TOGETHER

SAT., NOV. 13, 6 pm
New York City

Taking place during a
NATIONAL FIGHTBACK CONFERENCE
Sponsored by Workers World Party
Nov. 13-14, Chelsea Auditorium
281 9th Avenue & West 27 Street

Join us to discuss:

- What youth can do to fight military recruiting and the draft.
- The role of youth in the struggle against racism, sexism, and lgbt oppression.
- Fighting back against police repression and the prison industrial complex.
- Building revolutionary consciousness amongst youth.
- Much, much more!

Hotel workers take message to City Hall

By Brenda Sandburg
San Francisco

Nearly 2,000 San Francisco hotel workers marched from their picket lines to City Hall in late October to protest being locked out of their jobs.

The workers packed an Oct. 22 meeting of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. It was called to address the labor battle that began Sept. 29 when UNITE HERE Local 2 launched a two-week strike against four hotels. Two days after the strike began the hotel operators locked out the strikers along with workers at 10 other hotels.

Local 2 President Mike Casey told the Board of Supervisors that the union expected the lockout of 4,000 workers would end after the strike. The employers are "holding our jobs hostage," he said.

Local 2 called the strike to push the hotels to give union members a decent contract. A key issue is the union's demand for a two-year contract that would expire at the same time as union contracts in Boston, New York and other major cities. Synchronized contracts would give



PHOTO: UNITE HERE
Hotel workers picket outside of Sheraton in S.F. on Oct. 22.

the hotel workers as a whole more bargaining power.

The employers, represented by the Multi-Employer Group, are trying to impose a five-year contract.

The hotel workers are also fighting to protect their health and pension benefits, reduce work loads and raise their wages. Union members have been paying \$10 per

month for health coverage. Employers want to implement co-pays of \$129 per month for family coverage and \$47 per month for individuals.

The contract negotiations in San Francisco affect 8,000 union members at more than 60 hotels and motels. Hotel workers in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C., are engaged in similar contract negotiations.

Local 11 in Los Angeles is calling for a public boycott of the nine hotels it is battling.

Ernest Bonner, a cook at the Holiday Inn at Fisherman's Wharf, told the Board of Supervisors that employees have not had a full 40-hour shift since Sept. 11, 2001. They are now doing the same work in four or six hours that they once did in eight hours, he said.

"How much can they squeeze us?" Bonner asked. "Now they're asking us to pay a hike in insurance. We can't afford it."

The employers' group declined to attend the hearing, which lasted four hours. The meeting was the latest in a string of events showcasing the hotel workers' struggle.

In September, 3,500 people attended a unity rally in Union Square where the Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke. And on Labor Day, 135 union members and supporters were arrested at a protest on behalf of the hotel workers.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors is expected to adopt a resolution Oct. 26 condemning the lockout. The Los Angeles City Council passed a resolution in August endorsing the efforts of its hotel workers to get a decent contract with nine area hotels.

The hotel workers won the support of Mayor Gavin Newsom, who announced Oct. 25 that he would join them on the picket lines if hotel owners don't end their lockout and agree to a 90-day cooling-off period. Newsom said he would also call for a boycott of the 14 hotels that locked out their workers four weeks ago.

"You will see me take actions to [express] my disappointment not just in the proceeding days and months but years," Newsom told the press. The hotel owners will have sent a "message that San Francisco is a dispensable city and its employees can be used as pawns." □

Int'l solidarity with Million Worker March

Workers World received the following messages reporting on solidarity with the Oct. 17 Million Workers March in Washington, D.C.

Demonstration in Japan

Kikuchi Takao writes that on Oct. 17, in solidarity with the Million Worker March in the United States, more than 600 workers and students held a rally and demonstration in Tokyo, opposing George W. Bush and Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi. Hundreds also came out in Hiroshima and Osaka.

At the Tokyo rally, a former member of the Japanese "Self Defense Force"—Hiroshi Ashitomi, an activist and anti-war journalist in Britain—spoke of the crime of complicity. Ashitomi made a special appeal about the struggle in Okinawa. He stressed the everyday fighting in Henoko and support for this struggle.

The solidarity message of the MWM executive committee was read to the participants.

Yasuhiro Tanaka, president of National Railway Locomotive Power Union, said, "We see a new age in which Japanese workers and American workers truly struggle together." He appealed for people to come to a Nov. 7 rally supporting his union, which also sent a delegation to the MWM in Washington.

A teacher who was fired for refusing to participate in the "Hinomaru," the raising of the flag of the rising sun, and the "Kimigayo," a song honoring the emperor, also spoke. So did a young postal worker.

Message from Russia

From Russia, V. G. Gamov of the Defense of Labor union at the Atomic Center of the Russian Federation sent a solidarity message saying the workers there "join hands with our American comrades in solidarity, as if we are marching together through Washington in defense of the oppressed workers of the world!"

"Long live the World Workers' Solidarity! Socialism is our goal and the

only solution for the catastrophe the world is facing! We look forward to strengthening our ties with the comrade workers throughout the world!

"Glory and victory to the workers' march in Washington!"

Slovak workers support MWM

Bill Cecil writes that while U.S. Steel, once the world's biggest steel producer, has eliminated tens of thousands of jobs in the United States, destroying whole communities, five years ago, in an effort to penetrate the European market, it acquired the East Slovak Metal Works in Kosice, Slovakia. Since then, conditions for the Slovak mill's 16,000 workers have become hell.

Zuzana Cingelova, a crane operator, had worked at the mill for 19 years. A union shop steward, she resisted company attempts to change work rules and defraud the workers. When she refused to be bribed, she was beaten, almost killed, falsely accused and forced to leave her job.



She fought back with a hunger strike that became a symbol for workers and unemployed people all over Slovakia.

She and 24 supporters marched across Slovakia to the capital, Bratislava, finding welcome in poor and working-class communities as well as in villages of the oppressed Roma people. Zuzana and fellow activist Jozef Danis sent the following message of support to the Million Worker March in Washington:

"Dear brothers and sisters, we recently heard about your long efforts to organize a workers' march on Oct. 17. We understand your situation and we fully support your action. ...

"What we have in common is that our present bosses are U.S. multinational corporations. They are U.S. Steel at Kosice and MONDI through its Austrian affiliate, [the] Neusiedler paper mill plant in Ruzomberok town. Our present bosses fired us from work because we stood up against exploitation and mistreatment of Slovakian workers.

"We will not be slaves anymore. We realized that it is big capital that is dividing us, the working people of the world, against each other. They are threatening you: Be quiet or we will move more production to cheap labor countries like Slovakia. But our message to you is: Don't believe them, we are not your enemies. Since our fight began, we have a common goal with you: to have the same living standards and equal pay in the U.S., in Slovakia, in India, or anywhere in the world.

"Please support our fight by sending us solidarity messages. Please send email messages also to the bosses asking for our reinstatement to work, to assume our responsibilities as rank and file delegates. Thank you very much!!! We are internationalists." □

Flu vaccine shortage not an accident

Continued from page 3

the more likely others will catch it. So-called "herd immunity" prevents big outbreaks when a large proportion of a community has been vaccinated.

With smaller numbers getting the vaccine there is a danger that the spread of flu can be faster and greater than it has been in many years. And that may mean tens of thousands more deaths and hospitalizations, especially among the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

Even Wall Street is worried. An increased number of workers out sick may cost U.S. big business billions of dollars in production and profits.

Vaccine is now being rationed. It is supposed to be reserved for the elderly and others at greatest risk from flu. However, Republicans and Democrats in Congress made sure they had enough for themselves.

How did the vaccine shortage happen? The main reason is that health care in the United States is based on a private profit system.

Flu vaccines often have to be reformulated each year as the genetic makeup of the flu viruses shifts. So vaccine patents are not much use after a year or two.

Drug company profits from flu vaccine are modest. So only a limited number of companies produce it despite the huge need.

Also, the government spends very little on public health education. So many people don't realize how dangerous flu can be for some. With a national health system based on private insurance, with millions uninsured, only about one-third of the population even considers getting a flu shot.

In the last several years, the Bush and Clinton administrations have pumped billions of dollars into research and development of vaccines—but not for the flu. The money went to R and D for vaccines for smallpox, anthrax and other diseases that are supposedly potential bioterrorism agents but that will likely never pose any risk to people in the United States.

There hasn't been a single case of small-

pox in the whole world for more than 20 years. But the Bush administration attempted a huge smallpox vaccination program as part of its propaganda campaign for the 2003 invasion of Iraq. At least three people died from the side effects of that vaccine.

Even the anthrax spores that led to five deaths in 2001 have been linked to a U.S. military laboratory.

All the resources spent for these bioterrorism preparedness projects have left critically important public-health research and service programs underfunded.

As long as health care is considered a commodity sold for private profit, vaccines and other health products and services will experience the same boom and bust, glut and shortage cycles that are seen in other commodities like oil or food.

There may be efforts to make a quick fix for the flu vaccine. But in the long run, the only way to really fix it is to reorganize health care as a guaranteed right of all and not a source of corporate profit. □

100,000 demonstrate in London

Tell Blair: 'No troops to Baghdad'

By John Catalinotto

The British government's decision to allow an 850-member battle group to move from the Basra region to Babil province near Baghdad in Iraq has awakened a new wave of protest throughout British society.

Families of the soldiers, Iraq war opponents, Labor Party dissidents and even

Conservative Party politicians have criticized Prime Minister Tony Blair for giving in to U.S. pressure on this issue.

The troops are part of the occupiers' effort to crush the uprising in Falluja, a city that has maintained its freedom from the occupation. People expect an imminent assault on the city by U.S. forces. With British troops participating, U.S. President George W. Bush can claim he

has allied backing for this murderous attack on the Iraqi people.

The Daily Record reported Oct. 25 that "frightened families of Black Watch soldiers yesterday hit out at Prime Minister Tony Blair—as the regiment prepared to move to Iraq's so-called Triangle of Death." Yvonn Hanlon, whose son is in the battle group, said she had lost trust in Blair and would not vote for him again.

Former Conservative Party cabinet ministers Lord Hurd and Kenneth Clarke have joined Lord Heseltine to criticize Blair's position on the Middle East. Heseltine even accused Blair of "lying" to get Britain into the Iraq war behind the United States. That these rightists can attack Blair on this issue shows how vul-

Continued on page 7

THE PEOPLE OF FALLUJA APPEAL TO THE UN

Following are excerpts.

His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan
Secretary General of the United Nations

New York

Falluja 14 October 2004

Your Excellency

It is very obvious that the American forces are committing crimes of genocide every day in Iraq. Now, while we are writing to Your Excellency, the American forces are committing these crimes in the city of Falluja.

The American warplanes are dropping their most powerful bombs on the civilians in the city, killing and injuring hundreds of innocent people. At the same time their tanks are attacking the city with heavy artillery. As you know, there is no military presence in the city.

There had been no actions taken by the Falluja resistance in recent weeks because the negotiations between representatives of the city and the Government were going well. In this atmosphere, the new bombardment by America has happened while the people of Falluja have been preparing themselves for the fast of Ramadan. Now many of them are trapped under the wreckage of their demolished houses, and nobody can help them while the attack continues.

On the night of the 13th October alone, American bombardment demolished 50 houses on top of their residents. Is this a genocidal crime or a lesson about the American democracy? It is obvious that the Americans are committing acts of terror against the people of Falluja for one reason only: their refusal to accept the Occupation.

Your Excellency and the whole world know that the Americans and their allies devastated our country under the pretext of the threat of WMD. Now, after all the destruction and the killing of thousand[s of] civilians, they have admitted that no weapons were found. But they have said nothing about all the crimes they committed.

Unfortunately everybody is now silent, and will not even dignify the murdered Iraqi civilians with words of condemnation. Are the Americans going to pay compensation as Iraq has been forced to do after the Gulf war?

We know that we are living in world of double standards. In Falluja, they have created a new vague target: AL ZARQAWI. This is a new pretext to justify their crimes, killing and daily bombardment of civilians.

Almost a year has elapsed since they created this new pretext, and whenever they destroy houses, mosques, restaurants, and kill children and women they said, "We have launched a successful operation against Al-Zarqawi." They will

never say that they have killed him, because there is no such a person. And that means the killing of civilians and the daily genocide will continue.

The people of Falluja assure you that this person, if he exists, is not in Falluja and is probably not anywhere in Iraq. The people of Falluja have announced many times that any person who sees Al-Zarqawi should kill him.

Now everybody realizes that this man is just a hypothetical hero created by the Americans. At the same time the representative of Falluja, our tribal leader, has denounced on many occasions the kidnapping and killing of civilians, and we have no links to any groups committing such inhuman behaviour.

Excellency, we appeal to you and to all world leaders to exert the greatest pressure on the American administration to stop their crimes in Falluja and withdraw their army far away from the city.

The city was very quiet and peaceful when its people ran it. We didn't witness any disorder in the city. The civil administration was going well given its limited resources. We simply didn't welcome the occupation forces. This is our right according to the UN Charter, international law and the norms of humanity...

It is very urgent that your Excellency, along with the world leaders, intervenes in a speedy manner to prevent a new massacre.

We have tried to reach your representatives in Iraq, so as to ask them to be more active in this regard, but as you know they are living in the Green Zone where we cannot contact them. We want the UN to be involved in the situation in Falluja so as to avoid a new massacre.

We have tried to reach you through different channels and by asking our friends to convey this letter to your office in New York or Geneva with the hope that it will reach you. At the same time we appeal to you to urge the UN agencies in Iraq to take an active role in protecting civilians and preventing the new massacre which the Americans and the puppet government are planning to start soon in Falluja as well as many parts of our country.

Best regards.

Kassim Abdulsattar al-Jumaily
President
The Study Center of Human Rights & Democracy

On behalf of the people of Falluja & for:
Al-Fallujah Shura Council
The Bar Association
The Teacher Union
Council of Tribes Leaders
The House of Fatwa & Religious Education

As Iraqi resistance stiffens

U.S. plans military assault on Falluja

Continued from page 1

Iraq but in the entire Arab world and beyond.

Salim and the entire population of Falluja remember the brutal assault last April when U.S. bombs, artillery and snipers killed 600 to 800 people. Snipers killed people as they were trying to leave the city, trying to reach stranded children, and driving ambulances to assist the wounded and pick up the dead.

It was wholesale butchery carried out over a period of a month by U.S. Marines. Finally, they were beaten back and President George W. Bush ordered a truce in order to keep the military crisis from escalating and doing political damage at home and in the Arab world.

Massacre in name of democracy

Since then, however, the Bush administration has decreed that Iraq should have a "democratic election" in January. This phony election was originally planned as an attempt to justify the invasion and occupation, to stabilize the country politically, and to put in place a loyal puppet regime with the mantle of a "popular mandate," thus permitting the legal takeover of the country by U.S. corporations, oil companies and the Pentagon.

It was relatively easy for the imperialists to form an interim puppet government with a former CIA operative, Allawi, as the prime minister. They rounded up a few hundred collaborators and conciliators in a hall in the Green Zone, the secure bastion of the U.S. military command—although several rockets did fall there during the ceremonies. After twisting arms, Washington came out with its so-called "interim government."

It is another thing altogether to organize an election, involving millions of people in a country seething with hatred for the U.S. occupation and a resistance movement growing stronger every day. This scenario has created a self-made, increasingly acute political crisis for the U.S. occupation.

The Pentagon must try to crush the resistance if it is to stage manage an election. And the militarists in the Pentagon view the conquest of Falluja as the key to establishing control on the ground in Iraq.

Dozens of cities are not under their control right now. They recently took control of Samarra, but the resistance has resurfaced and Iraqi National Guard soldiers have been killed and wounded by roadside bombs at a checkpoint south of the city.

During the first invasion of Falluja in April, the regional and national character of the resistance showed itself. Caravans drove from Najaf, Baghdad and other cities to aid Falluja.

Journalist Patrick Graham went there during the second week of fighting. He wrote in the Oct. 19 Guardian of Britain that "We left Baghdad and drove down roads guarded by guerrilla fighters. The countryside from Ramadi east to Falluja and then to Baghdad was in revolt. We had to pass through resistance lines to get to the Marines and then through insurgents to get into the city. It was the Marines who were surrounded, not the rebels.

"The Americans have more than enough troops to attack Falluja," continued Graham, "but as soon as they do the area will once more erupt, and it will take everything the Americans have to control the surrounding villages of Habbaniya, Khaldiya and Al Kharma. According to the Iraqi president, Ghazi al-Yawar, there is a good chance that when the Marines hit Falluja again, even Mosul, home to 3 million, will explode."

Since the April assault, the resistance has grown. The Pentagon has raised its estimate of guerrilla fighters from about 2,000 to between 8,000 and 12,000. Of

course, they have no accurate count, but it is clear there has been a great advance.

The more important point is the relationship between the population and the fighters. The greater number of fighters means the support network among the population is undoubtedly growing by leaps and bounds, showing the political weakness of the occupation.

The New York Times of Oct. 24 reported that attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces have grown 30 percent since Ramadan began on Oct. 15. "Attacks against allied and Iraqi forces and civilians are now averaging 80 to 100 per day," wrote the Times, up from 60 to 80 during September and the first half of October.

Moktada al-Sadr, the Shiite cleric who led two uprisings against the occupation and has recently made some sort of agreement to reduce the arms of his followers, made a statement of support for the people of Falluja, excerpted in the German newspaper Junge Welt of Oct. 25:

"In a statement, which was distributed on Saturday evening in Baghdad," wrote Junge Welt, "and the Shiite pilgrimage city of Najaf, he said: 'I stand at your side, no matter which course you decide on. ... I am ready to help the Mujahedin in Falluja wherever I am able to, but I hope

nerable the leader of "New Labor" has been made by his pro-war actions.

100,000 march in London

Along with these individual reactions, the anti-war movement has also spoken out. On Oct. 17, the last day of the European Social Forum meeting in London, 70,000 to 100,000 people took to the streets there to protest the war on Iraq and the occupation. They were called out by the Stop the War Coalition. The anticipated assault on Falluja was on their minds.

Former Labor Member of Parliament George Galloway, a longtime war resister, is now a leader of the anti-war Respect Party. Speaking at the anti-war march, Galloway said: "There is one word in our hearts and our prayers—Falluja. This is going to be a new Stalingrad over the next few weeks."

In 1942-43 Stalingrad, in the Soviet Union, stood up to the Nazi assault. The defeat of the German army there was the turning point in World War II.

Some in the anti-war movement have begun to make direct appeals to the British troops. One such was Jo Wilding, who was shot at by U.S. troops while driving an ambulance into Falluja last April. Wilding testified about this before the popular War Crimes Tribunal organized by the International Action Center in New York on Aug. 26.

In her appeal to the troops Wilding described her experiences in Falluja and said: "The U.S. has asked the British government to send you north to free up forces for another offensive against Falluja. I'm writing to ask you to refuse any orders to deploy to Baghdad or other areas currently under U.S. control. ...

"British troops in Baghdad will sustain higher casualties than in the south, will take the brunt of the uprisings caused by U.S. misjudgment and brutality. The UK government will not be there for you or your families when you are killed, maimed or poisoned by depleted uranium weapons.

"Please, don't go. Please don't make yourselves complicit with the atrocities which will undoubtedly be committed against ordinary Iraqi people in Falluja." □

at the same time that your city can be spared a war, because the occupation powers know no mercy.' Liberty and democracy are not possible under occupation. Sadr demanded that the Iraqis themselves should decide their fate."

At each turn the Pentagon faces more than it ever thought it would have to deal with. This has been true from day one of the war. In fact, the scandal over the 380 tons of missing HX and RDX munitions, whose existence and whereabouts were told to the U.S. government by the International Atomic Energy Agency in March 2003, can undoubtedly be explained by the low priority given it by the military. They thought they would be in complete control of the country and never dreamed that the munitions would be used against them by a national resistance.

The morale of U.S. troops is sinking. The New York Times of Oct. 24 quoted a Marine stationed in Ramadi, where the troops have to drive a 4.5-mile "suicide run" every day to supply their bases in the city. "This is Vietnam," said Cpl. Daniel Planalp, 21, of San Diego. "I don't even know why we are over here fighting. We're fighting for survival. The Iraqis don't want us here." □

As repression mounts in Haiti

Resistance & solidarity grow

By Pat Chin and G. Dunkel
New York

Activists from African American organizations, Venezuela's Bolivarian Circles and their supporters picketed the Haitian Consulate here Oct. 25 to demand an end to the bloody imperialist occupation of Haiti and the return of exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Endorsers of the "Emergency Rally in Support of the People of Haiti" included the December 12 Movement; Patrice Lumumba Coalition; Africans Helping Africans; People's Organization for Progress; Black Telephone Workers for Justice; Roger Toussaint, president of Transit Workers Local 100; Brenda Stokely, president of AFSCME District Council 1707; the Africa is Home Coalition; and the International Action Center.

White-House-backed repression in Haiti has expanded so sharply that Haitians weren't able to go out into the streets for planned demonstrations the weekend of Oct. 16-17. But when police and foreign occupation troops raided Bel Air and Martissant—poor neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince where support for Aristide and his Fanmi Lavalas Party is strong—they were met with gunfire and burning barricades.

Oct. 17 was the 198th anniversary of Jean-Jacques Dessalines's assassination, and the 10th anniversary of Aristide's return from the first U.S. coup against him in 1991. The second putsch took place earlier this year, on Feb. 29, when U.S. Marines kidnapped Aristide and flew him from the country.

Haiti's Radio Metropole reported Oct. 18 that Aristide's supporters had attempted to overrun the police station in Martissant but were beaten back. One vehicle was set ablaze. The resisters were reportedly from the Grand Ravine section of Port-au-Prince. Heavy gunfire was heard throughout the weekend around the capital.

Meanwhile, on Oct. 20, central Port-au-Prince and its surroundings remained "the scene of burning roadblocks and sporadic shooting...." There were "burning barricades across Boulevard La Saline near the seafront and in Bel-Air, the bastion of armed Aristide supporters. However, while traffic was fluid in the commercial center, in Carrefour activities were disrupted by an absence of public transport." (Haiti Press Network)

The struggle continues

There's been an upsurge in resistance to the U.S.-installed puppet regime headed by Interim Prime Minister Gerard Latortue since the Sept. 30 police killing of two anti-coup protesters. As a result, the de facto government is negotiating with the U.S. State Department to purchase new weapons.

Any agreement will end a 13-year arms embargo Washington instituted after the first coup against Aristide, which was kept in place even after his return from exile.

The uprisings have also forced the International Monetary Fund to cancel talks on loans to Haiti. And the United Nations announced Oct. 21 that it will send 3,000 additional troops to "stop violence" and prevent a flood of refugees. (Bloomberg)

This will increase the Brazil-led UN force to 6,200 foreign occupiers—whose goal is to crush Haiti's popular movement, leaving the country open to unbridled capitalist super-exploitation.

With protests growing in strength and militancy, Latortue has accused South



Brenda Stokely speaks at Haitian Consulate picketline, Oct. 25.
WW PHOTO: PAT CHIN

Africa—which has given Aristide and his family refuge—of interfering in Haiti's internal affairs. But President Thabo Mbeki sharply denied Latortue's charge that Aristide is using South Africa as "a base to destabilize Haiti by violent means." An official press statement also asserted that "South Africa and President Mbeki cannot be taken as a scapegoat for the failure of the de facto regime in Haiti to restore peace and stability."

A huge contingent of flag-waving Haitians joined the Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C. Lavalas activist Marlene Jean-Louis called for continued solidarity with Haiti from the podium.

"More than 8,000 Haitian workers have lost their jobs since Feb. 29 because of their political association," she told the crowd. "The U.S. government along with the French and Canadian governments have taken President Aristide out of Haiti because they want to implement their own neoliberal plans in Haiti, and also because Aristide is the first president in Haiti's history to call for reparations for the Haitian people, the over \$21 billion that France had forced us to pay in indemnities after we won our independence.

"We will get it back. Even though Aristide is not in Haiti, he is still the president of the people, and he is with us in spirit, and we will continue to fight for his return."

On Oct. 18 there had been yet another protest at the Haitian Consulate. Demonstrators demanded the release of the Rev. Gerard Jean-Juste, who was brutally arrested in Haiti as he was feeding hungry children, three of whom were reportedly shot. Organized by the Committee Against Repression in Haiti, the Haiti Support Network, Fanmi Lavalas (New York City), Haiti's National Popular Party and Komite Chalo Jacklen, protesters also called for an end to the occupation and bloody repression of popular protest in Haiti.

Aftermath of floods

Four weeks after Tropical Storm Jeanne mercilessly lashed northern Haiti, the streets of Gonaives are still filled with water and mud. Most people there remain homeless. Food and water distributions are sometimes canceled, and the number of distribution points has been cut from four to two. Over 2,000 people were killed.

Latortue has done little or nothing to help the storm victims. But he has vowed to crush Aristide's supporters, whom he calls "terrorists."

His regime has arrested hundreds of people, including the Rev. Jean-Juste, Gérard Gilles, Lavalas activist So Anne, former Prime Minister Yvone Neptune and others. Many people have been killed for being Aristide supporters.

The ex-soldiers and paramilitary death

squad gangs the U.S. trained, armed and bankrolled to overthrow Aristide have proclaimed themselves as the Haitian army in small cities like Petit-Goâve. (Washington Post, Oct. 15). They've sent small detachments to Port-au-Prince to see if Latortue's White House bosses will accept their reconstituting the army.

Given that body's murderous history, Latortue would no doubt like to deploy a reconstituted army—the real terrorists—against his opponents. But he and the Bush administration have to worry about international reaction—and opposition from the Haitian masses being pro-

pelled forward by such a threat.

Haiti's bourgeoisie—who composed most of the "opposition" to Aristide—locked out Haiti's work force on Oct. 15. The loss of a day's pay was calculated to increase economic pressure and stifle the people's will to fight back. But it failed.

The occupation regime has raised the price of basic necessities. Yet only around 30 percent of the people work steadily—and for a pittance.

They have shot people in the street during protests and in the dead of night. But they haven't crushed the struggle to end the occupation, free all political prisoners and obtain the return of their democratically elected leader, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

As the popular resistance continues to grow in Haiti, so too does the solidarity movement in the United States. It's now time to globalize the struggle.

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

Dear Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz,

Workers World Party expresses our most sincere wishes for your speedy and complete recovery. We were deeply moved by how you responded to this unfortunate accident on Oct. 20. Even while in pain, you reacted with revolutionary optimism and leadership, never forgetting for even one second your great responsibility to the Cuban people and the world. As always, you demonstrated the dignity and endurance of the Cuban Revolution, qualities that continue to frustrate the enemies of socialism. We are sure you will receive the most loving and skilled care from Cuba's exemplary medical workers. Cuba continues to be the beacon that illuminates the hopes of millions of people worldwide—including here in the belly of the beast.

Workers World Party's Secretariat members

Teresa Gutierrez
Deirdre Griswold
Larry Holmes
Monica Moorehead
Sara Flounders
Fred Goldstein

PUERTO RICO

A call for massive actions

By Arturo J. Pérez Saad

Contract negotiations have been called off after the FBI and Internal Revenue Service invaded the offices of the Genuine Independent Union (UIA), detained and interrogated union workers, and confiscated all union documents and computer files—all early in the morning of Oct. 20 in Puerto Rico. The union members were later released.

Hector Rene Lugo, the union president, said that “it is the second time these agents barged into our building to confiscate union records.” He emphasized that their presence “is part of the ongoing persecu-

tion from the government-run Aqueducts and Sewage Authority (AAA) against the union.” (El Nuevo Dia)

Ricardo Santos, president of the Union of Workers of the Electrical and Irrigation Industry (UTIER), said, “This is the first time that a union is overtaken by assault in the middle of a strike.” He joined with over 30 workers in a spontaneous protest outside the building, chanting at the agents: “Pick up and go because there is nothing here—get out! Get out! Get out!”

Puerto Rican Gov. Sila M. Calderón, in collusion with the government-run AAA, continues to vilify the union and its representatives in the daily press like El Nuevo

Water company workers protest FBI raid of their union offices, Oct. 20



Día. But student groups, other unions and the Socialist

Front show their support by holding solidarity protests and pickets in front of the AAA's headquarters.

Before the Oct. 20 search and confiscation operation, the UIA and the AAA had appeared to be in accord that after negotiating the medical plan the strike would end, with the rest of the contract's clauses to be negotiated within the next 30 days. On Oct. 22, however, after talks failed and bugs planted by the authorities were discovered in the union offices, the union demanded that all clauses would have to be resolved in order for the 4,300 workers to end the strike.

The walkout began Oct. 5. The next scheduled negotiating session is Oct. 26.

On Oct. 22 a group of representatives from the union of the Port Authority work-

ers, the Association of Exempt Non-Teaching Workers from the University of Puerto Rico, the union of the State Insurance Fund, and the diverse unions in the Puerto Rican Central of Workers united with the UIA in the biggest demonstration to date. They picketed in front of the AAA's main building in support of the union's strike and in repudiation of the invasions of the union's headquarters.

Although there are many proposals for other solidarity actions, a call has been made for a massive march and day of civil disobedience in solidarity with the UIA on Oct. 27. The march will begin in front of the Department of Labor and march down the U.S. financial interest section called “la Milla de Oro”—the mile of gold—and end in front of the Banco Popular. □

GEORGE HARRISON

Irish freedom fighter, revolutionary socialist

By Bill Cecil
New York

Several hundred people packed the 1199 hospital workers' union hall in Manhattan on Oct. 20 to honor Irish freedom fighter George Harrison. He died in his Brooklyn home Oct. 6 at the age of 89.

Speakers at the memorial included David Dinkins, New York City's first Black mayor, New York Newsday columnist Jimmy Breslin, secretary of the Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade Moe Fishman, and Sandy Boyer of Radio Free Eireann. A representative of Republican Sinn Fein flew in from Dublin to address the gathering.

Harrison was born May 2, 1915, in Shammer, County Mayo, in an Ireland oppressed and impoverished by British occupation. A year after his birth the Easter Rising, which was crushed by British troops, took place. Its executed leaders James Connolly and Padraic Pearse would become Harrison's heroes.

As a young man Harrison worked as a wheelwright and a stonecutter. At age 15, he enlisted in the East Mayo Battalion of the Irish Republican Army.

The Depression forced Harrison to leave Ireland. He first went to England, where, like many Irish emigrants, he picked crops and labored on building sites. In 1938 he came to New York, working first as a bartender and then on the docks. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and later became a security guard for Brinks Armor. Working at Brinks for 30 years, he fought for justice as a shop steward and union organizer.

For most of that time Harrison secretly fought for justice on another front: running arms to the IRA.

To Harrison, the fight for Irish freedom was one with the world struggle against imperialism and racism. He stood vigil every week outside the British Consulate in New York to support the Irish people. And he was at every march against war and racism or in solidarity with the people of South Africa, Palestine and Latin America.

“You can't appreciate George Harrison without his passionate hatred of racism,” recalled Sandy Boyer at the memorial. “He worked day in and day out to elect David Dinkins as the first African-American mayor of New York City. Even after Dinkins lost his race for a second term, George called him the people's



George Harrison PHOTO: IRISHFREEDOM.NET

mayor. George would no more recognize Rudy Giuliani as the mayor of his city than he would recognize British rule in Ireland.

“I remember how thrilled George was when we organized an Irish event that raised \$10,000 to rebuild the burned Black churches in the South,” Boyer continued. “He called me the next morning to say, ‘We gave racism and imperialism a good kick in the ass.’”

Boyer also described Harrison as the “most thoroughgoing anti-imperialist I have ever met.”

In 1981 the Reagan regime prosecuted Harrison, Tom Falvey, Michael Flannery, Paddy Mullens and Tommy Gornley for arming Irish freedom fighters. The “IRA Five” refused to deny the charges but waged a political defense. Witnesses on Harrison's behalf included Irish leader Bernadette Devlin McAliskey and Sam Gulabe, United Nations representative of the African National Congress. (Dr. Gulabe, then known as David Ndaba, is today a colonel in the South African army and physician to Nelson Mandela.) The five were acquitted.

Harrison gave generously to many projects in Ireland, including a memorial to Irish volunteer Tommy Patton, who died fighting fascism in the Spanish Civil War. In the late 1980s, he supported Republican Sinn Fein, which broke with Sinn Fein over the nationalist party's decision to enter the Irish parliament.

Four years ago, in failing health, George Harrison marched in his last street demonstration. It was to protest the acquittal of the four New York cops who murdered African immigrant Amadou Diallo.

But he never stopped thinking of the struggle. On the day he died, Harrison penned a verse for the Republican Sinn Fein newspaper Saiorse:

“May the spirit of those who suffered in the torture chambers of the Empire of Hell animate us with enough strength to free the land of our heart's desire. In dedication to all my comrades—the living and the dead.” □

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

1. Publication Title: Workers World
 2. Publication Number: 1070-4205
 3. Filing Date: October 28, 2004
 4. Issue Frequency: Weekly except first week of January
 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 51
 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$25.00
 7. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer): (Street, City, County, State, and ZIP+4) 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Contact Person: R. Neidenberg; Telephone: 212-255-0352
 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer): 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
 9. Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank):
Publisher (Name and Complete Mailing Address): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): Deirdre Griswold, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; Managing Editor (Name and Complete Mailing Address): John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
 10. Owner (Do not leave blank. If the publication is owned by a corporation, give the name and address of the corporation immediately followed by the names and addresses of all stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of the total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, give the names and addresses of the individual owners. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, give its name and address as well as that of each individual. If the publication is published by a nonprofit organization, give its name and address.): WW Publishers, Inc., 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513; John Catalinotto, 55 West 17 Street, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10011-5513
 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities. If none, check box: None
 12. Tax Status (For completion by nonprofit organizations authorized to mail at special rates.) (Check One) The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes: (Check one): Does not apply
 13. Publication Title: Workers World
 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: November 4, 2004
 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: Average No. of Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 5000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1732; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 128; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 112; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 1530. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 3502. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 1200. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 1200. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 4702. h. Copies Not Distributed: 298. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 5000. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 74.5%.
No. Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date: a. Total Number Copies (Net Press Run): 5000. b. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: (1) Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541 (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 1838; (2) Paid In-County Subscriptions (include advertiser's proof and exchange copies): 119; (3) Sales Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: 0; (4) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 1572. c. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation [Sum of 15b (1), (2), (3) and (4)]: 3529. d. Free Distribution by Mail (Samples, complimentary, and other free): (1) Outside-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (2) In-County as Stated on Form 3541: 0; (3) Other Classes Mailed Through the USPS: 0. e. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): 840. f. Total Free Distribution (Sum of 15d and 15e): 840. g. Total Distribution (Sum of 15c and 15f): 4369. h. Copies Not Distributed: 631. i. Total (Sum of 15g, 15h): 5000. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15c divided by 15g times 100): 80.7%.
 16. Publication of Statement of Ownership. Publication required. Will be printed in the November 4, 2004, issue of this publication.
 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner: Deirdre Griswold, Editor, October 28, 2004
- I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties.)

Same-sex rights in East Germany

Legal and material progress

By Leslie Feinberg

After World War II, as productivity and social re-organization in the German Democratic Republic—"East Germany"—rose to meet the needs of the population as a whole, the more specific needs of individuals and groups within society, including gay men and lesbians, could be more easily addressed.

Canadian researcher Jim Steakley, who published the results of seven months of research in East Germany in 1976, outlined some of the concrete conditions under which East German workers tried to construct a planned economy—socialism.

He paid careful attention to the period between the establishment of the GDR in 1949 and the construction of the defensive Berlin wall in 1961. "With the formal founding of the GDR in 1949," Healey explained, "the cold war hostilities between socialism and capitalism intensified and entered a period of chronic crisis. The West used every means at its disposal to destroy the GDR, ranging from economic sabotage to CIA subversion."

He noted that a calculated "brain drain" lured away some 10 percent of the GDR's population—mostly middle-class professionals—and that a campaign of smuggling across the open border also served to bleed the resources of the workers' state.

"By subsidizing the costs of food, rents, and basic commodities, the GDR held living expenses at their 1945 level (which they continue to have today)," he wrote at the end of 1976. "Faced with costs five to 10 times higher at home, many West Germans did all of their shopping in the GDR, particularly in Berlin. Thus the GDR made relatively slow economic and social advances during this period, which was closed in 1961 by the construction of the tragically necessary wall along the border between the German states."

During the period between 1949 and 1961, he said, the "gay scene" in both Germanys was generally similar. Gays could visit a variety of clubs on either side of the border. He added, however, that some gays from the GDR felt uncomfortable about their clothing not being considered as "fashionable," and the price of drinks was steep in the West.

However, he added, considering that at 17 million the GDR had only about 30 percent of the population of West Germany, "the GDR matched the West in terms of subcultural institutions such as dance bars, steam baths, access to homophile periodicals, and so on."

And, Steakley stressed, "West Germany was scarcely a haven for homosexuals during these years. Ruled by the Christian-Democratic Party (the name tells it all), the federal government was adamantly opposed to law reform which might improve the situation of gay people; and local authorities were extremely intolerant of the gay subculture. Police entrapment and raids on bars and baths, unheard of in the GDR, were common in the West."

The published curators' notes from a

1997 Berlin art exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of the German Homosexual Emancipation Movement stated that the number of convictions of individuals accused under the anti-gay statutes in West Germany was 1,920 in 1950; by 1959, the number soared to as many as 3,530—an all time record.

"Even people not sentenced suffered a great deal," the exhibit curators pointed out, "as employers and family members found out in the course of proceedings that they were gay."

Progress, not perfection

The Nazi anti-gay amendment was immediately struck from the laws of the newly created German Democratic Republic in 1949.

Formally the old Prussian Paragraph 175 remained on the books in the GDR. But the activist efforts of Dr. Rudolph Klimmer—a gay communist and physician—during the 1950s had an impact.

Steakley explained that Klimmer set out to win the support of prominent people in the GDR for the campaign to rescind Paragraph 175 and win full equality for homosexuals. "His efforts were strongly backed by the GDR's then Minister of Justice, Hilde Benjamin; she urged repeal of Paragraph 175 in the country's leading legal journals. There was (and still is) a high degree of acceptance of homosexuals within the cultural sector of the GDR," he reported, "but the GDR's then Minister of Culture, the poet Johannes R. Becher, refused to take a public stand on law reform."

Becher's homosexuality was well known, since West German reporters had "outed" his relationship with a male con-

struction worker.

"Klimmer did, however, receive the support of numerous other agencies and individuals," Steakley said, "including one of the GDR's most famous writers, Ludwig Renn, a party veteran whose novels frequently turned on gay themes."

The 1950s and 1960s were defined not by perfection, however, but by progress.

Backward views about root causes of homosexuality still circulated. And when Klimmer wrote a 1958 opus to answer this

old prejudice, he could not find a publisher in the East. Klimmer had written that only two things differentiate homosexuals from heterosexuals: the object of sexual attraction and social discrimination.

However, Steakley wrote, "Klimmer's efforts during this period were rewarded by the judicial decision in 1957 to discontinue prosecutions on the basis of Paragraph 175 except in cases involving assault, coercion or minors."

Gains in East push West to follow

The year 1961 marked a period of economic change in the GDR that brought social change in its wake.

"Beginning in 1961," Steakley continued, "the GDR finally took measures which had long been delayed: the complete collectivization of farmlands and the expropriation of privately owned stores and industries. Since most bars and baths were privately owned and managed up to 1961, this had a direct impact upon the urban gay scene."

However, Steakley found that virtually every city with a population of more than 50,000 had a gay bar; Dresden and Leipzig each had four; and Berlin had five

and a steam bath. In some cases these state-owned clubs were frequented by heterosexual patrons in the daytime, and gay clientele in the evenings. "Frictions have developed when a homophobic manager was assigned to a gay bar," he concluded, "but such managers generally request a transfer after a short time."

At last, in 1968, the hated Paragraph 175 was removed from lawbooks after almost a century of struggle since its inception in 1871—but only in the GDR.

Richard Plant, a Jewish gay man forced to flee Germany in 1933, hailed this progressive move in his 1990 article "East German Gay Laws—Years Ahead of West."

Plant wrote that "finally in 1968, perhaps spurred on by sexologists, scientists and gay activists, East Germany revoked all penalties concerning sexual relations between consenting male adults. This caused consternation for the leaders of other Eastern European nations. Officials in Prague, Budapest and Bucharest were bewildered.

"But more troubled were conservative power brokers of West Germany."

Plant said the legislative move by the GDR pushed West Germany to follow. "In 1969 the Bonn government began timidly to draw up new regulations; the legislators, however, were so scared of right-wing fanatics that another year passed before the rulings resembled those drafted in the East."

While the welcome legal move in the GDR did not in and of itself wipe out centuries of homophobia that lingered as a legacy of class society, the Communist Party in the GDR would soon demonstrate what strides in social progress could be made when the workers' party and the workers' state put energy into the efforts.

Next: Stunning gains for same-sex rights.

Lesbian gay bi
and trans
PRIDE
SERIES
PART
19

Palestinian lesbian tours U.S.

By Leslie Feinberg
New York

She is far from her homeland, Palestine, and a bit weary. For two months, Rauda Morcos has traveled across North America to bring the message of her Palestinian lesbian organization "Aswat"—"Voices" in Arabic. The message: "We are women, we are Palesinian and we are gay."

Activist and poet Morcos brought the voice of lesbian Palestinian women against the Israeli occupation to events in Toronto, New Orleans, San Francisco and in North Carolina, Illinois, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania.

In New York, she was featured at five events in Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx before flying home on Oct. 25. Morcos spoke at a round-table discussion hosted by the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC-NY) on Oct. 20, a standing-room-only reading at Bluestockings Bookstore on Oct. 20, a reception hosted by the Audre Lorde

Rauda Morcos, left, and Workers World newspaper Managing Editor Leslie Feinberg at Brooklyn "farewell" event, Oct. 23.

WW PHOTO:
MINNIE BRUCE PRATT



Project co-sponsored by Astrea, and a reading at BAAD!—the Bronx Academy of Arts Dance.

At the ADC-NY round-table discussion, Morcos told those gathered that the group had formed in 2002 as an e-list—a "virtual forum." A year later, the group held its first meeting in the home of Morcos and her partner. Aswat now holds bimonthly meetings of some 14 women, including some who have to travel through Israeli checkpoints from the occupied territories. And the group has a larger mailing list. The women of Aswat have also worked to develop ties with Palestinian feminist organizations.

Morcos said Aswat also knows about "Queer" Arab groups in Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Syria and Kuwait.

She spoke out about Israeli groups that

have organized gay parades. "Unfortunately, there is no other group in Israel to open these connections between the oppression against gays, oppression against women and oppression against Palestinians, and also against the war. They are unfortunately doing gay parades with no relation to reality. How can we be proud in a country that oppresses us as Palestinians?"

She concluded that Aswat therefore made "a decision not to support any group that does not speak of political oppression, that does not speak to oppression of Palestinians."

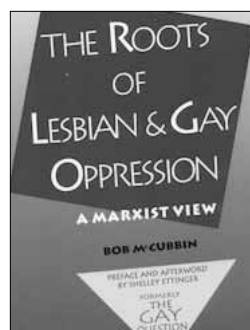
For more information about Aswat, visit: www.aswat-palestiniangaywomen.org. □

THE ROOTS OF LESBIAN AND GAY OPPRESSION:

A Marxist View By Bob McCubbin

This ground breaking pamphlet was originally published as the Gay Question in 1976, during the first flush of the modern lesbian and gay movement. Its unparalleled achievement was to offer a historical analysis of when, where, why and how lesbian and gay oppression developed.

WW PUBLISHERS Order from leftbooks.com \$6.99





A vote for socialism counts

Based on very real fears, many liberals and people in progressive movements predict catastrophe unless anybody but Bush is elected.

Yes, this is a campaign about the future. So we call on you to do more than choose the lesser of two evils. Make your vote count—by choosing socialism.

The candidates of Workers World Party—John Parker for president and Teresa Gutierrez for vice president—represent a real alternative. They are people of color, workers, anti-war activists, and fighters for poor and working people's rights. One is an out lesbian and the other an ally who has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with women his entire political life.

If you believe that change comes only through pulling a lever in a voting booth, then our call to choose socialism may seem utopian. But if we study the lessons

of history, we know that real change happens through class struggle, not through elections.

A vote for Kerry or for Bush will ultimately mean the same thing: more war, more union busting, more racism and bigotry, and more hardship for poor and working people, for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people, for people with disabilities, for immigrants, for women.

Instead, you can vote socialist. At the heart of socialism is the belief in people's needs before profits, and that those who do the work of the world should be running the world.

On Election Day, choose socialism in the voting booth in states where Parker and Gutierrez are on the ballot or, in Ohio and California where they are official write-in candidates, write their names. And, every day, choose to struggle for a socialist future. □

ELECTION 2004 No more Floridas

Continued from page 1

African Americans—are partly responsible. So is actual intimidation of voters, which was deadly in the South before the massive civil rights movement and still is chilling to many communities. The apathy of millions also affects turnout, and reflects the lack of real choice in a political system dominated by two big-business parties.

But this year has seen a massive voter registration drive among poor people, most of whom are expected to vote Democratic. Now Republican Party officials and other right-wingers are trying to discredit and intimidate these new voters before they even have a chance to go to the polls.

A major smear campaign has been launched against the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now, which has registered 1 million new voters this year, including 212,000 in Florida. Articles attacking ACORN are appearing in newspapers all over the country. Right-wingers are organizing to challenge these new voters at the polls, especially in swing states like Florida.

Bush stole the 2000 presidential election primarily through threats, intimidation and fraudulently disqualifying African American voters in Florida while Al Gore, who won the popular vote,

eventually caved in to the five-to-four decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. In the current campaign, similar tactics have been used against Native peoples in South Dakota and Latin@s in Texas. In Michigan, a Republican state senator was quoted in the Detroit Free Press as saying, "If we do not suppress the Detroit vote, we're going to have a tough time in this election." African Americans are 83 percent of Detroit's population.

The issue here is not whether Kerry is worth voting for. It is the right to vote itself—which was won by women and by African Americans only through massive independent organizing and militant action in the streets. The low number of people voting in the past shows how many are still struggling to exercise this bare minimum of basic democratic rights—to vote and to have their votes counted.

It is possible, given the charged climate of war and economic uncertainty, that real struggles may break out at the polls on election day. Even if they take the form of Democrats vs. Republicans, their significance is that they reflect a desire by the workers and oppressed to enter the political arena, which has been totally dominated by the super-rich and their representatives in both major parties. □

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

SPECIAL TRIAL SUBSCRIPTION

- \$2 for eight weeks (new subscription)
- \$25 for one year

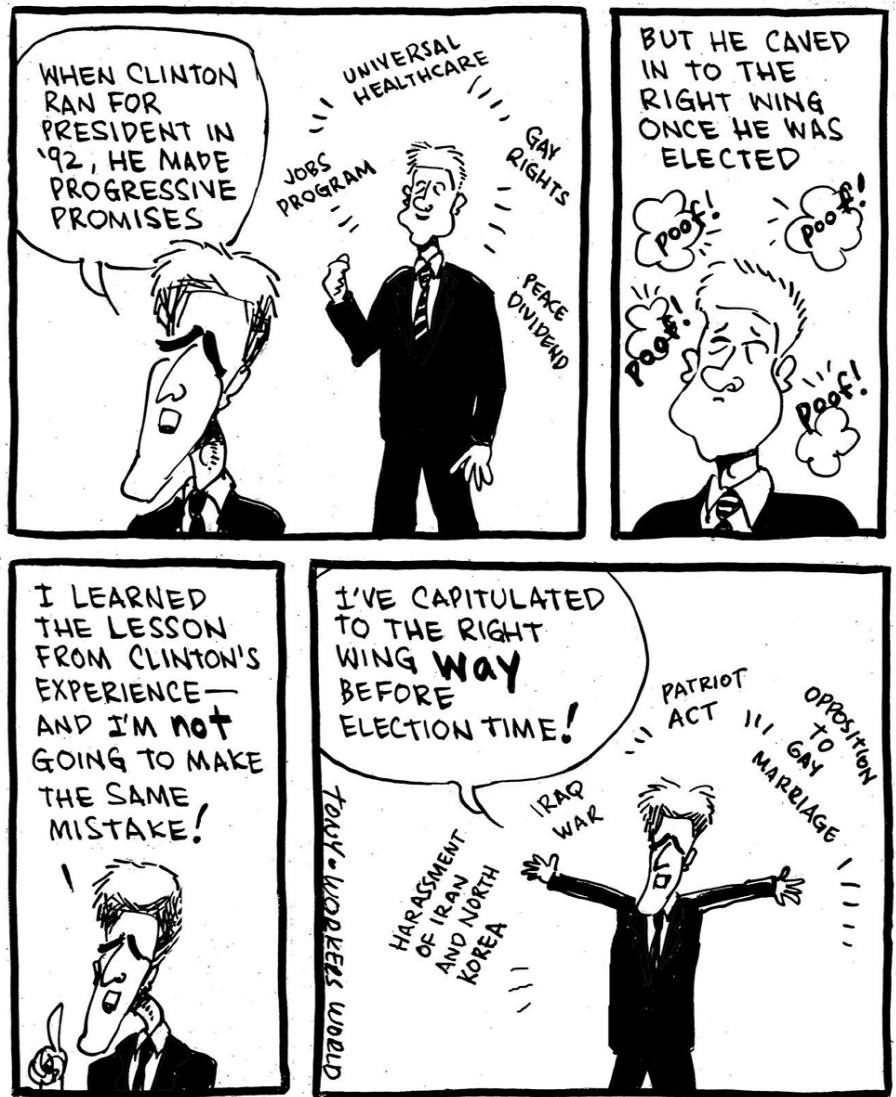


Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Workers World Newspaper 55 W. 17 St. NY, NY 10011 (212) 627-2994

Or use a credit card and subscribe online at:

www.workers.org/orders/subscribe.php



National fightback conference to take up elections, war & more

By Julie Fry

For months now, the public has been bombarded with news of the U.S. presidential election campaign. So much so that you might be tempted to believe the result of the election will determine the resolution of some important question facing the workers and oppressed today—such as the occupation of Iraq, unemployment, health care, HIV/AIDS, or police repression and the growing prison system.

But after Nov. 2 the elections will be over and these issues along with many others will remain unresolved. That is sure, no matter which of the ruling-class candidates wins.

So what are people who are truly committed to these struggles to do? Workers World Party believes that the way to win the fight against the war, poverty and repression is to build an independent mass movement of workers, youths and oppressed people of all nationalities.

That is why WWP is sponsoring a "National Fightback Conference" on Nov. 13-14 at the Chelsea Auditorium in New York City, where the party promises "a serious discussion on strategies."

Among those taking part will be organizers and participants in the protests at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions, the recent anti-war protests, the Oct. 17 Million Worker March and WWP's candidates, who have been meeting people around the country while campaigning for socialism.

These activists and progressive people will bring their experiences to a timely discussion of the capitalist elections and contribute to strategy for building a movement to fight for real change in our society. The conference will also feature discussions of the current struggle against U.S. aggression in Iraq as well as the resistance movements in Palestine and Haiti.

There will be reports about and analysis of the recent victory against U.S. intervention in Venezuela. The conference will

also provide an analysis of the heroic struggle of the Cuban people and the struggle to free the five Cuban heroes unjustly imprisoned in the United States.

The Fightback Conference will also feature discussions of the struggle against exploitation in the United States. There will be opportunities to analyze the significance of the Million Worker March and how to build on this experience to fight for jobs, health care and workers' rights in the United States. The conference will also highlight a Marxist view of the struggle against racism as well as lesbian/gay/bi/trans and women's oppression.

FIST meeting will highlight the youth struggle

Workers World Party's youth organization, FIST—Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—has called for a national youth organizing meeting to take place during the National Fightback Conference. The meeting is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Nov. 13. It will give young activists the chance to discuss how to move the struggle forward.

The meeting will focus on building a movement among young people to fight the draft, and on how to resist racism, sexism and lesbian/gay/bi/trans oppression. It will also give youths the opportunity to learn more about socialism and the lessons that Marxist-Leninism offers for youths who want to end capitalism.

Participants will be able to meet FIST activists from all over the country and find out how they can get involved with this new organization that has already shown its militancy at the Republican National Convention and other actions.

The National Fightback Conference and the FIST national organizing meeting are events not to be missed by anyone who is interested in building a mass struggle to stop war and fight for people's needs.

Information and registration forms for the National Fightback Conference are available at www.workers.org.

The writer is a leading member of FIST. Contact FIST at fist@workers.org.

WWP ELECTION CAMPAIGN

Socialists campaign in the South

By Maggie Vascassenno

In mid-October, Workers World Party candidates John Parker, Teresa Gutierrez and LeiLani Dowell completed a historic five-city tour of the South. Immediately after taking part in the Oct. 17 Million Worker March in Washington, D.C., they spoke at meetings in Richmond, Va.; Raleigh, N.C.; Winthrop College in Rock Hill, S.C.; Charlotte, N.C.; and Atlanta.

RICHMOND: the spirit of Gabriel's Rebellion

Emphasizing that building an independent movement is a requisite for the struggle for socialism, presidential candidate John Parker, vice-presidential candidate Teresa Gutierrez and congressional candidate LeiLani Dowell spoke in Richmond on Oct. 18.

Meeting with supporters at the Pace Center, Parker talked about the MWM as a continuation of the work of abolitionists John Brown, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Tubman—the struggle of workers to free themselves.

Dowell and Gutierrez contrasted the devastation of a Haiti wracked by imperialism with the success of revolutionary socialist Cuba, where people's needs are placed before profits.

Audience members noted the terrible economic pressures on workers who used to make \$20 an hour and are now unable to find work that pays more than \$8. The consequence was starkly evident in the adjoining room, where homeless people were being dispatched to area shelters for meals and clothing.

The meeting was held in the spirit of Gabriel's Rebellion, an 1800 Virginia slave uprising that was finally commemorated in Richmond with a historical marker on Oct. 10. This was a first for Richmond, the former capital of the slave-owning Confederacy, which has many monuments to its generals and politicians.

RALEIGH: militant youth and students

On Oct. 20, all three candidates had a full day of meetings in Raleigh, organized by the local chapter of FIST-Fight Imperialism, Stand Together—a Workers-World-Party-initiated youth and student organization.

The day began with a "meet the candidates" question-and-answer session at an outdoor Middle Eastern lunch. The WWP banner was boldly visible. In the afternoon, John Parker spoke at a well-attended teach-in on the Sudan at North Carolina State University. Organized by FIST members Dante Strobino and

Hussameldin Eltayed, the meeting was co-sponsored by the Middle Eastern and North African Student Association and the Student Peace Action Network.

Eltayed, who is Sudanese, opened the meeting with some factual background on the conflict in his country. Parker, who has visited the Sudan on a fact-finding tour, stressed that current U.S. policy is designed to divide and conquer the Sudan in order for U.S. financial interests to gain access to its rich resources of uranium, magnesium, copper and oil.

Parker pointed out that according to a United Nations report, the crisis for refugees could be averted with relatively small amount of money. Instead, the United States is pushing to send troops into the Sudan—not for any humanitarian reason, but to secure the recently discovered oil reserves in Darfur.

An evening house party, organized by local FIST member Peter Gilbert, focused on the MWM. The event brought Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell together with members of FIST, the Green Party, Black Workers for Justice and student independents.

Discussion centered on strategies for organizing, and on continuing connections among the groups. Dowell gave an overview of FIST, and local member Q Allen added some particularly moving remarks on the challenges of organizing as a "radical queer Black woman" at a predominantly white college.

FIST member Dante Strobino said of the day: "It's great to be working with people on a range of struggles because of the feeling of solidarity that's generated. We got incredible enthusiasm and motivation from the candidates' visit."

Elena Everett, chair of the North Carolina Green Party and a FIST member, reports that the struggle continues at North Carolina State. The day after the candidates' appearance, students sat in on campus to protest scandalously inadequate funding for campus people of color organizations. African American, Native, Latin@ and Southeast Asian groups have received little or none of the \$40,000 student activities budget.

ROCK HILL: fighting the war

On Oct. 21, candidates spoke to a packed forum at Winthrop College in Rock Hill, S.C. Pi Sigma Alpha, a non-partisan honor society for political science students on the campus, sponsored the event. The candidates' talks were followed by a lively question-and-answer session.

The war on Iraq was foremost on people's minds. On Oct. 13, soldiers from the 343rd Quartermaster Company—based



WW PHOTO: MAGGIE VASCASSENNO
Workers World Party candidates Teresa Gutierrez, John Parker and LeiLani Dowell stand in front of historical marker for Gabriel.

in Rock Hill—had refused orders to drive a "suicide mission" of fuel tankers to Baghdad. Almost 90 percent of the company are National Guard members or reservists from South Carolina, Alabama, Kentucky, North Carolina and Mississippi; 26 have been killed thus far.

In response to audience concerns about the need for a "strong" U.S. military, Parker asked for a new definition of security. "What if the U.S. exported hospitals, technology, and teachers? Wouldn't we be more secure than with years and years of imperialist plunder and terror? Security is through partnership and cooperation."

Gutierrez emphasized that the United States is the only country that has used atomic weapons: "This is a country founded on slavery, the robbery of half of Mexico and of Native peoples' lands. That kind of blood and terror has made the U.S. the superpower that it is. So of course there are going to be people around the world that want freedom from the U.S."

Dowell pointed out after one audience member's question about jobs and immigrant workers that "immigrants come to the U.S. for jobs because of what the U.S. does in and to their country."

CHARLOTTE: if socialists were elected

Parker, Gutierrez and Dowell got to talk in detail about their socialist vision during a vibrant evening-long house party in Charlotte on Oct. 21.

Participants at the event, hosted by the Charlotte Action Center for Justice and

organizer David Dixon, wanted to know just what the candidates would do about Iraq if elected. They were vocal in their agreement when candidates promptly said, "Get the troops out and pay reparations!"

Other local issues discussed were the huge subsidies paid to tobacco companies while the once-stellar local school system falls into disrepair and dysfunction. Several participants said they wanted to continue their discussion about socialism at the Workers World Party national conference Nov. 13-14.

ATLANTA: solidarity

The candidates' visit to Atlanta started Oct. 23 with action: a demonstration in solidarity with Kamau Sadiki. The former Black Panther was sentenced to life plus 10 years in prison for a police killing 30 years ago. Sadiki refused an offer of freedom if he could get Assata Shakur, his daughter's mother, back to the United States from her refuge in Cuba.

Speaking at the rally, Parker denounced police brutality and asserted the right of every Black community to self-determination and self-defense. He stressed, "Black people have the right to defend themselves against police terror, just like the Iraqis have the right to defend themselves against the U.S. occupation."

The candidates' afternoon forum was held at the Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless. Organizer Dianne Mathio-wetz noted, "The depth of the crisis for poor and working people shows in the fact that the shelter houses 500 men a night."

The meeting focused on issues of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, especially in relation to voting rights. Dowell pointed out that the current struggle for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans rights had its origin in struggles in the streets, particularly the Stonewall Rebellion.

Gutierrez noted that Workers World supported immigrants' fight to have drivers' licenses for identification and exercise the right to vote as aspects of the struggle for self-determination.

Parker concluded: "Voting for Bush or Kerry is not what our ancestors fought for. They fought for the right to vote for change. And Kerry and Bush both represent the status quo."

He championed the Million Worker March as the path to change—through an independent, fighting movement. □

**On the road with
WWP candidates**

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.
5920 Second Ave.
For information call: 313-831-0750.

WASHINGTON D.C./BALTIMORE

SUN., OCT. 31, 3:00 p.m.
For info. 202-232-0057

Julie Fry, a leader of FIST and representative of the WW campaign, will participate in a third-party presidential debate on 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.

MUNDO OBRERO

Destacamento de soldados rehúsa 'misión suicida' en Irak

Continúa de página 12

como el Sindicato de Efectivos Americanos (American Servicemen's Union, ASU) proporcionó apoyo para los reclutas que se oponían a la guerra.

El ASU publicó un periódico para reclutas que se llamó The Bond (el lazo). El título reflejaba la unión entre el movimiento antiguerra y los hermanos y hermanas en las Fuerzas Armadas. Establecer ese lazo es de nuevo una prioridad para finalizar la ocupación en Irak.

Grupos antiguerra apoyan la resistencia de soldados estadounidenses

La Red de Apoyo para un Sindicato en las Fuerzas Armadas (SNAFU por las

siglas en inglés) es una organización que apoya la resistencia dentro de las Fuerzas Armadas. SNAFU ha publicado una declaración apoyando este destacamento militar por haber rechazado las órdenes militares, y está trabajando para ofrecer apoyo a los soldados que rehúsen.

Según SNAFU: "Estos soldados han sido puestos en peligro por las políticas del gobierno de los EEUU que han creado un clima de odio a través del mundo árabe y musulmán. Esta guerra ilegal contra Irak, la brutalización del pueblo palestino, el bombardeo de civiles en Faluya y a través de todo Irak, y las cámaras de tortura de Abu Graib y en otros lugares han provocado una ira justificable en toda la región.

"El Pentágono y los altos oficiales han demostrado repetidamente su indiferencia hacia la vida humana al brutalizar y asesinar al pueblo iraquí, y por su calculador abandono de la seguridad y el bienestar de sus propias tropas. Los oficiales del Pentágono y del cuerpo de oficiales consideran a tropas de primera fila de combate, muchos de ellos provenientes de comunidades pobres y oprimidas, como desechables, de la misma forma que consideran al pueblo iraquí como subhumano. ... Apoyamos la decisión de estos soldados de rehusar las órdenes y llamamos a otros también a tomar acción para poner un alto a la guerra".

Para más información vea a (www.join-snafu.org). □

Destacamento de soldados rehúsa 'misión suicida' en Irak

Por Dustin Langley

El 13 de octubre, soldados de la Compañía Quartermaster 343, basada en Rock Hill, Carolina del Sur, y desplegada en Talil, Irak, rehusaron manejar siete camiones de combustible no blindados cerca de Bagdad donde los ataques de la resistencia contra los convoyes ocurren casi diariamente.

La compañía tiene personal de Carolina del Sur, Alabama, Kentucky, Carolina del Norte y Misisipi. Llegaron a Irak en abril como parte del 13mo Comando de Apoyo, una unidad de 15.000 efectivos para logística y abastecimiento.

Casi un 90 por ciento de las tropas de esta compañía son miembros de la Guardia Nacional o reservistas. Hasta hoy ya 26 han muerto.

Los camiones de combustible que les ordenaron manejar no podían correr a más de 40 millas por hora. Varios tenían averías mecánicas. El destacamento también había sido informado que el convoy no iba a tener escolta de infantería en humvees o en helicópteros de asalto.

El incidente captó la atención de los medios internacionales de comunicación luego de que algunos de los soldados lograran comunicarse con sus familiares en los Estados Unidos.

Este fue el primer incidente reportado donde un grupo amplio de soldados de los EEUU en Irak rehúsa órdenes militares.

Beverly Dobbs de Vandiver, Alabama dijo a la revista Salon que recibió una llamada con pánico de su hijo, Especialista Joseph Dobbs, el 13 de octubre. "Mamá, estamos en tremendo lío", dijo.

"Nosotros rehusamos viajar porque nuestros vehículos estaban en malas condiciones. El lugar adonde querían enviarnos era peligroso. Teníamos que ir desarmados. Todos rehusamos ir. No vamos a arriesgar nuestras vidas así."

"Estoy muy orgullosa de mi hijo", dijo Renee Shealey, cuyo hijo es uno de los 19 soldados que rehusaron la orden de lo que los soldados llaman una "misión suicida" en Irak.

El Ejército ha dicho que está en trámites una "investigación completa" del incidente y que se tomarán acciones disciplinarias si son indicadas.

Tod Ensign, director legal de Citizen Soldier (Soldado Ciudadano), un grupo pro derechos de soldados y veteranos basado en Nueva York, está demandando acceso al Pfc. Colin Durham de Rock Hill, Carolina del Sur.

Nadine Stafford, de Rock Hill, ha pedido que Ensign hable con Durham, su nieto, y averigüe su estado legal actual así como el de los demás miembros de su unidad.

Historia de resistencia

El rehusar combatir no es nada nuevo para el ejército de los Estados Unidos. Para el 1813, una unidad de 4.000 soldados del estado de Kentucky rehusó librar un combate con las fuerzas indígenas que acababan de atacar el Fuerte Dearborn (el actual Chicago).

Durante la Guerra Mexicana-Americana, miles de soldados, rebelándose contra el prejuicio anti-inmigrante y anticatólico, abandonaron el ejército de los EEUU y se unieron al ejército mexicano en su lucha contra la invasión de los EEUU. Encabezados por el Capitán John Riley del Condado de Galway en Irlanda, formaron el Batallón San Patricio y combatieron con valentía en muchas de las campañas de esa guerra que duró dos años.

Esta reciente negativa de un destacamento hace recordar la Guerra de Vietnam. Para el 1970 en Vietnam, el matar a oficiales y sargentos odiados con granadas de fragmentación, "fragging" era común. Entonces también hubo motines.

Ya para 1970, más de 65.000 soldados habían desertado. Las misiones de "buscar y destruir" frecuentemente se tornaban en "buscar y evadir".

En un artículo titulado "el Colapso de las Fuerzas Armadas", publicado en el

Boletín de las Fuerzas Armadas en 1971, el Col. Robert D. Heintz, hijo, reportó que el "ejército que queda ahora en Vietnam está en un estado de colapso inminente". Citó como evidencia los muchos incidentes de motines, ataques a oficiales por "fragging" y las actividades organizativas en contra de la guerra por parte de soldados dentro de las Fuerzas Armadas.

Heintz citó a un soldado estadounidense en Cu Chi: "Ellos han establecido compañías separadas para las tropas que rehusan combatir. No es algo muy especial rehusar. Si a un hombre lo mandan a reportarse a un lugar, ya ni se molesta en rehusar, simplemente empaqueta una camisa y se va a visitar algunos amigos en otro campamento militar."

"Las operaciones se han vuelto increíblemente desordenadas. Muchos tipos ni siquiera se ponen sus uniformes. ... Las tropas americanas en las bases más grandes están virtualmente desarmadas. Los soldados profesionales nos han quitado nuestras armas y las almacenaron bajo llave. ... También han ocurrido bastante incidentes de "fragging" en el batallón".

La resistencia de los reclutas jugó un papel decisivo en terminar la guerra de Vietnam. Los activistas antiguerra jugaron un papel importante al apoyar a los reclutas que resistían. Organizaciones

Continúa a página 11

Por toda Latinoamérica: Día de Resistencia Indígena

Por Berta Joubert-Ceci

En muchas ciudades de América Latina, se conmemoró el 12 de octubre no como el Día de Cristóbal Colón ni el Día de la Herencia Hispánica, ni siquiera como el Día de la Raza, sino como el "Día de Resistencia de los Pueblos Indígenas".

Cinco siglos después de la invasión de las Américas y el Caribe por el Imperio Español, los pueblos indígenas en cada país de Centro y Sur América menos Venezuela, siguen enfrentándose al racismo, la discriminación lingüística y cultural, la pobreza extrema y el genocidio.

En Cuba, Puerto Rico y otras islas caribeñas, la población nativa fue diezmada por el trabajo forzado, enfermedades y suicidios.

Pero ahora los pueblos indígenas se están levantando en Centro y Sur América, no sólo para demandar sus derechos sino también para oponerse a la intensificación de la explotación por el imperialismo estadounidense en sus países en la forma de los llamados tratados de libre comercio (TLC).

En julio, en el primer Foro Social de las Américas que tuvo lugar en Quito, Ecuador, y en otras conferencias por todo el continente, cientos de organizaciones promulgaron un programa de acción para el 12 de octubre. El propósito principal fue oponerse a la imposición de estos acuer-

dos de comercio en sus países. Las organizaciones incluían no sólo organizaciones indígenas sino también de campesin@s, trabajador@s, estudiantes, afrodescendientes, mujeres, y muchas otras.

Los tratados de libre comercio son impuestos por corporaciones casi todas basadas en los Estados Unidos, por el Fondo Monetario Internacional y el Banco Mundial, para forzar "reformas estructurales". Estas "reformas" conllevan la privatización de servicios como el de la salud, la educación, el sistema de comunicación y la energía, con la consiguiente pérdida de fuentes de trabajo, un alto desempleo, y el aumento del costo de la canasta familiar y de los servicios básicos.

Las compañías transnacionales drenan los recursos primarios obteniendo superganancias para los bancos de Wall Street, dejando atrás sólo miseria y desolación.

Durante los últimos dos años, una ola de manifestaciones militantes y masivas contra la propuesta Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas (ALCA) resultó en el fracaso de negociaciones entre los países sudamericanos y Washington. Ahora la administración de Bush se está reuniendo individualmente con los líderes de cada país, casi siempre a puertas cerradas, tratando de establecer pactos secretos.

En Centro América, donde el Acuerdo Centroamericano de Libre Comercio, auspiciado por los Estados Unidos, no ha sido

aún ratificado, se celebraron acciones contra el pacto el 12 de octubre.

Un@s 30,000 indígenas se manifestaron en Guatemala. En El Salvador, el Movimiento Para La Resistencia Social bloqueó las carreteras principales.

Están pendientes las negociaciones entre los Estados Unidos y Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, y Bolivia. En Bolivia, el 11 y 12 de octubre fueron días de conmemoración por las más de 80 personas que murieron el año pasado durante las manifestaciones que sacaron a Sánchez de Lozada (Goni) de la presidencia y exigían la nacionalización del gas y del petróleo.

Esta lucha continúa. El 18 de octubre, miles de campesin@s y trabajador@s de muchos sectores de la economía, incluso l@s cocaler@s, convergieron en La Paz, la capital de Bolivia. Rodearon el Congreso para demandar que se pasara una ley que establezca la nacionalización.

En Ecuador, indígenas, estudiantes, grupos anti-ALCA y otros movimientos sociales iniciaron una campaña para exigir un plebiscito sobre el ALCA.

En Colombia, el Día de Resistencia fue marcado por una huelga general. En la muestra más grande de unidad, federaciones de sindicatos, grupos indígenas, campesinos, de mujeres, de estudiantes, y otras organizaciones progresistas movilizaron a un millón de personas por todo el país.

Un cartel para la huelga decía "...y envueltos en amenazas que nos infunden gran valentía, ...iremos todos al paro sin temores ni cobardía". Las acciones de protesta en Colombia parecen ser más masivas al aumentar las amenazas, los asesinatos, las masacres, y las detenciones y encarcelamientos políticos.

Las organizaciones que convocaron la huelga fueron muy claras en establecer sus objetivos. Carlos Rodríguez Díaz, presidente de la Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT), una de las federaciones sindicales que inició el llamado, dijo que la huelga era política. "No estamos pensando sólo en los intereses de los trabajadores, sino que estamos luchando fuertemente para tener un país con una verdadera democracia económica y política."

El Partido Comunista Colombiano describió la huelga como "un día memorable", diciendo, "Se ha mostrado claramente el rechazo del ALCA y de la política de Seguridad Democrática de (presidente) Uribe." La "Seguridad Democrática" es un programa de medidas contra los movimientos armados de liberación y contra todas las organizaciones sociales y sindicales las cuales Uribe ha declarado como "aliados del terrorismo".

Esta huelga sucedió tras una huelga de camioneros, y de una manifestación masiva de indígenas que demandaban sus derechos y señalaban su oposición a los tratados de libre comercio. □